

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Dr. Allen Pang

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Interviewer: Ed Metzler

Mr. Metzler: This is Ed Metzler. Today is the 19th of June, 2015. I am in Rockford, Illinois, at the home of Dr. Allen Pang. 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. So, Dr. Pang, thank you for spending the time today to share your experiences with us, and I'd like to start by having you introduce yourself; give us your full name, and then date and place of birth, and we'll take it from there.

Dr. Pang: Okay. I'm Allen Pang. I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1921. I was a student at the University of Hawaii when the war started on December 7, 1941. I was in ROTC, and so they asked all of the ROTC students to volunteer for service. We all--quite a few of us volunteered because the rumor was that they were going to close all the schools and, because they probably needed the schools for barracks. They thought they would be invaded but the invaded [invasion] didn't come. But anyway, we were asked

to serve so we--I volunteered right away, and we were very green and they gave us a rifle and put us on guard duty.

Mr. Metzler: So you were 20 years old then, when--

Dr. Pang: I was 20 years old.

Mr. Metzler: Right. Now, what part of the year, what is your birth date?

Dr. Pang: I was born on June 26, 1921.

Mr. Metzler: So you were twenty years plus. Okay, well let me ask you a couple of questions about your family before we get into what happened on December 7. Tell me about your family, you parents and what they did for a living, and where they lived in Honolulu and the like.

Dr. Pang: Okay. My father was; his name was Wah Jin, W-a-h, J-i-n, and he was born in China and came to the islands. My mother was born in Hawaii. How they met is a long story. My father was the son of a jeweler and he was into a lot of sports, and happened to meet my mother. My mother came from a family of, let's see, ten children. Her parents were rice farmers.

Mr. Metzler: What was their ethnicity? Were they Chinese?

Dr. Pang: Chinese, yes.

Mr. Metzler: Okay.

Dr. Pang: And she had five sisters and four brothers, and they had a tenth sister, but my grandmother's sister could not have any children, so my grandmother gave one of her daughters to her sister.

Mr. Metzler: Isn't that something?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, uh-huh.

Mr. Metzler: Now let me ask you a question. Your father, how many generations removed from living in China was he? Did he emigrate?

Dr. Pang: You know I don't know too much about that because my father left us when I was a little bit over three years of age. So I was raised then just by my mother, and I had three brothers. My father went to China and he was caught in the Manchurian War. I think there was some kind of a war there at that time, and he was caught and could not get back to Hawaii. So my mother raised all four of us boys by herself.

Mr. Metzler: Did you have any sisters?

Dr. Pang: No sisters.

Mr. Metzler: Four boys.

Dr. Pang: Four boys.

Mr. Metzler: And how did she manage to support you?

Dr. Pang: Well, my--as I said, my father was the son of a jeweler. His father, when he came over from China, started several jewelry stores, so he had some money. When he died, of course, in the Chinese custom, all the control of the money went to the number one son. And my father was the number two son, so the number one son put my mother on an allowance so that my mother had a

certain amount of money to spend on us the rest of the time. You know, things were kind of tough back then, but fortunately, things were very reasonable, too. So, that's it; so I worked my way--

Mr. Metzler: Did you work when you were a child?

Dr. Pang: Yes. When I was in high school, I'd work during the summertime for the Dole Pineapple Company. The Dole Pineapple Company timed their harvest for the summertime so they could use all the high school kids. It was hard to get a job with Dole, even, and I got a job and we all started out at thirty-five cents an hour (Mr. Metzler chuckles). So that was my job there.

Mr. Metzler: So, what was it like growing up in the islands? Was it good for you or was it tough, or what?

Dr. Pang: It was a wonderful life. It was easy-going and we--I went swimming a lot. We had a swimming pool near us, public swimming pool, so I went there and then the rest of the time we went down to the beach and learned how to surf and all those things. Oh, let's see, my three brothers and I, I think we all were able to work part-time at the public swimming pool so that we could get free access to swimming.

Mr. Metzler: Were you the youngest or the oldest, or--?

Dr. Pang: I was number two.

Mr. Metzler: You're kidding.

Dr. Pang: I was the number two son and none of my brothers went into service. I think I was the first one in my family to go on to college. I had an uncle who did go to college, I think, but I'm not sure about that.

Mr. Metzler: Okay. So, where did you go to high school then, there in Honolulu?

Dr. Pang: First I went to grade school in Honolulu. It was called Likelike School, L-i-k-e-l-i-k-e.

Mr. Metzler: I'm glad you're spelling these for us; thank you.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, it's called Likelike. Likelike is named after a Hawaiian princess, Princess Likelike. Then from there, I went to grammar school, Central Grammar School, which at one time was for the royalty only, but then, you know, as things progressed it was opened to everybody. And then from there, I went to McKinley High School. McKinley High School was the biggest high school in the islands. I think it had 4,000 students.

Mr. Metzler: That's huge.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, huge. And most of the kids at McKinley High School were Japanese, so a lot of people referred to it as Tokyo High.

Mr. Metzler: Is that right? So, where did the children of the U.S. military men who were on base, where did they go to school?

Dr. Pang: Let's see, I think we had maybe about eight high schools in the city of Honolulu, and we had one private high school that was

kind of limited to white kids only and kids related to the missionaries that came to the islands. And then we had a second high school, called Roosevelt High School that was an English standard school, and that's where a lot of the service kids went to school there. So between those two schools, they took care of all the white kids. The rest of us went to--

Mr. Metzler: So you went to Tokyo High then?

Dr. Pang: I went to Tokyo High.

Mr. Metzler: Even though your ethnic roots are Chinese.

Dr. Pang: Yes, uh-huh. It was a good school. I would say maybe 20 percent of the kids were Chinese. There were other kids there, too. There were Hawaiian kids; there were Portuguese kids, you know, all kinds of nationalities. But just that the majority of the students were Japanese, so it was called Tokyo High (laughs).

Mr. Metzler: That's something. I didn't know that; that's news. So, you graduated what, a year or two before Pearl Harbor was attacked, because you--?

Dr. Pang: No, I never--you mean from college?

Mr. Metzler: No, I mean from high school.

Dr. Pang: Well, from high school, I graduated in 1939.

Mr. Metzler: Okay.

Dr. Pang: Then from there, I went to the University of Hawaii as an agriculture student, and then the war came.

Mr. Metzler: And that's how you got into the Reserve Officer Training Corps, or did they call it that back then?

Dr. Pang: ROTC, yes.

Mr. Metzler: Yeah, ROTC.

Dr. Pang: You know, ROTC was mandatory in all the high schools and the University of Hawaii, if they're a land grant school, so ROTC was a must. You had--there was no choice; you had to take it. So I was an ROTC student.

Mr. Metzler: And you must've been in your second year of college.

Dr. Pang: I was a sophomore.

Mr. Metzler: When all hell broke loose, huh?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, first semester sophomore when we were drafted. Not drafted, but asked to volunteer.

Mr. Metzler: Tell me about December 7th.

Dr. Pang: Well, December the 7th, I probably got up maybe about six o'clock in the morning, and then we heard guns. But you always hear guns on Sunday mornings down there, because the, you know, it was the biggest overseas station for U.S. troops. Schofield Barracks alone had, I think, 35,000 soldiers, and then if you put Pearl Harbor in there and then you had Hickam Field which was much smaller at that time, the Air Force, and so we, oh let's see, what happened?

Mr. Metzler: So it was a Sunday, wasn't it?

Dr. Pang: It was a Sunday, and so--

Mr. Metzler: So you weren't like, going to school or anything.

Dr. Pang: On Sunday mornings, they were always--the 64th Coast Artillery were always practicing their big guns, you know. You could hear the big guns going. The islands aren't that big. So, many of us thought, oh heck, they're practicing guns again. And then the radio came on. We had radios then, no TVs, and you could hear them saying, "It's the real thing! It's the real thing!" When you went outside, you could see the planes flying with the red dot on the wings, you know.

Mr. Metzler: The red meatball.

Dr. Pang: Yeah. So it was a few hours after that that I was already in service, enlisted in the--we were all put in what they called the Territorial Guard. The Territorial Guard, I would say, maybe after less than a year, they were dissolved and we were all switched to the regular Army.

Mr. Metzler: I would like to go back and just zero in a little bit--no pun intended--on the actual Pearl Harbor attack. You said you could see the airplanes. Tell me more about what you saw and what you were thinking when you heard it, when you saw it.

Dr. Pang: Well, we just--you know, as a kid you didn't too much of those things. It was just a big show, you know. We saw them going back and forth, going back, flying back and forth. Although we

lived maybe about, oh, seven miles from Pearl Harbor, you know, when you look up in the air, seven miles is nothing. So you can see all the black puffs of smoke, when they were able to start firing at the, what do you call, but we just heard a lot of turmoil.

Mr. Metzler: Was your house out--surrounded by other houses and other families or--?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, we had a lot of houses; I was--just a lot of houses around us.

Mr. Metzler: What was everybody's reaction when all this is going on?

Dr. Pang: (Laughs). About the same as mine. Yeah. They couldn't believe there was a war going on. You have to remember, most of the islands were Japanese and so there were a lot of questions about whose side they were on. A lot of the volunteers, the ROTC group from the University of Hawaii, the majority of them were Japanese. I don't know if anybody ever told you that before, but oh, I would say, I don't know the time frame, but several months into the war, they decided that the Japanese kids could not be trusted. So they were separated into, and made into a labor battalion. Have you heard of that before?

Mr. Metzler: No!

Dr. Pang: The Japanese kids were made into a labor battalion--

Mr. Metzler: When you say kids, you're talking about--

Dr. Pang: All the-- (unclear, both talking together).

Mr. Metzler: university, university.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, university, my classmates. I think, as I remember, most of them were loyal. There might have been one or two that thought--were for Japan. But anyway, they were separated from the rest of us. The rest of us were allowed to continue doing guard duty, but they were made into a labor battalion. Then after a certain amount of time, you know, I don't remember the time frame, we do not, being a territory, we did not have any senators or representatives in Washington, D.C., but we did have a delegate to Congress, and his name was Dillingham. No, Joseph Farrington. Joseph Farrington was our delegate to Congress, and he eventually was able to convince Congress that these kids should be able to be allowed to serve. They were made into the 442nd Combat Team, part of the 100th Infantry. And you know, they suffered just terrific casualties and all that kind of stuff.

Mr. Metzler: And were quite heroic as I understand.

Dr. Pang: Yeah. I've read here and there that they were the most decorated outfit in World War II.

Mr. Metzler: And they served in the European Theater.

Dr. Pang: Well, they served--the place they were most noted for was the Anzio beachhead and Mount Cassino.

Mr. Metzler: You bet, Monte Cassino.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, those two places. And you know, there was a movie made of those kids, and the name of the movie was "Go For Broke." You've heard of that.

Mr. Metzler: I have not seen the movie, but I know there was a movie made.

Dr. Pang: I've seen it once, but I've never seen it before, but it was called "Go For Broke."

Mr. Metzler: Did you have any personal friends in the university that were Japanese?

Dr. Pang: Oh, yes, lots of them.

Mr. Metzler: What did they think about how they were treated?

Dr. Pang: Well, you know, I never saw them after we were put on guard duty. We were separated quite a bit; four or five of us here, four or five of us there, at different stations. So my first place of duty was just outside of Pearl Harbor. I would say maybe about a couple of miles away, doing guard duty there. Then, oh, maybe about half a dozen of us were switched to completely the other side of the island to guard an ammunition dump.

Mr. Metzler: Now were you officially in the military at this point, or were you--?

Dr. Pang: No, we were still the Territorial Guard.

Mr. Metzler: That's what I wanted to know.

Dr. Pang: We were still the Territorial Guard, and I think it was several months later that they dissolved us and we went into the--I might have (unclear) the exact dates but I'm not sure.

Mr. Metzler: That's okay.

Dr. Pang: Uh-huh. But you know, we were so green. We hardly knew one end of the rifle from the other. (Both laugh).

Mr. Metzler: Didn't know which end to grab, huh?

Dr. Pang: Yeah. And we were taught what to do if we saw a stranger, we would say, "Halt. Who goes there?" Oh, boy, if you did that nowadays, the other side would just shoot at the sound. So I served there on guard duty until they dissolved us. I don't know what they date they dissolved us, but anyway, after they dissolved the Territorial Guard and my papers, my separation papers, said I served under fire on December 7th.

Mr. Metzler: Well, and did you (laughs)? You were in the neighborhood anyhow.

Dr. Pang: I was in the neighborhood, that's all. Then in put--

Mr. Metzler: When you were serving on the opposite side of Oahu, were you put in barracks?

Dr. Pang: Oh, no. We--

Mr. Metzler: Did you commute back home?

Dr. Pang: No. We--there happened to be an empty train car there, so we slept in--we had cots, put cots in the train and slept on the train,

so we had it pretty good. At least we were protected from the weather.

Mr. Metzler: And what about the food? Did they feed you military--?

Dr. Pang: You know, I don't remember how we got our food anymore, but I'm pretty sure they brought food to us to eat all the time. And it was near a sugar plantation so that the workers there had set up a shower and we were able to go, maybe about a mile, walk about a mile to take a shower every now and then. While I was in there, they were dissolved and went into the regular service. I put in for aviation cadet training. I signed my mother's name for permission. I think at 20 years old, we still had to get permission; I wasn't sure, but I know I signed her name. She didn't know I went into service until much--until I was shipped out to the states to go into Santa Ana for training.

Mr. Metzler: So you were the only one of the four brothers who did that.

Dr. Pang: Yes, uh-huh. None of the other brothers--

Mr. Metzler: And they were never drafted?

Dr. Pang: No, they were never drafted. They might have volunteered to work with service-connected outfits and stuff like that.

Mr. Metzler: So you went stateside--

Dr. Pang: Yeah, I went to Santa Ana--

Mr. Metzler: --for basic training.

Dr. Pang: We started out at Santa Ana, California.

Mr. Metzler: Which is what, down in the San Diego area?

Dr. Pang: No, it's in southern California.

Mr. Metzler: Okay.

Dr. Pang: I think it's near Fullerton and some of those places there. We did our basic training there, which consisted of algebra and all that kind of stuff, you know, like you did at university, plane recognition, where they'd flash pictures of a plane on you at maybe a fifth of a second at a time, and battleships a fifth of a second at a time, so you can recognize things at a glance. Then from there, we went on, progressed to different places. I don't remember all the places chronologically. I went to, I know it was New Mexico, for bombing training; Walterboro, South Carolina for camouflage training; and then we had classes on Morse Code, classes on meteorology, and we also had basic training on firing the rifle, firing the .45 caliber pistol. Then we went to--given overseas training where you went to learn how to crawl on the ground and all that kind of stuff, you know.

Mr. Metzler: Crawl under barbed wire and all that.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, uh-huh. Although I don't remember crawling under barbed wire.

Mr. Metzler: Where--so you did training in California, New Mexico--

Dr. Pang: Louisiana.

Mr. Metzler: Louisiana! You got around a lot of different places!

Dr. Pang: Yeah, Louisiana, Texas, Texarkana.

Mr. Metzler: Texarkana, Texas.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, and then after training, let's see, Roswell, New Mexico. After training they assigned us to different combat outfits. My first combat outfit they assigned me to was an A-20 outfit. Are you familiar with the A-20?

Mr. Metzler: Well, I know the A-26. I don't know the A-20.

Dr. Pang: The A-26 was a replacement for the A-20.

Mr. Metzler: Tell me about the A-20.

Dr. Pang: Well, the A-20 was a twin-engine plane, and they say it was pilot's dream because they'd get to fly that (unclear) all around. It had a pilot, a bombardier/navigator, and two gunners.

Mr. Metzler: What was your--?

Dr. Pang: Bombardier/navigator.

Mr. Metzler: You were a bombardier/navigator.

Dr. Pang: Yeah. We did a lot of training, how to bomb and all those things like that, and then--

Mr. Metzler: Is that what you did in Texarkana?

Dr. Pang: Oh, we did it in several places, New Mexico mostly. In DeRidder, Louisiana where the A-20 outfit was, we just practiced flying missions, getting to know each other in the crew. They eventually--the A-20 outfit was sent to--you want me to turn on some lights?--it was sent to Asia, I mean the south

Pacific, and you know, I wasn't allowed, Asians weren't allowed to serve in the Pacific area at that time.

Mr. Metzler: I knew that was true of Japanese, but they didn't differentiate?

Dr. Pang: No. Well--

Mr. Metzler: An Asian was an Asian as far as they were concerned.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, uh-huh, because to one, you know, for mistaken identity. In a way, it was (chuckles) fortunate for me, because that A-20 outfit that went there suffered tremendous casualties. I think they used the A-20 for dive bombing and all those things, and so I don't know; they told me out of the 19 fliers, 16 got killed.

Mr. Metzler: You were fortunate!

Dr. Pang: Yeah, so I got--I have pictures of all those kids. Then I was assigned to a crew and went to Huntington Field. I think it was in Savannah.

Mr. Metzler: Georgia.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, and we were given a plane, a brand new plane, and so we had to calibrate the plane, the airspeed, altitude and all those things. Because it was a smaller plane that couldn't get all the way across the Atlantic, we took the southern route. I think we went from--our first hop from Savannah, Georgia was Puerto Rico. From Puerto Rico we went to Belem, Brazil, and then Natal, Brazil; I don't know which one was first. Then we went to British Guiana and then, let's see, we went to one other place

in South America before we took off for a halfway point in the Atlantic, which was the Ascension Islands, because the plane couldn't make it all the way across. From the Ascension Islands, we went to Freetown, Liberia, and then went up the coast and across the top of Africa, where I joined my outfit in Telergma, Algeria and Constantine, Algeria. [17th Bomb Group histories indicate the group was based at Telergma, Sedrata and Djedeida, Algeria; there is no mention of Constantine.] I joined the 17th Bomb Group. The 17th Bomb Group is famous because it was Doolittle's outfit.

Mr. Metzler: Yeah?

Dr. Pang: As you know, Doolittle bombed Tokyo in 19--let's see, was it 1942, they were aboard the USS Hornet.

Mr. Metzler: Yes, sir.

Dr. Pang: Uh-huh. But by the time I joined the 17th Bomb Group in North Africa, there were very few, maybe just one or two of the old timers left. I don't think in Algeria, and Constantine, Algeria, we had--I don't think we had any bathing facilities or anything. I think we went months, a month or so without showers or cleaning, anything.

Mr. Metzler: Now, what year did you get over to Africa? Was that 1943?

Dr. Pang: 19--I think it was the last part of '43, the first part of '44.

Mr. Metzler: Okay, because when you went into the military, it was early '42, I'm assuming.

Dr. Pang: Well, I went into the Territorial Guard in '41.

Mr. Metzler: Right. And when did they dissolve the Territorial Guard, roughly? Six months later?

Dr. Pang: Well you know, I have some papers on that, but--

Mr. Metzler: No, I'm not; I don't need all of (unclear).

Dr. Pang: It was maybe less than a year later. Then from North Africa, Algeria, we were moved up to Sardinia, because as the Germans retreated, and Sardinia was a big treat for all of us. The first thing everybody did, there was a shower there with hot--hot sulfur springs shower and everybody headed for the shower. And then I was stationed in a very small little, outskirts of a small town called Villa Cidro, that's V-i-l-l-a C-i-d-r-o. Of course there were no bathing facilities there or anything, but every now and then we could bum a ride to go to the river and clean up at the river. From Sardinia I flew my first missions into, to bomb southern Italy, you know.

Mr. Metzler: So what were the targets, what were typical targets then?

Dr. Pang: Most of the time we bombed railroad cars, bridges and once in a while, anti-personnel, you know, dropped anti-personnel bombs and so--oh, let's see, some of the others might have told you that being in the Air Force, it was kind of a clean war because we did

not get to see our casualties, our dead, and if there was somebody severely hurt or killed, the ambulance or what they called the meat wagon, the meat wagon always met the plane, you know, when they landed so that they would take it away before we got into debriefing. They always sent, there was always a photographer sent along on a mission to record what you did and all those things. In our type of plane, the B-26, we were maybe an hour, hour and a half, two hours at the most from our target, as contrasted to the B-17s and the B-24s that got to fly a long way to their target and a long way back to civilization, to a station in London where they had a hotel to live in and clean stuff. We lived in tents most of the time. We had outdoor johns.

Mr. Metzler: So you started on an A-20, but then you ended up in a B-26.

Dr. Pang: B-26.

Mr. Metzler: So, tell me about the B-26. Was that a good airplane?

Dr. Pang: The B-26, as you know, was condemned from flying in 1943 by the Truman Investigating Committee, because the wings--not enough wingspan. I think they had a 43 feet wingspan, and they probably--the other kids, other people told you it's been called the flying prostitute and--

Mr. Metzler: Widow maker, yeah.

Dr. Pang: The widow maker and stuff like that. As I told you, I trained in the southwest area, but the kids that trained in B-26s in the Florida area, in the Tampa Bay area, I don't know why, but they suffered high casualties. It was "a plane a day in Tampa Bay." Did you hear that?

Mr. Metzler: I have not.

Dr. Pang: Yeah. I have an article that writes about that. I don't know why, but they had tremendous casualties.

Mr. Metzler: Do you think that was just coincidence?

Dr. Pang: I don't know.

Mr. Metzler: Or maybe they didn't get as thorough a training as you guys did?

Dr. Pang: Oh, I think they did. I don't know; Florida, the weather should be pretty good. But we did not suffer any trouble like that. We might have a plane crash every now and then, but nothing like "a plane a day in Tampa Bay."

Mr. Metzler: What bomb group or wing or squadron; did you have an extra number designation?

Dr. Pang: Yes, I was in the 432nd Bomb Squadron of the 17th Bomb Group. As I said, the 17th Bomb Group was Doolittle's outfit.

Mr. Metzler: And that's interesting because Doolittle flew a B-25 when they attacked Japan.

Dr. Pang: During the attack on Tokyo, they converted -25s because the -26 was too heavy.

Mr. Metzler: And had the short, stubby wings, and so it didn't have the lift.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, they would have never made it with that. The B-25 was lighter and they could get it off.

Mr. Metzler: Well, did they modify the B-26 to get it to where it was acceptable, or did you guys just get better at flying it, or what?

Dr. Pang: Well, no, they never--all the time I was in it, they never--it was never modified. But we had a pretty good record because we flew medium altitude. Our planes were not equipped with oxygen or any special things, you know. But we had a pretty good record and toward the end, I was supposed to fly 61 missions.

Mr. Metzler: Sixty-one.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, 61 but, when my 61st mission came by, they did not have a replacement for me so I had to go on to 68, 68 combat missions.

Mr. Metzler: But they hadn't grouped you Asians into a single group for flying, did they? I mean you were just dispersed around.

Dr. Pang: No, not in Europe. There were so few, probably so few Asians, there weren't enough to make up a group, you know, maybe like the African group.

Mr. Metzler: The Tuskegee Airmen and that kind of stuff.

Dr. Pang: They had enough people. I was the only Asian in our group, our outfit.

Mr. Metzler: Did you get to know the other guys in your outfit pretty well?

Dr. Pang: Oh, pretty well. Well, you know, when you start just living in a tent and just have a tent area, no city to go to, every now and then, once in a great while, you might be able to mooch a ride with somebody going into the city, but in an outfit like ours, there might have been three jeeps for the entire group. So, it was even tough to get to the river to take a bath (Mr. Metzler laughs). And so we ate regular mess food like you read about, out of mess canteens. A lot of times on a mission, we'd take K-rations along and we used K-rations, but I don't remember ever having a place to wash your hands before meals or after going to the john.

Mr. Metzler: Toilet or anything, yeah.

Dr. Pang: And of course, we got our water out of a Lister bag, you know. You know what the Lister bag was?

Mr. Metzler: No, tell me.

Dr. Pang: A Lister bag, I'm going to guess now, a Lister bag is maybe a 50-gallon canvas bag. They filled that with water, so that was our water supply. Whenever you needed water, you just go to the Lister bag and get water out of it. I think they were called a Lister bag because it was, Listerine, what's the guy--

Mr. Metzler: Oh, it could be.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, to purify the water. The other thing, and because we were so isolated, our group, they put what they call, oh, what do-- saltpeter. You heard the term before?

Mr. Metzler: Oh, sure.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, they put saltpeter in all of our--

Mr. Metzler: So you guys wouldn't get carried away if you saw a woman (laughs).

Dr. Pang: Yeah. Saltpeter in all of our drinking water, so in the morning we'd get some water, put it in a helmet top and use that to clean your--to wash your face and brush your teeth and stuff like that.

Mr. Metzler: Now, you were bombardier and navigator? Is that a dual role job or did you alternate?

Dr. Pang: There were a group of us that were trained for both ways. Although, because I was assigned to a B-26, which was a medium altitude, I never had to use navigation. Most of the time, we could see the ground so you could navigate directly; didn't have to use dead reckoning or--

Mr. Metzler: So what kind of a bomb sight did you have? Did you have the (both speaking together)--?

Dr. Pang: We had the Norden bomb sight.

Mr. Metzler: You had the super-secret Norden sight.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, we had the Norden bomb sight. Like you've been told, it's a secret. And then of course, at one point to the target, we

just took the firing pins out our bombs and activated our bombs, so that in rare instances where we could not drop our bombs, we just dropped our bombs on the way home--on the city, in the ocean or someplace. You know, it's a cruel war.

Mr. Metzler: Right.

Dr. Pang: So a lot of times, innocent people got killed.

Mr. Metzler: Were most of your sorties to--in support of ground operations there on the Italian mainland?

Dr. Pang: I would say Italian--yeah, because we were bombing railroads and railroad bridges and personnel. I remember when we got up to southern France, we bombed the Sigfried line--

Mr. Metzler: Oh, so you got up there, too. Okay. I know I'm getting ahead of the story here. What about resistance? Did you get anti-aircraft fire or fighter resistance?

Dr. Pang: Yes. Yes, on certain flights we did get a lot of resistance, especially during the early part of the war. Toward the end of the war, there were several times when we went on what they called milk runs, where we had almost no resistance. But early in the war we got resistance, and of course, they tell you in briefing that you're going to get this resistance, you're going to have a lot of flak here and a lot of flak there, and then at a certain point, you're going to pick up your escort.

Mr. Metzler: I was going to ask you if you had escorts.

Dr. Pang:

Yes, we did. We would pick up our escort to protect us from enemy planes. And you know how they signal each other, maybe you've been told this. In our type of plane, we fly B-26, we'd fly four planes to a group, to a squadron, and then four groups to a squadron, and then we'd try to fly real close together so that we're close-knit in case enemy planes come at us, we'd have concentrated firepower at the planes. But at the same time, because you're close-knit, you made a bigger target for the ground fire. So the ground fire would fire at us and when they fired at us, we'd go into what we call evasive action. In evasive action, you split, the planes split apart and all of a sudden, maybe then they would fire a red-colored flak, which would signal--I might get my colors mixed--that might signal, okay we're going to stop firing now, so that you fighters can come in and pick up the stragglers. You know, because when you do evasive action, you spread out all over the place and then the fighters can come in and pick out the straggler. So they stopped firing, coming in, and pretty soon, so we're all grouped together again into a tight unit so we have concentrated firepower and some of the gunners--then there would be green flak, maybe. They'd fire a green color to tell the fighters, okay you can come in now because they're grouped together, you know, and our gunners, well they let us know where the fighter planes are

coming in, you know, by shouting over the P.A., ah, the--I don't know what they called the microphone system.

Mr. Metzler: Yeah.

Dr. Pang: They would say, "Three o'clock, or five o'clock high, or five o'clock low," so we'd know where to look for the planes.

Mr. Metzler: What was the larger problem for you most of the time, ground fire or fighter?

Dr. Pang: Ground fire, ground fire. Sometimes it was pretty intense, especially when you get to the bombing target. I don't know what the other guys told you about B-17, about how they'd do it, but on our plane, we'd go to what they call the initial point of attack and then from the initial point of attack, you fly to the target. That may be a 30-second run or maybe a 25-second run. From the initial point of the attack to the target, everybody keeps a straight line and there's no deviation, anything. And then the Norden bomb sight takes over the plane and (unclear). You know, before the initial point of the attack, you have some freedom. Anyway, the Norden bomb sight takes over, and you know, the enemy knows you're going to start from there and you're going after that target. A lot of times they'd know that, so they'd put up what they call a barrage (chuckles). They'd just fire a lot of flak or anti-aircraft into your line of flight because

you've got to fly through it, see. So that's when we'd get our biggest fire support.

Mr. Metzler: Did you ever take damage to your aircraft on any of these?

Dr. Pang: Well, a lot of times there were a lot of holes. I was lucky; I never got hurt, but a lot of--all of us experienced when the flak exploded the plane shudders, you know, and then you can hear the pieces of flak hitting the side of the plane, clank, clank, clank, the side of the plane. And then when you get back home, of course, you can see all the holes.

Mr. Metzler: Count the holes (laughs).

Dr. Pang: And you know, on contrary, the public thinks you fly in a single plane, that's your plane. But that's not true. You fly in--on a mission, you fly in whatever plane is available for flying, because a lot of times the planes have to be repaired and can't be flown, our type of plane, anyway. You're not assigned a plane. You go in--

Mr. Metzler: You fly different aircraft, depending on what's available.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, what's available.

Mr. Metzler: But it's your crew that flies it.

Dr. Pang: Even our crew, a lot of times our crews are mixed up because, you know, somebody might be sick and somebody might be hurt. And so, to make up the full crew you just get whoever's available. I'm pretty sure that's true for most of the places, but

as soon as--there's a big release, relief, as soon as the bombs are released because then you can just peel away, and I said, "Bombs away." Then you'd peel away.

Mr. Metzler: You'd get back home (laughs).

Dr. Pang: Yeah, you'd get back home. You'd form in flights to get back home.

Mr. Metzler: What kind of escort aircraft did they have, P-51s or P-40s, or do you remember?

Dr. Pang: In our case, most of the time we got British.

Mr. Metzler: Really?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, we got Spitfires and we might have had some American planes, P-40s and maybe the P-38, but a lot of times we had British planes, the Spitfires, and the Germans were really afraid of the Spitfire.

Mr. Metzler: Really?

Dr. Pang: I don't know how come we rated that (chuckles) but we got that.

Mr. Metzler: And so there were British soldiers and airmen assigned at the air base where you were?

Dr. Pang: No, never saw them. We just met them in the air.

Mr. Metzler: Got it.

Dr. Pang: There were times when you missed each other, you know, due to weather and stuff like that, where the escort and us; we'd miss each other.

Mr. Metzler: Did you have much interaction with the Italians? I'll say the natives, although I don't mean that.

Dr. Pang: No, we had no action with the Italians, but we did--were close by to a French air force unit, but the talk was, those guys, you only see them during cocktail hour. (Both laugh). You never saw them during an action.

Mr. Metzler: (Laughing). Cocktail pilots, huh?

Dr. Pang: Our flight got a commendation from General DeGaulle.

Mr. Metzler: Okay. Now that was because of your activities in France, in the French area of combat. When you were in Sardinia, this was in support of the Italian campaign, is that correct, or did you stay in Sardinia even when you were supporting the French invasion?

Dr. Pang: Well, I don't know. You know, in Sardinia, I think we were fighting the Germans mostly.

Mr. Metzler: Right.

Dr. Pang: Yeah. I think all through the war we were fighting the Germans. There might have been some Italians; I don't know.

Mr. Metzler: When you went up and started getting involved in bombing the Sigfried Line and that kind of thing that you mentioned earlier, where were you based when you did that?

Dr. Pang: Okay, from Sardinia as they retreated, we moved up to Corsica, and from Corsica we bombed middle Italy, bombed Rome, and the Po Valley, you know, like Florence and those cities, Bologna

and those cities were better defended as far as I was concerned, because I think it was their big industrial cities. From Corsica, we also bombed southern France and then, as they retreated more, we moved up to Dijon. From Dijon, we bombed Germany.

Mr. Metzler: The Sigfried Line, for example.

Dr. Pang: What's that?

Mr. Metzler: Perhaps even the Sigfried Line, which was between France and Germany.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, uh-huh. I think there we dropped a lot of anti-personnel bombs.

Mr. Metzler: Was there a lot of ground fire and resistance when you were doing that part?

Dr. Pang: No. By the time we got there, there was very little ground fire resistance. Once in a while you got it on some flights. I can remember some flights when we got no resistance, not like the first part of the war where the resistance was pretty great.

Mr. Metzler: And you were still flying the B-26?

Dr. Pang: Yes. I flew the B-26 the whole time.

Mr. Metzler: When you were stationed in Sardinia, you didn't get the opportunity to go into town very often because there weren't any jeeps.

Dr. Pang: Very seldom. There were no cars in that town and no roads, so you had no--

Mr. Metzler: Interaction to speak of with the local population.

Dr. Pang: A couple of times we did. I was a non-smoker. I don't know about the kids from London and--but anyway, being in the boondocks, we got, I think, two cartons of cigarettes a month and maybe one or two cigars, and some candy. So being a non-smoker, my tent mates and I would pool our cigarettes and we'd mooch a ride into town and we traded the cigarettes for eggs.

Mr. Metzler: Real food.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, real food came back instead of tinned food. And then we were able to save up enough cartons of cigarettes; I think it cost us 20 cartons of cigarettes, and we built a little brick home, a three-room brick home. So we moved into that--four of us from the tent--moved into that.

Mr. Metzler: You built yourself a brick home at the air field--at the air base.

Dr. Pang: Yeah. They built that for us, but it cost us 20 cartons of cigarettes. We stayed there for only maybe three months, and then we moved up to--I don't even remember; I think the town in Corsica was called Bastia, and we went back into tents.

Mr. Metzler: Did you have much interaction with the Corsicans then?

Dr. Pang: Not at all. Once in a while, once a month, maybe, we were allowed to go into town, but when we went into town most of

us--there was a bathhouse; you paid 35 cents and you can get a bath and stuff like that. So, no, we--

Mr. Metzler: How did they treat the U.S. GIs? I mean, were they--?

Dr. Pang: Well, as far as I was concerned, fine.

Mr. Metzler: Okay.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, they were very nice to us. In Villa Cidro, there were a couple of-- there was a family that invited us to dinner, invited two of us to dinner.

Mr. Metzler: That's in Sardinia?

Dr. Pang: That's in Sardinia, uh-huh. But that didn't happen to us in Corsica, because I think we were even more isolated in Corsica. Of course, when we moved up to Dijon, although we were on the outskirts, we were very close to town. So it was easy to bum a ride into town. And there, we were able to buy things. They had--it was a city. On the way back, you know, after I finished my service, we were--I was sent back to London first to catch a boat back to what do you call. And the impression that, I don't know how many guys were with me, but the guys, all of us from the group coming back from Dijon to France, and when we got close to some of the towns, we said, "Oh, look, English signs." You know, it was so strange to see something in English.

Mr. Metzler: In your own language.

Dr. Pang: Yeah. (Unclear).

Mr. Metzler: What was the interaction like with the French then, in Dijon? I mean, were they friendly to you guys?

Dr. Pang: Yes, they were. They were friendly to us. We were able to buy booze and all that kind of stuff. (Chuckles). The other funny thing; I don't know if there was an Air Force policy or service policy, but when you served overseas, when you finished your tour of duty, you were guaranteed six months in the zone of the interior, which is the United States, before you can be shipped overseas again for service. Did you hear of that before?

Mr. Metzler: I had not.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, okay. But in my case, because I lived in Hawaii, they considered that overseas. So I came back from France; I had to take overseas training before I could--

Mr. Metzler: (Laughing). Doesn't that seem crazy?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, so I had to go--I told them, "Hey, I just came back from overseas." But I had to go through all the overseas training again.

Mr. Metzler: For you to go overseas to home.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, into a pressure tank and all that kind of stuff. So, (laughs)--

Mr. Metzler: Now, on your aircrew, your crew of your airplane, the pilot was the chief officer, correct?

Dr. Pang: Yes.

Mr. Metzler: Were you an officer as well?

Dr. Pang: Yes. First lieutenant.

Mr. Metzler: You were a first lieutenant.

Dr. Pang: So was the pilot; he was a first lieutenant at that time.

Mr. Metzler: What was your pilot like? Did you always have the same pilot?

Dr. Pang: Very rarely (laughs), very rare. As I told you, whoever was available, you know.

Mr. Metzler: Okay.

Dr. Pang: Very rarely.

Mr. Metzler: Which officer did you report to then? There must have been an officer or executive officer at the base or something?

Dr. Pang: Yeah. We reported to the--our squadron, each squadron has a C.O., commanding officer, and you don't really report to him except that you took orders from him. But where our orders always came from was--you always check at the Operations Det to see if your name was posted for service. All the orders came from briefing. On the day you were assigned to fly, you had to report to briefing, and the briefing might last about an hour. They'd tell you about your target, the weather, what kind of opposition you're going to get, how long your flight is going to be, whether or not you're going to have an escort this time or not, and then you synchronize your watches so everybody has the same time, you know.

Mr. Metzler: Just like in the movies, and on TV!

Dr. Pang: Yeah, you synchronized it so everybody in the flight knows that's when you're going to hit your target, that's when you're going to turn back, that's when you're going to meet your escort and, you know, every detail. When you come back, you go to debriefing. At debriefing, you talk about the weather, the weather was bad today; we couldn't find our target. So they'll want to know things like that. Or why did you miss your target, you know. What kind of opposition did you get today.

Mr. Metzler: What was your closest call on all of those 68 missions that you ran?

Dr. Pang: (Laughs). I don't remember that.

Mr. Metzler: Okay.

Dr. Pang: All the time we got fired on, when it rocks the plane, you would say, "Wow, that was close." You know, this like that, but I can't pick out one mission where we were tougher than the rest. Just, that I know at first it was tough and toward the end, it was a lot easier, you know. We went on, I think my last eight missions, which were my extra missions, most of those were milk runs, and they did that on purpose, you know, because I've already flown my missions. They would put us on easy missions.

Mr. Metzler: Give you a break.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, uh-huh. And then they would send us on to squadron duties, like if the officers' club was running low on liquor, they would send us to someplace to pick up liquor. Like when we were in Dijon, I remember we flew to the town of Cognac, to pick up cognac whiskey.

Mr. Metzler: (Laughs). Is that right?

Dr. Pang: Yeah.

Mr. Metzler: So that was a milk run, wasn't it?

Dr. Pang: Yeah. The funny thing was, when we got to Cognac, we went to a restaurant to eat, and gosh, it was all empty. So we had to go to the bathroom; we went down to the bathroom, and here the bathrooms were just filled with people dancing (laughs). See, they weren't allowed to celebrate.

Mr. Metzler: Really?

Dr. Pang: (Laughing) It was funny. You know they weren't allowed to celebrate in France.

Mr. Metzler: Why is that?

Dr. Pang: Well, I guess it's wartime.

Mr. Metzler: Okay.

Dr. Pang: You're not supposed to be happy; I don't know why.

Mr. Metzler: Who was your closest buddy when you were--?

Dr. Pang: A friend from New Jersey. He was the copilot, Tom Pawlowski. He was also the ping-pong champion of New Jersey, so that--

Mr. Metzler: Is that right?

Dr. Pang: To kill our time, we had a--at Sardinia, (unclear) who had a ping-pong table and we had ping-pong tournaments, and because he was my partner, we did pretty well.

Mr. Metzler: You did pretty well (laughs).

Dr. Pang: Yeah, uh-huh.

Mr. Metzler: Did you stay in contact with him after the war?

Dr. Pang: Not too well, because--at first we did but after a while, they all died off, and all separated. I think in 2000--it was either 2000, 2002, we had our last reunion and there were about eleven or fourteen of us, met in Nashville. And then after that, hotels wouldn't take us because we were too small a group for them to give us special--

Mr. Metzler: Rates and stuff, yeah.

Dr. Pang: deals, yeah. And so we--

Mr. Metzler: But you did go to reunions for years and years.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, we went to reunions; there were reunions for years, and then of course, you know, gradually the people died off from illness and different things.

Mr. Metzler: Normal depletion, yeah. Did you write letters back home when you were--?

Dr. Pang: Not too often. We--you've heard about V-mail? Okay, we had V-mail where we'd send letters. We could write, use the V-mail

to send letters to different people. My own opinion of the V-mail was that it's a method that they can censor your mail before it reached home, because I know on all of my pictures that I have, all of them have a censored stamp on them: censored, not for publication. So I had all of that stuff.

Mr. Metzler: Were you single when you went to war?

Dr. Pang: Yes, I was single until (chuckles) after dental school, I met Kay. Let's see, let me backtrack again a little bit. When I finally got to Hawaii after my overseas training (chuckles), I was assigned to an outfit, but not to a plane, so then I was given a lot of freedom to just go around, because that was my guaranteed time for the zone of interior.

Mr. Metzler: This is after you came back from Europe?

Dr. Pang: Well, as I told you, I came back from Europe and then I had to take overseas training to go home to Hawaii.

Mr. Metzler: Yeah, but you were still in the military.

Dr. Pang: What's that?

Mr. Metzler: You were still in the Army at that point?

Dr. Pang: Yes.

Mr. Metzler: Okay.

Dr. Pang: And then I had a lot of free time, and that's when I met some old friends. They were non-military and we'd talk about what are you going to do now and all that kind of stuff. And then

somebody said, why don't you go to dental school? And that's how I went to dental school. And then I stayed in Hawaii, Honolulu, until September when the war ended. And when the war ended, because I had a lot of points because of flights and stuff like that, I was eligible to be dismissed right away. They did not have a separation center in Hawaii, so I was shipped to the coast to be separated.

Mr. Metzler: For you to come back!

Dr. Pang: Yeah, but after I got my separation papers, to report back to Hawaii, I did not report back to Hawaii. I caught a train, went out to the University of Iowa and enrolled in school. I did my pre-dental work at the University of Iowa, and Iowa was very nice because a lot of the courses I took in the University of Hawaii, like English and those basic courses, they gave me credit for. So I did a lot of my pre-dental work there, but I could not get into the University of Iowa for dental school because they only took 55 students and 55 students were reserved for in-state students. So I went to Loyola in Chicago and I chose Loyola because they had a three-year program; you can get out of dental school in three years, by going to school in the summertime and all. But when I got there, I found out they had changed; you had to go four years and the summers (chuckles).

Mr. Metzler: Oh, dear!

Dr. Pang: And then Kay was a student nurse in Wesley Memorial in Northwestern University, and they came down; I was stationed in the medical district by the University of Illinois, and they had to come down, 30 at a time or whatever number, to the University of Illinois for special training, psychiatric training. And I was working for my meals, and you know, the meals in the medical district was just terrible. But the interns got good meals, and because I was working for my meals, I was allowed to eat in the intern cafeteria. The nurses ate in the intern cafeteria, too, and so six or seven of us who worked for our meals--working for my meals was easy, because I just wiped off light switches and stuff like that--but anyway, we got to see all these student nurses come in. So I started dating her class alphabetically (both laugh), and finally got to her. Her last name was "P", started with a "P", so after I got--we started dating steadily--

Mr. Metzler: You stopped at the letter "P", is that what you're telling me (laughs)?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, I stopped at the letter "P", and then we got married between my (phone rings in background). She'll answer it.

Mr. Metzler: Okay. Well, let me go back to when the war was over in Europe. You were still when the war was over?

Dr. Pang: No.

Mr. Metzler: You came home before the war in Europe was over.

Dr. Pang: I came home; well, I don't remember if it was April or May.
When did the war end there?

Mr. Metzler: Early May.

Dr. Pang: Early May; I think I came home in April--

Mr. Metzler: Just about the same time.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, April. I came home in April.

Mr. Metzler: So, what did you do, come home by ship, or did you fly home?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, by ship. We went by truck from Dijon to the coast, where we caught a boat to London and then, let's see, we went to London, Southampton, I think, someplace in there. We came home by boat.

Mr. Metzler: To what, the east coast of the U.S.?

Dr. Pang: East coast of the U.S.; I don't remember where. And then right away, they shipped me to Salt Lake City, Utah for overseas training (Mr. Metzler laughs).

Mr. Metzler: So how did it feel when you came back to the U.S.?

Dr. Pang: Well, it was--things were different because you heard people speaking English, and you saw English people, and as I told you earlier--

Mr. Metzler: Signs, yeah.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, we saw the signs, English signs. I think there was a small period of adjustment getting back to everything being English

and hearing people speak English, you know. When you're in the service, I guess, you go along with everybody else, and you use derogatory terms. When we were over in Italy and Sardinia and Corsica, we'd call them gooks. You know--?

Mr. Metzler: Yeah, I know that, yeah.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, we'd, "Hey, the gooks there" (laughs).

Mr. Metzler: So you had to clean it up when you went back to the states (laughs).

Dr. Pang: Yeah, of course there was a lot of cussing when you were in service, and you don't call each other by the--very rarely do you call somebody by their first name. You always go by--when you address somebody, you call them by your last name.

Mr. Metzler: Hey, Pang.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, hey, Pang. Because, you know, if you say, hey George, or something like that, there may be three or four Georges around (Mr. Metzler laughs). So, as far as I know, everything was by last name in the service.

Mr. Metzler: Well, you fought the Germans a lot; they shot at you in your airplane. What do you think about the Germans?

Dr. Pang: I thought they were good (laughs).

Mr. Metzler: Were they pretty good?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, they were good. They had good radar, and I thought very highly of--I thought they were very good, good military people

and I think Hitler made a big mistake in that he was too greedy. I think if he had taken just one country at a time, and then absorbed the country, he would have made, you know, he took France, and just absorbed that, but then they decided to go more and more, South Africa and--I mean North Africa and--

Mr. Metzler: Russia and tried Russia, yeah.

Dr. Pang: He was spread too thin, and then Russia, but if he had just done one thing at a time, I think he would have succeeded.

Mr. Metzler: But what about them as a people? I mean you heard about all the horrible things that went on in the POW camps and everything.

Dr. Pang: What's that?

Mr. Metzler: You know, the things they did to the Jews and the Holocaust.

Dr. Pang: We didn't hear too much about that where we were. We didn't hear; I guess we were too far from Germany, because the closest to Germany we got was toward the end, when we were in Dijon.

Mr. Metzler: Did you fly any bombing missions over Germany proper toward the end of the war?

Dr. Pang: Yes, yes, uh-huh. Maybe my last ten or twelve missions were all Germany, Offenburg, and things like that. We were over the Sigfried Line. But I think, and we were lucky when the war ended because we heard they were just coming out with new types of planes and all that stuff.

Mr. Metzler: Jet airplanes and stuff.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, jet airplanes and stuff like that. You know, they were good; they were smart.

Mr. Metzler: They were tough.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, uh-huh.

Mr. Metzler: So, you spent two-plus years overseas. You started out in the war with just being a 20 year-old kid, and you came back. How were you different when you came back?

Dr. Pang: I think I was pretty happy go lucky when I came back.

Mr. Metzler: Really?

Dr. Pang: Yeah. I was really happy that my service time was--I did okay in the service, and people were nice to me because I was in service, you know, and all that kind of stuff. I don't know if it's the right word, being treated as a hero, but I know, to a lesser extent. Anyway, people were very nice to me.

Mr. Metzler: Respected you, huh?

Dr. Pang: Yeah. That's a better word. Uh-huh. Maybe I was invited to dinners and all that kind of stuff.

Mr. Metzler: Did you ever think about staying in the military?

Dr. Pang: Never!

Mr. Metzler: (Laughs). Didn't cross your mind, huh?

Dr. Pang: Being in a place like Hawaii toward the end, well, there were so many service people anyway, you know. So you could not call

them heroes; there were tons of heroes. A lot of them were like me; they had seen their tour of duty, and then when the war ended, right before the war ended, I was assigned to another crew to go down to the Pacific area.

Mr. Metzler: Oh, you were?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, when the war ended--

Mr. Metzler: Was it going to be on a B-26 or another airplane?

Dr. Pang: They didn't tell me what kind of plane, just that I was being put on a crew to go to the south--to go to the Pacific.

Mr. Metzler: And that's when the war ended?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, uh-huh.

Mr. Metzler: Was there a little celebration going on when the war ended?

Dr. Pang: Yes, there was a celebration going on,

Mr. Metzler: What did you, how did you celebrate?

Dr. Pang: I don't remember how I celebrated, because I was still in service; it was just with other servicemen, you know, had a couple of beers and stuff like that.

Mr. Metzler: But it felt good to know there wasn't going to be war for the rest of your life.

Dr. Pang: Right, uh-huh. I think we were kind of surprised, because it came so sudden. To me, it was very sudden that the war ended.

Mr. Metzler: But don't you think the atomic bomb speeded that up?

Dr. Pang: Yes. The atomic bomb did it, yeah, uh-huh. They were killing off too many people, so--

Mr. Metzler: After you came back, when the war was over, did you ever think about the war years and think about your times there, dream about it, any of that?

Dr. Pang: Yeah. Yes, I did.

Mr. Metzler: Tell me about that.

Dr. Pang: I thought I had a good time (laughs).

Mr. Metzler: Oh, really? Well--

Dr. Pang: Except for, when you got a little nervous during flights, you know. I enjoyed the people I was with. I guess I had a good time. You know, I don't know if it's the right thing to say, but in pre-war Hawaii, we had no blacks and I don't think we had many Jewish people, and so that, when I came to the states, that was a whole new experience for me. And when we slept in the barracks with other cadets and one of the guys was from Alabama, and I didn't know what the heck kind of talk he was doing (Both laugh). The Jewish kids from New York, you know, you're used to hearing a certain type of talk, and so it was different and I think before I came to the states, I spoke mostly pidgin English, you know.

Mr. Metzler: Oh, really?

Dr. Pang: Most of us kids in the islands spoke pidgin English, you know.

Mr. Metzler: Give me an example of pidgin English.

Dr. Pang: I don't know; oh, like, I know something from a song called Manuel. It was, "Manuel, oh boy you know mo hinahina; boy you no mo hina." That means you have no shame, no embarrassment.

Mr. Metzler: So, pidgin English was a mixture.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, it was a mixture. "You no go; I come." You know.

Mr. Metzler: Okay, and what, back to Chinese?

Dr. Pang: All the different languages.

Mr. Metzler: All the different; so it was just kind of a mixed--

Dr. Pang: It's mixed, yeah. You'd throw some Japanese in, but mostly you'd throw a lot of Hawaiian words in there. In fact, there is a song called "Maulihini Mele," where this newcomer comes to the island, where he started singing a song, and he'd say, let's see, he goes, he would call, oh, he'd call all kinds of wrong words with different things, you know. Because when I came to the states, I must have been different, too, to all those people. So, people treated me very nicely and like, they'd ask me, "Where did you learn to speak English?" and all the stuff. Whenever we had a two-week vacation or one-week vacation, somebody would invite me to their home. So I experienced different things. Even after I got in school, I was invited to different homes.

Mr. Metzler: This is when you were going to dental school in Iowa?

Dr. Pang: Yeah. I couldn't get back home for those short vacations. So, because of that, these people all being so different, I enjoyed the people that was in my squadron and things like that. I don't think I had a single enemy or anything like that. I just enjoyed everybody, and it was the same thing after I went to dental school and stuff like that, you know. I was still just, maybe four years or five years removed from the islands, so everybody was my friend.

Mr. Metzler: Well, we've covered a lot of territory, Dr. Pang. What stories about your war experience would you like to add to what we've already discussed? I probably missed some really good stories here.

Dr. Pang: I don't know. I guess maybe meeting all these different people from different cultures, you know, I learned a lot about people and especially was when I was in my--A-20 people; I got very close to some of those, the pilots and anybody that makes up the crew. In fact, one of my best friends at the A-20 outfit had played hockey up in Boston and he had survived the Boston fire. I think there was a big fire in a restaurant at that time. He survived that, and he used to tell me about that.

Mr. Metzler: That must have been a harrowing story.

Dr. Pang: Uh-huh. And you know, you've got to remember, we were all about 20 years old. We were young and different people.

Mr. Metzler: That was a long time ago, wasn't it?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, that was a long time ago, and after you leave I'll probably remember something.

Mr. Metzler: (Chuckles) That always happens.

Dr. Pang: Yeah. Probably remember some--but all in all, I would say I enjoyed my service time, and met a lot of nice people, and it broadened me, because in Hawaii, I only knew about Hawaii.

Mr. Metzler: That's right.

Dr. Pang: I only knew that the missionaries came to Hawaii to do good, and they did--(laughs).

Mr. Metzler: In fact, I'm just speculating, and I'm not trying to put words in your mouth, but if you hadn't had the war experience, you might never have ended up in Iowa going to dental school.

Dr. Pang: No, and I probably, being an aggie student, I probably would have been a farmer or something.

Mr. Metzler: Yeah, you'd be raising pineapples or something.

Dr. Pang: So I, myself, I don't feel that the country owes me anything, because it gave me a good education.

Mr. Metzler: Well, we do owe you one thing. We owe you a big thank you for what you and your generation did for our country. And I want to thank you for that.

Dr. Pang: Well, I enjoyed it.

Mr. Metzler: So it was good for you, too.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, it was good for me.

Mr. Metzler: That's great. Well, anything else?

Dr. Pang: No, except that I lost a lot of good friends, too, in the service.

Mr. Metzler: Yeah, that's a shame. Do you ever think about why them, and not me?

Dr. Pang: Yeah, I've thought about that, and it was fate, I guess. One of the guys that invited me to their home was from Framingham, Massachusetts, and he was stationed in Corsica, got to Corsica just before I did, and he got killed while he was stationed in Corsica, and yet, I didn't. And I wondered how come, through 68 combat missions I never got hurt. In Corsica, on a practice mission, we crash landed in Corsica. There were three of us in that plane that crashed and we all got out alive.

Mr. Metzler: Man! So that was your closest call, it sounds like.

Dr. Pang: Yeah, it sounds like that was my closest call. But you know, one of the things we practiced all the time in training is the ditching procedure, how to get out fast, you know, and we got out fast (laughs) before the plane caught fire, and that kind of stuff.

Mr. Metzler: And all of that on a B-26, a widow maker!

Dr. Pang: A widow maker, yeah, the flying prostitute.

Mr. Metzler: (Laughs). The flying prostitute!

Dr. Pang: Yeah, uh-huh.

Mr. Metzler: Okay. Well, I'm going to end it here, Dr. Pang. I want to thank you again for spending the time with me, and I do appreciate it.

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