

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Kenneth Platt

Date of Interview: November 8, 2021

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Interview in progress.

Ed Metzler: This is Ed Metzler. Today is November the 8th, 2021. I am in San Antonio, and I am interviewing Mr. Kenneth Arthur Platt. We are doing this interview in his son's house here in San Antonio. This interview is in support of the Nimitz and 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, Ken, thank you for spending the time today to share your experiences of World War II with us. Let me get started by having you introduce yourself. Give us your full name and date and birth and then we'll take it from there.

Mr. Platt: I'm Kenneth Arthur Platt, born May the 16th, 1921.

Ed Metzler: Well, if I've done my math correctly, that puts you over a hundred years old.

Mr. Platt: A hundred and ...

Ed Metzler: Some change (chuckles), congratulations.

Mr. Platt: Thank you.

Ed Metzler: So, where were you born?

Mr. Platt: I was born in a little place called Clawson, Texas. Well, there ain't nothing there but a ... wasn't nothing there then but a store, but it was a country store just out of Lufkin.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so that's in the Lufkin area. Carson?

Mr. Platt: Clawson.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Platt: Clawson. That's in Angelina County (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Okay, so ...

Mr. Platt: But that's what my record said about where I was born.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: Only reason I know I was born is (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), yeah, you don't remember it when you were born. I know.

Mr. Platt: Uh uh.

Ed Metzler: Were you born in the country, in a hospital, in town or what?

Mr. Platt: (Cough), I was born in ... at home.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And with a doctor.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And ...

Ed Metzler: So, were you the eldest child or did you ...

Mr. Platt: No, I was fourth child of ... my mother had seven children altogether.

Ed Metzler: So, what did your father do for a living?

Mr. Platt: He worked for the city of Lufkin Water Department, and all I remember that ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. So, you weren't out on a farm or anything like that? You were ...

Mr. Platt: After the ... the Great Depression, we moved on a farm, and I lived on a farm, but I was seven, eight years old and the rest of my life.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. And where'd you go to school?

Mr. Platt: I went to school at Shawnee Prairie, Texas.

Ed Metzler: Can you spell ...

Mr. Platt: A one room schoolhouse.

Ed Metzler: Really?

Mr. Platt: It's in Angelina County about ...

Ed Metzler: Angelina County, yeah.

Mr. Platt: Yeah, it's Angelina County, and it's near Huntington, Texas is where it was.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Platt: Huntington, Texas is on the map, Shawnee Prairie ... is ... it was just a farm community.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, small. So, the Depression was tough times, huh?

Mr. Platt: Wasn't for me. I don't ... I don't remember worrying one bit about the Depression.

Ed Metzler: You did fine, huh?

Mr. Platt: Yeah (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: You had food, you had school, you had a family.

Mr. Platt: Yeah, we ... we never ... we never got hungry. We didn't have exactly what you ... what you might want every day, but Mama always seen that we got something that settled the edge.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Platt: And I was the fourth one out of the seven. My (cough) (unintelligible) ...

Ed Metzler: So ...

Mr. Platt: ... my brothers and sisters, my ... Ed, my oldest brother was Elton Platt; he was in the Air Force during the ... during the ... during the war, stationed (unintelligible) at Ellington Field. And (unintelligible) from the time they'd open till the time they closed.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Platt: He never went nowhere.

Ed Metzler: Uhm! So, you went to high school. Did you graduate from high school?

Mr. Platt: I did not go to high school; I never started high school.

Ed Metzler: What was the last grade that you took?

Mr. Platt: Last grade I took was seventh grade.

Ed Metzler: Okay and let's see, if I remember correctly, you went into the military in 1937, didn't you?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, if you were born in 1921, I'm doing the math again.

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: You don't sound like you were seventeen years old just yet.

Mr. Platt: I wasn't sixteen either.

Ed Metzler: No, you weren't even sixteen.

Mr. Platt: I (unintelligible) at sixteen.

Ed Metzler: So, tell me that story, would you please.

Mr. Platt: Well, I was at a party one night and friend of mine, the one of the farm boys that lived down the road from me about three miles said “How we going to ... I’m probably going to join ... see if I can join the Army tomorrow because you don’t know (unintelligible). I said, “Oh, I don’t see why not.” I didn’t have enough to do in the summertime.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Platt: And so, I went with him to the ... to the Army Recruiting Station in Lufkin, and he talked to the recruiting sergeant and he (unintelligible) accept him, but they had to send him to Houston to be examined and (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Yep! You have to pass all your physicals and everything.

Mr. Platt: Every ... everything, you know, you don’t get into the Army till you got ... till you’re out of Houston. And he interviewed him and ... and got through he said, “Well, (unintelligible) you want to go, you want to go in the Army?” I said, “I might as well; I ain’t got nothing else to do.”

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Platt: And ... and said, “How old are you?” Well, I ... I knew how old you had to be, I said, “I’m eighteen.”

Ed Metzler: So, you misrepresented things.

Mr. Platt: And he said, “Eighteen? When’s your birthday?” And I ... and I told him, you know, March the same, but I kept the same birthday, March the ... (unintelligible) the 21st in (pause).

Ed Metzler: So, they let you in? You didn’t have to ...

Mr. Platt: He (unintelligible) he said ... he said, “I’m sorry,” he said, “you don’t look like you’re sixteen yet.” And I said, “Well, I ... I happen to know how old I am.” I was going to (unintelligible), and he said, “You know, I guess you do.”

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Platt: He said, “You really want to join the Army?” I said, “I will; my daddy will sign for me.” And you had to be eighteen, you had to show ... sign for it. And I got the paper and Daddy signed it.

Ed Metzler: He did?!

Mr. Platt: Mama had a fit. Mama about whooped him and me both.

Ed Metzler: Is that right (laughter).

Mr. Platt: But I ... I went in the Army anyhow. I went to Houston the next day, and ... and ...

Ed Metzler: So, how'd you get to Houston, ride the bus or the train or what?

Mr. Platt: I rode a train to Houston.

Ed Metzler: Yeah?

Mr. Platt: And (pause) we had ... our recruiting officer in Houston had ... there was about fifteen of us, I guess, a whole bunch of us, in this big recruiting office in Houston from all over east Texas.

Ed Metzler: Yeah?

Mr. Platt: And (pause) ...

Ed Metzler: So ...

Mr. Platt: They (unintelligible to everybody all day and they interviewed us, and the doctor examined us and ... and all this (cough). And about three o'clock in the afternoon, a captain come in and said, "Well, all you people, they (unintelligible) you ... is qualified and going in the military." And I knew it wasn't me, you know? They ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Platt: And I was the only damned one out of that fifteen people that wasn't physically unfit or ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: ... hadn't (unintelligible) arrest or something. I had no record whatsoever (cough). So, I rode a (unintelligible) swore me in in Houston. I caught that train out of Houston, no, yeah, I caught the train out of Houston and come to San Antonio. And a sergeant picked me up at San Antonio land carried me to Dodd Field which is where ... that's where the cemetery is, and it used to be Dodd Field. It was ...

Ed Metzler: Oh really?

Mr. Platt: They had ... the Air Force had a lot stationed out there at one time. But ... and I was assigned to a ... infantry unit, (unintelligible) Company and 23rd Infantry. And I done a total of three years there and I was about ready to get out and I

about made up my mind I was going to stay in the military (cough). But I went in there and told them, "I want to ... I want to go somewhere; I've got to ... I don't want to stay here."

Ed Metzler: So, how long did you stay in San Antonio?

Mr. Platt: Three years.

Ed Metzler: Three years? What ... what did you do for those three years. Were you in the motor pool?

Mr. Platt: No, I wasn't (unintelligible) in a infantry unit, and we trained and done short order drill and all of that stuff every morning. And (unintelligible) but ...

Ed Metzler: So, you're at Fort Sam?

Mr. Platt: Yeah. I started out training at Fort Sam Houston. And I re-enlisted and they give me a, oh, a thirty-day leave. I took thirty days. I re-enlisted and they give me a thirty-day leave. And I volunteered to go to the Philippines, and I was scheduled to go to the Philippines.

Ed Metzler: So, this is three years after you went in, and you went in in '37.

Mr. Platt: Uh huh. This is of course ...

Ed Metzler: So, this is 1940, okay.

Mr. Platt: ... 1940.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Platt: (Cough).

Ed Metzler: So, why do you want to go to the Philippines?

Mr. Platt: I don't know; just sounded like a far away place, and ... but I don't know. I figured I (unintelligible) I'm not sure, I never ... don't remember even thinking about it; I just did it. And ... anyhow, when I went there to go overseas to go (unintelligible), they sent me to ... my orders read ... re-enlistment, the report said, "Angle Island ... something in San Francisco," and ...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Platt: ... an island right across from ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that's in the bay there, yeah.

Mr. Platt: And ... and in the bay, and just for a ... just for a ... ship out from where I'm going to. But when I got to ... to ...

Ed Metzler: What'd they do, put you on a troop ship?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Or cargo ship or what?

Mr. Platt: I got ... before ... before that, uh, (pause) I ... I was there at ... at Angel Island, and they called me in one day, and this was a couple of weeks before we sailed, and he said, "The Army needs machine gunner, anti-aircraft machine gunners, and I see here that you was a ... (unintelligible) expert on a thirty caliber round machine gun," but he said, "these guns are the same as the guns that you got, only ... only from (unintelligible)." And said, "Would you ... would you ... they ... the Army has requested you be ... if you vol ... if you would go to Hawaii instead of the Philippines." And I said, "That's fine; I don't care which one I go to."

Ed Metzler: Well, why not? Yeah.

Mr. Platt: And what a life saver that was! And so, I didn't go to the Philippines.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you'd of been in a Japanese ...

Mr. Platt: You ... you know I'd of been ...

Ed Metzler: ... prisoner of war.

Mr. Platt: ... had ... if I had of, but anyhow, anyway, we got on a ... on a troop ship, the USS Eulyses S. Grant, (unintelligible) about twenty-eight days to Honolulu.

Ed Metzler: Twenty-eight days?! I mean ...

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... that is slow, man!

Mr. Platt: This was a World War I troop ship. It didn't ... it didn't make no ...

Ed Metzler: Three knots (laughter).

Mr. Platt: ... we wasn't ... we wasn't in no hurry.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: But ... and I got assigned to M Company in the Nineteenth Infantry, still in M Company, Nineteenth Infantry.

Ed Metzler: Nineteenth?

Mr. Platt: Nineteenth.

Ed Metzler: So, you were in the Twenty-third when you were at ...

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... Fort Sam?

Mr. Platt: Right.

Ed Metzler: Okay. So, then you went to the Nineteenth.

Mr. Platt: Uh huh, and (unintelligible) Twenty-Fourth Division, and (cough) and the Nineteenth Regiment (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, you arrived in Honolulu, I assume?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And what did they do with you?

Mr. Platt: (Pause), they assigned me to M Company that ... Nineteenth Infantry.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Platt: And I was already skilled at what they'd done; they done the same thing there that we done over here that I'd been doing (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: You'd been practicing for three years!

Mr. Platt: (Unintelligible) with that machine gun, tear it down, put ... pull it apart and name ... name all the parts, you know, like ... and ...

Ed Metzler: So, a thirty-caliber machine gun?

Mr. Platt: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: So, did you go immediately to Schofield Barracks for ...

Mr. Platt: Yeah. There was a truck that picked us up and carried us to Schofield Barracks. It was seven or eight guys on that boat that ... but they was all scattered at all different places (unintelligible) ...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Platt: ... it was a whole bunch of them that got off there.

Ed Metzler: So, is this '40 or '41 when ...

Mr. Platt: '40.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so we're still a year plus, yeah.

Mr. Platt: Yeah, this is 1940.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: About July. I got discharged in March, April, May ... it may have been May or June before I got to Honolulu.

Ed Metzler: So, in that period, what did you do – more training, more drills?

Mr. Platt: More of the same thing. Same, same deal. We had the Twenty-Third Infantry had a sector of the island that they was responsible for in defense of.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And this was before the war. We never thought of it that way at the time.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Platt: Because we was (unintelligible) we didn't know they were going to attack us, but it ...

Ed Metzler: So, did you have good buddies that you kind of palled around with on a regular basis?

Mr. Platt: The ... oh yeah. I had the ... one guy in particular was in M Company.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: The Twenty-Third Infantry, same time I was but he had been in Hawaii about six months when I got there, and I got assigned to the outfit that ... that he was in.

Ed Metzler: Coincidence, yeah.

Mr. Platt: And he and I was (unintelligible) buddies (unintelligible) of the whole ... best friend ... best friend I had in the whole war was him. He ... he wound up the first sergeant of the outfit, and I wound up a platoon sergeant before we ... uh, that was before the end of the war aft (cough).

Ed Metzler: So, what was life like in Hawaii? That's pretty good living, wasn't it?

Mr. Platt: It wasn't bad at all. We ...

Ed Metzler: It never got cold.

Mr. Platt: No, it never got cold.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Platt: Never got hot (unintelligible). No, I ... I really enjoyed the years I was stationed there. And I stayed on Oahu until the latter part of 19 ... 43.

Ed Metzler: Oh ...

Mr. Platt: They ... they held us there in defense of the island.

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Platt: We had two divisions on the island, and the Twenty-Fifth Division you probably know what ... went to Guadalcanal.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And I'm sure I missed going to Guadalcanal like this ... like I said (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, by that ...

Mr. Platt: Well, there's two divisions and one of them's going (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, you were kind of lucky. You missed going to the Philippines before the Japan invaded it.

Mr. Platt: Uhm.

Ed Metzler: And you missed going to Guadalcanal.

Mr. Platt: Uhm.

Ed Metzler: After the war started.

Mr. Platt: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: But did you ever get ... they gave you liberty every once in a while, and you could go into Honolulu, couldn't you?

Mr. Platt: Oh yeah, you remember ... we was free to go on the weekend. We could go ... go anywhere you wanted to on the ... on the island. I mean ...

Ed Metzler: So, did you go into Honolulu?

Mr. Platt: Yeah, several times. Got ...

Ed Metzler: That was a rocking town, wasn't it?

Mr. Platt: Yeah. It was ... it was a lot of military people on that island, too. People don't know what they (unintelligible). I had a Pearl Harbor Survivor's hat on there in Washington and walking down the street and there were (unintelligible) somebody was hollering congratulations, you know, being in Hawaii and ... and what ... what ... what boat was you on ... what ship was you on? I took my hat off and put it in my ... I had a carry-on satchel and ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: ... and Cathy Pryor (sp?) was a ... one of the guardians of the ... of the honor flight, and she said, "Why'd you take your hat off for?" I said, "I'm tired of ...

I'm tired of explaining to people that there was five times as many Army personnel on Oahu as there was sailors!"

Ed Metzler: Yeah, we've all got this image of, you know, there was six battleships and that was it.

Mr. Platt: I know it, and ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: ... it was all ... it was all the Navy. I mean, a lot of ... lot of people still today think that ...

Ed Metzler: No.

Mr. Platt: ... they didn't thank nobody but the Navy, but ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: ... they didn't ... like where I was on December the 7th ... I may be getting ahead of you.

Ed Metzler: No, no. You go ahead.

Mr. Platt: On December the 7th and exactly what I was doing ... me and the first sergeant ... he wasn't a first sergeant then, but me ... me and my friend, we ...

Ed Metzler: Now, were you still private first class at this point or do you remember?

Mr. Platt: When the war started, I was a corporal.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Platt: (Unintelligible) on December the 7th, I was a corporal. I'd been (unintelligible) a squad leader.

Ed Metzler: Okay, I interrupted you. Go ahead, tell me about December the 7th.

Mr. Platt: I forgot where I was.

Ed Metzler: I apologize.

Mr. Platt: My mind isn't sharp as it used to be.

Ed Metzler: Well, ain't it true for all of us. So, anyhow, December the 7th comes around, it's on a weekend.

Mr. Platt: Oh yeah, and I was ... we stayed up till about twelve o'clock playing cards or dominoes or something in the day room, I don't remember what for sure, but we just ... we went to bed and I woke up ... I got woke up with all kind of noise and people running through the ... through the squad room, and (unintelligible)

airplanes went overhead and somebody said the Japanese had attacked us and I'm half asleep (unintelligible) my clothes on, went downstairs and at that time, my friend (unintelligible) and he was a sergeant then, and they ... they was in the process of tearing the door off of the supply room to get to the machine guns and all of our guns was locked up. And the sergeant lived in the ... didn't live on the base and he wasn't even there when it, you know, time he got there it was all over. And that's what woke me up.

Ed Metzler: So, how'd you get into the ... to the supply room? How'd they do it?

Mr. Platt: We just tore the door open.

Ed Metzler: Tore the door off.

Mr. Platt: (Unintelligible) crowbar ... crow bar; they did, I didn't. Yeah, they had it off when I ... when I got there. They already had machine guns.

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Platt: And they (unintelligible) machine guns up there and tried to shoot them. And they fired at some of the airplanes. There were a few airplanes. There wasn't that many of them anyhow that come over there, but they were all real low because they'd just dropped bombs on Wheeler Field.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: But they did drop quite a few (cough), and ...

Ed Metzler: Did they ... didn't they strafe the barracks? I mean, you had a few bullet holes in the building, huh?

Mr. Platt: Oh, oh yeah. I had ... they ... there was one round of bullets come ... come right through the window about ten feet from where I was ... my bed was.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Platt: And ... come through the window and one hit the wall outside. You can see where they hit the wall, (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Was that when you were out of bed and getting dressed or what?

Mr. Platt: That's when I woke up when ...

Ed Metzler: That's what woke you up then.

Mr. Platt: ... I wasn't ... wasn't (unintelligible) well, I when the building started falling down is when I thought, "Well, the building's collapsing." And ...

Ed Metzler: So, how old are you at this point? This is '41 and you were born in ...

Mr. Platt: I was twenty years old.

Ed Metzler: You were twenty years old!

Mr. Platt: I was twenty years old.

Ed Metzler: And you'd been training for six years. Well, at least five years, and all of a sudden, there's a war! What's going through your mind when all of this happens, or did you even have time to think about it?

Mr. Platt: I didn't ... I don't even remember thinking about what ... what happened really. It was unbelievable that the Japanese ... the Japanese and us ... when I ... after I got ... after I got up and got downstairs, (unintelligible) run over to Schofield, it wasn't ... wasn't very high; he just dropped his bombs on ... and that's the only airplane that's all.

Ed Metzler: You got an up close and personal look at that airplane though, huh?

Mr. Platt: Yeah, I had that one airplane, but I didn't ... I didn't see any others. They'd already went over; I heard them, but I was in the barracks 'cause I was still in the bed.

Ed Metzler: Well, they were tearing up the aircraft over there at Wheeler Field though.

Mr. Platt: I'm going to have a drink of water. Where is my ... where is my (unintelligible)? You know you had it off?

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah, I ... I just put it on pause.

Mr. Platt: No. Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: Okay, here we go, we're back. So, you're a thirty caliber machine gun expert, you finally get your hands on a machine gun, right?

Mr. Platt: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: What did you do?

Mr. Platt: I didn't get my hands on a machine gun that day.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Platt: (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, you guys couldn't really do very much, could you?

Mr. Platt: Well, they was (pause) nine, ten guys in a squad had one machine gun. We couldn't all ... couldn't all be my gun and your gun.

Ed Metzler: Yeah? So ...

Mr. Platt: We was a team (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: Somebody had to carry the ammunition ... the ammunition boxes in.

Ed Metzler: So, you're a team, you went outdoors with your machine gun and ...

Mr. Platt: Yeah, the ... they ... they did; they went outside with them.

Ed Metzler: They tried to set it up?

Mr. Platt: Uhm, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Did you have the tripod and all that other stuff?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And did ...

Mr. Platt: No, we didn't have no anti-aircraft tripod.

Ed Metzler: Uhm! That makes it ...

Mr. Platt: 'Cause that ... that part I ... I missed when I was at Honolulu, they assigned me to (unintelligible) outfit instead of a ... instead of anti-aircraft outfit.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: I really don't understand that, but (phone ringing in background) that's about (unintelligible). They did a lot of things I didn't understand.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, well, that's the military for you, huh? So, how long did all of this last? This ... this is a turning point in history that you're in the middle of.

Mr. Platt: I ... I understand, I ... I only saw the last wave of the ... of the bombing of Wheeler Field.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: 'Cause it was two waves; there was one that come over about an hour later, but there was another ... another bunch come over.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And that last one didn't last (pause) didn't last twenty minutes, twenty or thirty minutes when they was bombing Wheeler Field.

Ed Metzler: So, the Japanese had done their damage, and they leave, and you guys don't much about what the heck is going on

Mr. Platt: No ...

Ed Metzler: ... elsewhere, right?

Mr. Platt: ... no, it ...

Ed Metzler: What did you find out and what did you hear?

Mr. Platt: You didn't find out nothing the whole day, you know, the attack that we ... we loaded ammu ... machine gun ammunition all day. At ... at that time our machine guns had web belts. If the bullets was in and they fed the machine gun with a web belt (cough) and we had ammunition. We had all them ammunition in the boxes and they brought a truckload of it up there, and ... we got a ... we had a ... we had a loader I think to put them in the belt.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: We put them in a ... in a rack and they would go down and you'd crank and it shoved them in the belt and kept it straight.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Platt: (Cough) and that was about the end of (unintelligible) December 7th, (unintelligible) and we loaded ammunition. And that night ... that night they sent me and three other guys and a jeep on a ... what they called a black-out patrol. All the civilians was supposed to have no lights showing, and of course, we were a dark island, and there was light showing. And we just gently told them they had lights showing and they'd better ... better ... better cover them up or turn them off or we'd shoot them out.

Ed Metzler: Hum. Well, obviously, they never invaded, so ...

Mr. Platt: No.

Ed Metzler: ... you guys patrolled, but nothing else happened, huh?

Mr. Platt: Nothing else happened. The next day ... uh, the next day we went to our defense after ... on one other part of the island where we were supposed to ... all set up and I didn't know that it was set up that way at the time. I knew ... I knew we'd been out here doing this and doing that and building uh, gun positions and ... for the last year we did ... for a year or two we did that, and we moved out in the field and I moved. My squad was assigned ... overlooking Waimea Bay, I think it was, it was up over a hill and there was a highway down below the ... went all the way around the island (cough), and we could ... we

could see all the way down there in that bay, and that's where my position was. And (unintelligible) that hill come up like this and it ... it was all rocky down here. This was a pineapple field over here (showing location on map).

Ed Metzler: A ... a pineapple field.

Mr. Platt: (Cough), yeah. We had ... we was sleeping in a pineapple field there for a day or two (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Well, you'd have all the pineapples you'd want to eat.

Mr. Platt: Yeah, well, it wasn't ripe at the time.

Ed Metzler: Oh rats!

Mr. Platt: It was the wrong time of the year, but later on ... well, later on we ate some of them.

Ed Metzler: So, how long were you up there on ... on lookout duty? I mean, was that just a few days or was it weeks and weeks or ...

Mr. Platt: Uhm, no, it was (pause) I know we was up there Christmas. I remember eating Christmas dinner up there and eating pineapple ... field off of a portable kitchen on a truck.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Platt: And (pause) ...

Ed Metzler: So, that's like ...

Mr. Platt: (Unintelligible) we stayed up there three or four months. I built ... I built a whole ...

Ed Metzler: That's a fair ...

Mr. Platt: ... whole ... a whole gun position up there.

Ed Metzler: So, what are you in tents for sleeping or ...

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah?

Mr. Platt: Pup tents.

Ed Metzler: Pup tents, oh boy!

Mr. Platt: Pup tents. We slept ... over there, we slept out there just ... about (unintelligible) open ... most (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Platt: You're too ... you're too hot.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. So, they started ... what did they ... what did you do after that? Did they bring you back down to the barracks or ...

Mr. Platt: Uh, no we stayed up there in the field. Well, I didn't stay there. They moved ... they ... they moved me to (pause) they moved ... they called it Eucalyptus Forest. It was a few hundred eucalyptus trees down there in one place and they built ... that's when we moved down there and the whole company I was in.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: One day they said, "We need everybody, and there's some trucks coming in here with some buildings on it, and we're going to unload them." And they unload ... primarily there was one building was on one, uh, one to each truck. But some of it didn't all fit. They ... but they brought buildings out there on a truck and was already pre-fabbed (unintelligible) and we set it on some rocks or solid ground and leveled it out and put the floor down, and put the walls up, put the roof on it, and they even had electricity running down there, too. It was a ... four or five hundred yards to the electricity ... that far.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Platt: But the only way (unintelligible) stay there but all ... nearly all in '41 I stayed in and part of '42. We were just (unintelligible) really gun positions and all ... it was all right in that area.

Ed Metzler: And ... and you said earlier that you stayed on Oahu until '43.

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, were you there in that spot that you're just describing until ... through '43 or did they move you around again?

Mr. Platt: Uh, one time we moved back in the barracks for about two months, two or three months. And then (pause) from there we ... we loaded on a troop ship in '43 (pause).

Ed Metzler: Now, when you were in Hawaii, did you write letters home to your parents? They must have been worried about ...

Mr. Platt: Oh yeah. Yeah, we ... we wrote letters. We had ... we had mail all the time.

Ed Metzler: So, you wrote letters?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And you got letters?

Mr. Platt: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: You get ... you get any cookies from home or anything like that?

Mr. Platt: Yeah, we had cookies.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Platt: (Unintelligible) Christmas, I got a cake my mother made instead of cake or (unintelligible) and it was all ... (unintelligible) tore up when I got it.

Ed Metzler: Kind of mashed up, huh?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: But you ate it anyhow, right?

Mr. Platt: Oh yeah, we ate the crumbs and ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Platt: But ...

Ed Metzler: What were your officers like? Were they good guys? Did they worry about you and take care of you guys or ...

Mr. Platt: Oh no, they ... they took good care of us. They was ... that was luck. Anywhere I'd been in the military and otherwise, some good people, and there's a few that for some reason, you just don't like or they ain't good people or they don't seem like my people or ...

Ed Metzler: There's always a few.

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles). So, in '43, they come ... they came and took your outfit and did what with them? Took them over overseas, right?

Mr. Platt: We went ... we loaded on a troop ship.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: And sailed to Australia; we had no idea where we was going. They didn't tell us where we was going until two days before we got to Australia, and then they distributed Australian (unintelligible) money was going to change to ... to in, uh, not in, uh, (pause) shillings and English money.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, pounds and shillings and (unintelligible) and ...

Mr. Platt: And pounds and ...

Ed Metzler: ... and that kind of stuff.

Mr. Platt: But ...

Ed Metzler: Now, when you're ... this is on another troop ship, right, that you're going down to Australia on a troop ship?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, you crossed the equator, right? Did they do that thing where they ...

Mr. Platt: International Date Line is over here.

Ed Metzler: Did you ... what did they call it, a shellback or something?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Tell me about that. Did they ...

Mr. Platt: I didn't ... we ... they ... they had it but it was just some people I knew that were mixed up in it.

Ed Metzler: You didn't fool with it, huh?

Mr. Platt: I never was ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: ... I never was in one them. I ... I crossed that equator ... I crossed it again after that on those troop ship (unintelligible) in 1957, and that's a different tour altogether.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Platt: But we went and landed at ... Gladstone, Australia. That the port we went into.

Ed Metzler: Gladstone.

Mr. Platt: Gladstone.

Ed Metzler: Hum. Is that close to a big Australian city like ...

Mr. Platt: No, it ... it's ... the only other city that was close to there was Rockhampton.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Platt: And about four or five miles inland they had a camp was already set up for us ... all ... tents and everything.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: Big tents and everything.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And we moved in the tent city. And we stayed there (pause) I don't know whether to go into this or not, but (chuckles) I ... while I was in Australia, whenever you camp, uh, my mind went blank, Camp ... whatever the name of the camp was ... we was there. We'd been there about a month and my lieutenant, my platoon leader, come to me one morning and said, "Sergeant, I've been ordered to go to a bomb disposal school, and I'm supposed to carry one man with me," and he said, "you're the man I picked to go with me." And he was ... this lieutenant was a ... he was actually an enlisted man and had ... the OCS (unintelligible) become a ... become a first lieutenant; he was a real nice man.

Ed Metzler: Ninety-day wonder, they called them.

Mr. Platt: Yeah, ninety-day wonder.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). Right.

Mr. Platt: And we went to Wagga Wagga, Australia all the way to Shindin (sp?) an old town called Wagga Wagga, and we went to Bomb Disposal School for three months studying nothing but (slapping sounds) diagrams like this.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: And ... but it had ... they had the pictures of all the, I'm sorry, I forgot ...

Ed Metzler: The kinds of bombs and stuff.

Mr. Platt: Yeah. Well, uh, fuses is what we was ... (unintelligible) but we were supposed to be able to defuse a bomb, and I never ... all my schooling never used Crayola or painted with Crayola as long as I did in that school. We made it all day ... they give ... they give you two or three of these sheets and say "This is bomb fuse so and so," and it had numbers and all.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: And it had all the picture of all the little springs and levers and every ... everything inside it. You paint everything with a different color. And you remembered while you was doing this. The instructor told us that you'll ... you'll remember more if you sit there and ...

Ed Metzler: And color it.

Mr. Platt: ... uh, a few hours and color every ... every piece in that bomb fuse.

Ed Metzler: I'll be!

Mr. Platt: You ... you'll remember it.

Ed Metzler: Did it help you remember?

Mr. Platt: Well, not the bomb fuses. I nev ... I never had no reason to fool with it in palm trees was after that. We went back to our outfit and ...

Ed Metzler: But you never used that ... you never did diffuse any bombs?

Mr. Platt: We ... we ... me and ... me and that lieutenant diffused one bomb. And we had a ... in Hollandia, a parachute bomb. It was about four feet off the ground and it hung in a tree.

Ed Metzler: Hum!

Mr. Platt: And about a twenty-five pound bomb. So, he ... he decided we'd ... he'd bear-hug the bomb and I'd cut them little bitty rope ... rope, looked like it was going to fall all the time.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: He cut it ... I cut it down and he laid it on the ground real gently. And then we put us a compression grenade where the fuse is supposed to be or where the fuse was, and run a wire to it. And I went over here and got in a ravine in a lot lower section and pulled the wire and then nothing happened. Something went wrong. We sat there for five, ten minutes.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Platt: Done nothing. (Unintelligible). "Well, got to do something. I'll run ... I'll run over and see what's (unintelligible) what happened." He went up there, and about the time he got up to that bomb I ... he ... he touched something or done something, I don't know what he done. But I heard the handle fly off of that grenade; it was just like a hand grenade, you know, it had a handle on it.

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Platt: And (unintelligible) had eight seconds to get out of the way.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: And here he come, jumped in that hole, and about the time he jumped, that ... that bomb done ... went off and a piece of shrapnel went through his shoulder and ... and then I had a devil of a time. Had to go get the jeep, it wasn't close.

We didn't park closer, we was afraid we'd blow it up, and when that jeep was right beside of him, and he was ... he was like a ghost, you know? He ... he done turned white; he was shocked completely.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Platt: He ... he was either scared to death or ... but anyhow between his little bit of help and my being pretty strong at that young age, why, I got him in the front seat of that jeep. And I knew where our portable surgical surgical hospital was ... about eight miles away. And I took ... I took him there and he got a ride here.

Ed Metzler: He was okay?

Mr. Platt: Oh yeah, he was ... he was alright. Heck, he was back to duty in three days. Of course, he wore a bandage, had to go back till the doctor ... showed up.

Ed Metzler: So, Hollandia is in New Guinea, right?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So ...

Mr. Platt: I got a little ahead, Ed.

Ed Metzler: That's okay, that's a heck of a story.

Mr. Platt: And ...

Ed Metzler: So, you got trained in bomb disposal, but you only got to use that once. Uh ...

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: How long were you in Australia? Was that just a few months or ...

Mr. Platt: We stayed at Australia about ... I went to that school, been there about two or three months.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And then I went to school for three months and come back for about two months, and it was ... it was a pretty good while. Never had ...

Ed Metzler: So, you got to know Australia pretty well.

Mr. Platt: Oh yeah. Well, we ... we really ... we really (unintelligible) me ... me and the lieutenant when ...

Ed Metzler: So, you got to know Sydney pretty well?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: That's a good city, huh?

Mr. Platt: Oh yeah. Well, we got out of the bomb school and we went back there and caught a ... rode a bus or truck or something to ... back to Sydney. It wasn't but about ten or fifteen miles, and then we was going to catch a train and ... well, Lieutenant Pope went in (unintelligible). In the train depot they had a ... a ... there was a captain there was in charge of shipment – everybody being put on a train. I mean, and Lieutenant Pope ... we finally got ... got a break and Lieutenant Pope got to talking to him and he said, "Captain, I've ... I've never been ... we've never been to Australia. We've been to school and then we ... we ... I'd ... I'd like to stay in Aust ... uh, in Sydney." And he looked at him and he said, "Lieutenant, I'm a transportation officer. When you get ready to go somewhere, you let me know, otherwise, I have no idea and can care less what you do or where you go."

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Platt: And ... and so, we decided ... Lieutenant Pope said, "Well, that guy almost give us a free hand. All we got ... (unintelligible)." But nobody questioned it anyhow. Nobody knew where we was at or when we was coming back. But that was one little instance that ...

Ed Metzler: So, you had free reign in Sydney for a while?

Mr. Platt: Oh yeah. Oh, we stayed there four days, four days.

Ed Metzler: How did the Aussies treat you Yanks?

Mr. Platt: But Lieutenant Pope, he treated me just like he would anybody else. I mean, other than I treated him like he was an officer, and he treated me like I was an enlisted man, but ...

Ed Metzler: Right (laughter).

Mr. Platt: ... but (unintelligible). But when we was in Sydney, I mean, that was something else. It was ... we was ... come out of (unintelligible) we do. We had a pretty good time there, two or three days there. We caught that train and rode it all the way back to ... back to Brisbane. The outfit I was in, they ... they moved them from Camp (pause) that camp and another camp at Brisbane.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: Don't know why they moved, but nobody ever told us and I never asked.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Platt: (Unintelligible) outfit at a different place, but it was really short. After that was when they loaded us on a freighter and we went to Goodenough Island.

Ed Metzler: Goodenough Island, that's an interesting name. What was it like?

Mr. Platt: Like any other ... any other of them islands, they was all ... they all looked just alike to me. They all had beaches, the all had palm trees or same brush and jungles and ...

Ed Metzler: Mosquitos.

Mr. Platt: ... mosquitos and rats and ...

Ed Metzler: What'd you do on Goodenough Island?

Mr. Platt: We done a little more training. We had a little more doing, and ...

Ed Metzler: Did you ever get malaria or dingy fever or ...

Mr. Platt: I had ... I had malaria, but I never did get real ... I never did get real sick. I run a temperature for about seven days and I ... and I got over it. But my temperature never did go real high like a lot of them did.

Ed Metzler: Did you take your pills?

Mr. Platt: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Astra Zen pills? Did you turn yellow when you took the pills? Some people said they made them ... their skin go yellow.

Mr. Platt: (Unintelligible) real yellow, not that I know of, not that I remember. Can we take a break?

Ed Metzler: Sure.

Mr. Platt: I got to go to the restroom. I know you ... your daytime.

Ed Metzler: It's ... it's breaktime (unintelligible).

Mr. Platt: Yeah. (Recording stopped momentarily).

Ed Metzler: Yeah. So, I'm going to start this thing up. Alright, we're online again. So, where did you go after that?

Mr. Platt: After Goodenough? We ... we went to Hollandia.

Ed Metzler: Okay, how ...

Mr. Platt: Made a combat landing, and ...

Ed Metzler: Combat landing?

Mr. Platt: Yeah, that's (unintelligible), the only combat I ever did.

Ed Metzler: Was it ...

Mr. Platt: Was at Hollandia.

Ed Metzler: Were the Japanese still there?

Mr. Platt: No, not ... not very many. Most of them disappeared before we got there.

Ed Metzler: That's a good thing.

Mr. Platt: Yeah, they moved them out and ... and I went ... as luck would have it, I went in on the opposite side, a peninsula or whatever from where all the air ... air base was ... was on the other side, all the way across New Guinea from where I ... where we landed.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And there wasn't too many shots fired that day, but I did have one. After we'd ... well, after we landed that first day and what was supposed to have been ... they told us there was a road ... or a river, and when we got there and we had to go around and cross the river in Hollandia, and (pause) we went (pause) that day after ... two days or three days ... there wasn't much going on but we had ... the outfit I was ... the platoon I was in, the company I was in, I was selected to carry rations and ammunition if there was a ... there was a lot of troops ahead of us ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: ... ahead ... ahead of the one I was in.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Platt: And they got so far in, and they run out of ... they only had so much ... how much food you could carry on your ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, they ran out of supplies, yeah.

Mr. Platt: ... and run out of supplies (cough). And I walked ... walked about seven or eight miles one way with about forty pounds of food or ammunition or what have you.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And then another crew took it and just kept going with it. And we turned around and we rested overnight, (unintelligible) walked back and done the same

thing the next day. And the third ... third day, they'd got all the way across the island and done (pause) but that's my whole ... whole combat world.

Ed Metzler: Well, after Hollandia where did you go?

Mr. Platt: I come home.

Ed Metzler: Oh really? You had your points?

Mr. Platt: (Unintelligible) had no idea was, you know, we was over there ... forever, (unintelligible). I mean, the way I was thinking about it then, you know what I mean. You (unintelligible) want to go home and you just ... of course, all you could do or want to do, but ... but (unintelligible) he ... he had become the first sergeant of the outfit, and I was the platoon sergeant.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: Lieutenant Pope said (unintelligible) come and told me, he said, "You know, the captain just come back from division headquarters and he said they're going to start ... people that been over here the longest, overseas the longest, is going to start rotating some of them home." And I could hardly believe it!

Ed Metzler: This is in '44?

Mr. Platt: Yeah. And ... and ... the next morning (unintelligible) come and woke me up about eight o'clock in the morning, and I tell you it was all of a sudden, and said, "Get up! We're ... we're going to ... to air base over here," and it was about four or five miles. (Unintelligible) somebody loaned us a jeep or we had to ... we wound up with a jeep anyhow, and we went over in a C-47 and come ... flew back to one of those other towns back ... way in back (unintelligible). The war in Australia ... and we caught a troop ship and rode it about twenty-eight days, thirty days, a long time, but we got home. And I got re-assigned to Fort ... Camp Hood, Texas, Infantry Replacing Training Depot and Basic Training at Fort Hood. Fort Hood; Fort Hood now Camp Hood.

Ed Metzler: Killeen!

Mr. Platt: Killeen. And I stayed there and ...

Ed Metzler: So, when you came to the states, what did you do, come in through San Francisco or San Diego or ...

Mr. Platt: We come through Los Angeles.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And we caught a train, a troop train.

Ed Metzler: How'd it feel to be back in the States?

Mr. Platt: Felt pretty good.

Ed Metzler: I bet!

Mr. Platt: Very good, yeah, after ...

Ed Metzler: After mosquitos and ...

Mr. Platt: ... after seven years (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that's a long time! You had ... you hadn't been back to the States since you went in!

Mr. Platt: I ... I came in 1940.

Ed Metzler: Oh you ... that's ... oh you ... that's right, that's right.

Mr. Platt: '40 to '44 I didn't ... I told (unintelligible) about the records show the over ... overseas duty was four years and ... four years and something, two months and twenty-forty days or something.

Ed Metzler: Whatever, yeah.

Mr. Platt: Whatever they gave.

Ed Metzler: So, what was your closest call when you were over in the Pacific?

Mr. Platt: Uh, well, the closest call, it wasn't close for me, but it was a story. I was going to skip it, but I ... I guess I must tell it. I ... I had a guy from my platoon ... was ... and I was (unintelligible) about killing Japanese; I was ready to kill all of them (unintelligible), and I had a ... I got a platoon sergeant, had a tommy gun. You know what one of the tommy guns is? It was a fifty-round drum in it.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And we only had one. The one ... and he had ... one in each squad. And uh, he'd complain, "Boy, I wish I could carry that tommy gun and get me them so and so (unintelligible) as many Japs as (unintelligible)." He ... we started off on a patrol. I decided to go on a patrol, there was still some strangling Japanese was harassing us at night, they was hunting something to eat, I guess, and ...

Ed Metzler: Was this in Hollandia?

Mr. Platt: Yeah, it was in Hollandia.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: Yeah, it was in ... inland then. And (unintelligible) was his name; he was a pfc, and been ... been over there quite a while, but he started to get on, "I wish ... I wish ... I wish I (unintelligible); let me carry that gun. It's too heavy for you." And he had this old carbine. I got mad at him, "March Easy, take this damned tommy gun and you ... but you get in front of this damned patrol and you be ... you be the leader, I'm going to be the peon in the back of it!"

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Platt: 'Cause I'm enjoying it, I can go anywhere I wanted to, you know? And I put him in front of it. And we went about two or three miles going through the jungle and all of a sudden I heard that tommy gun cut lose and two ... two or three shots was fired, four or five shots, I don't know how many. And I hit the ... hit the dirt like you do, and tried to reconnoiter and decide what to do, and about that time somebody, a guy named (pause) I've forgot what his name was but anyhow he says, "March Easy's hit!" I said, "Oh no!" And I ... (unintelligible) I heard ... I heard the Japanese running through the ... must ... must have been twenty of them running through the ... running through the brush.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Platt: One ... one after ... after these few shots, and I knew that they was certain of where we was. And I went up there and that March Easy was as dead as a doornail.

Ed Metzler: Oh no!

Mr. Platt: And that was ... saved my life. I thank him a thousand times ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: ... for talking me into him ... let him carry that tommy gun. I don't know, I might have been at a different step or different cadence but I wasn't ... but like I told most people, my motto is, "World War II, best place to spend it is in Honolulu," and I spent almost all of it in Honolulu; that place is a paradise!

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Platt: And everybody wants to go.

Ed Metzler: Yep, yeah, Waikiki Beach (laughter)! So, you spent four years overseas, you went in as a pup, just a young kid, and now you're back home. How ... how did this war experience change you? What impact did it have on you, the person?

Mr. Platt: I [don't] know that it changed me one bit in the world in one way or the other.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: I never worried about it during the war, I never worried about it after the war. And this (pause) my wife, wherever she is, she is ... bless her soul (cough), I went to school with here and heard ... I accidentally ... accidentally wound up with her, and wound up, and not accidentally, but intentionally marrying her ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Platt: ... in 19 and ... August, 1945 we got married.

Ed Metzler: You've been together a while!

Mr. Platt: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: How about that!

Mr. Platt: Seventy-six years.

Ed Metzler: That's amazing!

Mr. Platt: Seventy-six years; she's ninety-six years old, and I'm a hundred.

Ed Metzler: So, you almost robbed the cradle, didn't you?

Mr. Platt: Well, I ... wound up, I had another ole boy that I knew and he'd been overseas, and he was ... he was going with her sister. And he come ... he come to my house one day and said, "I had," in the meantime I had ... I'd been home for a while. Anyhow, I had took some of my savings and bought me a late model '36 Ford (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Platt: And I didn't have a car, and a late model '36 Ford, and he said, "I asked for Vernelle (sp?), her sister's name is Vernelle, asked me if I can find a way for going to a baseball game at the high school. And said, "Would you ... would you take us up there? Would you take us to a ball game?" And ...

Ed Metzler: In your '36 Ford (laughter).

Mr. Platt: ... I was ... , "my late model Ford?" And I said, "Sure!" I went by the house ... and I lived half a mile from her all of her life, well, my people did. And we got

there, there she was standing on ... sitting on the porch. Vernelle was ready to go, and she got up and said, "I'd like to go to that ball game, too, can," and she asked me, says, "Can I go with you?" And I said, "I don't see why not." She was nineteen years old then, eighteen or ... I think she was nineteen, and ...

Ed Metzler: And the rest is history!

Mr. Platt: The rest is history.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Platt: And we had two wonderful children which you know Wayne. He's a wonderful ... he's a ... I don't know what we'd do without him 'cause he takes care of me and his mother both. His mother ... his mother's got congestive heart failure, and she's ... she ... one time she ... one time she got swelled up so big carrying water and ... but that ... that heart doctor ... she ... wound up with ... hooked up with, he got her straightened out.

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Platt: I mean, she is doing wonderful!

Ed Metzler: Well, that's (unintelligible), both of you are doing wonderful!

Mr. Platt: And I never have had ... I never have had any sickness in my whole life. I mean, the last three or four years I've been in and out of the hospital. I had pneumonia; I don't know why. Back here three years ago I decided to get pneumonia and I got pneumonia and I got rid of it. Then it ... six months later, I had pneumonia again.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Platt: And one time, last time I was in the hospital a year ago in October I think, a year ago, and I hadn't had no trouble since.

Ed Metzler: That's great!

Mr. Platt: I ... my ... my lungs is clear.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Platt: And my doctor (unintelligible) ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Platt: I'm a hundred years old and I take no blood pressure medicine whatsoever.

Ed Metzler: Isn't that wonderful?!

Mr. Platt: I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, and they give me a ... well, they started out giving me a hormone shot or a cortisone shot, whichever it was, and I started gaining weight. And I gained about thirty pounds. And I went and told the doctor. I didn't gain anymore weight. I (unintelligible) them damned (unintelligible). He said, "That's the only thing we got," and I said, "There must be something else," because (unintelligible) said, "I ... I'd rather die from damned cancer than I would with ... with ... me carrying all this extra baggage around here! And I feel awful all the time."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), yeah.

Mr. Platt: And ... and he argued with me, a doctor up at Methodist Hospital, uh, not (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Let me ask you another question.

Mr. Platt: Alright.

Ed Metzler: How do you feel about the Japanese after all these years?

Mr. Platt: In a way, I forgive them. I know that them Japanese soldiers was just like we was. They was just doing what they was told ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Platt: ... they wanted to do. I have no hard feelings against the Japanese people. I done ... I done ... I done three years in Japan in '57, '58, and '59.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And I worked ... we worked with them right around close to some of them, and ...

Ed Metzler: So, did you do a big celebration when the Japanese surrendered and the war was over? I know you were back in the States, but ...

Mr. Platt: No, we was ... when ... when the war was over in Europe, they ... well, we was at Lufkin, Texas at the time, and I was working in a steel ... uh, I had went to work for a foundry.

Ed Metzler: So, you were out of the military then?

Mr. Platt: Yeah. I ... I was out of the military. And I stayed ... I stayed out six months then went back in (cough), and ...

Ed Metzler: Oh really?

Mr. Platt: Four or five months I stayed out. And then (slapping sound) ...

Ed Metzler: Well, what other stories you want to tell me about World War II? It's been some great stories.

Mr. Platt: That's about all I know to tell you. I've got that ... I've got a DVD in there, it's got the whole thing, my whole history from ... it was over two hours long. The disc run out.

Ed Metzler: Hum!

Mr. Platt: The interviewer called me and said, "The disc run out, and I don't know what I'm going to do."

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Platt: "So, I'd shortened the story." Said, "I never interviewed anybody that talked as long as ... ," he and I just got to talking and he ... and he's a young (pause) he a young man. He's a ... but he's president of the Jeff Webb ... Jeff West Foundation.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. And what does that foundation do?

Mr. Platt: They try to help World War II veterans. Nothing but they ... they have ... I went to a ... (unintelligible) last month, a fundraising gala at a ranch out here off of Bandera Road.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: And the auctioned off stuff. They had World War II helmets.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Platt: World War II rifles. They (pause) I remember one item but what was it? And they had sixty thousand dollars somebody bid on it.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Platt: Yeah, and it was (unintelligible). And I ... and this is something that I'm (unintelligible) proud of is on my hundredth birthday, I invited a Major General to my birthday party. You know what a Major General is?

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that's pretty (unintelligible).

Mr. Platt: He's pretty high ... high rank.

Ed Metzler: That's getting up there!

Mr. Platt: Well, he's retired, but he when he was retired, he was commander of the whole missile program in the United States, and ... but he's retired now. But my birthday party, he gave (unintelligible) and he give me a baseball cap, and that son of a bitch had two stars on it.

Ed Metzler: Wow! So, you'd been promoted.

Mr. Platt: He said, "Sergeant Platt, I hereby appoint you honorary Major General. You've been compared to the rank of me; we're both the same now."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Platt: Said, "You treat me like a dog is you want too."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Platt: He's a hell of a nice guy.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Platt: But he was ...

Ed Metzler: That's a great story!

Mr. Platt: Yeah, but ...

Ed Metzler: But you did the Honor Flights up to ...

Mr. Platt: I did, I ... I did, I did two Honor Flights.

Ed Metzler: Two of them!

Mr. Platt: I went to that one in Washington D.C. and one that ... New Orleans. They had Gary Senise. You know who Gary Senise is, don't you? Lieutenant ... ?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: Lieutenant Tim, Lieutenant Tom with no feet?

Ed Metzler: Right! Right. Yeah, he's a big supporter of the World War II effort now since he was in that movie.

Mr. Platt: He ... he ... well, his (pause) he carried us to the ... the foundation of ... the ... the charter ... we went on a chartered airplane to New Orleans, and ... and I'll shut her down. He ... he come right on the airplane and sat right beside me all the way ... all the way to San Antonio. I talked to him.

Ed Metzler: That's good, that is something.

Mr. Platt: I got ... on my hundredth birthday, I got a picture of him that's hanging in there behind my ... over my ... behind ... behind my chair (unintelligible) back wall.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: But he ... not only autographed, but he wrote a ...

Ed Metzler: A note.

Mr. Platt: ... he wrote a note on it. "To my dear friend," and this and that. And I got a thanks ... some help from Honor Flight people that ... that did a lot of work to get ... got, uh, yonder, this list (unintelligible). She's a ... she's married to a Lieutenant Colonel (cough), and she was a guardian on the Honor Flight.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Platt: And (pause) I forgot what I was going to tell you now. But anyhow we ...

Ed Metzler: Well, we've ...

Mr. Platt: But ... oh, she ... she done ... she done a lot of work on getting stuff from ... she either wrote, for my hundredth birthday, she called ... she called ... I don't know who all she called or what all she done, or what all she done on the line, but out of the outfit I was in, M Company, Nineteenth Infantry ...

Ed Metzler: Hum!

Mr. Platt: ... she found out that there are ... they're now in ... they're all we got, they didn't ... I don't know whether they're still alive, I thought they was ... had deactivated them, but I don't know whether they did or not, but there was an Italian commander, C Company, Nineteenth Infantry. I said M Company, of course, this colonel is in C Company, I guess, and he sent me five t-shirts with a big ... a big emblem ... logo on it (unintelligible) five of them, mind you.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Platt: And a whole box full of stuff.

Ed Metzler: That's great. Well, I'm going to end this interview unless you've got some more stories you want to lay on me about your experiences in the military.

Mr. Platt: No, that's about all. I forgot ...

Ed Metzler: Quite some stories. Whether you like it or not, you are a real piece of history.

Mr. Platt: I know it now, I know it since (unintelligible) and there used to be a hundred ... hundred and some of us at Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, and the Alamo Chapter.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Platt: And ...

Ed Metzler: I think there's three now or something, isn't there?

Mr. Platt: I only know of two, and then they played this ... another list on me the other day there was ... they found another one somewhere. I ... they got ... and they tried to get me ... they didn't try to get me, they asked me if I would go and be willing to go to Honolulu on December the 7th.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Platt: They wanted me to go; they wanted me at Pearl Harbor for the ceremony.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Platt: And I said, "yes." And my family all said, "You shouldn't go," and this and that. And we went round and round about it. And I don't ... I don't think I should go. I ain't going anyhow.

Ed Metzler: You're not going?

Mr. Platt: No, I ... I had a guardian picked out, and I had the same guardian that went to ... went to D.C. with that ... which is ... would up with one of my dearest friends. And he says, he's my adopted son now. He adopted me, but ...

Ed Metzler: Well, I know I'll be the thousandth person to thank you for your service to our country, but you're ... you're special, and we appreciate you. And I thank you for spending the time with me today.

Mr. Platt: I'm just proud I'm still here to do anything. It's been a joy talking to you.

Ed Metzler: Thank you. Yeah. Well, it's been a privilege for me to hear your stories, and

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