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Interview with
HOWARD L. PATTON
January 5, 1999

Place of Interview: Kerrville, Texas

Interviewers: William J. Alexander

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Approved: Howard L. Patton
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

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Mr. Alexander: This is Bill Alexander interviewing Howard L. Patton for the University of North Texas Oral History Program. The interview is taking place at his home in Kerrville, Texas, on January 5, 1999.

In order to begin the interview, let's start off with when you were born and where.

Mr. Patton: I was born on August 19, 1920, in Olney, Illinois. However, that was a regional hospital. The family home was in Flora, Illinois. They have quite an athletic rivalry, so I make sure that Flora is named as my hometown.

Mr. Alexander: (Chuckle) I can imagine. So, did you grow up in Flora?

Mr. Patton: Yes, I grew up there. I went to school in Flora and graduated from Flora High School.

Mr. Alexander: Okay. I also want to know about your parents.

Mr. Patton: My father, Howard Thomas Patton, was born in

Flora on the large farm of Major General Lewis Baldwin Parsons of the Civil War. My mother was Alma Rose Lewis, who had been born in 1895 in a "soddy" [sod-built house] out in far west Kansas north of Goodland. My middle name is the name that I grew up with--Howard Lewis Patton--and that's from her family name.

Alexander: Tell me about the general. Tell me, if you can, about your grandfather's relationship with him.

Patton: Well, my grandfather lived in Albion, Michigan. The general wanted a person to run his farm down in southern Illinois, and he recruited my grandfather through a brother of his. My grandfather then came down and settled. That's how the family got to be there in Flora.

Alexander: Okay. I want to get back to your grandfather. Was he a Michigan volunteer?

Patton: No. No one of my family was in any of the nation's wars, that is, the immediate family. I do have ancestors who were in the American Revolution, and I belong to the SAR [Sons of the American Revolution].

Alexander: Yes, I knew that you did. I thought, though, that the brigadier general who owned the farm--was he not your...

Patton: No, he was the employer, and my grandfather was the employee.

Alexander: Oh, okay.

Patton: Incidentally, Parsons and his brother established Parsons College in Fairfield, Iowa.

Alexander: Now, you lived in Flora. Your father, also, grew up in Flora.

Patton: My father graduated from high school and immediately went to work for the post office. He had about forty-six-and-a-half years with the post office there in that small town.

Alexander: And you, of course, then went through your schooling there and through high school. When did you graduate from high school?

Patton: In May of 1938.

Alexander: Okay.

Patton: I went to the University of Illinois [Champaign-Urbana, Illinois] in September of 1938.

Alexander: Were you there on a scholarship?

Patton: As a matter of fact, yes. I wrote for and was able to win what they called a "County Scholarship." I think that two scholarships per county were given [by the University of Illinois]. That was back in the days when tuition was, I think, \$35 a semester.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: So, the total amount [of the scholarship] was \$290, which included a \$10 matriculation fee--whatever that was.

Alexander: Whatever that meant (chuckle). Okay. Well, that's

rather unique from what I've ever heard; I mean, I'd think that that's wonderful. That gave at least two people [a collage education]. Did you say that there were two from each county?

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: That was great. All right. Then when did you graduate? What was your major in college?

Patton: Geology. I worked half-time at the Illinois Geological Survey for a couple of years, so I was not able to take a full course-load. I was commissioned in ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps] prior to graduating from college.

Alexander: Okay. When was that, now? When were you commissioned?

Patton: I was commissioned on May 25, 1942.

Alexander: Oh, okay.

Patton: Then I went on active duty down at Camp Hulen at Palacios [Texas] on June 3, 1942.

Alexander: So, I assume that as soon as you graduated, you went directly to active duty.

Patton: Right, correct. That's on Matagorda Bay.

Alexander: What did you do there?

Patton: Well, I was a second lieutenant then, of course. Three of us came down from the University of Illinois on the train together and reported for duty. Others from that class also joined that outfit, which was the

607th Coast Artillery Antiaircraft Regiment. We trained there at Palacios mostly with the cadre, and the fillers [full complement of personnel] finally came in several months later. Then we had a full training schedule at that time.

Alexander: When you say a "training schedule," was this training in infantry tactics and that sort of thing?

Patton: Well, no. It was the antiaircraft part of operating the guns, tracking planes, and so forth.

Alexander: You didn't really do any infantry training.

Patton: No. We did some marching there, and we learned a lot, but not any infantry tactics.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: We did do bayonet drill under a German, who nearly ruined all of us, but he made us very adept with the bayonet, which I didn't have to use.

Alexander: I understand that. Okay, how long were you there?

Patton: We were there from June [1942] until March, 1943.

Alexander: What were your duties as an officer there?

Patton: Well, I had various duties, two of which were kind of interesting. One was as the regimental recreation officer because I had played some ball in high school and a little bit in college. That meant that I took enlisted men to dances at El Campo, Wharton, Bay City [all in Texas], and so forth--not a good assignment. The other was better, and I became the rifle

instructor for the regiment. I had done quite a bit of rifle work and was on the ROTC rifle team at the university, at least as my time allowed.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: That was an interesting thing and a very gratifying one, too.

Alexander: Yes, yes, using the Garand rifle.

Patton: Right. The one claim to fame that I have is that I set the camp record one day, and since they have, of course, disbanded the camp, as far as I know, I've still got it (chuckle).

Alexander: You still have it, okay. Well, that sounds like a fairly good deal (chuckle). Now, this antiaircraft unit...what do you call it? I mean, you weren't a battalion.

Patton: No, I was appointed as a platoon leader.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: That just involved training with the guns.

Alexander: Yes, right. On this training, now, you were down near the Gulf [of Mexico]. Did you shoot at [airplane-towed target] "sleeves" and that sort of thing?

Patton: Yes. The 2nd Battalion, of which I was a member, went down to Indianola [Texas], to the firing range, and we did shoot our guns at that old historic place, which, of course, is not there anymore. It washed away in two hurricanes. But we did shoot at targets there

that were towed by the Air Force.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: At first, it [our firing practice] was at stationary targets because they didn't have enough planes, I guess, to provide to us.

Alexander: They wanted you to shoot at something else first.

Patton: Yes, to shoot at something. As a matter of fact, that was during the time that the migratory birds were flying over. I think that maybe there was some tracking on some geese at about that time.

Alexander: I'll bet (chuckle). In that same area, I've noted in some of the background material that you lent me and let me use...I wanted to ask you about practicing with anti-aircraft equipment to also use it on a level plane for whatever it might be considered as traditional artillery. Was that something that you also learned in that training?

Patton: Yes, we also did that. We could shoot at targets offshore--buoys--that we would have set up.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: And that came in handy in the both New Guinea and the Philippines.

Alexander: Yes. But I've often thought that the anti-aircraft battalions or groups were strictly that. Of course, my experience was aboard ships, so I'm not very well-versed in terms of the land. But in seeing that, it

looked like that was an excellent way of getting people [Japanese soldiers] out of these caves.

Patton: The 40-millimeter was a high muzzle velocity weapon, and it was just like firing a rifle. We could aim it, and it was a powerful weapon. Then we had the quadruple-mount .50 [-caliber] machine guns, the M-51. That was also a great weapon. Concerning the caves, we didn't do a lot of that. In fact, I think that history points out that we offered to do that, and we were told to mind our own business. Then, finally, they came to us.

Alexander: Well, we'll get to that. That's interesting because that becomes very much kind of a strategic thing. Now, when you left your training, by now you guys could shoot anything out of the air that flew, I assume.

Patton: (Chuckle) With some success.

Alexander: All right, yes, I'm sure that you had some success. Where did you go from there?

Patton: I went to Camp Cooke, California, near Lompoc, which is now Vandenberg Air Force Base. The 5th Armored Division was there, and they left soon afterwards. Then the 6th Armored Division came there. I guess that we were probably attached to them, but we were not really a part of any armored division. We continued to do a lot of marching, overnight bivouacs,

tracking of planes that were sent over from Santa Maria Airfield.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: In general, we thought that we got pretty good.

Alexander: Yes. And you were continuing your training. Where are we now? What timeframe? We started in June.

Patton: Well, that would have been in June of 1942. Then we left Camp Hulen in March of 1943 for Camp Cook. Then we left there in November of 1943.

Alexander: Of 1943, okay. How did you leave, and did you know where you were going?

Patton: By that time I think that we knew, but we did have one interesting assignment.

Alexander: Oh, good.

Patton: During that time we were sent down to San Diego [California] to train with the Marines on making an amphibious landing. We made one trip out to San Clemente Island for a regular assault landing. Then we loaded up and came back.

Alexander: Now, how does that work with an antiaircraft group? You have to land; I mean, you would land with all of your equipment.

Patton: Right.

Alexander: From LSTs [Landing Ship Tank] or what?

Patton: Yes, LSTs. Of course, you load in reverse order. The stuff that you want first [is loaded last so that

it] is the first to come out of the boat. That's was what this exercise was, of course, just a landing exercise.

Alexander: Yes, okay.

Patton: We got our first touch of seasickness.

Alexander: That's true (chuckle). And that's harder to do there than it might have been later. Okay, now you're prepared, and now you know that you're going to be some landings as well, or are likely to where you're going to go.

Patton: I think that we got...I'm not sure when the word came down, but we learned that we would be going in the Pacific area rather than the European Theater. We went up to Camp Stoneman at Pittsburg, California, and we went down to the port of embarkation on what I'm virtually positive was the vessel that became the [paddle-wheel, steam-driven riverboat] Delta Queen.

Alexander: Really.

Patton: I've been on the Queen since then, and I'm positive of it. I've had correspondence with the Delta Queen ownership.

Alexander: Are you talking about the Mississippi and Ohio River traveling Delta Queen--the paddle-wheel riverboat?

Patton: Yes. You know, they sailed it down through the [Panama] Canal and up. They refurbished it at Avondale Shipyards in New Orleans [Louisiana].

Alexander: I don't think that I knew that.

Patton: We knew the man who performed the final inspection and so forth. But there were six [regularly scheduled, passenger-carrying] paddle-wheelers in operation at that time. We've eliminated four of them. Then there's a choice between two, and, as I've said, I've been on the Delta Queen since then, and I'm positive that that's the same boat. But I can't get verification. I'm sure that someplace there are log books, but...

Alexander: Yes, there would have to be.

Patton: ...I don't have access to them. But then we went...are we ready to go overseas?

Alexander: Yes, we sure are.

Patton: We sailed under the Golden Gate [Bridge, San Francisco, California] with great reluctance on my part, at least, on November 24, 1943.

Alexander: Aboard what ship?

Patton: Aboard the USS West Point, which had been the America before the war.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: It was a luxury liner.

Alexander: Right.

Patton: And someone said that it had made only one trans-Atlantic trip--its maiden voyage.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: It was fast, and we had no escort. It was an uneventful voyage, except that this was right before Thanksgiving, and, of course, I got seasick when we hit those swells coming out of the Golden Gate. Guys were coming back down into the stateroom saying, "You'd better go get something to eat! They've got turkey and dressing and gravy." That was not what my tummy wanted (chuckle)

Alexander: (Chuckle) Not exactly. You said that you left with regret. Of course, that would be an understatement for everybody, I'd think, to have to leave the United States. Were you married at this time?

Patton: Yes, and I should have mentioned that before.

Alexander: Let's get that in here.

Patton: I was married on October 15, 1942, in Houston [Texas], to a girl from Algona, Iowa--Margaret Nelson. She had come to visit a friend in Champaign when I worked there at the Illinois Geological Survey. She came back and got a job with the liberal arts college of the university. So, we dated for a year, and then I went on active duty. I went back up and got her and brought her back down to Houston, and we were married there. Then she accompanied us--as did most of the wives--to California. Then, when I left there, she went home to Algona. She got there one night, and the next morning they came after her to work at the

prisoner-of-war base camp in Algona.

Alexander: Oh!

Patton: ...which was just being constructed. So, that became a very interesting thing for her. She worked there until the day she left to meet me in Saint Louis Missouri].

Alexander: Were they incarcerating German or Japanese prisoners?

Patton: It was a camp for Germans, and then later some Italian prisoners were kept there. They didn't have any Japanese prisoners at all.

Alexander: No, I don't think that they ever mixed them up. So, when you went under the Golden Gate Bridge, she went back to Algona.

Patton: Yes, to Algona.

Alexander: Were there any children?

Patton: Not at that time. We had one born in New Orleans [Louisiana] in 1949, and one was born in Pensacola [Florida] in 1953.

Alexander: So, you had no children until after you got out of the service.

Patton: Right.

Alexander: The trip...when you were going across, did you know your destination? First of all, did you stop at Pearl Harbor?

Patton: No, we went directly over. We were supposedly heading for Sydney [Australia], and the "scuttlebutt" [rumor]

was that south of New Caledonia we got orders to proceed directly to Milne Bay [Papua, New Guinea], which was the first time that a ship like that had gone directly up there.

Alexander: Now, Milne Bay is in New Guinea.

Patton: It is the extreme southeast tip of New Guinea.

Alexander: Yes, okay.

Patton: We proceeded there.

Alexander: Now, the Japanese were holding--I don't know about Milne Bay--part of New Guinea.

Patton: The big battle at Milne Bay had been, oh, I guess, maybe a year before that. Of course, they were scattered all up the coast, but we had no problem there.

Alexander: They didn't try to interdict with a ship like that.

Patton: No, no. We heard that "Tokyo Rose" had us "pegged" [identified], but, you know, at my level I didn't know whether that was correct or not.

Alexander: Sure, sure.

Patton: We were a little apprehensive going up into those waters.

Alexander: Yes, because of submarines. So, in other words, it was an uneventful passage, except for getting your sealegs.

Patton: Right.

Alexander: Okay, what happened now?

Patton: Well, we got to Milne Bay. [Referring to and gesturing toward personal document] I have a map here of it. We set up camp in the jungle. With a lot of hard work, we made a really nice place out of it. You know, if you're going to live someplace, you might as well do it the best that you can.

It became just kind of a garrison thing, but one interesting thing happened. We had had a real good baseball team on the West Coast at Camp Cooke, and they started that again at Milne Bay. They made a beautiful [baseball] diamond, and they put up searchlights and pointed them away to some reflective panels, and they played night baseball there. There were two big replacement depots there, and, of course, those guys had no unit affiliation. They were homesick; they had just gotten there. I don't know how many minds we saved [restoring morale] by means of those night baseball games. I have not heard of any of that being done anyplace else. They were real proud of it. I didn't play. I was mainly just the recreation officer, so all that I could do was cheer. We had a good team.

Alexander: That's really interesting because that's pretty important. That was a really good thing for the morale of everybody who was there.

Patton: Oh, yes. Morale, you know, was at rock bottom in a

replacement depot. That really helped out.

Alexander: Was there any kind of Japanese scares or anything like that while you were there?

Patton: No. The worst scare that we had was when a kangaroo ran down the battery street one night (chuckle), and that created a little bit of a stir. But there were no Japanese scares and no Japanese air attacks.

Alexander: What was your primary duty around there, then? Just to secure it? Were you securing it? Was that part of it?

Patton: Well, it was pretty much a staging situation, and I think that history points out that they [reference to the forces of General Douglas A. MacArthur] were waiting for the dry season up on the north coast.

Alexander: Oh, okay.

Patton: So, we were at Milne Bay longer, I think, than they had planned for us to be there.

Alexander: Okay. Now, you were attached to what?

Patton: At that time we were completely separate. I should have mentioned that back in, I think, January of 1943, the coast artillery antiaircraft regiments were separated into three battalions. The 1st Battalion had 90-millimeter guns; the 2nd Battalion had 40-millimeter Bofors guns and the M-51 multiple-mount machine guns; the 3rd Battalion was equipped with searchlights.

Alexander: Oh.

Patton: So, we just went wherever we were told to go.

Alexander: Now, you were in the 2nd Battalion.

Patton: We were in the 2nd Battalion, and that became the 202nd Battalion. They renamed it.

Alexander: When you were there, it didn't have that designation.

Patton: Yes, at the latter part of Camp Hulen, we did. Yes, because that was in, I think, January.

Alexander: Okay, I want to ask you a question about your weapons. You were talking about Bofors. Tell us what a Bofors is.

Patton: Well, it was a 40-millimeter gun. It fired, I think, 120 rounds per minute at an extremely high muzzle velocity. It was electrically controlled by what we called a "fire director." However, it could be manually controlled, too, if the electricity went out.

Alexander: Was it powered by batteries?

Patton: Well, they had a generator.

Alexander: A generator, sure.

Patton: The M-51 was placed to guard the so-called "dead area," which would have the fire director, and a lot of us thought that it should have been the primary weapon because it was a pretty awesome thing--that machine gun.

But the Bofors gun was a marvelous thing. I think that every fifth round [fired from the Bofors

gun] may have been a tracer. I frankly don't remember, but you could, you know, follow them.

Alexander: This was antiaircraft artillery.

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: And it's 40-millimeter.

Patton: Yes, but it could be depressed to zero [the full horizontal position for the purposes of firing at surface vessels]. Our men often said when they were working on it to, you know, oil it and so forth: "Elevate it up! Elevate it down!"

Alexander: Let's see. Now, we're waiting for these monsoons to leave, and they finally do.

Patton: Then we went on a liberty ship up to Finschhaven and spent a horrible time there of, I think, five days, maybe six, in some of the deepest mud that you can imagine. For what reason, we didn't know. Then after that, we went on up the coast and split into two different units.

Alexander: What coast were you on, now?

Patton: We were on the north coast of New Guinea.

Alexander: Okay.

Patton: I didn't know then--and I'm not even really sure now--just who did what and where, but part of the outfit went to Aitape, and made the invasion in the Toem area of Dutch...excuse me. We went from Finschhaven to Hollandia on an LST. Then we went from

Hollandia...just the next day part of the outfit hit Toem as the assault wave. Then the field artillery pounded Wakde Island, which was a couple of miles offshore. That was where the airfield was.

Alexander: The Japanese airfield?

Patton: Yes. There was a lot of resistance there.

Alexander: Now, let's go back. You're talking about your outfit, the 202nd Battalion.

Patton: Yes. My battery, A Battery, went to Toem and set up there, but D Battery and, I believe, one platoon from C Battery went over and participated in the assault on Wakde Island after the bombardment from the mainland.

Alexander: Oh.

Patton: And they had a lot of resistance there--*banzai* attacks and so forth. Eventually, when the Japanese were exterminated there, that became a kind of safe haven, except from bombing. But along the north coast where my battery--A Battery--was, that was a bad situation from the day that we landed until the day that we took off for Leyte months later.

Alexander: Oh, really.

Patton: Yes. We never got a good night's sleep.

Alexander: Due to enemy action?

Patton: Yes. You know that MacArthur, by using leap-frog tactics, had bypassed an awful lot of Japanese.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: And they were going, I guess, toward Tokyo or someplace. Well, they were trying to get to Sarmi Point, which was well up the beach from Toem.

Alexander: "Well up the beach," meaning what? Fifty miles?

Patton: No, it was more like fifteen miles, I guess, from Toem.

Alexander: Okay.

Patton: I'm not real sure.

Alexander: That's all right.

Patton: I'd have to check the map. I think that for all of us in that phase, that was the thing that we remember most about the entire war. We had activity later, but that was the bad time. We were extremely vulnerable, and I think that later books have pointed that out. The book The Approach to the Philippines has a pretty good-sized section on that situation.

Alexander: Well, you say this primarily because of Japanese air strikes?

Patton: No, it was ground troops.

Alexander: There were that many ground troops in there, or were they being landed there?

Patton: No, apparently there were more--probably double the number--there than there were estimated.

Alexander: I see.

Patton: Then all of these characters were coming up from the Aitape and Driniumor River area, as I said, walking

someplace--walking west. I think that if they had bunched up, they probably could have wiped us out.

Alexander: Run you off the beach, because you were basically on the beach there, weren't you?

Patton: Yes. We didn't get very far inland. We were right on the beach. In fact, vehicles used the beach. It was pretty hard-packed sand. Then, ultimately, there was a road made inland, oh, perhaps, 100 yards from the beach. That was not used, of course, at night except under extreme circumstances.

Alexander: How long were you in Dutch New Guinea?

Patton: Let's see. We got there in late May of 1943, and we left there in early November of 1944 for Leyte.

Alexander: So, now, you're headed toward Leyte, which was in October.

Patton: Yes. The A-Day [reference to D-Day for the invasion of Leyte] was October 20, and, as I understand it...I've not been able to get confirmation from my good buddies on this, but it was my distinct impression at the time that we were scheduled to make the landing at Leyte, and we had such high tides there....well, we called it by then Maffin Bay. That actually, I think, was a bit farther up the coast. But at Toem and Maffin Bay...the LSTs were afraid that they would...what's the Navy term? Broach, I believe.

Alexander: Yes, broach.

Patton: So, we were not...I never saw anything like that before or since. The whole doggone ocean just rose. But, at any rate, we marked time there until we went to Leyte. So, we did not make the assault landing at Leyte, but we did set up some guns near Tacloban.

Alexander: Now, Tacloban is where?

Patton: It's on the east side of the island of Leyte.

Alexander: Okay, it's on the east side. And the landing beach was where? Where the 6th Army landed?

Patton: Right.

Alexander: They landed on the 20th.

Patton: Yes, the 20th was their target date, and they landed then. I think that I saw in my records that we were landed eighteen or twenty days after the initial landing. So, as I said, we did not participate in that. However, there were still Japanese ground activities in and around there, so it was not a happy thing altogether.

Alexander: No.

Patton: Then, of course, there was [Japanese] air activity, too.

Alexander: Of course, that was your thing--the air activity.

Patton: Yes, there were other antiaircraft outfits that were actually set up there with that as their primary mission, and we were, again, pretty much staging. We set up, as I recall, one gun section per platoon.

Each platoon had four gun sections, and we didn't set up the others.

Then we were made ready for another major step here. We were put on LSTs to go to the Mindoro invasion...

Alexander: That was another month later.

Patton: ...which was that tremendous end run--around the left end--that put us in the western part of the Philippines.

Alexander: You had been in the eastern part, so you had to come around.

Patton: Yes, and all through the Sulu Sea and up. Mindoro is on the western part.

Alexander: How long did it take you to get there?

Patton: Oh, gee! I think that it was maybe four days. I don't recall.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: But there was one event on that that I remember very clearly. We had just had evening chow [on December 13, 1944], and we came up on the top deck of the LST and saw the [Japanese *kamikaze*] plane come out from behind one of the islands and hit the Nashville [CL-43], and, of course, that created all sorts of problems. I don't know how many were killed. It hit just right at the bridge. The executive officer of the task force, Colonel [Bruce C.] Hill, was killed;

and the commanding officer, Brigadier General [William C.] Dunckel, was wounded, but he was able to carry on.

Alexander: That was a cruiser, wasn't it? The Nashville?

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: And they got a *kamikaze* hit right at the bridge.

Patton: The Nashville was on the right flank--to the starboard side (chuckle). I was on the starboard side of our LST enjoying the evening, except that there was antiaircraft activity. A plane suddenly came out from behind one of the islands and came out over, more or less, the center of the convoy, and then it dived into the Nashville's bridge from the port side.

Alexander: So, you had a catbird's view of it? You saw it all?

Patton: Oh, it was right there, yes. It was the first real action like that that I'd ever seen.

Alexander: How far away was she, do you think?

Patton: Well, the convoy was constricted to go through a channel, which was...

Alexander: A strait?

Patton: ...a strait, which was probably why he [the Japanese *kamikaze* pilot] chose that area [to patrol].

Alexander: Sure.

Patton: So, I wouldn't know in terms of yards or miles.

Alexander: No, but it was pretty close.

Patton: It was pretty close. [Editor's note: The event recounted by Mr. Patton occurred shortly before 1500

hours on December 13, 1944, as the Nashville was rounding the southern cape of Negros. A Japanese kamikaze pilot flying a Val dive-bomber came in low astern the cruiser and crashed into the port side behind Admiral Arthur D. Struble's cabin. Struble was in command of the Mindoro Attack Group. Both bombs carried by the Val exploded and caused fires to break out immediately. The flag bridge, combat information center, and communications center were destroyed. As fire spread, ready ammunition from the 5-inch guns and 40-millimeter gun mounts began to go off. In addition to the Japanese pilot and Colonel Hill, more than 130 other men were killed, among them Admiral Struble's chief-of-staff, Captain E. W. Abdill, and Colonel John T. Murtha, commander of the 310th Bombardment Wing. Moreover, 190 personnel were wounded. The destroyer Stanly rendered aid, and eventually the crippled cruiser returned to Leyte Gulf.]

Alexander: That was pretty frightening.

Patton: Then we proceeded on and made the assault landings at Mindoro Beach at San Jose. That's in the southern part of the island. There was a Japanese airfield near there. We were on the first wave because they didn't expect any ground opposition, and they got none. But they wanted the antiaircraft guns set up as quickly as they could.

Alexander: Around the airfield.

Patton: Well, actually, just right on the beach. The airfield was a little bit inland. With all of the unloading there on the beach, we were pretty much "sitting ducks" [an easy target]. Of course, the Jap planes would come along parallel to the beach and go right down the line...

Alexander: ...strafing them

Patton: ...strafing the LSTs. The M-51 machine guns were put on a searchlight trailer, and it worked very well, except in deep sand. We had a heck of a time getting across that sandy beach with those trailers. We set up very quickly, and I think that we did really well.

[Tape paused briefly]

Patton: We were set up there on the beach, and then some of the outfits went inland to the airstrip. Ultimately, my platoon--with four guns--was on the southeast end of the beachhead, and one platoon of C Battery--"Charlie" Battery--was on the far opposite end. We were pretty lonely out there, and a little field artillery outfit--a forward observer's post--came and got close to the gun where I was headquartered. So, we kind of took them in for mess [eating facilities] and so forth and became very fond of them. They had a little ol' 37-millimeter gun, which didn't look very big.

Alexander: (Chuckle)

Patton: The lieutenant--Hingst--who, I think, had been an honorable mention All-American [football player] at the University of Minnesota [Minneapolis, Minnesota] before the war--a real nice guy--came over one day, and he said, "You know, we've heard that there are two forces headed this way, and one of them is known to be Japanese." Well, of course, I hadn't heard that. So, I went to the field phone in my tent, and I called the battalion headquarters. The officer who was there--who took my call--thought that was the funniest thing that he'd ever heard. He really chewed me out in a nice way--and we're real close friends now, and were then although he was a captain at that time. I said, "Well, that's just what I heard."

So, I went back to my duties, and I'll bet that it wasn't fifteen minutes later that my field phone nearly jangled off of the tent pole where it was anchored, and he was a completely changed man. He had gotten the word through the official staff, so we kind of hunkered down. I was hoping that the battalion commander would say, "Now, you fellows can on back to the hill." You know, "Get your canteens full [and so forth]." But he didn't say that. So, then here we were, fully expecting an [enemy] assault landing.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: That was what we thought. You know, with only one platoon of fewer than 100 men, that was not a good prospect. So, that was probably the most exciting time that we had. That was the night of December 26 [1944]. We had just nearly been starved, and we had gotten our Christmas rations, as I recall, that morning--December 26--and had gorged on them. So, we were in pretty good shape that way.

Alexander: How were they coming at you?

Patton: They were offshore shelling us.

Alexander: Their navy, in other words.

Patton: Their navy. As far as I know, they didn't hit a thing. They didn't hit a thing.

There was a PT base down at Caminawit Point, southeast of where we were, and those guys would come up parallel with the beach, and they must--in the moonlight--have seen my gun section, and they used that, I think, as a landmark. Then they would head on out and take on those ships. That was impressive. They would come back. I remember that a couple of them came back, and, of course, that bulb up on that PT....

Alexander: The radar thing?

Patton: The radar. That little vessel would be leaning over to the side, you know, and you could see it very clearly. I had one man who wanted to shoot one coming

in, and I thought that I was going to have to stop him at gunpoint. He thought that it was a Jap boat, and I told him that it wasn't. He was not a very smart man, anyway, and we've not been able to find him since the war [for a unit reunion]...

Alexander: (Chuckle)

Patton: ...and that has suited all of us. But I seriously thought of taking him at gunpoint. At any rate, at the same time, then, planes were making just a circle route. They'd take off, go out, drop their bombs, come back...

Alexander: Whose planes were these?

Patton: These were our planes.

Alexander: Okay.

Patton: They'd go out, drop their bombs, come back, reload, rearm, and go out again. But the Japanese...I guess that they were carrier planes...

Alexander: They didn't have any carriers by then.

Patton: They didn't have any? Well, I don't know where they were coming from. They must have come in from Luzon, then, at that time. I don't know.

Alexander: They very well could have.

Patton: They got into this flight pattern, and I remember that you could almost reach up and touch those "meatballs" [reference to red, rising sun insignia designating Japanese warplanes], but we were not supposed to fire.

I've always wondered if I shouldn't have tried to hit one with an M-1 [Garand rifle], but I didn't do it.

Alexander: (Chuckle)

Patton: At any rate, eventually, obviously, they [the Japanese] pulled out, and we were okay.

Alexander: That's really interesting because they were Japanese planes, and they were shooting at our planes, were they?

Patton: Well, they were in the same pattern.

Alexander: In the pattern. What were they doing?

Patton: Well, I presume that they were trying to get a bead on an American plane and shoot it down. I can't say that I ever saw any shots being fired, but they were in the pattern.

Alexander: That's really amazing. How many would you say were in there?

Patton: Well, I saw two or three. I don't know whether there might have been more, but it was a pretty impressive sight to see those "meatballs" just really not very far off the ground above you.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: But at that time, you wish that you had done something completely different.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: And then the darned things were gone. You know, I had hunted quite a bit in my life, but they still were

faster than anything I'd ever hunted (chuckle).

Alexander: (Chuckle) Yes. That's a wild thing. Well, that's really interesting because I would have thought that if they had had a chance...I would have thought that our planes would have shot them down. Maybe they didn't identify them.

Patton: Well, I suspect that...of course, that was at night, and I remember that it was moonlight. But it was still at night.

[Tape 1, Side 2]

Alexander: You're probably right. Because it was night, they might have been afraid of shooting each other down.

[Tape paused briefly]

Patton: Eventually, my platoon moved inland, around the air strip, and...

Alexander: We were at the 26th of December [1944], so we're now close to the first of the year.

Patton: Yes, it was probably about the first of the year. The thing that I remember, and the thing that's important about it, is that we were in the tall grass, which I think is *cogon* grass. I don't know. And the rats were in there by the thousands! Of course, that was dangerous. One of our men got typhus, and we lost him from the unit. He did not return, although, as far as I know, he lived. We would shoot at them with a .22 [-caliber rifle] that someone had traded with someone

from the Navy. But for every one that you'd shoot, there'd be a dozen come on. So, that was interesting.

Then at about that time--and I should have mentioned this before--B Battery came up on a supply convoy after we did, and their LST-460 was *kamikazied* and sunk. We lost two officers and two enlisted men from our battalion.

Alexander: From your battalion.

Patton: Others were lost, but those were the ones from our battalion. It was a pretty interesting thing. One aspect of it was that we had a man from Amarillo [Texas] who eventually found his way to his gun section, which was the one that I had been headquartered at, and he looked like he had been through a ship sinking. He was a mess with oil and everything. He wanted to know where he could clean up. Well, on Mindoro we would dig a hole down pretty close to the waterline on the beach, and the hydrostatic head would bring freshwater in.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: It wasn't salty like you would think. Then we'd sink a fifty-five-gallon drum with both ends cut out, and we had the sweetest, best water that you could imagine.

Alexander: (Chuckle)

Patton: So, he said, "Where can I clean up?" Someone kind of

pointed and said, "That's our well over there." The next thing that we saw, he was down in the fifty-five gallon drum just scrubbing up a storm.

Alexander: (Chuckle)

Patton: And as I said in my write-up, "He escaped drowning once, but he darned near got it then on dry land."

Alexander: (Chuckle) I'll bet that he did that time. His bathtub was your drinking water.

Patton: And also at that time--and I think that a lot of people who were on Mindoro will remember this--a *kamikaze* hit either a munitions ship or a ship loaded with fuel. I don't remember which. That was the forerunner of the atomic bomb. Boy, there was a cloud that went up, and, of course, we didn't know. We thought that it might be [poison] gas. It was coming out over the beachhead, then, toward us. And you've never seen such a scramble for gas masks, and, of course, they were at the bottom of our barracks bags.

Alexander: I'm sure.

Patton: I think that that was the time that I was absolutely terrorized. I had been scared a lot before, but this time there was no defense if that had been [poison] gas. Of course, it was just vaporized seawater.

Alexander: Was that a U.S. ship?

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: Well, you said that it was a *kamikaze*?

Patton: It was offshore.

Alexander: It could have been fuel for aircraft. You know, all of that aircraft fuel at that time was 100-octane. [Editor's note: The episode that Mr. Patton discussed with Mr. Alexander occurred at 1012 hours on the morning of December 28, 1944, when two groups of three *kamikazes* each attacked the aviation fuel-laden tanker Porcupine and the liberty ships William Sharon and John Burke. The Porcupine was overshoot by the *kamikaze* attacking it, but both the liberty ships were hit. The ammunition-laden Burke exploded and sank with all sixty-eight hands and Master Herbert A. Falk. The Sharon, carrying gasoline, TNT, trucks, rations, and--much needed--beer, was heavily damaged by fire. It was later towed back to Leyte, much to the chagrin of the thirsty U.S. forces on Mindoro.]

Patton: But at Mindoro, then, after the beachhead situation, we got a lot--an awful lot--of Jap air attacks both day and night. We were very successful and did quite well according to the records.

Alexander: When you say that, you're talking about shooting them down.

Patton: Yes, our battalion shooting them down. We're very proud of the fact that we never fired on a friendly plane, and I don't believe that all of the anti-aircraft outfits can say that.

Alexander: No.

Patton: So, we're very proud of that. But there was no ground opposition. I think that there were Japanese up in the northern part of the island, but we had no problems with them. That phase was pretty well ended by then.

Alexander: When did they secure...when did MacArthur say that he had secured Mindoro (chuckle)?

Patton: Well...

Alexander: I know that it was on the 25th of June or whatever.

Patton: Well, it was at about fifteen minutes after we landed, I think (chuckle).

Alexander: (Chuckle) Yes.

Patton: As for Mindoro, that was probably right, because there was no ground opposition. I really can't say. But we did stay there, then, until March 10, 1945, when we went on to Zamboanga. So, a lot of the time that we were at Mindoro, in the last few weeks, was just waiting.

Alexander: How long would you say that you were on Mindoro? Of course, then the 6th Army went on into Luzon and so forth, and I think that they had secured that at about that time, in about March.

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: How much enemy activity would you have had after they got into Luzon?

Patton: I think that we had none, because by that time all of their efforts were centered there at Lingayen Gulf.

But I do remember, too, that the C-47s left the Mindoro airfield for the parachute drop on Corregidor. Of course, we didn't know what they were doing, but we saw them take off, I guess, early in the morning or maybe before daylight, I don't know. At any rate, when they would come back, some of their doors were still open. Maybe that's the way that paratroop aircraft do, but we knew then that there had been a paratroop drop and that the Americans were at Corregidor.

Alexander: That was another question that I had. Once the Japanese were no longer interested in your airstrip, what was flying off there? Was it mostly supplies?

Patton: Yes, supplies, but we still had bombers and fighter planes going on up from there. In fact, there was a pilot who shot down seven [Japanese planes] on one mission, and his wingman got three. He wound up, the last that I heard, as a lieutenant colonel. He was from the state of Pennsylvania and had a German name that I would have remembered other than right now. When he came back, he made two victory rolls down the field. We thought: "Gee! That guy has done a pretty good job!" He went way out, and he came back, and he did two more. We thought: "He really did a good job!"

He came back and did two more, and by that time we decided that he had broken the rules, you know.

Alexander: (Chuckle)

Patton: Then everyone went back to his work. Then he went way out, and on the fourth pass he made a screamer of a victory roll. And by that time, some of our fellows decided that they had better check. You know, in an outfit you've always got people who can find out things.

Alexander: Yes, you can (chuckle).

Patton: They went over, and they found out that he had shot down seven planes. That's one of the high points of my career.

Alexander: (Chuckle)

Patton: I remember seeing seven victory rolls at one time.

Alexander: Yes, yes. What kind of an airplane was he flying? Do you remember?

Patton: I think that it was a P-51.

Alexander: Oh, it probably was.

Patton: The P-38s were very popular, but I think that in this case that it was a P-51.

Alexander: Well, it sounds like it would have been a P-51, because they were excellent, excellent airplanes. Now, you were going to be leaving in March, and you were going up to...what is it?

Patton: Well, we went down to Zamboanga.

Alexander: Okay. Zamboanga.

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: Help me with Zamboanga,

Patton: Well, that's at the extreme southern tip of the Zamboanga Peninsula of Mindanao, and that's, I guess, the closest thing to Borneo and places like that.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: It has been a beautiful city right on the tip. It gets good air circulation. I think that [General John ("Black Jack")] Pershing was stationed there for a while, if I remember correctly.

Alexander: I know the name, but I just didn't remember quite where it was. Now, what was your assignment there?

Patton: Well, we made the assault landing at Zamboanga because of the Japanese planes in some of the islands to the south, I guess, and maybe on Mindanao itself. So, our battalion was loaded in the landing craft so that we'd be off in a hurry. Then they got the guns set up very quickly. That was kind of a "hairy" [risky] thing. We bivouacked pretty close to the beach at first, and the Japs got into a big fuel dump and "ammo" [ammunition] dump right behind us and set it afire. That was pretty exciting--a lot of pyrotechnics.

Alexander: (Chuckle)

Patton: One interesting thing happened. Probably the first night that we were there, or maybe the second night,

we heard a motor offshore, a little boat motor, and then we'd hear someone call. Then the motor would pick up and get a little closer, and they'd call again. We couldn't understand what they were saying.

It finally got up close enough, and by that time I was down on the beach, and I had a flashlight. I didn't know Morse Code--I knew that they didn't, either--but I was trying to signal them to come on in. I didn't have any luck until, finally, I kind of exploded, and I said, "You can stay the heck out there if you want, or you can come on in! It makes no difference to me!" That was laced with a lot of other stuff [expletives and epithets], which...

Alexander: I understand.

Patton: ...as a young man, you know....

Alexander: I'm certain that you did.

Patton: At that point, when I said that, the motor kicked up, and he came right on in, and he said, "Boy, I was glad to hear you! I knew that I was behind American lines then!" (chuckle)

Alexander: Oh, okay, because he was not sure where he was.

Patton: He didn't know where he was. Well, what happened was, he was in a little LCVP [Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel], the small Higgins boat.

Alexander: Oh, yes.

Patton: And when they lowered the ramp, apparently it hit on a

coral head, I guess, and when he walked off, he went in over his head in water. Well, I had a clean uniform because we had all done laundry up in Mindoro, so I outfitted him.

He was with the counterintelligence group, and he had come from Zamboanga City, off to the east, with reports that there was a big Jap force coming down the beach. The quote was that: "Heads were rolling in the ditches" and so forth. He used my phone to call the task force commander, General [Jens A.] Doe, of the 41st Division. He was quite a character, but we became good friends there in a short period of time. He wanted me to go into counterintelligence, but I could see myself going into the interior of China and never being heard from again.

Alexander: Not coming out (chuckle).

Patton: So, I declined his "kind offer," and since then I've been in contact with the CIC people. They're trying to find this man, and they haven't been able to do so. This was a couple of years ago. The man that hired me for Chevron was a well-known man with Chevron. He was in counterintelligence, and he was mentioned in this same bulletin that I happened to get hold of to get all of these addresses of these veterans. That was quite a thing.

Then we moved inland and set up our regular guns.

We had very little activity, but there were a lot of Jap ground forces in the area. So, we were pretty apprehensive.

Alexander: Now, was this part of the 6th Army that had gone in there, also?

Patton: I think that it was still the 6th Army.

Alexander: Or the 8th Army?

Patton: I believe that...well, see, the 8th Army...I think it was the 8th Army because it was formed on January 1, 1945.

Alexander: Yes. I was going to say that it was pretty early in 1945.

Patton: So, we were there in March. One of the things that happened there on the beach at Zamboanga...of course, there was chaos, obviously. A Jap came over and dropped a bomb, and it hit and killed a Navy man, and it splattered his body all over the truck of one of our drivers. That driver has had [mental] problems since that time. I met him at a battalion reunion several years ago.

Alexander: The driver?

Patton: The driver. He was trying to get help from the military--some sort of medical help. He hadn't been able to do that because he, himself, was not wounded physically.

Alexander: No.

Patton: But he was telling me about this, and I said--I knew him quite well--"Hubert, I wasn't there." He said, "You were standing there by me!" I said, "Hubert, I was not there." "Oh, yes, you were, Lieutenant!" And I said, "Gosh, I don't believe that I would have forgotten that." So, after that was all over and we came back home, I got to thinking, and just on the spur of the moment I called another lieutenant [from our unit who now lives] out in California We were about the same [physical] build, and he said, "Oh, yeah! I was the one who was there by Hubert." Well, he has had sight problems since that time.

Alexander: Who is he?

Patton: Lieutenant Hazen White, the other officer.

Alexander: Oh, okay.

Patton: He was the one who has written quite a bit about Mindoro. You know, neither man got a Purple Heart, but they were injured.

Alexander: Yes. It was the type of thing that you didn't get...it was part of the war. You know: "War is hell!"

Patton: We were amused in a kind of a macabre way. Hubert's main concern was: "How am I going to clean off my truck?" You know, your mind works in a kind of an odd way.

Alexander: Sure.

Patton: And that was--reportedly from what Hazen White said--
Hubert's main concern.

Alexander: He was going into shock himself at that time probably,
yes.

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: There are many stories of those things, and some
people never get over them; some just have to take it
and go with it.

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: How long were you there? Were you there now until
the end of your stay overseas?

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: Was this in an area...you said that the
Japanese...were they pretty well dug-in in that area?

Patton: They were back in the hills pretty much, but the
infantry took care of that, although we got shelled at
one of the positions where I was. In fact, I had just
turned in on the phone what I thought was a pretty
doggone good report on this shelling, you know, the
time, the direction, the estimated size of the
projectiles and so forth. I called it in, and I was
told to: "Clear the wire! That's not important!" So,
I went back to my business, but that was the only
thing that we had that was firing [at us] from the
ground that hit our outfit. But then the infantry
took care of the actual fighting back in the hills,

which was not very far away, maybe, oh, a mile, two miles or something like that.

Patton: Was this an area in which...oh, I guess that you weren't called upon to lower your guns at those targets, or were you?

Patton: No. I should have mentioned that that was back at Maffin Bay.

Alexander: Oh, at Maffin Bay.

Patton: In Dutch New Guinea.

Alexander: All right. Tell us about it.

Patton: Well, my outfit, again, was on the end of the beachhead, which would have been the eastern part of the beachhead. But then B Battery primarily went up with the 158th Regimental Combat Team, "The Bushmasters," and then later the 6th Division and then later the 31st and the 33rd because they used that as a kind of a training ground for these new outfits. That was up around the Tor River. They were trying to get to Sarmi, which was the Jap strongpoint, but I don't think that they ever got to Sarmi. But at any rate, it was in that area where our people offered to use our 40-millimeters to shoot into caves. They were at first turned down, but later they were called upon to do that.

Alexander: They didn't think that they needed you.

Patton: I think that that's right, and, also, there's a

certain amount of unit pride, you know: "By golly, we're the field artillery!" And this [information], I must say, comes largely from [what Mr. Patton has read in] the battalion history because I did not personally participate in that.

Now, at Dutch New Guinea, at Maffin Bay or Toem, we used our M-51s on Japanese ground troops...

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: ...and that was pretty spectacular. I hate to back up like this, but this...

Alexander: That's all right.

Patton: ...but I kind of overlooked something.

Alexander: We're not dealing in any real sequence with this thing.

Patton: I overlooked the biggest thing. One night...it was June 4, I think. At any rate, my gun section--A2--saw some people--presumably Japs--coming across the little ol' road that I mentioned, and they fired the M-51s at them. That converges four streams of .50-caliber at--what--1,500 yards, I think it is. It's 1,500 feet, I guess. It cut those people down, but then the next morning they went over there, and for some reason or another, I and none of the other officers went over there. But they counted anywhere from forty to sixty Jap bodies that apparently had been massed for an attack, and our boys had just hit them at the right

time. We've all wondered why we didn't go over to verify that, but when daylight comes, you've got other jobs to do, and you're getting ready for the next night. You didn't know if the next night would be any worse than that, so for some reason or another, although that was my platoon, I did not go over and physically count the bodies. But I would say that...I think that our history says that there were forty-some bodies. I've heard estimates up into the sixties.

You see, at night we would hunker down, and any movement was at your own risk. The 41st Division, theoretically, provided the perimeter defense, but the last part of it was called up to support the Biak operation, I believe, was the timing on it. And I think that without any notification, they pulled out...

Alexander: Without letting you know.

Patton: ...without letting us know. So, we became the perimeter defense, and each of our gun sections, which ranged, oh, from fourteen to eighteen men, became a little strongpoint all along the beach.

Alexander: How many would that have been? You've got how many guns out there?

Patton: Well, I had a platoon of four, and I think that there were about sixteen gun sections strung out along the beach over, probably...oh, I think that the history

says fifteen miles, but I think that it was more like three or four miles where this activity took place. The Japs would cut the telephone lines, so we were not in communication, and nobody dared go anyplace. So, each section was pretty much on its own.

Section A4 was at the far end, the far east end, of the entire beachhead. Sergeant Alex Crapps of Fort Gaines, Georgia, and his group fought off what we thought was an [Japanese] Imperial Marine attack. [Editor's note: What many U.S. servicemen refer to as "Imperial Marines were in fact designated by the Japanese military as special Naval Landing Forces.] There has been some some question about whether they were actually Imperial Marines or whether they were some other elite group. I went down there the next morning early, and there were Jap bodies lying all around. It was a pretty bad thing, but he [Sergeant Crapps] got a Bronze Star out of that [action]. That was A4. Then A2 was the one that shot so many of them with the M-51 machine guns.

But the important thing, I think, is that our gun sections were separate units with very little communication, if any, and we provided the doggone defense for the whole beachhead, because once the infantry moved out, there was only a bakery outfit, a graves registration outfit, and there was a combat

engineer outfit very close to this A2.

And I want to mention this. There was a lieutenant colonel in command of that [combat engineer outfit], supposedly from [Texas] A & M [University, College Station, Texas], and the boys said that he was reported to be the youngest battalion commander in the Army. It turned out to be Andrew Rollins of Dallas [Texas].

Alexander: That name is familiar.

Patton: Well, he later retired as a major general, and I don't doubt that he merited the rank. I had correspondence with him in about 1990. But my A2 gun section thinks that he's about the finest thing that ever was.

But outside of those few units, we, as far as I know, were the defense for the entire beachhead. That's why I say that that bunch of Japanese coming up the coast there could have walked right over us, I think.

Alexander: They maybe thought that they were going to...

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: ...because...well, they probably didn't know that you were there by yourselves...

Patton: Well, I suppose that's true.

Alexander: ...until it was too late, yes. Well, is there anything else on that that you remember?

Patton: We had a bomb dump fire pretty much across the road

from the battery headquarters, and several of us got Soldier's Medals for going over and stomping out the fire. We think that a couple of guys from another outfit had been over there working with the parachute bombs to get the silk--whatever the fabric was--for their girlfriends.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: And they apparently had started a little fire to burn the parts of the crates that they had torn off. Our battery commander, Captain Thomas H. Tarver--the only West Pointer [graduate of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York] that we had in the 202nd, and he was tops--got a bunch of us together. We went over there, and we were raking the stuff together, and unbeknownst to us there was a bomb inside that stuff that we were raking.

Alexander: Whew!

Patton: So, it went off and wounded some people. I pulled one guy out, and he lived. But at any rate, that was kind of exciting.

Alexander: Yes, that's exciting. I should say so. Okay. Well, let's talk about how you...when did you leave, and how did you leave? How did you go? Was it after the [atomic] bomb was dropped? [Editor's note: In accordance with the terms of the Yalta Agreement of February 11, 1945, and the subsequent Potsdam

Declaration of July 26, 1945, the Allies insisted that Japan must accept terms of unconditional surrender. On August 6, 1945, following a barrage of messages demanding immediate and unconditional surrender, the first atomic bomb was employed against Hiroshima, Japan, without any official Japanese response. On August 9, 1945, a second atomic bomb was employed against Nagasaki, Japan, again without any immediate response from Japanese officialdom. On August 12, 1945, the Japanese responded that they would consider a surrender with the proviso that their emperor remain in power. During the period from August 6 through August 14, 1945, American warships and aircraft continued to be exposed to suicide Japanese *kamikaze* attacks. The battleship Pennsylvania was torpedoed on August 12, 1945, at Buckner Bay, Okinawa. Twenty men were killed, and ten were injured. She was sent to Apra, Guam, for repairs sufficient to make the return trip to Puget Sound, Washington. The largest B-29 raid of the war against Japan was launched on August 14, 1945. Following the destruction of their last oil refining plant, the Japanese agreed to the Allied terms of unconditional surrender on August 15, 1945. The formal surrender was signed aboard the USS Missouri on September 2, 1945, in Tokyo Bay.]

Patton: Yes.

Alexander: [Referring to the anticipated invasion of the Japanese home islands] Did you do any kind of training at all prior to that for the invasion time?

Patton: No, not specifically, but there was daily bivouac training, I guess. But we had no way...we had already made invasions, so we kind of knew how that was done. So, there was no real way to train for that.

Alexander: Nothing special in the way of trying to get you prepared for it.

Patton: We were pretty doggone glad that the atomic bomb was dropped. Of course, we knew nothing about it, but we were glad (chuckle) to know about it and have stayed that way.

Alexander: Well, would there have been a...would you have believed that there would have been any reason for you to try to get to, say, Kyushu, for example, because antiaircraft defense was not going to be your biggest problem.

Patton: No, but I think that by time we had proven ourselves as capable ground troops, although, obviously, not infantry and not Marines. But we were able to handle ourselves. I guess that we were probably as heavily-armed as any outfit in the Army, with the stuff that we had, so we would have been, I think, very useful in this horizontal fire, for one thing. As I understand it, according to that Life magazine report that came

out, we were to go in with the 33rd and the 41st Divisions and maybe the 6th Division. Those were favorite divisions of ours, anyway, but that meant that [landing beach] would have been a hot spot.

Alexander: That whole thing was a hot spot.

Patton: Well, that's true.

Alexander: How did you get home?

Patton: Well, with the five points from the Soldier's Medal, I got home a little bit early. I flew up to Del Monte Airfield in northern Mindanao, which was where MacArthur had left from when he got out of the Bataan.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: Then the typhoon hit at Okinawa.

Alexander: That would be in April. That was in April, or was it later than that?

Patton: No, this was in December. It was a bad deal.

Alexander: This was December of 1945.

Patton: It maybe was in November.

Alexander: But it was in 1945.

Patton: Yes. That disrupted the shipping. I was attached to the 31st Division, the so-called "Dixie Division." We played volleyball; played chess; played basketball; and got terrific sun tans. But we were there at Del Monte for about a month. After you had gone through a couple of years and then you were on your way home, and then get stymied, that was not an easy thing to

take.

We finally got loaded at Bugo on the north coast and came home on the General Barnett. I think that he had been the commandant of the Marine Corps "way back when" (chuckle), and everything was fine, except that north of Hawaii we got into a terrific storm, and I thought that my days were over right then.

But we got into San Francisco, I think, on the 19th of December of 1945. We stayed at Camp Stoneman for a couple of days, as I recall. Then I took the train, and I remember at Oroville [California], up in the mountains, at Christmas Eve the whole town, I think, came out and sang Christmas carols in snow that we could see was a good foot deep.

Then we went on and got to Kansas City, and the train stopped for quite a while. A lot of guys got off. Well, we all got off. Some of them had to run to get back on when the train started again. That night I was the only officer in the entire railroad car, and that was not a happy situation at the end of the war, as you can imagine.

Alexander: Yes.

Patton: And I was back by the restroom, and a fellow tapped me on the shoulder, and he said, "Lieutenant, I think that we've got a problem here. There's blood coming out from under the door there." Well, it turned out

that a guy had committed suicide. He had cut his throat or his wrist or whatever, and we assumed that he had gotten a "Dear John" phone call from Kansas City. This was, I believe, between Kansas City and Jefferson City [Missouri]. Then we went on into Jefferson Barracks, which was where I got out.

Alexander: That's right. Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, yes.

Patton: As I mentioned, I had been commissioned before I actually got a degree, so I went back [to school] then, and my wife got her same job back at the university. So, we stayed there for two years while I got a master's degree.

Alexander: That's fine. That's great. Your military days were over.

Patton: Yes. I stayed in the Reserves and made some meetings, particularly in New Orleans. But my job with Chevron just did not allow regular [attendance at] meetings. Then, finally, I think it was on February 1, 1953, that I was actually relieved or released--whatever the term was--from Reserve duty.

Alexander: Discharged.

Patton: Yes. So, that was the end.

Alexander: That was a good time to have it end (chuckle). You didn't get involved in Korea, at least, either. Well, if that's the end, why, we'll shut the tape off.

Patton: Okay.

Alexander: All right.