

**National Museum of the Pacific War
Fredericksburg, Texas**

Interview with Orland J. “Bud” Harris

**5th AAF- 80th Fighter Squadron
“Headhunters”**

1941-1945

Mr. Cox: Today is August 22, 2000. We are in the city of Hot Springs, Arkansas interviewing Mr. Orland Jordan Harris, known as “Bud” Harris. My name is Floyd Cox. I am a volunteer at the National Museum of the Pacific War located in Fredericksburg, Texas. We are here in Hot Springs to talk with Bud concerning his experiences as a fighter pilot during World War II in the Pacific. To start out with Bud can you give me a little information about when you were born and where you were born?

Mr. Harris: Well, I was born in Quachita County near the little town of Beardon, Arkansas, August 16, 1922.

Mr. Cox: When you lived near Beardon where did you go to school and how far in school did you go?

Mr. Harris: Well I went to school in Beardon High School and graduated from there. I did graduate work at the University of Arkansas and of course they did count what I had in Cadets as part of my eligibility for graduation.

Mr. Cox: Oh, you went to the University of Arkansas after you got out of the military.

Mr. Harris: Yes, after I got out of the military.

Mr. Cox: Speaking of going into the military, what year did you go in?

Mr. Harris: I was sworn in I guess it must have been 1942. I can't remember, but I know two of us going to school there in Arkadelphia went to Little Rock and took the test for entrance in to the Aviation Cadet training in the Army Air Corp at that time.

Mr. Cox: What led you to be interested in being a pilot? Had this been your interest before when you were younger? Tell me a little bit about that.

Mr. Harris: Well I guess I always wanted to be a pilot. One time I ordered a book about flying from someplace. I can't remember who it was. I guess it was some federal aviation department. It was a method of learning to fly an airplane and all you needed was a chair and a stick to act as a joystick and some pedals or blocks for your feet to act as rudders for the ship itself. I flew the plane without going very far, all across and up and down and around that bedroom.

Mr. Cox: In your imagination you were flying all over the world, in that correct?

Mr. Harris: That is correct. My plane responded favorably in all maneuvers.

Mr. Cox: After you went to Little Rock and joined the Aviation Cadets, this was in 1942, where did you go after you were inducted? Did you go into basic?

training or preflight, what did they call it?

Mr. Harris: Well then we left. There was a group of us that left Little Rock on a train going to Los Angeles, California. Found out how far it was across Texas at that time. We went there and went to the Army Air Corp Cadet base at Santa Ana, California. That is when I first got a serial number.

Mr. Cox: Do you remember your serial number?

Mr. Harris: 18136038.

Mr. Cox: When you first went out there was it pre-flight? Did you get some of the basics on flying?

Mr. Harris: It was pre-flight. It was instruction before you were ever around an airplane.

Mr. Cox: A lot of ground instruction.

Mr. Harris: Ground instruction. They said one cadet was working on his math and dropped his pencil on the floor and he reached over to get it. By the time he picked it up they had gone from adding to calculus during that time. So they rushed us through kind of fast.

Mr. Cox: I bet they did. How long was pre-flight school?

Mr. Harris: Well ours lasted a little longer. I don't know exactly how long it was because we were on quarantine on Santa Ana Base, and when they let us

out of quarantine one of the cadets that went up to Los Angeles got some contagious disease. I forgot what it was, something like Polio, although that wasn't what it was. Anyway they quarantined the whole bunch. We occupied three barracks, different barracks but one squadron. There were fifty-two of us there in the barracks and they quarantined all of us. We had to be on K.P. the whole time. We didn't have any classes to go to so they made us permanent K.P. there for while.

Mr. Cox: K.P. that is the initials for kitchen police. For anyone that might be reading or listening to this interview Kitchen Police is when you help the cooks get the meals ready and take care of all the pots and pans. And believe me as being a former military man I've had my share of K.P. and I don't envy anyone being put on K.P. After you were finally pulled off of quarantine then what took place Bud?

Mr. Harris: We went to our classes in school. We were sent to our separate primary flying school. Mine was at Visalia, California. It was my first time to fly with army instructions. I had previously taken CPT, civilian pilot training for one year. I learned to fly then at Ouachita College while I was there before I went in to the service.

Mr. Cox: What were your primary trainers? Were they AT-6's.

Mr. Harris: No, they were PT-22's, Primary trainers. They had a 125-horse power Kenner engine in it and I know that it wasn't a Biplane. I can't think of

the name of the plane but one of the things I recall was in landing that plane. It was easy to take off in that plane. It had a wide landing gear. It was a low wing monoplane. We had this one guy in my class who established a record for the most take offs in one day. It wasn't the number of takeoffs it was the ones favored to make landings. He circled the field twenty- two times to come in and land. Each time he'd hit and bounce and give it the gun and hit and bounce and go around again.

Mr. Cox: That was unintentional touch and go then?

Mr. Harris: Yeah, a unintentional touch and go because he was driven by the circumstances. On the twenty-second time he let it bounce and it slowed down enough that when he gave it the full power again the torque of the engine turned the plane over and he hit upside down. When he cut his safety belt he fell on the concrete and hit his head. That was the only injury he sustained.

Mr. Cox: When you finished there where did you go? Did you go to more advanced training?

Mr. Harris: I went to LaeMore, California. There we had primary basic. We had a larger plane that had flaps and everything. It was a larger and faster plane to fly at that time.

Mr. Cox: After you completed that you still weren't qualified for wings were you?

Mr. Harris: No, then you had to go to advanced. In basic you learn night flying. It was one of the more hazardous things there. One guy was following a star, he thought, and the star turned out to be the headlights of an automobile down on the highway. He did dodge the car, by pulling back up, but there were scary things that did happen in learning to fly.

Mr. Cox: After you finished your advanced training what kind of plane did you use then? Did you use an AT-6 (Texan)?

Mr. Harris: We had three planes. One was a AT-9 (Curtiss) a twin-engine plane. We said its top speed was 130 mph. That was the speed it took off at and it landed at about the same speed. It was a twin-engine plane which you flew before going into P-322's. A P-322 is a P-38 that they had never put a supercharger on as they did on the standard P-38. And of course the P-38.

Mr. Cox: The way I understand you, is that when you got to this point in your training they had already selected the type of craft you would be flying?

Mr. Harris: No they hadn't. They gave you a preference. If you were in the top ten percent you got a preference where you wanted to go. Normally they would send you where they wanted you to go, fighters, bombers, light bombers or whatever. I did get my choice to go to P-38's. That was the plane I wanted to fly. The old guy that taught us said, "There are a lot of you that are going to get killed in this P-38". We were with a P-322 at the time. Then he said, "One thing you got to remember is that it is an honor

to get killed in a P-38.” Of course we all remembered that.

Mr. Cox: You took your P-38 training at that point in your career and where did you go from there, to more advanced?

Mr. Harris: Yeah from there to replacement training unit. I think that is what they were called. I went to different ones. I went from flying P-38's and P-322's and all of that to flying P-39's, which is a single engine aircraft.

Mr. Cox: That is what is called Airacobra?

Mr. Harris: Yes, the Airacobra..

Mr. Cox: Is that the one that had the engine behind the pilot's compartment?

Mr. Harris: Yeah, it had your engine behind you. I understand if you got in a spin, it was a violent spin that a lot of people didn't escape from. It was kind of a flat spin. But it was a fun plane for me to fly. I enjoyed flying the little P-39.

Mr. Cox: That is the one, if I remember correctly, with the engine being behind you, you had a drive shaft that went underneath the pilot up to where the propeller is, to turn the propeller. Now what is the noise factor when you were in the cockpit of that plane?

Mr. Harris: The engine being behind you, it was better than having the engine in front of you as far as the noise was concerned. The drive shaft that turned the

propeller was also the thirty-seven millimeter cannon that the P-39 fired and it was noisy when it went off as it was right between both feet.

Mr. Cox: Of the two types of planes, P-38 Lockheed and the P-39 Bell Airacobra; which did you prefer to fly?

Mr. Harris: The most fun to fly and the most confidence I had in the plane itself was the P-38. The P-39 was a lot of fun to fly. It had the ability to react to lateral movement in a hurry. It had quick response. You could fly up to trees and tilt one wing down and go in places that were too narrow to go in horizontally.

Mr. Cox: How old were you about this time?

Mr. Harris: Oh, I was nineteen I guess. I was probably getting close to twenty years old.

Mr. Cox: At that age you don't realize how dangerous airplanes can be so you are inclined to take chances like flying between trees and those types of things.

Mr. Harris: I guess all of the pilots did it or a big percent of them did it. It was the thrill of flying or the thrill of being able to do or test yourself to see if you could do what you thought you could do.

Mr. Cox: As we were talking prior to this recording; fighter pilots had to have

confidence in themselves, consequently they had a tendency to think they couldn't get hurt, is that correct?

Mr. Harris: Well that is true. They would feel sorry for any of the others that would be injured or killed but they didn't think of themselves being included in that bunch.

Mr. Cox: After you finished that phase of your training in the P-38 did you receive your wings?

Mr. Harris: At Williams Field in Chandler, Arizona on November 3, 1943. Williams Field is on one side of Phoenix and Luke Field is on the other side so we had good flying weather conditions.

Mr. Cox: This is when you received your pilot wings?

Mr. Harris: Yes, at Williams Field, Chandler, Arizona . It was class 43- J, which meant it was November 3, 1943. The cadets that graduated became officers on that day. By the way my cadet number changed from 18136038 to 757987 as an officer. It happened the day. I became an officer.

Mr. Cox: An officer and a gentleman?

Mr. Harris: Yes, an officer and a gentleman.

Mr. Cox: What took place after you got your wings? Did you go home on leave?

Did you know where you were going to be assigned?

Mr. Harris: We got to go home for a short leave and that is when it was hard to get anyplace because of the scarcity of gasoline.

Mr. Cox: When you had completed your pilot training, had you received any combat training yet? Did you go to gunnery school?

Mr. Harris: We had gunnery school prior to graduation. The plane we used at gunnery school before we received our commissions was an AT-6. It had a single thirty-caliber machine gun on it that we used on target practice. Later when we were in regular fighter planes like P-38's or any of the others that may have been the P-40's (Warhawk) or the P-47's (Thunderbolt) you had regular training missions where you would fire at towed targets. We would fire from side lateral passes at the target or overhead passes on the target going down. The poor guys flying the target did not want you to follow very far around shooting at that target aiming along the path the target itself was taking.

Mr. Cox: Well I can appreciate that. In fact it looks like to me the only guys who would fly the planes pulling the targets would have to be volunteers. After you had completed your training and returned from your leave (at home) were you ready to be assigned to a squadron at that time?

Mr. Harris: They had a lot of pilots that had been through replacement training that didn't have a permanent squadron to go to at that time. I went to at least

four different places and replacement training units. I went to Concord, California, I think we had P-39's. I flew off of San Francisco municipal airport. From there I went to Santa Ana at Orange County Airport. From Santa Ana I went to San Diego and flew off of North Island at San Diego Naval Air Station. From there I went to Lake Hamilton (later called Hamilton Field) where they sent us overseas after about a Three-day delay.

Mr. Cox: Now, when you went overseas I guess you didn't have a choice whether you went to the European theatre or the Pacific theatre did you?

Mr. Harris: No, when we were there at Hamilton Field, they called us out at four o'clock in the morning and said "You were supposed to be shipped out to the ETO (European Theater of Operation) this morning but your winter flying gear didn't get here so you come back in the morning and we'll send you where you are supposed to go. We did that for three mornings in a row and finally instead of sending us to the ETO; although as we now had all of this fine heavy winter stuff; leather and fleece lined boots, pants, jumper, helmets and everything we no longer needed; they sent us to the South Pacific where it was plenty warm.

Mr. Cox: When they finally made the decision to send you to the South Pacific how did you get there, by flying or boat?

Mr. Harris: There was about thirty of us that flew over there in a C-54 (Douglas

Skymaster). We flew from Hamilton Field, California to Hawaii and then on to a little island out there, I can't recall its name, that looked like a dot in the Pacific before we got to Guadalcanal and then to one of the replacement squadrons in New Guinea.

Mr. Cox: In New Guinea, I believe you ended up in the 5th Air Force, is that correct?

Mr. Harris: Yes, there were about thirty that went together and they were divided up among the different squadrons that needed replacements and there were about four of us that were able to stick together from the start of our beginning of the war to the end of the war.

Mr. Cox: Do you recall their names?

Mr. Harris: Hugh L. Hatfield, from Powell Station, Tennessee. He was one of my best friends. He said his grandpa was Devil Hanes Hatfield, I think he was the mean one of the Hatfields and McCoys. Donald Jarvis Loggett was from the state of Washington. Kenneth Bancroft Lloyd was from Santa Ana, California, 1010 Baker Street. There were four of us that were able to stay together most of the time. Two of the five got killed.

Mr. Cox: Those that were killed, were they killed in combat?

Mr. Harris: One was killed on takeoff. The bottom engine cut out just as he was leaving the ground and the powerful top engine just rolled him over and he hit the ground upside down. The other one was flying and he didn't call

in. His radio was working and everything. He just flew into the ground for no apparent reason. He wasn't thinking or something. I don't know if it was just an accident or what happened.. Apparently he was looking inside the cockpit instead of outside, anyway.

Mr. Cox: Now you were in the 5th Air Force. Is this the time you were assigned to the 80th Fighter squadron?

Mr. Harris: Yes 8th Fighter group. It was called the "Headhunters".

Mr. Cox: Now exactly where were you? Were you on Guadalcanal at that time?

Mr. Harris: No, we just landed on Guadalcanal while being flown to Nadzab, New Guinea. After we left Nadzab we flew to different coastal places.

Mr. Cox: When you were on Nadzab were you flying missions? Reconnaissance missions, air cover, air strikes or any other kind of missions?

Mr. Harris: The five of us that were there would be considered rookies or yard birds because we were not familiar with any of it. We had to fly familiarization tours around where we were. It was too easy to get lost. One of the guys there bailed out while in the traffic pattern and it took him two weeks to get back to get back to the field. When you are on the ground, you can't go in a straight line. You can go until you hit something you can't plow through or swim around. The jungle is different and you have to be familiar with the big features to know something about the

overall terrain.

Mr. Cox: After you were on Nadzab and you flew familiarization missions did you go to various islands and fly off of those?

Mr. Harris: We flew off of one island, but we did have different fighter strips along the coast that we flew off of. That is when the island hopping started there. We were trying to starve out the Japs there in New Guinea.

Mr. Cox: What you are saying is, before the American forces started island hopping and the marines started jumping from one island to another, you were there, and were trying to starve out the Japanese by cutting off their food supplies?

Mr. Harris: Cutting off their food supplies. I heard some of the guys talking about shooting up their fields or garden tracts and doing everything possible to make them uncomfortable. Make them want to leave the place.

Mr. Cox: Was this New Guinea?

Mr. Harris: This was before they subdivided it and gave it different names. It was on the coast of New Guinea itself.

Mr. Cox: Tell me about some of the missions that you recall real vividly, different ones that you took part in. I'm sure that we are all interested in that. Strafing missions, cover missions, bombing missions and so on.

Mr. Harris: There were strafing missions. We may be hopping around to different times, but there was one incident that was quite interesting. There were two of us that were assigned to a mission which was the bombing one of the caves on Corregidor. We were to fly at this cave and put a bomb in it. The cave was down below a cliff, and it had a very small opening. We were given the assignment of blowing up the cave. A small LCI plane was assigned to work with us as a spotter. I don't know what you call these small planes.

Mr. Cox: An observation plane? I believe they called it a Grasshopper.

Mr. Harris: What he did was, he gave us a route to the cave. I was going at least 400 miles per hour. I had two one thousand pound bombs and I had to drop them one at a time into the side of the cliff. The top of the cliff was much higher than the top of the cave so you had to be careful not to fly into the cliff. I approached the cliff real fast and I had to move a little bit to get where I thought was lined up. I spotted some features of the cave and dropped my bomb and it missed the opening. It had a ten second delay action fuse on it so it fell on down into the water before it exploded. The guy in the little LCI plane was watching real close and was spotting the effectiveness of the bombing. Trying to hit the cave was parallel bombing for a fighter plane. Sort of like "skip bombing". I had to fly straight at the opening of the cliff. He said that the second bomb I dropped was perfect and if that had been a bulls eye it would have hit the center of the bulls

eye.

So the second bomb I dropped went into that cave that the marines couldn't get to.

Mr. Cox: Your second bomb went in?

Mr. Harris: The second bomb went in. Evidently it was perfect because he said it hit the center of a bull's eye. Later I read that there were seven hundred and forty Japanese that committed suicide by blowing themselves up in that cave on Corregidor. I think it was that one thousand pound bomb that slid in amongst them. There is no way I could know that is what actually happened, but it was the cave they sent me to hit. It was the same one in which, they said, that all the Japanese had committed Hari Kari or whatever.

Mr. Cox: The observer in the spotter plane, did say you hit it?

Mr. Harris: He said it went in. At that speed I was glad I wasn't in that cave.

Mr. Cox: You really had to pull up fast once you released your bomb didn't you?

Mr. Harris: You had to get as close as you could for accuracy but then you had to pull up and go up to dodge the cliff.

Mr. Cox: Were they firing at you as you made your run?

Mr. Harris: I didn't notice any. Normally I could have seen any gun fire because the

cave was just an opening in the side of the mountain and I would have seen the flash of the guns, but I didn't see any at that time.

On occasion, I did shoot up at any unfriendly ships that were on the ocean below us. We were flying as a squadron but C. B. Ray (one of the pilots) had something happen and he had lost one of his drop tanks and it fell.

We weren't to Borneo then, it was still a little piece ahead of us. We strafed some Japanese ships that were down there. They were like transport ships. We knew he would not be able to go all the way to Borneo with C.B. having lost his drop tank. It had about one hundred and fifty gallons of fuel in it. That would be about nine hundred pounds.

While we strafed these ships down there, you had to go down low to hit them with fifty caliber machine guns and twenty millimeter. I glanced to my right at the edge of Borneo and saw silhouetted there in a cove a ship that had tree limbs all on the top of it to camouflage it. I called C.B. and we both made a detour into the part of Borneo but kept the ship in our sight. We came back low. C.B. was in the lead and strafed the thing and I followed his pass. When it came my time I stomped my rudders making S turns across the top of that cargo ship down there. I was glad I was going fast because I had just cleared the cargo ship when the thing blew up. I pulled up some but I stayed level with the water. When I got out a piece I pulled up and the clouds of smoke from the ships explosion had already gone up to five thousand feet. I don't know what, if anything, was left.

There wasn't anything left in the surrounding area of that ship. It was an

munitions ship. It was flashing, and it would blow up and then on up in the air something would go off in the clouds that it had made.

One time the Japanese blew up one of our munitions ships in the harbor and we were about three miles from where the thing was docked. We had planes on the strip that had diaphragms and carburetors ruptured from this explosion. We were at lunch time and lined up outside. When the concussion reached us the tent tried to pull itself away and the guys up there dived on the ground in between those stakes holding the tent down. It was a mess of confusion. I know that being that far away from the ship how much such an explosion can flatten things even if there is jungle around you.

Mr. Cox: Do you remember any other missions you went on? I believe you were talking about one time you spotted some American cars. Was that in New Guinea?

Mr. Harris: No that was in the Philippines. It was just a mission of hunting for things to shoot up.

Mr. Cox: Is that what they call target of opportunity mission?

Mr. Harris: Right, targets of opportunity. We saw these automobiles that looked like they were as big as American made automobiles. In the length of time it took me to turn to get ready for a shooting pass they had put American

flags on these cars. They had little American flags in their hands, it looked like a dozen people around these cars. I don't know where they got those flags but I did honor the flags and we did cut off the strike on those cars.

Mr. Cox: Even to this day you don't know if they were Japanese or Americans that are thanking you even today.

Mr. Harris: I've often wondered who they were. They were brazen if they got out there in the open and waved those flags at me. I saw them do it at Clark Field on Luzon. There were Filipinos that were waving at us as we were shooting up cars out on the highway. They were waving facing away from us. It was like they heard us but they weren't going to turn around and look and wave. They just waved with their backs to us. I made a pass up there because they wanted us to shoot up some cars that had already been shot up and that is a waste of ammunition. These guys were out working in the field just adjacent to the road itself. They would just wave with their back to us as though they were wishing us well and goodbye and all that.

Mr. Cox: Is there any other missions that you recall? Did you ever get in any combat with enemy aircraft, Japanese Zeros or the like?

Mr. Harris: Well, on one occasion, I took myself out of combat unintentionally by getting into a dive that I couldn't pull myself out of.

Mr. Cox: Tell me about that. How did that all come about? Were you real high going into a dive?

Mr. Harris: Yes, I was high. We were up about twenty-two thousand feet. I know it was less than thirty thousand feet. I got in a dive because I was trying to shoot a Japanese plane off of a friend of mine's tail. My friend was in front, the Jap was in the middle and I was behind him. I got some bullets close to the Jap, where he at least saw the tracers. He rolled over on his back and went straight down. I followed him down. I still had high manifold pressure and maintained the dive. I rolled the plane going down where I could see 360 degrees. The Jap was turning himself and I didn't know which way he was going to turn out. When I started to pull out of my dive I pulled back on the control yoke and there was tension against it. It was stiff and then it pulled me forward. Instead of me pulling it back, the yoke pulled me forward and straightened out the dive to a vertical position down again.

Mr. Cox: You probably thought uh oh I've got a little problem here.

Mr. Harris: Yeah, I had never read about it at that time but I knew you could get the P-38 in a condition that it was going faster than the empennage can control the turn out of a dive like that. I read later that in Alaska the P-38's had witnessed that themselves and knew that it was possible for it to occur. I got the plane slowed down. I chopped the throttle and got the pitch so the

air would have to turn the engine instead of the engine pushing the air. I got the plane slowed down enough with the thicker air down below me that I was able to survive that. I had heard that people had been killed in that situation that was a mystery to me at that time.

Mr. Cox: I have heard about target fixation, have you ever had that occur to you where you are in a steep dive for a target and you know you are going to have to pull out?

Mr. Harris: To get a fixation on a target is easy to do because you are going fast and you are going down toward a target normally. The tracers go in all sorts of directions when they hit the ground and they ricochet. They present an interesting picture and you get enthralled looking at them. I never was that enthralled with the picture I was seeing. During my last mission there was this young man that I hadn't even talked to five minutes, I didn't even know him, he had just come to the squadron and was assigned to my flight. He flew into the ground. I was talking to one of the guys that were on the ground. He called me on the radio and asked me how many angels (planes) I had. I told him there were four of us. He said well there are only three of you now. I peeled off and went back and looked down on the ground where we had been strafing. There was this P-38 scattered out what looked like two miles on the ground. He had just flown at a shallow angle into the ground. I had never even talked to the young man and now he was dead.

Mr. Cox: That could have been target fixation?

Mr. Harris: It could have. That was the only thing I could think of. It could have possible been that he was shot but didn't notice any anti aircraft. It could have been tracer bullets, but I didn't see any explosives. It just looked like he flew into the ground. I've seen people strafing and the one in the back strafing is dangerous to the one in the front because if he timed it just right he can ricochet his bullets off the earth so they bounce up into the plane that is ahead of him. I had one hit like that. I heard the bullet but I couldn't find where it had made a dent in the plane, but it did make a dent in it.

Mr. Cox: Were any of your missions flying cover for various bomb runs and if so what kind of bombers did you cover?

Mr. Harris: Normally we covered the heavy bombers, the B-17's (Fortress') or the B-24's (Liberators). On occasion we gave fighter protection to the light and medium bombers such as the B-25's (Mitchells) and A-20's (Havocs). Normally we would pick up the heavy bombers when they were about ten minutes out from their target and go with them in over the target and get them out away from the target about ten or fifteen minutes to be sure there were no enemy planes that were alerted to the fact that the B-24's were going to make a raid.

Mr. Cox: Did you have any occasion where you did run into enemy fighters coming

up in an attacking group?

Mr. Harris: No, I never did get involved in an occasion where large groups of Jap planes were after the B-24's or the B-17's.

Mr. Cox: About what year is this now that we are we talking about these combat missions?

Mr. Harris: This was 1944. I don't think I was involved in a fight other than the ones where the fighters were coming up after us. I don't remember any fight that ended with them trying to down some of our heavy bombers. The most unusual one I had was covering the Thirteenth Air Force that was to dive bomb a Japanese Task Force. We were there to protect them from Japanese fighter planes; however the Jap fighters never came up. The 13th Air Force attack planes were P-38's. So there we were, P-38's of the Fifth Air Force covering the P-38's of the Thirteenth Air Force.

Mr. Cox: I just recently read in a book called Black Sunday that tells of an incident that happened April 16, 1944 where thirty- seven planes from the Fifth Air Force were lost due to weather conditions. They were unable to complete the mission. Do you recall this mission and were you a member of this mission?

Mr. Harris: My squadron was on that particular mission. I was not on that mission. I was back at the base listening to the air traffic going on about how

confused everyone was. The conversations concerned what they were doing, and where they were going to land or try to land. They did lose a bunch of planes on that mission. All of it was due to the weather. It was the bad weather that precipitated the breakdown in normal procedures.

Mr. Cox: Correct me if I'm wrong but a lot of these planes went down because of the condition of their fuel supply. They ran out of fuel before they could find their fields that they wanted.

Mr. Harris: The weather conditions were bad and they did run out of fuel. They weren't able to see well enough to fly in the direction they wanted to go because of the danger of mountains. They just couldn't navigate under those weather conditions.

Mr. Cox: I imagine that was quite an experience listening to that radio traffic and hearing these guys in the confused condition, knowing they were running out of fuel and didn't know where they were.

Mr. Harris: Yes it certainly was. These little voices coming out of a radio. You empathize with them when they have problems like that. Makes you want to help but there is nothing you can do that could assist them.

Mr. Cox: You had one mission that I'm really interested in. It is the night mission you were on in which a small Japanese small task force was involved. I believe you earned the Distinguished Flying Cross Medal as a result of that mission. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Mr. Harris: On that particular one we were aware of a Japanese Task Force¹ coming down from up North. We didn't know what size it was or anything else. We were on the island of Mindoro, in the Philippines. When we got the information from the Air Force headquarters concerning the actions we had to participate in it was already late in the evening and it was dark. I don't know how many of us were in that bunch because we didn't fly as a squadron. In accordance with our orders, we flew individually rather than a organized flight. We were told there would be one heavy cruiser, a light cruiser and six destroyers. I don't know if there was a battleship. Our orders were to go out and attack that Japanese Task Force. Apparently the Task Force planned on landing troops on the island of Mindoro. The troop landing ships were being protected by small armada of armed war ships. They gave us orders that we were to fly individual missions and fly toward where the fight was occurring. We were told to observe where the tracers were coming toward us were coming from. The source of the tracers would be where we would find our target. Before we went there, we didn't know if they were going to put bombs on our planes or not. There were Japanese planes in the area and they would come down every once in awhile and strafe our fighter strip. On this one occasion, we were not in a slit trench but were behind a big log. I got in a jeep to go down

¹Actions regarding the Japanese Task Force off Mindoro on December 26, 1944 are also covered in the Oral History of Cpt. Paul F. Stevens USN Retired entitled Low Level Liberators on file in the Archives of The National Museum of the Pacific War.

and see if my plane had been armed with a thousand pound bomb as I thought it was going to be. On the way down a Jap fighter came over. It was a night fighter and the pilot cut loose at me with his machine guns at my jeep going down the runway. I reached up and turned the key off, shifted to second gear and jumped out of the jeep while it was still moving. I hid in the dust of our airstrip where it was powdered to dust and I made a soft landing on it. I found the men that were supposed to be putting bombs on the plane were already in a slit trench that was made by the people laying pipe in which they were piping gasoline down to the flight line. I didn't think that wasn't the best place to be during a bombing raid .

We got orders that we were to go to the scene of the action out on the South China Sea. We had had night missions before and sometimes we had long night flights. On those kinds of missions you are normally out longer than you intend to be and it is usually getting dusk or dark before you could land.

On this particular mission we were to start out in the dark, take off in the dark, and end the mission in the dark. One thing about it however; it was easy to see where the fighting was taking place due to the tracer bullets and explosions. My only trouble was the lack of night flying experience over there in the Pacific. I accidentally turned on my navigation lights. It is a white light behind the headrest in the cockpit. When turned on, other planes can see how close they can get in formation flying. It wasn't

supposed to be for exposure for the Japanese night fighters. (laughter)

The Japanese destroyers were in three sets, with two of them going side by side, followed by two and those being followed by two. They were all going together, it was easy to find them. One of the guys on the mission suggested that everyone on the mission would strafe the Japanese ships from east to west. They were headed south and we were on the far side of them on the island. Otherwise there would have to be planes, if they were flying at the same target, going from the east to west and there would have been many collisions of planes going toward each other fast and at night. As they are firing, the five guns on your plane prevent you from seeing much of anything that is past them anyway.

Mr. Cox: You talked about you could tell where the action was by tracers. Were these tracers coming from the ships?

Mr. Harris: Yes, their tracers would lead us to them. There were also tracers from the Japanese night fighters against our own planes and tracers coming from our planes. I never experienced the Jap night fighters coming after me that night. If they did I was not aware of it. I was going up and down after destroyers.

Mr. Cox: This happened December 26, 1944, is that right?

Mr. Harris: That is right, the day after Christmas. That was the night of it.

Mr. Cox: Tell me a little bit more about this action. Is this the time you went down?

Mr. Harris: Yes. I had made several passes at the destroyer that I was shooting at. There were two destroyers in the set I was going after. One was east of the other. I would approach from the west side and go across and when I would pull up at the one I was shooting at I would turn at the same time. The one on the east side would take his chance at shooting me down. I was determined that I should be able to shoot at one of their ships and only get shot at by the other one of their ships but it didn't end up that way. I had been making straight passes but on this one last pass, instead of going at them broadside I had gone around for the angle more on the fantail. I was angled from the corner diagonally across the ship to the prow of the thing. My dive was more shallow than usual so I figured I had to make it a little longer. When I released my triggers on the gun I saw that the super structure was higher in the air than I was. I thought " Uh Oh!" I pulled back and tried to go up and avoid contact but evidently I hit some of the superstructure of the ship. It threw me forward and bounced my head against the gun sight. Something knocked me unconscious for awhile and cut my head open. I came to and heard someone in my earphones say, " I wonder why that guy that is on fire doesn't bail out?" It didn't take me long to figure out they were talking about me. I looked down and I was already better than a thousand feet up in the air and still flying. My right engine was burning and the flame was coming back behind the engine and toward the three different fuel tanks. The one

hundred plus octane we carried was volatile enough to make a big explosion. I started to prepare to leave the plane by bailing out, I did the thing I shouldn't have done. I reached up and popped the canopy which has hinges behind you. When you release the front of the canopy, the wind carries the canopy away and you are afraid to go out where the canopy used to be. The only trouble was this caused the fire to be pulled into the cockpit with me. This really hurried me up into leaving the plane. I remember, and it's funny how you remember things like this, I remember trying to get out of my seat without unbuckling my seat belt. My seat belt pulled me back down into the seat. It sounded like it tore I was trying to get out so quick. I sat back down and took off my seat belt. I then let the window down on the left side of my cockpit and crawled out on the wing with my one hand holding on to the inside of the plane. I flattened myself on the wing and slid off feet first under the tail assembly. When I looked up I saw my beautiful airplane burning with fire coming out. The plane is about fifty- two feet wide and it looked like the flames were about three times as long as it was.

Mr. Cox: Do you remember what your thoughts were at this time? You knew you were in mortal danger about that time, do you remember exactly what your thoughts were? Does your life flash before your eyes, do you think about home or do you just think about how to get out of there?

Mr. Harris: Yeah, it did. Before I heard this guy on the radio say, " I wonder why that

guy that is on fire doesn't bail out", I couldn't see anything because I couldn't see past the fire. The fire was on my right side covering my right wing and I just knew I was dead. I had been hit in the head and I was just wondering what you would remember as you died. I thought, gosh you idiot, you can't remember anything. (laughter) About this time this guy called on the radio.

You see, I thought the plane had been hit just before crashing into the ocean. I didn't think it zoomed up as I planned to do. I thought the plane just hit something. I had seen too many planes hit something and explode and it doesn't take long. I thought that is what would happen. I didn't see any possibility of anything else happening. I didn't know I was that high in the air.

When I left the plane I must have thrown away my ripcord. You know how they say, retain your ripcord, I must not have been very cool and calculated because I threw mine away as I didn't think that it opened the chute. Then I heard the chute open. It opened with a loud pop and when it did my shoes that I had on; they were these real nice comfortable shoes; they kept going when my chute opened. They had popped right off my feet.

Mr. Cox: You went up and your shoes went down.

Mr. Harris: Yeah, they went down. It sounded like the chute ripped all to pieces. I had never bailed out before and I didn't know what they were supposed to do. I knew I was going to hit the water because I was over it. I reached

up and grabbed my seatbelt where I was holding on to the parachute straps and like I said I looked up and I saw my pretty P-38 going off in a blaze. I didn't have time to do anything really except hit the water. I looked down again and I hit the water. I had about a three second chute ride down from the plane to the water. I had my Mae West, life preserver, on. I felt like I would be going to China instead of the United States, I felt like I would go to the bottom of the ocean. I pulled the little cord on my Mae West and the CO-2 cartridge inflated that thing and it stopped my descent and I started back up to the surface again. I was fortunate not to come up under the parachute and be drowned by it. I never even thought of that previously. You know, if that chute would come down on you how would you get out of it?

Mr. Cox: When you hit the water were you close to these Japanese ships that you had been strafing?

Mr. Harris: I was close enough. When I got back to the surface I'm sitting on my rubber raft, it was deflated and has a big CO-2 two cylinder that inflates the rubber raft. This is in addition to your Mae West, your flotation device.

Mr. Cox: Is it hanging off the front or the back of it?

Mr. Harris: No, it is part of your cushion in your parachute.

Mr. Cox: We are talking about your life raft. It is hooked to the rear of your

parachute harness. Is that about where it was?

Mr. Harris: There is a snap cover over the boat and your parachute. It's a seat pack that you sit on. You are sitting on top of that folded inflatable rubber boat (raft) that will support one man easily. I took the cover off of it and found a little valve that opens it. I started to open it and looked up and here came another Japanese destroyer. I was sure he could hear me because when I turned that CO-2 cylinder on, it sounded just like when you put air in a tire and it makes a screaming sound.

Mr. Cox: Squeals like when you hold a balloon and let the air out?

Mr. Harris: Yeah, that is what it sounds like. I just shut it off. It had a controllable valve on it and I just shut it off. I had a balloon about the size of a basketball and just breathed with my head above water.

Mr. Cox: The balloon being your life raft that you didn't inflate fully?

Mr. Harris: Yes. I know I didn't want to lose any part of that rubber raft. When that destroyer went by I went up on the waves he made, over the top of the waves I could see where my parachute was. I wanted to get away from my parachute because it was white on that black ocean and I didn't want to be close to it. A little while later I got the raft inflated fully and I got into it

Mr. Cox: Where were the Japanese ships that had already passed by while you were in the water?

Mr. Harris: I don't know what they were doing. There were a total of six of them I know. They were making circles I guess. I saw this one go by and he would have been on my left side and there was another one on my right side so I was between the two of them. I know that while I was still in my raft one of our planes came by strafing the ship like I had, but they were strafing from east to west. The bullets started hitting the water behind me, in front of me, and everywhere else. I heard bullets hitting all around me. I didn't feel anything and they didn't hit me. I don't know if it was a Navy plane or what it was. There was one Navy plane that came over. I don't know what it was. It was the type of plane that lands on the water too. He dropped a bomb and it hit closer to me than it did that Japanese destroyer.

I was bracing myself and I was trying to get out of that water. I had my feet on both inflatable edges of the raft and my hands holding me up trying to get my stomach out of that water because I didn't want to feel the concussion of that bomb. I know the destroyers weren't just maneuvering around out there. It appeared to me that they were trying to run over me. They kept running toward me all the time. I took the nylon cord that you hook onto your Mae West so you are not separated at any time from your rubber raft. I got it and pulled the strap over my shoulder so me and the raft would land on the same side of the destroyer. Just before he hit me I flipped the rubber raft and we both landed on the right side, I don't know

which side is the port or starboard. The only thing was, when I would look up, I was right next to the ship itself. My view looking up went out and it made the curve of the ship from the water up to the outside. I didn't realize how much of a steep slope it had curving outward.

Mr. Cox: Boy, you were very close to that ship, practically touching it.

Mr. Harris: I was touching it. I got my hands cut by the barnacles that were on the bottom of the ship at and below the water line. I had to push myself away from the ship. I had to look out at an angle that was about a forty-five degree angle to see the edge of the deck. They would have to get over and look down toward the water at me because I was a lot farther to the inside than they were.

Mr. Cox: Well you were probably fortunate that they couldn't see you.

Mr. Harris: Yeah, they couldn't see me. I went along the side of the ship and got caught in the propeller wash. I started going around and around as I was caught in the vortex of the wake of the propeller. I don't know how long it did that. I followed in the wake and it was pulling me. It pulled me along until finally I got loose of it. Then I stopped worrying about ships getting close to me or anything else. They had been as close as they could get.

I had a wristwatch on and it was still working. It had a luminous dial. I got the direction that the ships were going because they turned around and

apparently headed back toward their base. They got chased off I guess. They were going North and I was wanting to go South by South-East a little bit because I wanted to get below a river that I was pretty sure emptied into the sea on the island shore-line near where I was. I didn't want to swim any more. I got tired of being in that water. I was paddling on my back in the raft like a backstroke. Then I would get tired of that and turn over and do the breaststroke. The only thing about the breaststroke was I wasn't prepared for my arms to light up when I pulled them through the water the first time. I had this phosphorescence all over my arms. My arms reminded me of a picture I saw in Outdoor Life magazine that was advertising a fishing lure that was lit. It said, "Get the big ones at night." and I could see some big shark down below me saying "I'm going to get the big one". (laughter)

Mr. Cox: What you are saying then is your arms were luminous like maybe the tail of a firefly.

Mr. Harris: Yeah, just smeared with plankton.

Mr. Cox: I've heard you can see that on the prow of a ship as it goes through the water at night. Quite often you can see it from the air. Do you know how long you were in your raft floating around? Who picked you up and how?

Mr. Harris: I didn't know how many planes we lost. We lost three out of that eleven or twelve of us that went. They said there were some P-47's in on the

attack and there were just two in their squadron that survived. That could have been an error, but that is just what I heard.

There were observation towers along the edge of the shore. They used these towers to signal the ships entering the harbor directing them as to where they are supposed to go into the harbor. They were about fifty feet tall.

Mr. Cox: These towers were manned by Americans?

Mr. Harris: Yes, by Americans. It was our harbor. They had the watches stationed in the towers looking for downed airmen like me. They spotted me and signaled this ship what my position was and what course to take. I had seen ships come in my direction before daylight. It seemed like there were four or five but there were probably only two or three. Before they would get to me they would turn and go back the other way. I got through the whole night with no sweat or no problem except my arms got tired. I went to sleep and my arms kept working and that is the truth. The next morning the wind got up and was blowing and the way I was trying to go I was going into the wind. It had been a very smooth ocean that night. I thought that God had been good to me and he said If you had been a good boy I would have saved you all the way, but you have been so bad I'll let you get part of the way to show you what you could have had if you hadn't been so bad. I wasn't very confident in being able to make it all the way through those waves. That is when the personnel in a Landing Craft saw

me. This boy was crawling on the top of the front of the LC (landing craft) it so I couldn't see all of the ship until he was over the horizon. He crawled up there, I waved, he waved back and that meant he saw me. That was the first time I relaxed that whole cotton picking nightlong. Boy, I was glad to see him!

Mr. Cox: They came by and hauled you on board?

Mr. Harris: Yes, they threw a rope at me and I missed it. He said, "Don't worry about it we'll throw it out there again" and he threw another rope. I started feeling for it and finally found it and they pulled me up to the deck and turned me loose. I struggled when they got me on deck and they turned me loose and my knees just bent, they wouldn't hold me up.

Mr. Cox: They took you back to shore then?

Mr. Harris: Yes and there were ten million guys there and I had never been offered so many cigarettes in my life.

Mr. Cox: Did you smoke at the time?

Mr. Harris: Yeah, I did smoke at the time.

Mr. Cox: When they took you back to the island, did they take you to sick bay or the Army hospital and check you over?

Mr. Harris: I went to the station hospital and they checked me over. I had been at that

hospital on Christmas day. I found out they were going to have turkey and we weren't.

Mr. Cox: So you went to that hospital the day before your mission and you ended up going back to the hospital after your mission. After they checked you out did you go back to your unit?

Mr. Harris: I went back to my unit. They said there was a Life photographer there looking for me but I never saw him. I think that was just a story. I don't think there was one.

Mr. Cox: After that, did they return you to your unit and did you go back in flying missions?

Mr. Harris: A day or two after I returned to my unit, I flew missions.

Kenneth Bancroft Lloyd from Riverside, California, a friend of mine had also been downed. The Japs shot in front of his plane and caused this geyser

of water from the ocean to shoot up and it pulled his wing down heavily damaging his plane. It took him an hour to get up to three thousand feet and he bailed out from there.

Cy Homer, our CO (Commanding Officer) called us into his office and said we hadn't been flying. We told him we had been flying! We had flown at least a couple of missions. He said "Well you are not supposed to have any more missions for awhile. I'm supposed to send you for R & R,

(rest and recuperation) to Australia.” This sounds silly, but we went to Leyte to catch a plane. They couldn’t bring a plane up there where we were but they brought a C-47 up to Leyte and flew us on down to Sydney, Australia. While I was down there, this GI came up and said “Are you one of those P-38 pilots?” I said yes, both of us were. He said, “well take your shoes off.” I said, “my what? He said, “take your shoes off.” I said, “Why do you want me to do that?” He said, “I want to kiss your feet.” I told him he was crazy.

Mr. Cox: Why did he want to do that?

Mr. Harris: He said that knowing that a Jap Task Force was shelling the island heavily and he thought his time was up and he would be killed. Then we came along and the Jap Navy ended up retreating..

Mr. Cox: Bud, what was your impression of the Australian people while you were there?.

Mr. Harris: Australian people were like the pioneers. To me they were vivacious and energetic. To me they looked like a young America. Their things were outmoded compared to what they were in the United States. In 1943 or 1944 they didn’t have the conveniences and more modern things like we had in the U.S..

Mr. Cox: The Australian people, from what I understand, loved the Americans and the Americans loved the Australians for the way they were treated.

Mr. Harris: I dated Sydney's pin-up girl while I was in Australia. I've got her picture. Well, Margaret, my wife still has the picture. She's not going to throw it away.

Mr. Cox: In discussion prior to beginning of this interview you mentioned that the P-38 glowed at night. Could you tell us a little bit about that? When the P-38's flew at night with their super charger going, how did they appear if you were flying top cover of a P-38? What did a P-38 down below you look like?

Mr. Harris: Well, the super-charger gave off a dull red glow. We got them that hot. It wasn't bright red but if you knew what you were looking for you could see them. You would have to be looking down at them. You could see from the cockpit so you could turn around and look at them and see them glowing and know you were with friendly aircraft. I wasn't impressed too much by that, because radar would be more effective.

Mr. Cox: Oh definitely, but the way I understand it, sometimes when it was so pitch dark, even though you had radio contact with a fellow, you could probably tell when your wingman got below you. From what you told me before basically you see two red dots separated by blackness which would be the space between your super-chargers. I find that quite interesting.

Mr. Harris: They did appear that way. Also, right behind my cockpit was a white light

and we used them when it was dark for recognition purposes and also you could try to estimate the distance to another P-38.

Mr. Cox: Speaking of P-38's; the ones you flew over there and the one you put in the ocean, what color were they? Were they silver?

Mr. Harris: Yes they were silver. We had invasion stripes. Ours went straight back. The 35th and 36th Fighter Groups had different markings.

Mr. Cox: Was that on the top of your wings?

Mr. Harris: Yes. They were black and white marks. Black with white edges so it would stand out. I think that's right. It was on the top and the bottom of the wings. It matched the invasion stripes.

Mr. Cox: Well, I guess this is probably the latter part of 1944 and you are still over there in the New Guinea area. Do you recall any particular missions after the one where you went down?

Mr. Harris: I can tell you one that made me feel like an idiot. I was up over Luzon in the Philippine Islands. There were four of us and we scattered out and we were supposed to look for Jap planes. I looked and saw one off in a distance. I went over there and it was an American Navy dive bomber. I just pulled up beside him. He wasn't going very fast and I flew along with him. All of a sudden he looked liked he started nosing over and I started nosing over with him. I was chopping on the throttle. I was just nearly

stalled out trying to stay with him. He dropped his flaps, dive brakes with holes in them and it was just like someone grabbed him and I went whoosh, right by him. The thirty caliber gunner who sat behind the pilot thought that it was hilarious and I could see him laughing as I went by. I followed him all the way over in his dive, but I was chopping throttle and he was too. We then parted, as the Navy pilot proceeded on his bombing mission.

They used to have the Army and Navy Hospital here in Hot Springs. I went up there sometimes after the war. There was a guy that worked there. As I remember, he was a dentist. He came over to Glenwood, Arkansas when I lived there. He said he wanted to come over to bird hunt so he brought his German Shorthaired Pointer. We got to talking and he had been in the 101st Airborne and he was the guy that talked to me in the Philippines when that guy flew into the ground or something happened to him. I told you about that incident earlier. I still feel responsible for the loss of that young pilot because I should have warned him not to be intrigued by those damn bullets bouncing around when going on a strafing run.

Mr. Cox: That is just one of the misfortunes of war. The guy you talked to over there that described what he saw when this plane went into the ground, you ultimately met him here in Hot Springs?

Mr. Harris: Yes, he said he was the operator on the radio that talked to me to ask me

how many angels (planes) I had.

Mr. Cox: That is quite interesting. Did you have any other notable missions before you were rotated home? Tell me about when you found out you were coming home. Was that the end of the war or was it before the end of the war?

Mr. Harris: Me and "Hat" Hatfield from Powell Station, Tennessee were going on leave. Cy, our Commanding Officer had told us that both of us would be Captains before you get back but don't wear any Captain bars yet because I'm going to hurry the orders through. He said that we should have been promoted a long time ago and he was going to shove the orders through. We got down there and there was no TO (technical officer) vacancy. A Full Bird Colonel, a man named Harris, came into our group, he wasn't any relative of mine, and another Light Colonel also came into the group about the same time. Consequently the TO (technical officer) vacancy was filled.

Mr. Cox: Interesting that you say that. I was reading some of these old military orders that you have here, Citations and so on. I noticed that one of the documents makes a statement to the fact that you had not made Captain because there were no TO vacancy's. After you went to Australia did you go back to the islands or did you head home?

Mr. Harris: Yes, I went back to the islands. Everything there seemed to be more relaxed, there wasn't as much tension as there had been. We had some

guys that left Mindoro. They were going to Leyte and from there to the States as soon as they got transportation. I finally decided I wanted to go to the States. If I had accepted the Captain's bars I would have had to stay over there another year and I didn't want to stay overseas another year. While I was in Australia I got myself some Australian flying boots. The Aussies boots were different from the American made ones. They were fleeced lined, soft warm boots. Normally you didn't need warm boots when you were flying, but you did when you got up twelve thousand feet. I had my personal Forty-five (pistol) in Sydney and I had it nickel plated because I didn't want to have to get the rust off the parts. It was a pretty gun. I didn't know it was so pretty until I got it back to the islands. I decided I was going to take that gun home with me. I had to sign some things that said I wasn't going to take a P-38 or anything else home with me, but I decided that I was going to take that gun and put it in my boot and strap it in there and take it home.

Mr. Cox: Requisition it?

Mr. Harris: Yeah, midnight requisition.

Mr. Cox: The atomic bomb was dropped in 1945, where were you and what were your feelings when you heard that had occurred?

Mr. Harris: I was at Luke Field then.

Mr. Cox: That was in the States, so you knew you wouldn't have to go back again.

Mr. Harris: Yes. A bunch of us when we got back here at Luke Field went in to apply to go to Alaska or somewhere to get out of Luke Field because it was too hot there. They were going to send us to Alaska but then they wanted some guys to fly a P-38 back to Arkansas. They were storing P-38's somewhere in northwest Arkansas. The guys in squadron were all going to do the same thing. Cy Homer was going to be the CO. He was the major ranking officer. We had plotted our course that we were going to get lost between Phoenix and Barksdale Airport. We would land at Barksdale and we would have to fly over Beardon, Arkansas, my home town, to get up there. I don't know what town it was in Northwest Arkansas but we plotted the course so with little deviation we would have to go right over Beardon. We were going to have a rat race (wild air maneuvers) over Beardon with Cy leading it. They would never have believed the maneuvers that could be flown with a P-38. There was a conflict with us going to Alaska and flying the planes. It ended up with all of us going home.

Mr. Cox: Are there any other stories that you can think of at this time that you would like to relate?

Mr. Harris: No, I really can't think of anything else.

Mr. Cox: I would just like to point out that there is a book out called Pacific Sweep that was published in 1974. It is written by William N. Hess. It has

some excerpts from your experiences in the Pacific. In fact I saw a copy of it here at your house. I would also like to point out to those that listen to this interview that Bud Harris is a recipient of the **Purple Heart**, and the Asiatic **Pacific Theatre Ribbon**. He is also a recipient of the **Bronze Star, New Guinea Campaign ribbon, The Philippine ribbon with two Bronze Stars**, and he is the proud recipient of **The Distinguished Flying Cross**. Bud I want to thank you for the time you have spent with us and I know future generations will thank you for being able to listen to your story next year and one hundred years from now. I do personally want to thank you and shake your hand right now for what you did for me as an American citizen during World War II. Thank you Bud.

Mr. Harris: Well thank you. Your sincerity is touching, really.

Mr. Cox: If it hadn't been for gentlemen like you, who knows what condition our beloved United States would be in today. Once again, thank you.

Transcribed by Cynthia G. Cox
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San Antonio, Texas

