Interview with Sidney Goldman

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Interviewer: Rozanne Flatt

A Note to the Reader

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Flatt: Good afternoon. My name is Rozanne Flatt. I'm a volunteer at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's Oral History of Illinois project. I'm in the office of Sidney A. Goldman at 1700 Spring Street in Springfield, Illinois, where Sid maintains his office, probably as a nice little getaway. (laughs)

Goldman: Thank you.

Flatt: I have to stipulate that Sid is a friend so that if I kid him a little bit along the way, you'll understand what's happening.

We're here today to talk with Sid primarily about his experiences in World War II, and he has some very interesting ones to tell us. Sid, let's start by talking about your early life—where you were born and a little bit about your parents and growing up.

Goldman: I was born in 1922, May the eighteenth. Actually, my parents at that time lived in Litchfield, Illinois, and my mother was from Decatur, Illinois, so I was born at Decatur Memorial Hospital in Decatur, Illinois. And then when I was still a baby, my father and mother moved to Springfield, Illinois. So they

lived in Springfield—I think in 1922 or ’23, they were in Springfield. My father and my uncle, Adolph Lubin were partners in the scrap business. His wife and my mother were sisters. So I was raised in Springfield, Illinois.

Flatt: Okay. And tell me a little bit about growing up, where you went to school and so forth.

Goldman: Well, I grew up in Springfield. I went to Butler School for grade school up to the sixth grade. From the seventh and eighth grade, we went to Lawrence School. Then for high school, which was nine, ten, eleven, and twelve, we went to Springfield High School. But in those days, your first year, your freshman year, was in Central High, which was the old Springfield High School. I went to high school in 1935, and I actually was the class of 1940 for graduation, but I got out of high school in three and a half years, and I started college in 1939, University of Illinois.

Flatt: Okay. What program did you go to at U of I?

Goldman: When I was at University of Illinois I took the School of Commerce, and I got my degree in Bachelor of Science.

Flatt: Okay. Now, I remember when we talked earlier that you had some summer experience that relates to this whole thing.

Goldman: I did. In 1935, ’36, and ’37, I went to Culver Military School to summer camp. In those days, they had the Navy and they had the Black Horse Troop. I was in the Navy, and that was summer school. Culver, being a military academy, has a winter school, but I did not go; I went to the regular high school.

Flatt: Didn’t go the whole time. So what kinds of things did you learn there along the military line?

Goldman: Well, we did do military. They did our marching and all as we were in the Navy, but we spent a lot of time on sailboats and on the water.

Flatt: Well, that was a tough duty. (laughs)

Goldman: It was a nice summer. Yeah.

Flatt: Yeah, that sounds good.

Goldman: It was an enjoyable summer, three summers.

Flatt: Well, let’s go on, then, to U of I, and tell us about things that happened there.

Goldman: Well, I started the University of Illinois in mid-year 1939. In those days, as I believe still today, the University of Illinois had a compulsory ROTC program, and we had to take ROTC our freshman and sophomore year.

Flatt: Now, that's interesting because, of course, this is when things are starting to happen in Europe.

Goldman: Precisely.

Flatt: Mr. Schicklgruber [Adolph Hitler's real name] was starting to raise Cain, and that's probably why that became compulsory.

Goldman: Well, no. In those days, the state university had compulsory, even before the thirties, but it was your choice if you wanted to go on your junior and senior year in ROTC. So I took ROTC my junior and senior year. In 1942, when I was starting my senior year at the university, in March of '42, my ROTC unit was called. The war was declared in December of '41, and by March of '42, I was starting my senior year. All the seniors were given credit for that year in ROTC, and we were shipped for basic training to Fort Ord in Texas. We took our basic training in Texas, and from Texas, we were sent to Fort Benning, Georgia, which was the infantry officers' training, and we got our officers' training at Fort Benning, Georgia. After we were commissioned—

Flatt: Tell me a little bit about what officers' training entailed.

Goldman: Well, it detailed actually basic training and maneuvers, and we had to learn as if we were back in school. In those days, because they were so short officers, non-commissioned officers, our commission training was only ninety days They used to call us ninety-day wonders.

Flatt: (simultaneously) Ninety-day wonders! (laughs)

Goldman: Yeah. After my training at Fort Benning, I was then sent for more training as an officer, then I was commissioned. I went to Camp Robinson in Arkansas, and I was with regular troops as a replacement officer to get some training with those troops.

Flatt: Now, was that leadership training, that sort of thing, or…?

Goldman: It was leadership. We had to train the troops, and in doing so we also trained ourselves. Some of the officers and non-commissioned officers had been in the service for a long time, so they were in charge of our programs to see that we were trained and our men were trained. And then we would go on maneuvers, and during maneuvers we would learn more and know what was supposed to be done. Actually, the best training is in combat. You learn fast.

Flatt: You have to, or you're not around to tell about it.

Goldman: If you don't learn (laughs)—you only get one chance. Then from Camp Robinson, I was sent with a few of the officers to Fort Ord, which was in San Francisco, and that was for shipment to the Pacific. Some of the officers were sent to other camps in the east, and they went to Europe. When we got to Fort Ord, then we were assigned different duties, we had some programs there for some more training, and then our orders were given to us. Then we were shipped out from San Francisco to the specific…

Flatt: When you shipped to the Pacific, do you remember approximately when that happened?

Goldman: Well, I was trying to think. I'm not sure of dates anymore. It's been a long time. But I think at that time—I started my programs in '42, so that had to be the beginning of '43, in 1943.

Flatt: Well, and then you had the ninety-day three-months wonder thing, so there's three months of that.

Goldman: I did that in '42 besides the basic training I had at Fort Ord in Texas and Camp Robinson. So it was in '43. I was sent as a replacement officer. I landed on the island of New Guinea, as a replacement officer. I was in the 24th Division, and it was the 19th Battalion, and we were the—let's see—the 19th Regiment, I'm sorry. Nineteenth Regiment, 2nd Battalion.

Flatt: All right, 2nd Battalion.

Goldman: And it was Fox Company, which is F Company. I reported to the company commander. And at that time, as a replacement, they had taken heavy casualties all the way through. I learned later they were constantly getting new officers, new replacements, so you really didn't get to know your men very well. Every time you would get to know a few people, we would run into different combat, and then we'd have more replacements.

Flatt: I'd like to talk about that later, so don't let me forget, because there's been a change in that.

Goldman: Okay. After the first day that I was on the island, on New Guinea, and had reported to company commander, he asked me what weapons I carried; I showed him my trench knife and my carbine. And he said, "Those are two things you will get rid of right away. You'll need a .45 for hand-to-hand combat, and the M-1 is a better rifle to use." And so he was right. The first night, my orders were to keep the men in the trenches. We had a perimeter that we held, and in the middle of the perimeter were our machine guns and 37-millimeter cannons. We had a banzai[1] attack that night.

Flatt: Wow.

[1] Banzai: Japanese, literally *ten thousand years,* a desperate military attack.

Goldman: I got my first experience to know what it was all about, and a very harrowing experience. (laughs)

Flatt: Well, yeah. What were your feelings when you went into combat like that—a nice boy from central Illinois? Gee.

Goldman: Well, it's very different. (laughs) At that time, you're afraid, you don't know what's going on, and all kinds of noise and commotion most of the night. The next morning, you see so many Japanese that had been killed and all, and you realize that to them, life means nothing; to us, it is important. The company commander called me in that morning and handed me a .45—we had lost some machine gunners that night—and I had my hand-to-hand weapon.

Flatt: So you actually got the weapon of somebody who was killed or wounded and had to leave, one or the other.

Goldman: Yeah.

Flatt: Now, what was your rank at this point?

Goldman: I was second lieutenant. I was just the new second lieutenant. Also—

Flatt: And you commanded, then, a…?

Goldman: I was a platoon commander.

Flatt: Platoon leader, okay.

Goldman: In the platoon, you had squads; they had a sergeant in charge of the squad of seven men, and he had a corporal with him. My right-hand man was a staff sergeant. He was second in command of the platoon.

Flatt: If you happen to think—I know I forget names, Sid, but if you happen to think of the names of any of these men—if not, no problem—but if you remember, put it in there.

Goldman: I'm very poor at remembering. (laughs)

Flatt: But if one comes to you, let us know who it is, because—

Goldman: Yeah, I'll let you know.

Flatt: —this goes in as a permanent record, and sometimes people find you this way.

Goldman: Oh, well, I don't—we had so many replacements, and we had so many casualties. I do remember some of the—now, my company commander was Captain Logino. Logino was the company commander.

Flatt: Can you spell that?

Goldman: No…

Flatt: Like it sounds, you think? All right.

Goldman: Yeah, it was an Italian. He was killed later, and Captain Jared took over. He was a replacement officer. And he was with us when we went in to Leyte. Then—

Flatt: Let's stay in—

Goldman: In New Guinea.

Flatt: —New Guinea for the moment. You talked about a banzai attack. Exactly what was that?

Goldman: When they attack en masse and they attack your position en masse. We throw everything we have at them; we shoot with artillery and everything else. Most of the fighting that's done in the jungles is group fighting. We would find pillboxes and we would blow them up what we could. We would be on patrols and run into them, and they would run into us on patrols. Every night, we would send out patrols; usually if I had a patrol, it would be a either a platoon or a squad patrol to find positions or to see if we could capture a Japanese soldier, find out where their positions are.

Flatt: Oh, okay, get somebody for intelligence.

Goldman: For intelligence.

Flatt: So your mission was not strictly to kill; it was to try to—

Goldman: Find out where they were, too. We wanted to take as many as we could so we could get information. It wasn't easy, because they would fight to the end; they wouldn't let you capture them. They were different than we were.

Flatt: Absolutely. Whole different philosophy.

Goldman: Their mental attitude is completely different than the Western attitude at that time. To them, if they died for Japan, it was a—

Flatt: For the emperor.

Goldman: —they were a hero. The emperor.

Flatt: The emperor. Die for the emperor, right.

Goldman: And for the Americans, we wanted to come home; we didn't want to get wounded or didn't want to die.

Flatt: Sure. Describe the jungle. You were strictly in jungle territory, weren't you?

Goldman: Yes. It's very difficult. During the day, it's very, very warm, very hot. You're in the trees, and it's sultry. During the night, it rains most every night, and it's very cold. You're cold at night, and you're hot during the day. Mostly you have to worry about things like jungle rot because you're so damp all the time; your feet, your hands, everything is mildew. You have mosquitoes, so you have malaria to worry about. You also have what they call dengue fever, which we call breakbone fever, where you were in pain. Then usually most of the soldiers had dysentery because we would eat mostly—we were never clean; we were dirty all the time. When we would eat, we'd eat our C-rations and all, and so we were always in a position that we always didn't feel good. You always had dysentery or you had something that you shouldn't.

Flatt: Wow. (Goldman laughs) Tough go. That was almost as bad as the enemy.

Goldman: It was more to it than just the enemy, right. There were times went they would relieve our outfit; we would go back, and they would have areas where we could take a shower. Or whenever we were in cricks[2] or streams, we could wash ourselves a little bit and try to keep clean. And you were in dirty clothes most of the time. And you just—that's the way it was.

Flatt: It was war. War is hell.

Goldman: Yeah. Who—someone said that war is hell, and it is.

Flatt: Probably every GI who went into the jungle. (laughs)

Goldman: Yeah. But, you know, it's funny. After you've gone, after you're out of it, and you're back home and it's all over, then it's gone. While you're there, you do the best you can, and that's it. There's nothing else you can do. You have to take the best of it.

Flatt: Absolutely. Did you ever get a hot meal?

Goldman: Oh, yes, you did. When we would be in camp, then they would have hot meals. When we were in combat, actually when we were in the bush or in the jungles, and we'd be on the trail, the Japanese chasing, and if they were running to a certain spot or so, then you were carrying C-rations, and you would eat that.

Flatt: People fifty years from now who are listening to this s interview, Sid, may not know what C-rations are. Can you describe them for us?

Goldman: Well, C-ration was a box that had—and this is interesting, because we don't smoke today—but they had about four or five cigarettes in a little box at the top, and they also had a can of solid cheese.

[2] Illinoisans typically pronounce creeks as cricks.

Flatt: Sterno?

Goldman: Yellow cheese, you know, American cheese.

Flatt: Oh, real cheese, okay.

Goldman: Yeah, regular cheese. We'd put it out in the sun, and the cheese would melt; we'd make a deal with some of the Australians who were usually on the right, get some of their biscuits, and we'd put the cheese on it and have cheese and crackers. (Flatt laughs) And then there's a candy bar sometimes in there. And, you know, I forget—at the time it was okay, the food was good. When you're hungry, it doesn't make any difference what it is.

Flatt: Well, they were giving you balanced diet as they knew it at the time, and a pretty high caloric intake.

Goldman: Oh, yes.

Flatt: But wasn't there a can of some kind of solid food as well, (laughs) if you can call it that.

Goldman: Well, they had some things in there. And when we had solid food or hot food, we had chipped beef. (Flatt laughs) You ever hear about that?

Flatt: Oh, we all know about (Goldman laughs) the acronym for chipped beef.[3]

Goldman: Chipped beef. But you can't blame the Army, because they had a lot of guys to feed, and they couldn't carry the food around.

Flatt: Well, and in a jungle with people spread all over the place, it would be pretty tough to…

Goldman: You lost a lot of weight because you were eating very little, and when you did eat, you didn't eat anything that was of any substance.

Flatt: And then you had dysentery, which meant you weren't absorbing a lot of your food anyway, yeah.

Goldman: That's true. When you're in the jungles, it's so different. Now, my hair grows fast—I have a lot of hair—and I had a crew cut when I started, but I always got a kick out of this. My hair grew fast, so my platoon sergeant would use his trench knife to kind of cut my hair for me (Flatt laughs) because it was always full of mud and bugs. (Flatt laughs) I have a trench knife, but that's not it. But he, after the war, a few years later, I got a box from him, and it was his trench knife, and he said, "I think you probably need a haircut right now." (laughs)

[3] Chipped beef, very thinly sliced cured and salted beef, usually prepared with gravy of some kind and served on bread or crackers, was universally known as SOS – shit on a shingle. The SOS reference transferred back home after the war.

Flatt: Oh, that's a great story. That's a good… Do you remember his name?

Goldman: (laughs) No, I don't. Just sergeant.

Flatt: Yeah, that's a wonderful story. He found you somehow.

Goldman: We all knew each other. But my memory—don't forget, that's been sixty-seven years ago.

Flatt: Yeah, tell me. (laughs)

Goldman: And my memory's not good. I'm going to be eighty-seven in May, so you know, (laughs) I don't remember everything.

Flatt: I think you're remembering a lot.

Goldman: I tell you, today, I can laugh at all this. If you find any veterans, they'll all sort of tell it to you, and they'll kind of get a kick out of it when they think back, all the things they did. I don't know, I couldn't do it today. Isn't that interesting how that happens?

Flatt: Well, you're young; you're a lot tougher.

Goldman: Oh, I was nineteen then, you know, so it was a different story.

Flatt: Let's see, you were only nineteen when you went in?

Goldman: Well, when I went in, maybe I was, by the time this was—okay, so twenty or twenty-one, yeah. And you're in excellent condition because of all the training. Especially in officers' training, you go through a lot of the exercises, and those—where you climb ropes and you have to do a lot of jumping, and you do a lot of different things, so you stay in condition.

Flatt: I have sort of an image in my mind of what a jungle is like—you know, watching some of the movies and so forth.

Goldman: Well, you—

Flatt: Is it just dense?

Goldman: Thick. It's so thick with the trees and the undergrowth. See, the ground is covered with leaves and tree branches, and you can't even see. And at night, if you can see between the trees or anything, you can see the stars, but otherwise it's black. You use your compass to get around. The compass is the main thing and—

Flatt: Best friend.

Goldman: —your best friend. Unless you've actually been in it, it's hard to explain. It's just like a closed room with the light off.

Flatt: Or a coal mine, maybe, since we're both from central Illinois.

Goldman: It's probably like down in a coal mine, yeah. When it rains, you hear the noise. You can hear the rain on the leaves and everything at night, and it's cold. But during the day, there's no breeze or anything; you can't get a breeze through there because the trees are so thick.

Flatt: Well, I lost my thought. Let's go on.

Goldman: Okay. After our fighting in New Guinea, they regrouped us, and we were told we were going to fight for the Philippines, and the first island that we were going to hit was going to be Leyte. So we were given equipment and rations and ammunition and everything and got us set and got us trained and ready to go for the landing. That was our next move after they felt that we had taken the island in New Guinea.

Flatt: Okay, so that campaign was pretty well wound up.

Goldman: Pretty much when we left.

Flatt: That was the reason for moving on.

Flatt: Now, you stayed with the same outfit?

Goldman: Oh, yeah, you stay with the same outfit.

Flatt: All right, okay.

Goldman: Now, actually, the Japanese never surrendered, per se. A few of them we captured, but a lot of them stayed in the jungle and would keep fighting. So we left certain troops there to continue to find the last Japanese they could. If you'll remember, later on, even after the atomic bomb—and I'm going way ahead now—there were still Japanese in the jungles and around, and for years after the war, they were still catching Japanese.

Flatt: Years after. I remember reading several accounts where they didn't even know the war was over.

Goldman: They didn't know, right.

Flatt: They were so isolated, and they were still there defending the emperor.

Goldman: Right, and a lot of them were left as snipers. For instance, when you'd go to the bathroom, you had slit trenches, and they'd be away from the center of our perimeter, and the Japanese would set up snipers to watch for the guys, so

then we would have to send people around and try to clear the area so we could view it. But they would stay. They wouldn't be there. They'd tie themselves to the tree even so that they could stay up there and spot people.

Flatt: Isn't that something? You left one part out of the mess kit, I think, I mean, out of your C-rations. What else was in there that you used in relation to what you've just been talking about?

Goldman: Oh, yeah. Well—

Flatt: Didn't they give you a little piece of toilet tissue?

Goldman: Yeah, you're right, you're right.

Flatt: All rolled up or something? Yeah.

Goldman: I never thought about that. Yeah. You know, you were talking about the mess kit. When we had the hot meal, you had your mess kit. Everything gets piled on top of everything else.

Flatt: Describe a mess kit.

Goldman: Well, the mess kit was an aluminum pan, and you had a cup that your canteen fit in, so you had the cup to drink, if you had coffee, and the mess kit was aluminum pan; you had your fork, your spoon, and you could eat out of that.

Flatt: Didn't it have a lid or something?

Goldman: Well, it's a top to the mess kit, and it fit in your pack, back in your pack. I'd forgot about that.

Flatt: Yeah. (laughs) I remember seeing some in an Army surplus store or something once, and I laughed. I thought a woman would have a fit. (laughs)

Goldman: Well, you know, just like the helmet—we used our helmet for everything. We even used them for pillows.

Flatt: Oh my.

Goldman: You'd put it in the bottom of your trench, if you'd lay on your side with your head on it. And you made coffee in your helmet—you did everything with the helmet.

Flatt: Those helmets weren't lined then, were they? I think later they had like a leather strapping—

Goldman: There was.

Flatt: —that kept it from hitting right on your head, didn't they?

Goldman: Well, you had what they called a helmet liner. There was something inside your helmet—it was a plastic, and then your helmet fit on the plastic.

Flatt: I got it. So you'd take that out to make coffee. (laughs)

Goldman: You'd take your helmet off, yeah, and you had the plastic, and the helmet fit on top of the plastic.

Flatt: That's really interesting.

Goldman: I have a picture I can show you of both the helmet—there. See, on the left hand is the plastic, and on the top is the helmet.

Flatt: Okay. Sid has a wonderful collection of pictures of things—unfortunately, not many of him in battle, but we'll get to that a little bit later, so.

Goldman: (laughs) Okay.

Flatt: We'll put on the Web site whatever we can find that's interesting.

Goldman: Whatever you'd like.

Flatt: Okay. Okay, so now you're all—

Goldman: Going into Leyte.

Flatt: —gathered up, and you go on, what, a troop ship over to—it's a little distance over there.

Goldman: We get on what they call LSTs.

Flatt: Landing ship tank.

Goldman: Landing ship—yeah. And I had my platoon with me on our LST, and we hit the beaches. I was with the 2nd Battalion. We hit a certain section of the beach. There were eight hundred men of our battalion when we went in, and our orders were to keep going until we were stopped. The mountains were up ahead, and so our objective was to get into the mountains and hold a position so that other troops could land without being attacked. So we hit the beaches and moved up with about eight hundred men, and we held for ten days. We ran out of ammunition; we ran out of water and so forth. And what we had to do—I kept sending men back for the beaches, you know, to pick up the ammunition and pick up the canteens and whatever guns we could get, keep using. We later found out, of the eight hundred men we had 606 casualties, so we had less than two hundred men left. We found out that the Japanese on the other side had over three thousand men that were attacking our—

Flatt: Your eight hundred. Your eight hundred. Oh my.

Goldman: So we took a pretty good beating.

Flatt: Well, you did one heck of a job, then.

Goldman: Yeah, they did. And our unit, the 2nd Battalion because of the job they did, were given the Presidential Unit Citation, and that's—I'll show you later—just a blue ribbon. Then, after ten days, they pulled us back.

Flatt: Back to the beaches.

Goldman: Yeah, we came back.

Flatt: You were up into the mountains.

Goldman: Yeah, and then they pulled us back.

Flatt: Okay, pulled you back to the beach.

Goldman: And then we had taken areas in Leyte, so we were able to come back and rest. Then, we got orders to move out in Leyte and start mopping up. When we mop up, that means you go after the Japanese and try to clear the area.

I'll tell you an interesting story, a funny story. One area that we were in was in the cemetery near Tacloban, which is a town, and the cemetery has an iron fence around it with pointed things. Today, I couldn't even get over it, but when we were there and the artillery shells started coming in, I said to the outfit, "Follow me," and we all got to that fence, and we helped each other over. (laughs) We all got over, were able to get out.

Flatt: Now, you said the artillery coming in—there was a big naval effort going on at the same time, wasn't there? Is that the artillery you're talking about, or the Japanese?

Goldman: No, this would be Japanese.

Flatt: Okay, the enemy artillery.

Goldman: Also, they would use a lot of mortar shells, too. They used a lot of mortar and everything on us for that.

Flatt: Grenades were a pretty big thing, too, weren't they?

Goldman: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Goldman: We had rifle grenades, and they did, too, and we used hand grenades. Hand grenades would be for closer combat. Mortar shells—they can throw a shell pretty far with the tubes where they dropped in the shell and would fire, and their artillery. You see, today when I see the different weapons, they're so much bigger and so much more powerful than our day, than we had. Then we

would go on patrols in Leyte, too, the same way, to clean an area. They would send me with my outfit, and we would go in that area and take care of things.

Flatt: Now, you mentioned the mountains. What was the terrain like? Was it jungly mountains, or was it…?

Goldman: Well, it would be rocky, and there would be trees. There's jungle on the mountains, too. But what the Japanese would do—they dug a lot of tunnels. We never know where they were; we would try to find them, and if we did find a tunnel, we'd drop grenades, as you were mentioning, down in the tunnels to blow them up.

Flatt: What did they do, just cover up the entrance to the tunnel with branches or something?

Goldman: Yeah. Say they dig a tunnel. They would take boards and put leaves and branches, and you wouldn't know it was there, and then they'd lift it out and come behind you. See, you'd go through—

Flatt: Go past, and then—yeah.

Goldman: And then they'd be behind you, and then they would come out of the tunnel and attack you from behind.

Flatt: So you had to keep watching all the time, all the time.

Goldman: You had to watch all the time. Then they were on these islands for awhile before we got there, so they had pillboxes, too. They would cut trees and lay them down and make a protection, and then they could shoot from there and you couldn't get them because the heavy branches, the heavy trees—

Flatt: You couldn't see them, for one thing, could you? Well, you could see where the fire was coming from, yeah.

Goldman: Pillboxes. We had in those days explosives that were like in a canvas bag, and you pull the cap and then throw it and blow up the pillboxes, you know, we'd do it. It was a lot of close in-fighting in those days.

Flatt: Did they use any flamethrowers then?

Goldman: Oh, yeah, (laughs) oho. We did, and so did they. We would use the flamethrowers, but once you'd get an area and you'd use that flame, everything would burn, you know. We used a lot of flamethrowers. The Japanese would look for the men that were carrying the flamethrower—they would have a tank on the back. And we had to protect those guys, because that's the fellows they were shooting at. They were afraid of them, see.

Flatt: Yeah, that's to be afraid of.

Goldman: You're right about the flamethrowers.

Flatt: That's interesting. So this was really—except that it was more mountainous—New Guinea wasn't mountainous, was it?

Goldman: No. Well, yeah, but it's jungle. It was more jungle. This had more hills and mountains in Leyte.

Flatt: Did they come down pretty close to the beach?

Goldman: Well, they would wait for us, and they were waiting for us on the beach. They were ready when we came. And the same way—and I did not see this—but the Marines had the same problems; on each island that they went to, the Japanese were waiting on them to hit the beaches. That's where most your casualties are, on the beaches, getting ashore.

Flatt: Did they dig any caves into those mountains and hills, or was it just pillboxes?

Goldman: Well, everything. They had tanks, too. You know, the Japanese had the tanks. I'd forgotten about—our flamethrowers were good for the tanks. We had tanks, also, but in the jungle, it's a different story; it's mostly man-to-man you're fighting.

Flatt: Well, they're spread out, and they're in where you can't see them, and it has to be pretty close-in fighting, doesn't it?

Goldman: Oh, yeah. You know, it's interesting, because when you see the movies today, the different people see each other. We didn't always see each other. We could see the flashes of fire where they were, and that's where we would start firing and doing what we could for that.

Flatt: Well, Leyte was one of the big—I remember even as probably teenager at that time, hearing about the battle of Leyte, or the campaign—I think they called it a campaign, didn't they?

Goldman: It was a campaign, because we took an awful lot of casualties in Leyte. Then afterwards—well, I was going to tell you—I got a Bronze Star on Leyte. I was on a patrol, and it was a platoon patrol. I had two scouts out and we were going through kunai grass. Now, kunai grass is in the jungles, and it's tall, seven-, eight-foot high grass, real thick grass. And when you move—

Flatt: Wow, you can't see anybody in that.

Goldman: No. When you see the tops of it moving, that's where they shoot. My scouts were going through there. The Japanese make a tunnel and shoot their machine guns through that little tunnel that they make in the grass. They killed the first scout, and the second was hit in his cartridge belt, exploded the shell that went into his side. And he laid and cried and was carrying on, so I said to

my platoon sergeant, "You watch the platoon; I'll be right back." And I ran, got the man, half-dragged and half-carried him back. They were shooting at me all the time; I didn't realize how dangerous. (laughs) I got him back, and then our aid man worked on him and got him back to the aid station, and they saved his life. And then years later—should I tell this?

Flatt: Sure.

Goldman: We have the state fair here in Springfield. Years later, I was married and he was married and had some children, and he called me. He was from southern Illinois, and he said, "We're showing some sheep at the cattle barn, and my son and I are going to be there, and I'd like for you to meet us there; I want to introduce my son to you. And I said, "It'd be a pleasure to meet you." So I ran to the state fairgrounds, went to the cattle barn, and I saw him. He introduced me to his son, and his son was about, I think, thirteen or fourteen. He said to his son, "If this man hadn't pulled me out, not only wouldn't **I** be here, **you** wouldn't be here either." I was trying to think of his name, but I can't remember his name.

Flatt: Well, if it comes to you later, just…

Goldman: I'll think of it later. But he was a farmer from southern Illinois. The first time I'd seen him in years.

Flatt: How did you feel when that little thing happened? I mean, when he called you and so forth.

Goldman: Oh, I got a thrill. I did.

Flatt: Of course.

Goldman: It felt good that—I was tickled to hear—I didn't know whatever happened to him, but I was thrilled to hear from him and stuff. I heard one time years later from another man someplace in Illinois—his name was Stiegelman. He was traveling through, and he gave a call; he says, "Is this the same lieutenant that was with the 19th?" And I said, "**Yeah**!" He said, "**Hi**, I was in your outfit. I just wanted to say hi."

Flatt: Oh, that was nice.

Goldman: Wasn't that something?

Flatt: Yeah, right.

Goldman: But you had so many replacements all the time that you never really got to know your people.

Flatt: Yeah, it was hard to develop a team thing, wasn't it?

Goldman: Right, when you were together—

Flatt: Except you had to to—

Goldman: The great guys. And I want to tell you, there's nothing like the American. Boy, these guys—it was their country, they were fighting for it, they did everything they could, and they did it right. It's amazing because they're youngsters, you know, and they really did a good job.

Flatt: Were your NCOs[4] competent?

Goldman: Oh, they were, too. They were good.

Flatt: Were some of them older timers, or when had they gotten in?

Goldman: Yeah, but I'll tell you what happens. The more experienced NCOs were taken back for training to train the new troops that were coming all the time, so they were constantly taking a lot of them away.

Flatt: So that meant you had some kind of greenhorns.

Goldman: Oh, yeah. You'd get new young men coming in a lot.

Flatt: Well, as you said—

Goldman: You know, in fact, as things quieted down in Europe, we were getting a lot of soldiers from there; they were sending replacements. They were artillery men that were put in the infantry. When we went into Mindanao, it was not as difficult as Leyte was, but it was difficult; that was the next island in the Philippine chain that we went to.

Flatt: Let me back up just one step, because I want to emphasize the fact that this rescue of the man under your command was what earned you the Bronze Star.

Goldman: A Bronze Star, uh-huh.

Flatt: Well, it's well-deserved.

Goldman: (laughs) Thank you. But anyone would have done it. I tell you, it made the guys nervous hearing all the man hollering and everything, and so I wanted to get all that out of the way.

Flatt: Did you really think about it, or did you just—

Goldman: No, I just ran and got him. (laughs)

Flatt: It was instinctive almost, wasn't it?

[4] NCOs – Noncommissioned officers, Corporal and the several sergeant ranks.

Goldman: Right. One of my boys out there, and I wanted to get him. And I got him and brought him back.

Flatt: Okay. Well, let's move along. Now, they've pretty well finished up the Leyte campaign?

Goldman: Well, yeah, and we were there, and then they left part of the outfit in Leyte.

Flatt: Another clean-up.

Goldman: Because you never completely get the whole island because there are always Japanese around. You have to realize, in the jungle there's so many places to hide, and they could live off the land. The Filipino people—a lot of them, were afraid, and if the Japanese would come into their village, they'd feed them and give them the food, you know—

Flatt: Just to keep them pacified.

Goldman: And I never blamed them because they were not fighting. They just didn't know.

Flatt: Well, it was self-preservation for them, wasn't it?

Goldman: What could they do? Yeah. And then when we went into Mindanao.

Flatt: Now, Mindanao is on the other side of the Philippines, isn't it?

Goldman: Right. It's still part—

Flatt: The big island.

Goldman: —of the Philippines. It's a big island.

Flatt: A big island sort of southeast, or southwest.

Goldman: We had—casualties, you know, was not as bad.

Flatt: Was it the same kind of fighting again?

Goldman: Yeah, same thing, in the jungles.

Flatt: Just go in and clear out the Japs, huh?

Goldman: All that is the same. I think, just between you and I, I wouldn't want to live in the Philippines. I don't like (laughs) that kind of jungle life and stuff. The cities, of course, are different. But it's not a life like we know.

Flatt: Right. Now, did you have much contact with Philippine civilians?

Goldman: No, very little, although they had an army of their own, and they did guide us. We did use some of their people to show us where to go in the jungles and so forth. You know, it's funny. It's been over sixty years. A lot of this I've forgotten already (laughs) what's happened. I remember going in; I remember the fighting there. I remember when we left there and left people—when I say "people," our soldiers there to still fight them. They took some of us, and we went into Mindoro. I was only there after we hit the beaches of Mindoro and came in, I think it was maybe the second, third day I walked into a mortar shell. I had just turned around to the sergeant to say, "The men have to spread out more; we're too close together if the shells come in." And one did, and you can see here.

Flatt: Oh, yeah.

Goldman: I've got up in here—

Flatt: Sid is showing me a scar. He still has a lot of hair, and it covers it up, yeah.

Goldman: (laughs) And what happened, the next thing you know, I woke up under a tree. And, you know, the concussion—I was lucky because it does this—and I'm close enough I got the concussion instead of a lot of the shrapnel. It flowers over you. And I woke up under a tree and I'm wet, and I feel it's bloody, and I think, Uh-oh, and I look, and they've got some men looking at me. And I hollered for the aid man. He came over and he said, "Hell, lieutenant, we thought you were dead." I said, "No, get me out of here." So he helped me up. I was so dizzy that I couldn't stand, and so they got me back;. they sent me to Leyte. I was in the hospital there. This happened in the beginning of August, and a week or so later, we dropped the atomic bomb. And I think about ten days or more after that, we dropped the second bomb, and the Japanese I think surrendered at that time. I was sent back to the States a little later.

Flatt: Can I back you up just a little?

Goldman: Sure, go ahead.

Flatt: I think when we talked earlier, you said that you went from Leyte to Mindanao and then to Mindoro.

Goldman: Mindoro. That's true.

Flatt: How long were you in Mindanao? It was obviously the same kind of fighting, and it all runs together, doesn't it?

Goldman: I can't tell you, but not as long as we were at Leyte, because they wanted to move on. But they still left troops there. In other words, what they would do—they take part of the units, leave part of them there, and move on to the other islands, because there were several other islands that they wanted to get the

Japanese out of. You know, it's funny. Every day was like the same. I can't tell you how long I was there; I just don't know.

Flatt: But that was your progression?

Goldman: Yeah.

Flatt: It was Leyte to Mindanao to Mindoro.

Goldman: (overlapping) Mindanao to Mindoro. And then from Mindoro, they—

Flatt: And Mindoro was where you were injured.

Goldman: Right. I was injured there and sent back to Leyte, which was the hospital. The nurses were great. They were really—

Flatt: Were they Army nurses?

Goldman: Yeah. They were really wonderful. And I was there. Then I was sent home by hospital ship, and I reached Seattle, Washington in October, and it was **cold** in the States. I'd been there for a long time in the South Pacific, and I was used to the warm weather. What happened—everything I owned was still there in the islands, on Leyte, I guess, my duffel bag and… So I had nothing but a hospital gown and paper slippers. And as an officer, you had to buy your own stuff, so I had nothing.

Flatt: Oh my.

Goldman: I did have my wristwatch; that's about all I had. Being a detachment of patients, you don't get paid, and I didn't get my promotion because I was a detachment of patients. You know, you're sort of like out in left field. But on the hospital ship, they had good soup, good food for us, and I slept in a bed for the first time in years. And then we got to Seattle, Washington, and it was so cold in October that I borrowed the blanket off my bed, the Navy blanket—it was a blue blanket. And the Navy guy said, "You can't do that," and I said to him, "You sue me." (laughter) They took us by bus. I was an ambulatory patient. They took us by bus then to Madigan General Hospital in Seattle, Washington. What a great hospital. It was good. Madigan General in Seattle, Washington.

Flatt: Okay. And how long were you there, approximately?

Goldman: Well, I was there October, November, and about the middle of December, they moved me to Chicago, Illinois to Vonn General Hospital. I think it's now called Hines Hospital. So I got there in December, and—

Flatt: Now, you didn't have to go with no clothes.

Goldman: Oh, no. Oh!

Flatt: There's a story back there in Seattle, isn't there?

Goldman: My grandfather's brother lived in Bremerton, Washington. That's a story itself. When I was at the hospital, you got into line and you were able to call home to tell them you were home. So it was a Sunday, and I called. My dad wasn't at home; my mother was. I talked to her and I told her I'm home. I said, "I'm in Washington at Madigan General Hospital." My mother got so excited that I'm home and I'm at Washington, DC. So then I had to move on, and the next guy got the telephone. See, you can't imagine the lines for the phones in those days. So my mother got hold of my dad and she told him I'm in Washington, DC, so my dad said, "What hospital?" and she didn't know. So my dad didn't know who to talk to, but he did know the state representative, so he called him. He lived in Petersburg at that time. His name was Brooks, Congressman Brooks.[5]

Flatt: Curly Brooks?

Goldman: Curly Brooks. And he told him that I was home. So Curly Brooks called Washington, DC, the hospitals there, and they didn't have me there. So he said, "Where did he come from?" My dad said, "From the Pacific, from the Philippines." He said, "He has to be in Seattle, Washington." So he called Madigan General, and they got a hold of me. I'll never forget: the nurse came in, and she said, "The congressman wants you on the phone." I said, "You're kidding me!" So I get there, and it was him, and he had me hold, he had my dad talk to me. And I said to my dad, "Dad, I'm an ambulatory patient. I can go out certain times and walk around, but," I said—

Flatt: In your hospital gown. (laughs)

Goldman: Yeah, but I said, "I can't go out naked like this!" I'm not sure what kind of relative that is, my grandfather's brother, so my dad said great uncle, I think.

Flatt: Great uncle.

Goldman: Yeah. He said, "I'll call your great uncle." I said, "No, I'll call him." And he told me his name—it was Berstein—and I called him up, told him who I was. He never knew me. My grandfather had seven brothers and one sister. (laughs) His son and daughter live in Bremerton there—his daughter and son-in-law, it was. And he said, "I'm going to come and get you." I said, "I haven't got any clothes." I told him what I need, and he said, "Give me your sizes." He went to Army Navy Store and got me some pants and a shirt. Then I went with him to the store, and we bought clothes. He gave me a hundred dollars, which was a lot of money in those days.

[5] C. Wayland Brooks, Republican Congressman from Illinois

Flatt: Oh, yeah.

Goldman: And so we got clothes. I had clothes, then, see? He was so nice. He really was a nice guy. He laughed. He said, "It's the only way I get to see my family, is when they need something." (laughter)

Flatt: The old story.

Goldman: But that's a long way, from Washington to Decatur, Illinois. But he was awfully nice, and when I got home, I wrote him a letter and thanked him for everything, you know, and he called me. Then when I got to Vonn General Hospital, my folks said to me, "You used to date Ruthie Eckstein." I said, "Yeah." They said, "She works there in Chicago." I said, "Really? I'll call her." So I was able to get a hold of her, and she worked for the government, for the…

Flatt: Red Cross?

Goldman: What is it? Not the… Well, they called on the soldiers'… When somebody was killed, they went to see the family.

Flatt: The Red Cross?

Goldman: With the Red Cross, and I think it was the government USO? No, she was with the Red Cross, I guess it was. Is that government or state? That's government?

Flatt: No, they support the government, but it's a private organization.

Goldman: But it's some private… And she was with them, and she would call on the different families and all. That's what she was doing there in Chicago. Then a lot of the families had no support, needed food, needed stuff, and they would take care of it and see if they had medical services and all that sort of stuff. Her office was way in a bad neighborhood in Chicago at that time. Anyway, we started dating again. I dated her in high school, but I hadn't seen her—she had gone to college in Lynchburg, Virginia; it was a girls' school there, Randolph-Macon. Then after the war started, she went to Wisconsin to school. And so that was in March '42.[6] I was discharged from the hospital and discharged from the Army. I'd had a promotion, but I'd never gotten it, as a first lieutenant, because I was detaching patients, and I just never took it. When the Korean War—now, we can cut this now.

Flatt: No, that's all right. Go on.

Goldman: That was the end of it. I guess I got a discharge. I don't remember what happened to it or anything. And then when my kids were little, I gave my

[6] The atomic bombs were dropped in Japan in mid-1945, so he must mean 1946.

uniforms, they wore my medal—you know how they do—and all I kept was the ribbons and stuff. So. Everything was good, and when I got out of the service, I hadn't had any problems. I was in the jungle and I had jungle rot, and my gums were infected and all, so after I got to be a civilian, I had dental work done on my own and a lot of things. The soldiers had to go to their own doctors and get a lot of the things done that needed to be done.

Flatt: But you mentioned that the doctors back at the Leyte hospital were wonderful—or the medical people, not just the doctors.

Goldman: Oh, oh, the medical people, doctors and all.

Flatt: Did you feel you have—as far as your personal wound were concerned and so forth, they took—

Goldman: Oh, yeah, they were great, and they were great at Madigan General in Seattle; they were great in Vonn, too. They treated us well. What happened, because I was ambulatory, I only had to report for certain times, and they'd let me out if I wanted to be out a little bit; I could wander around.

Flatt: You could go out and date Ruthie.

Goldman: I went out and had a date with Ruth. We'd go to dinner. Her sister and brother-in-law lived in Chicago—he was an attorney—and so we'd go for dinner and so forth. Let's see, I was there January, February, and then in March, I was discharged. So I was there for three months.

Flatt: So that was March of '46.

Goldman: Forty-six. And in May of '46, Ruth and I were married, so this coming May will be sixty-three years that we were married.

Flatt: Congratulations. That's a good record.

Goldman: It's a good record.

Flatt: Good record.

Goldman: She put up with me for a long time. (laughs)

Flatt: I'd like to ask just some—

Goldman: Sure, anything, yeah.

Flatt: —little funny questions about things that happened. When you were in the jungles, did you also have critters like snakes and things that you had to deal with?

Goldman: Okay, I'll tell you an interesting story.

Flatt: That's what I'd be looking for. (laughs)

Goldman: Okay. In my foxhole one night, we had an attack. I was in my foxhole, and before I got up to give an order, I thought I got hit. I got bitten by a scorpion in my left shoulder, in my arm.

Flatt: They're nasty.

Goldman: And I said to my sergeant, my radio men—they had SCR-300 radio—and I said, "Uh-oh, you're going to get a replacement, I'm hit." He said, Taylor, "We can't be hit; we're six feet down in the ground." Next morning, I looked, I roll over, and I'd killed the scorpion, but he'd bit me. And that arm swelled up like my thighs, that's how big it swelled. So when I went to the aid station to look at it, the aid man said, "Well, lieutenant, you're here today, so you're going to be here tomorrow." (Flatt laughs) He said, "Don't worry." And then for months, it stayed swollen, and finally it went down. I got bitten by a scorpion. I saw nice snakes. (laughs)

Flatt: Nice snakes, yeah.

Goldman: And all kinds of critters, and I had every kind of dirt and bug in the world in my hair, and I had jungle rot in my feet and crotch and armpit—everything. It's just from the dampness and the moisture and the…

Flatt: You're just never dry.

Goldman: Never dry. You're wet during the day from perspiration and wet all night from rain.

Flatt: How was your gear, your clothing and so forth? Did you—

Goldman: You're wet all the time. You're running around in wet underwear, and it's very uncomfortable. You took salt tablets—and the white from the salt…

Flatt: Did you at least have change of clothes, or…? No?

Goldman: No. (laughs) You wore your clothes for **weeks**. (laughs) The only time, if one of the guys got killed and your fatigues were pretty ripped, – you would take maybe from the guy that was gone, you'd take his jacket or his canteen or something. He didn't need it. But forget it. Your clothes were just—that was it. You tore pieces off your clothes to clean your rifle, because that kept you alive.

Flatt: Oh, that was the most important thing.

Goldman: Yeah. So you're in dirt all the time.

Flatt: You wear glasses now. Did you have to wear glasses then?

Goldman: No, I didn't have to wear glasses. Afterwards my eyes were not good, and they got worse. In those days, you'll see, I didn't wear glasses at all.

Flatt: Because that would be really tough (laughs) in the jungle.

Goldman: Well, yeah, your perspiration and everything, yeah.

Flatt: Did you have any aftereffects from the…?

Goldman: My ears. Well, I don't hear. I broke the eardrum in my left ear.

Flatt: From the concussion from that mortar.

Goldman: Concussion, yeah. I had malaria once after I got married and went to the hospital at St. John's; they took care of me there. Now, when I went to give blood, no one will take it now because I did have malaria. And we took Atabrine in the jungle.

Flatt: Atabrine, yeah.

Goldman: They didn't have quinine in those days; we had Atabrine, and I was as yellow as that notebook paper, that yellow paper.

Flatt: Yeah. I had an uncle that served in New Guinea—

Goldman: And he had the same thing.

Flatt: He was a doctor. When he came home, his skin was almost green.

Goldman: Yeah. It's just you're yellow. I'll tell you a funny thing. I had hemorrhoids so bad they hit the back of my knee. (laughs)

Flatt: Oh my.

Goldman: (laughing) _____(unintelligible.

Flatt: Well, you know, hey, that's what life is about in war, and that's one of the things that makes war hell.

Goldman: But what makes it so bad there, too—when I went back to the hospital in Leyte afterwards, they had showers there, which was wonderful. We could clean up and wash, and I washed my hair and everything. It felt so good to finally clean up. I'll tell you, we had a great bunch of guys. Everybody was very good to everybody else, and we tried to take care of each other.

Flatt: How did the troops feel about General MacArthur? He was, of course, the big man in the whole Philippine thing.

Goldman: He was the main guy. I have pictures of him coming ashore in Leyte. We felt he was good. We liked him, although he and President Truman had trouble later. I think he knew his people, he knew what had to be done, and I think he did a good job. I really do. They knew where we were to go and how to handle it, and I think both he and General "Ike" [Dwight] Eisenhower did a good job. They did good in Europe, and they did well in the Pacific. We took tremendous casualties in the Pacific.

Flatt: Oh, yes.

Goldman: I'll never forget. Ernie Pyle was killed in the Pacific, but he wrote about the different things.

Flatt: He was probably the premier reporter—

Goldman: Reporter, yeah.

Flatt: —of World War II, wasn't he?

Goldman: Right. I have a book at home on my division, the 24th, and it tells about the different landings and stuff. And when I read it, I see things that happened, and I think, "Oh, didn't remember that, yeah."

Flatt: Yeah. Well, maybe that will help you remember some of those names. If you can think of them, we'll plug those in.

Goldman: Oh, those soldiers? I—

Flatt: Too far.

Goldman: I'll tell you, my memory today, even when I meet someone today, at the time I'll know, and then later I forget it. I know them when I see them, but I can't remember their name. Don't forget, I'm getting older. (laughs) Not "older," **old**.

Flatt: Oh, Sid, (laughs) you're never going to be old. I know you'll die someday in the distant future, but you're never going to be old. You have too much spirit.

Goldman: I tell you, I love life. I tell you, I'm on vacation all the time. Everyone says, "Don't you want to get away?" and I say "From what?"

Flatt: Yeah, What do I get away from?

Goldman: Yeah. I play golf, I meet the guys, we have beer, we do everything. It's fun.

Flatt: Well, let's just talk briefly about your life when you came back, about business and about the other interesting things you did to continue the military connection.

Goldman: Actually, when I came home then and discharged and was married, I went to school at night because I was still sixteen—I was short of my degree. My father and my uncle, Mr. Barker, had Barker, Goldman, and Lubin construction and lumber and scrap business, and so I went to work for them. Then in '49, my dad, my brother, and I sold our [construction and lumber] interest to Barker and Lubin, and we bought the scrap business from that.

Now, my brother was also in service. He was a tail gunner on a B-24, and he was shot down over the Ploesti raids over Romania when we did the oil raids, and he was saved by Mihalovich's underground and taken to Italy, where he was held in the hospital. He had been hit by a fifty-caliber machine gun bullet.

Flatt: Ooh, boy.

Goldman: Right. So he carried the shrapnel a long time with him.

Flatt: But he survived at least, right?

Goldman: Yes.

Flatt: And then you were in business together?

Goldman: Yes. There's a picture up there of my dad in the middle and my brother and myself. We were in business together from '49 until '86. In '86, I bought my brother out. My two sons were my partners, and we sold out to Mr. Mervis, Lou Mervis. And he bought our business and several others like ours. He was doing business at that time with General Motors and needed our type of material. We were in office equipment and trucking and that type of thing, and also did feed business. So we sold out in '86. I maintained several corporations and the land, and then I build a building for the state and I lease to the state, and I did some other stuff. And just keep busy.

Flatt: Well, just to keep busy. (laughs) That's why you have so much fun.

Goldman: So I could have fun.

Flatt: (laughs) You don't have to sit home and watch television.

Goldman: **No**, there you are. I don't like to sit much.

Flatt: Well, you did take on sort of a second career, though, a little bit later.

Goldman: Oh. I got bored and ended up teaching school.

Flatt: Tell us about that, how you came to do that.

Goldman: Oh, I had fun. I had a friend at Lawrence Educational Center, Lawrence School. It's an alternate school for students who have problems.

Flatt: Well, and isn't it also for people who—it's like a continuing education thing, isn't it?

Goldman: It is, it's both. It's GED, and it's for girls that have children out of wedlock that should be in school. So they have playgrounds for the children to take care of them and all. I went to this friend of mine and asked him if I could tutor, and he said, "No, Sid. You got your degree?" I said, "Yes, I do." He said, "You're going to teach." (Flatt laughs) So I had to go to see Helen Tolan who was superintendent of the schools. She gave me an exam, and if you look right there, to the right of the clock, you'll see my certification to teach. I took the exam on Friday. Monday morning at eight o'clock I got a call from Bob Leming, the principal: "Get your tail over here; we need you right away to sub." And you think I wasn't scared? I was more scared there than I was during combat. (laughs)

Flatt: Well, now, don't exaggerate. And what did you teach?

Goldman: Well, when I got over, I taught the first day English as second language. I had a great time because two things. One, there were a lot of Filipinos, students from the Philippines, and when I mentioned I'd been there, and they heard about it, oh, boy, we had a ball. That was number one. Number two, at Lawrence school are a lot of minority students. When I ran the scrap yard, a lot of those students' fathers and grandfathers were associated with us, so when I taught them in school, if I had a problem, I'd call them up and I'd say, "I know your grandpa," and I'd tell them his name. They'd say, "You didn't know my grandpa." I said, "You go home and ask your mom or granddad and find out." They'd come back the next day and they'd say, "Mr. Sid, you did know my grandpa." (laughs)

Flatt: That kept them in line, too, didn't it?

Goldman: Kept them in line. I never had any trouble. In fact, the principal said to me I'm the only teacher that never had to send a student to the office.

Flatt: That's interesting. Okay.

Goldman: And then I had to go—

Flatt: Now, did you teach anything beside English?

Goldman: Right. I'll tell you, I had to go to school at night to learn how to use a computer—I didn't know anything about that—because all the students knew. And then what happened, the math teacher had cancer and had to leave, so then they told me I'd be in for a couple of weeks. So I went at night to brush

up on my high school math, and I ended up teaching several years of high school math. (laughs)

Flatt: Well, good for you.

Goldman: The couple of days or couple of weeks ended up a couple of years. So I taught high school math. Then I taught a class on social study, which is like history and geography; we had fun in that because a lot of the students and a lot of the books never really go into what caused the war, about the Depression, about the WPA, the CCC,[7] and all the other initials that we had during the Depression days. They didn't know the banks closed. You know, history is funny, unless they actually record it like you're doing here the books will have just a skimming of it, and the background and the actual knowledge of it is not available to the students today, so they really don't know what happened. When you think back, in the thirties, when I can remember milk was delivered to our home by horse and wagon; we had **ice** boxes, and they delivered ice in our house by horse and wagon; we had a tray underneath we had to empty that had water. We had furnaces that we put coal in, and we banked the furnaces at night, so in the morning, we'd have to shovel coal in, and we'd take the ashes out. None of the kids know any of this today. They have natural gas; all they do is go to the thermostat and turn it on. The refrigerator takes care of everything too, and they don't remember. When I tell them that I had a pony in my back yard, and before I'd go to grade school in the morning, I'd ride him out to Washington Park and bring him home and clean him up and take care of him and feed him, they said, "You really did?" And I'd say, "**Yes**."

Flatt: So you really enjoyed teaching, didn't, you, Sid?

Goldman: Oh, I had fun. I had a good time. I enjoyed it. I'll never forget—the first day I taught math, I asked my students, "How many know the multiplication tables?" Less than half. And I said, "How can you learn high school math?" And they all showed me their calculators. They all lifted calculators. I said, "Okay, I want the girls—do any of the girls have purses?" All of them had purses. I said, "Put your calculator in your purse. Do any of the boys have pockets in their pants?" Oh, yeah. "Put your calculator in your pocket. Now, I'm going to teach you the multiplication table," and I showed them how to make a chart, from one to ten at the top and one to ten at the bottom. And I said, "Now, here's your multiplication table. "We're going to work this week. This time next week, I'm giving you all a test on your multiplication tables; you've got to know them." "Oh, you wouldn't do that." I said, "Yes, I will." (laughs) And I got them to learn their multiplication tables.

Flatt: Well, good for you.

Goldman: But that's what happens. They all depend on calculators.

[7] WPA – Works Progess Administration. CCC – Civilian Conservation Corps.

Flatt: Yeah. Well, there was another opportunity for you to carry on to young people some of history. Can you tell us about that? When you talked with the small children in schools.

Goldman: Oh, oh. Well, on Veterans Day, last Veterans Day, I was asked if I would give a talk on World War II to the kindergarten and first and second grades at Chatham Elementary School. I said it'd be a pleasure, so I did. They had 140 veterans there, from World War II, from the Korean War, and from Vietnam, and I believe there were some from Iraq. The youngsters were darling, and the girls would say, "Were there any girls in the Army?" and then I'd have the lady Marine stand up and tell them about the WAVES[8] and the WACs[9] and the Marines[10], and the women that would fly airplanes to England and to Canada and who would teach the pilots how to fly.[11] And the girls would get up and cheer.

Then the boys would ask, "What did you do with the steel helmet? Did it just stop the bullets?" I saw a veteran there that came in on a walker, and I said, "Sir, would you want to tell them?" And he said, "We did everything from pee in them to make coffee," (Flatt laughs) and I think the kids all **roared**, you know. They got a big kick out of it. So I had a lot of fun, and we talked about different things.

And when we'd give a lecture, I would have the children ask, and the main question they always would say to me, "Did you kill anybody?" I would always answered it this way: "We never knew. We were always shooting, and they were shooting back, and you never really knew unless you were in close." And I said, "I was very lucky; I had very little close hand-to-hand combat because we didn't want to take a chance of getting hurt; we wanted to keep them at a distance. So I imagine we did, but we never kept count, we never made notches on our guns, and the main thing we were there for is to protect our country."

Then they would ask you, "Did you capture any?" I have one interesting story that I'll never forget. When I was in New Guinea, on the island, on a patrol one night, we captured some Japanese; one of them was a Japanese major. When we took him prisoner, his English was perfect, so I said to him, "Well, you're going to be sent to the States. You'll be there for a few years before you go home." He said, "I'll be home before you will." I said, "You will?" He said, "Yes. I'm an American citizen, so if I'm sent to the States, I'm sent home."

Flatt: So he was an American citizen fighting for—

[8] Women in the Navy were known as WAVES: Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service
[9] WACs comprised the Women's Army Corps. Their commanding officer was Colonel Oveta Culp Hobby, so they became known as "Mrs. Hobby's WACs works" alluding to a famous wax works of the time.
[10] United States Marine Corps (WR) – Women's Reserve
[11] They were known as WAFS**,** Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron.

Goldman: (overlapping) He was an American citizen. For Japan.

Flatt: —Japan.

Goldman: I asked him, "How could it be that you're in the Japanese army and an officer?" He said, "Before the war, we were called back." So our country knew what was going to happen, and I think that's one of the reasons that President Roosevelt had to intern so many Japanese; he didn't know who he could trust and who he couldn't and whether or not the Japanese would attack our main country, our main**land**, say, California—who he could trust. So he was worried about it, and so I think that's why he had to have internment camps. That explained a lot of things to me at that time. There were a lot of Japanese that fought for us; there were the Nisei[12] who fought in Italy. There were Japanese[-Americans] who fought for the Americans. So you had stories on both sides.

Flatt: Sorting them out was the problem, wasn't it?

Goldman: Yeah, it was just finding out. You see, it's just like today when we fight the Muslims, the terrorists. They have a different mindset than we do. We trust everybody. We're different; the American people trust everyone. Evidently, in a period of time when there's a different mindset, you have to handle things differently. That explains a lot of things that happened during World War II, and which is happening now. The same thing now when—and I have no way of knowing other than when I see the house-to-house combat—that I remember a lot of times orders were, "Shoot first, ask questions afterwards." These soldiers get into these houses; they don't know who's their friend during the day and who's shooting at them at night. When I see they get into trouble, they're being court-martialed, I worry for them because I know it may not be their fault; this was the order.

Flatt: Well, this was the order, and this was the necessity in war. It's hard, yeah.

Goldman: Yeah, it's altogether a different—we're fighting different wars today. Now I'm getting to subjects that I know nothing of.

Flatt: (laughs) Okay, well. Sid, I really admire your interest in keeping our history alive, both by meeting with these young people—I think that's wonderful, and I'll bet you they'll invite you back again and again on Veterans Day.

Goldman: I hope. (laughs)

Flatt: I hope so.

[12] Children born in the United States of Japanese parents. Japanese, literally, second generation, from *ni* second + *sei* generation.It is interesting to note that in the United States we refer to immigrants from the West as first generation, such as *first generation Polish-American*, meaning the first generation born here.

Goldman: I do enjoy. I think what's happened today—I wish everyone could give of the history that they know. Everybody has a little history of something else, and it goes on to the posterity so that people will know what has happened.

Flatt: It sounds like you're describing the oral history project (Goldman laughs) called Veterans Remember.

Goldman: I better stay out of it.

Flatt: No, no, that's exactly what we're doing. That's exactly what we're doing.

Goldman: One thing—at Camp Lincoln is one of the most interesting museums on different history of the fighting in this country. It goes back to the French and Indian wars, it shows World War I, it shows World War II, it shows all the different things, even like the War of 1812.I It has uniforms and different trophies of those periods. If sometimes people would go and look at these different museums, they would be amazed. I'm amazed at the difference in the guns that we used in World War II and the gun that they use today. Now, in our day, we could only use our own ammunition. Today, all the people of NATO use the same ammunition; everybody can use the same guns. It's completely different.

Flatt: Yep, it certainly is, and the next—it would be nice to think there wouldn't be a next war, but—

Goldman: Oh, that—

Flatt: —I'm not optimistic about that—

Goldman: I'm not either.

Flatt: —and it will be different in any future wars.

Goldman: Right. What worries me—the future wars are fought more with like atomic bombs or new weapons, and civilians are more involved. They cannot protect themselves; there's no way to do that. So the only thing—and we try to get along with everyone, and it's hard. Everybody is jealous of our country over here because this is the greatest. We've got the greatest country in the world over here.

Flatt: No question about that, is there? Well, again, this time that we've spent together today is an attempt to preserve some of that history for people in posterity. This will go on the website and be there for a long, long time, Sid.

Goldman: Well, Posy,[13] thank you so much, and I appreciate it.

[13] The interviewer's nickname.

Flatt: Thank you for your time, Sid, and thank you for what you've done for America as a citizen at war.

Goldman: Thank you, and I tell you, a lot of guys did a lot. And I want to tell you, the people back home did a lot, because in those days—that's when Rosie the Riveter and all the ladies were busy helping.

Flatt: Right. Do you have any last thoughts that you want to give to young people about serving their country?

Goldman: Well, I want to tell them they've got one of the most wonderful countries in the world right here. It's a great country.

Flatt: How do we motivate them, do you think?

Goldman: Well, they want to help everyone and have a helping hand for everyone, and we want to work together as one unit. And we have a great country and we want to keep it great.

Flatt: Well, that's a wonderful final thought, Sid, and I appreciate it.

Goldman: Thank you.

Flatt: Again, thanks for your time and for your service.

Goldman: Thank you so much.

(end of interview)