

Interview with Allen Dulles

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DePue: This is Mark DePue. Today is November 28, 2007. I am here with Allen Dulles, We are here to talk about his experiences during the Korean War. It is a great pleasure, Mr. Dulles, for me to have a chance to talk with you today and to hear firsthand what you did during the Korean War. I always start with some background information, and in your case, let's start with when you were born and where you were born.

Dulles: January 22, 1930, New York County.

DePue: New York County. Was that near Manhattan?

Dulles: Manhattan. That *is* Manhattan.

DePue: Did you grow up in the Manhattan area, then?

Dulles: Yes. I was there most of the time. ... Until ... Well, as a matter of fact, I suppose before I can remember. Father was in the Diplomatic Corps, and I suppose I was in Paris.

DePue: So you spent some time in Paris as well?

Dulles: Uh, well, I can't remember anything about that time. I don't know how long it was.

DePue: Well, I'm sure you were very young then.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: What do you recall about growing up?

Dulles: Well, I remember there were some very unusual things. I think the basis of it, I have just recently started to learn, was that Allen Welsh Dulles was a German spy.

DePue: Okay. Well, I know that he was certainly posted in Switzerland during the Second World War, but we're getting ahead of our story a little bit. Do you recall Pearl Harbor?

Dulles: Yes. Oh, yes. I remember that very well. I was out in school in Arizona, outside Tucson, and we went out riding that day and the war hadn't started yet. We came back in and everything was war.

DePue: You would have been just eleven years old at the time?

Dulles: I was just eleven, almost twelve years old at the time.

DePue: What was the name of the school you were attending?

Dulles: It was the Russell Ranch School. It was a Presbyterian minister from New York State who had, I guess, more or less retired into a situation of running a school there. A lot of people from around New York State... [were in the school.]

DePue: I know that your grandfather was a Presbyterian minister.

Dulles: Yes.

DePue: Was your family religious when you were growing up? Did you attend services regularly?

Dulles: I think Mother was more religious than Father. ... I was born Presbyterian, and have become a Unitarian now, because I do not like a mistranslation in the Bible, which is done in the Catholic Church. My cousin, Cardinal Avery Dulles, said the Pope has the right to change the Bible. I don't think so. He's turned a beautiful line of Greek philosophy into a pretty sloppy bit of Greek: what it says in actual Greek, "In principal was reason," they've translated into, "In the beginning was the Word." That, obviously, wouldn't be conceivable, that a Greek would start a book with a line as blunt as that.

DePue: Well, I'm a Lutheran myself, and—

Dulles: What?

DePue: A Lutheran, and so it's important to me when Martin Luther decided to challenge the Catholic Church and say, "You know, we ought to go back to what the Bible actually says and let people read the Bible for themselves, so..."

Dulles: Yeah. I think that's very important. A Greek author of that time never conceivably would have begun his book with a blunt non sequitur, like "In the beginning was the Word." I think it's much more likely that it was, "In principal was reason." And Avery says that the Pope has the right to change the bible. I don't think that he's made it in any way better there. I think that that's a lot worse.

DePue: Let me ask you very quickly your mother's maiden name.

Dulles: Todd.

DePue: What was her first name?

Dulles: She never used her first name, which was Martha. She preferred to use the name Clover, which was her middle name, a family name. I understand there was an Admiral Clover, whom I did not know.

DePue: Okay. You attended this Russell Ranch School, is that what it was?

Dulles: For one year, yes. Just at the time of Pearl Harbor. And then I was brought back to Buckley School in New York City, since it was more expensive to be out in Arizona.

DePue: I know that eventually you attended Exeter as well. Was that during your high school years?

Dulles: Yes. Then after that, a few years later, it was Exeter.

DePue: Was it the tradition in the Dulles family that the children be sent to boarding schools?

Dulles: Well, I don't know if it particularly was. But various members of the family have ended up at various times in [boarding school.]

DePue: What can you tell me about your years at Exeter, then?

Dulles: Well, I liked it very much.

DePue: Did you find it challenging academically?

Dulles: Yes. They have anticipatory programs, and so on. So I went ahead fairly fast. But I did not like Princeton University.

DePue: Well, in Exeter, were they trying to develop, not just academically, but the whole person? The whole man?

Dulles: Oh, yes.

DePue: Was athletics a part of your life as well?

Dulles: Yes. I have never been good at athletics, but I've tried.

DePue: Mr. Abboud said that you were very competitive, though.

Dulles: Yes. There may have been a competitiveness, but I was never interested in athletics.

DePue: But you enjoyed your years at Exeter.

Dulles: Up to 1947.

DePue: How much do you remember about the Second World War when you were at Exeter?

Dulles: I do remember the time of Pearl Harbor, when I was out at school in Tucson. And I remember a lot of other things happening. There had been one extraordinary experience with Mrs. Thomas S. Lamont, whose son had been killed at the end of the Second World War, and she thought that if it hadn't been for Allen W. Dulles having blown the plot to kill Adolf Hitler that her son would not have been killed. That was Thomas Lamont, who was quite a good deal older than I. I was in the same class at school with Lansing Lamont, who was her youngest son.

DePue: But all of that is something that you only found out much later. Do you remember what the mood was like at Exeter during the war? I would imagine that the students were very interested in what was going on in the war, and followed the war closely.

Dulles: Certainly. But, of course, I had no knowledge whatever of the fact that Allen W. Dulles was a German spy.

DePue: But were you following the war closely yourself? Reading in the newspapers every day, and—

Dulles: Oh, yes. I was very much interested in the newspapers.

DePue: Would you say you got interested in the military at that time?

Dulles: I think that was probably one of the reasons for it. So at the age of seventeen, I entered the Reserve.

DePue: While you were still in high school?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Was it the Navy or the Army Reserve?

Dulles: Marine Corps. It was a special program that they called a Platoon Leaders class. It didn't have any classes during the school year. You did all your Reserve training in the summer. That is the principal reason I joined that program, that I felt that it was much better than the Army or Navy Reserve, which took away a good part of your academic year.

DePue: Well, that's interesting. The Army and the Navy ROTC and the Air Force ROTC still have classes all the way through the school year, and the Marines still send their prospective Lieutenants off to summer camp and don't bother them during the

academic year. So that's a long standing tradition, then. I wasn't aware of that. What were your career aspirations at the time you concluded at Exeter?

Dulles: To be a lawyer. The one course in the history department at Princeton that I took was Constitutional Law. And that's about all the law that I've ever studied.

DePue: You've mentioned Princeton here a couple of times. Why did you select Princeton as your college?

Dulles: It was partly family tradition. But what I hadn't realized was that it suddenly turned into a Jewish college. I had always been under the impression of it as a Presbyterian college.

DePue: I understand you were there for just three years at Princeton?

Dulles: Um-hm.

DePue: Why was that?

Dulles: I found that it was not good, and so I took a year off and went to Oxford.

DePue: Was it not good in terms of not challenging enough academically?

Dulles: Well, I'll tell you the first and the most basic thing, which was that the first big defect that I noticed was that all people entered in one basic level, no matter what they had done in preparatory school or anything of that sort. It seems a little bit ridiculous. A person had been in various different forms of education for nine years before Princeton, and then suddenly to come in and they started as if you were all at the same level. On the contrary, when I came from Buckley School to Exeter, everybody—as a matter of fact, when I entered Buckley School, then for one year, everybody was in the same undifferentiated class, and in the next class, people were differentiated into the slow and the fast learners. It seems pretty ridiculous that you would come to university, and I had a fairly good record at my primary and secondary schools, it seemed ridiculous to come to the university and everybody was placed in one undifferentiated group.

DePue: From all accounts, from everything I've read and heard, you were an exceptional student.

Dulles: Yeah. So I found myself very much claustrophobic.

DePue: Frustrated, perhaps?

Dulles: What?

DePue: Frustrated?

Dulles: You might say that. But I think they've gotten rid of that program since.

DePue: Now, you spent three years there. Your major while at Princeton was pre-law?

Dulles: Well, just ordinary history. I mean, there was no explicit pre-law. But I mean my studies in politics were pretty much aimed in that direction.

DePue: I know your family had a long tradition of serving in the Diplomatic Corps—

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: —and diplomacy. Were you inclined to law and service in the Diplomatic Corps as well? Was that of interest to you?

Dulles: No. That hadn't been so much of interest. I don't suppose I had such a large income as to serve in the Diplomatic Corps, where most people went in having a good private income.

DePue: I know you mentioned that you were in the Marine Corps Platoon Leaders course at seventeen.

Dulles: That was what, for the other services, would be called ROTC.

DePue: Did you continue that at Princeton?

Dulles: Yes. I did that for two summers.

DePue: So, again, it was strictly focused on those summer camps in the Platoon Leaders course?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Was that at Quantico?

Dulles: Yes.

DePue: Can you talk a little bit about your experiences in Quantico?

Dulles: Well, I certainly got to realize why Washington is considered in most foreign diplomatic handbooks as a hardship capital, because the climate was so appalling. Now, I don't think that the climate is so bad anymore, because they have good air conditioning. But I saw recently that they had to let all the workers out of the Pentagon building at noon, because the electricity failed and the air conditioning stopped.

DePue: Who was it that was instructing you? Were these Marine Sergeants who were primarily instructors, or young officers?

Dulles: Yeah. Could be both sergeants or officers.

DePue: Well, I would suspect that they were not easy on you when you got there.

Dulles: Oh... Well, I enjoyed the time very much.

DePue: Now, I know that the Marine Corps Platoon Leaders' Course, Marine Corps basic, all of the military experiences really stress the athletic stuff, or at least exercising and being in excellent shape.

Dulles: Yeah. I'm not particularly interested in athletics. I do like staying in good shape.

DePue: What was it that really appealed to you about being in the Platoon Leaders course, and being in the Marine Corps then?

Dulles: Well, unlike the Army or Navy ROTC, it did its training during the summers, whereas Army, Navy ROTC took away one fourth or one fifth of your whole academic life at college. I didn't think that military training deserved to be part of your academic life. So I felt that that program, which, as a matter of fact, a cousin of mine had devised, Thomas Holcomb, who was later Commandant of the Marine Corps, he was the one who had started that and commanded a couple of summer classes.

DePue: Was it the expectation that any young man who went to Princeton had to be in some kind of an ROTC program?

Dulles: No, they didn't have to. But I mean I was aware that a war was pretty likely.

DePue: So why did you decide to go into ROTC?

Dulles: Well, PLC.

DePue: The PLC. I'm sorry.

Dulles: I wanted to be in a good situation, and to be an officer.

DePue: So, a sense of service to your country, an obligation that you had—

Dulles: Oh, yeah.

DePue: Was that something that was shared by many of your colleagues at the university?

Dulles: Yes. It was a very hell-raising class of the Platoon Leaders Corps. I remember the term "book defilade," which was when you got back down behind somebody else so that the lecturer couldn't see you were reading Mickey Spillane. (both laugh)

DePue: I would assume, also, that those of you and your colleagues who were in the Platoon Leaders course rather looked down at the Army and Navy ROTC people?

Dulles: There's a certain amount of particularism, I suppose, in every Service.

DePue: Okay. So a friendly rivalry, if you will.

Dulles: A what?

DePue: A friendly rivalry, between the services.

Dulles: Yeah. Yeah.

DePue: Three years at Princeton—

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: And then you went to Oxford. Why Oxford?

Dulles: Yeah. I found I couldn't stand Princeton. A teacher at Exeter had warned me against Princeton, but I still tried Princeton because of family background, and so on. But the ridiculous thing was that when you came to Princeton, you were all put into one undifferentiated class. You had, by that time, all your records from primary and secondary schools. But I mean aside from, as opposed to Buckley School, where you were all put in the same class for the first year, and then in the second year, you were differentiated into classes of slow learners and fast learners.

DePue: So, you were eager to get to Oxford to get out of that environment?

Dulles: That's why I went there, because I felt that Oxford had a reputation of a more personal existence, and so on. But one thing that I found there—I wrote various articles for the conservative party magazine in the newspaper, but they insulted *me*. Our family is a relative of William Henry Seward, who bought Alaska. And I kept writing on Pacific foreign policy, because frankly I believed there was nothing else of any importance. And they were always thinking in terms of Atlantic foreign policy. I believe that the era of dominance of things Atlantic has passed, and we are in the era which Secretary of State, family neighbor and teacher of my great-grandfather in geopolitics, when the future of the world lies around the shore of the Pacific Ocean.

DePue: I can imagine that the Brits, especially, were still Eurocentric in their views, and thinking that Europe was still going to be the future of the world.

Dulles: Mm.

DePue: Okay. Did you get a degree from Princeton, then?

Dulles: Yes. Then I got a degree—

DePue: But after your year at Oxford?

Dulles: Got my AB degree from Princeton.

DePue: But only after you'd completed your thesis in Oxford?

Dulles: Yeah. Um-hm.

DePue: Okay. And that was in, what, 1951?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: May or June of '51?

Dulles: June of '51. And then I went to Basic School for five months. That was the first part of the Marine Corps active life. They were called Special Basic Courses, because they had to sort of boot, put together the people who had never been in active service before, and then there were a lot of people called the Recalled Reservists, who had been brought into service in the first place in World War II, and then were recalled for the Korean War. And they were very much put out at that.

DePue: Okay. You graduated right before the Korean War started.

Dulles: Yeah. Yeah.

DePue: When did you get your commission?

Dulles: When I graduated from Basic School at Quantico in, that would be November 1951.

DePue: Okay. When you graduated from college, though, from Princeton—

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Was it your intention to go directly to the Basic course, anyway?

Dulles: Well, yes. There was a war on. Let's see. When did the—

DePue: The War hadn't started yet, at that time. I'm trying to establish whether it was your intention to go the Marine Corps Basic Course even before the war started.

Dulles: Yeah. Well, the war started in 1950. Yes.

DePue: Okay. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You're absolutely right. Okay. What were your career aspirations at Princeton?

Dulles: Well, I had expected to be a lawyer, as my father and uncle had been. But that idea ended when I got hit in the head and my sight, hearing, and memory were very much impaired.

DePue: Okay. Now, you corrected me, and you were absolutely right to correct me. 1950, June of 1950, you were just beginning your year at Oxford.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: When the North Koreans invaded.

Dulles: Yeah. That told me to get my degree, finish my year of study.

DePue: So it was during this time that you're trying to convince the Brits, and you're writing articles about the importance of the Pacific—

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: And the war has just begun in Korea. What were your thoughts about the war in Korea, at *that* time?

Dulles: Well, it was perhaps very important. It showed us the danger of Communism.

DePue: So you did not question the decision of Truman to send in troops immediately?

Dulles: No.

DePue: That was the right thing to do?

Dulles: I think that was the right thing to do.

DePue: You were in Oxford during that horrendous winter of November, December 1950.

Dulles: Um-hm.

DePue: Were you paying close attention to the Korean War?

Dulles: Yes. Well, I was in touch with the Headquarters of the Marine Corps, and they told me to finish my degree and come and serve after that.

DePue: Okay. What were your thoughts when you heard about the Chosin Reservoir?

Dulles: Well, it was a very difficult campaign because of the weather.

DePue: Were you surprised when the Chinese entered the war in a big way?

Dulles: I suppose so. I didn't have any particular knowledge of that. I couldn't read any Oriental language. I think that my cousins Holcomb mostly do know Chinese.

DePue: Okay. So when you got done with your year at Oxford, in spring of '51 you went right to the Basic Course?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: By the time you were done with the Basic Course, the war had changed. It was no longer occupying all of Korea and liberating North Korea, but it was settling for a stalemate somewhere along the thirty-eighth parallel.

Dulles: Yeah. So I went over in the September draft replacements to Korea, and got hit in November.

DePue: What was your thought though, sir, of the decision to end the war at a stalemate, if you will?

Dulles: Well, I thought it would have been more logical to end it at the division across the short part of the line. I think that would have been about the thirty-ninth or fortieth parallel.

DePue: But it made sense to you not to liberate North Korea, then?

Dulles: Well, no, but I mean we should have gone up farther north than it is, farther than the thirty-eighth parallel. I don't know exactly what the degree of latitude is across the narrow waist of the peninsula.

DePue: You had basically volunteered for the Marine Corps.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Which is arguably the most dangerous of the branches to go into. I would guess you selected the infantry as your branch.

Dulles: Oh, yeah.

DePue: Why?

Dulles: Well, it was the best Reserve plan. You did all your training during the summer, and didn't have any year of college—and you didn't have any course during your time at college.

DePue: But you were in the Marines. Why infantry in the Marines versus artillery, or aviation, or many of the other things you could have selected?

Dulles: Well, I thought I could do a useful job, and I think I did.

DePue: So you deliberately, consciously chose the most dangerous part of being a Marine?

Dulles: Yeah. Um-hm.

DePue: Was it the sense of service and obligation to the country? Was that part of it?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Was a sense of adventure part of it?

Dulles: A factor of what?

DePue: Adventure? Looking for adventure?

Dulles: Yeah. Yeah.

DePue: Okay. Was the camaraderie, you think, going to be different in the infantry than some of the other parts?

Dulles: Hm... No. I don't think so.

DePue: Okay. Well, let's get to the point, then, of Korea itself. You finished the basic course, and got your commission.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Roughly when was that?

Dulles: 1951.

DePue: Late '51?

Dulles: Yes. I graduated from Princeton in June, 1951, and basic school in November of '51.

DePue: Well, if I am reading your record correctly, you got to Korea approximately September of 1952?

Dulles: Oh, September. Yeah.

DePue: So what were you doing during the early part of 1952?

Dulles: Well, I was finishing basic school then.

DePue: Okay.

Dulles: Oh, no. I guess that was 1951 that I finishing Basic school. And then I was, for some time, at Camp Pendleton, California. More training.

DePue: Okay. Training in infantry tactics?

Dulles: Yeah. Um-hm.

DePue: Were you assigned to a line Marine company or unit at that time?

Dulles: Yeah. Yeah.

DePue: Do you remember what unit you were assigned to while at Camp Pendleton?

Dulles: The Seventh Special Basic Course at Camp Pendleton. Oh, no. That was at Quantico. I was in the Third Division in Camp Pendleton.

DePue: Third Marine Division. Then a few months later, when you were shipped to Korea—

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Were you shipped as an individual replacement?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. How did you get to Korea?

Dulles: Boat.

DePue: Do you remember anything about the boat ride to Korea?

Dulles: No...

DePue: Okay. So many people remember how (laughs)—The common answer I get there is how bad the weather was, and getting sick on the ship, and things like that. You don't recall any of that?

Dulles: No, I really don't recall much about that.

DePue: Did the ship land in Japan or in Korea?

Dulles: It went first to Japan, and then to Korea.

DePue: Did you have any time on the ground in Japan?

Dulles: Very brief.

DePue: Okay. And then you went to Pusan in Korea?

Dulles: Something like that. And I remember we went up on the Keigr National Railroad, which impressed me as being somewhat like the Toonerville Trolley (laughs), [an old comic strip] or the Long Island Railroad. Do you remember that bad little railroad around New York City?

DePue: No, not much. But I'm painting a picture of it here.

Dulles: The Long Island Railroad was not at all good.

DePue: What were your initial impressions of Korea?

Dulles: Very rough and hilly.

DePue: Anything else? The Korean people?

Dulles: No...

DePue: You probably landed at Pusan. You were shipped north. The Marines at that time were on the western part of the front, to include the Panmunjom area.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: And Bunker Hill, and the western part of the frontlines.

Dulles: I was on a little hill right next to Bunker Hill called Yellow or Heavy.

DePue: Okay. Were you initially assigned to a battalion staff?

Dulles: I was originally on a staff, yes.

DePue: What were your duties there?

Dulles: I really don't remember too terribly well about that.

DePue: Now, reading accounts that were written back in the 1950s—at least Mr. Abboud indicated you were initially an Assistant S-2?

Dulles: Yes. Um-hm.

DePue: The Assistant Intelligence Officer for the—

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: For the battalion?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: What was the battalion?

Dulles: First Battalion, Fifth Marines.

DePue: Okay. So Fifth Marines being the Fifth Marine Regiment.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: And First Marine Division.

Dulles: That's the First Marine Regiment.

DePue: The First Battalion of the Fifth Marine Regiment of the First Marine Division?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. Do you recall what the typical duties of the intelligence officer were?

Dulles: No, I really don't, really.

DePue: Okay. You must have been there for a couple months at least, though.

Dulles: Uh... Well, I think about... Might have been that long then. I was on the front for only a week.

DePue: So being on the front, you must have been reassigned to Baker Company.

Dulles: Yes.

DePue: And from what I have read, what was your assignment in Baker Company?

Dulles: Well, I was first of all Machine Gun Platoon Leader, and then somebody, the Infantry Platoon Leader, went home. So I took over for about a week on that. And then I got hit.

DePue: Did you volunteer to be assigned to a line platoon?

Dulles: Oh, yes. Um-hm.

DePue: Why did you volunteer for line duty?

Dulles: Well, I found it was fairly good, interesting, and I rather liked it.

DePue: What did you like about it?

Dulles: Well, it gave me some good exercise.

DePue: Were you closer to leadership and troops in that position than you were on staff?

Dulles: Yeah. Oh, yes.

DePue: And did you like that aspect of it?

Dulles: Yes. Evidently—I have to state what was said to me by a teacher of mine at Exeter, who said, “Harvard has it. Yale has it. Princeton doesn't have it.”—The first time I ran into a classmate at Princeton I said, “Hello.” Rich, was his name. He said, “We want people here with balls on.” (laughs) I do not think much of Princeton University. I think it's become a totally Jewish outfit now.

DePue: But again, going back—I'm interested in why you first selected the Marine Corps, which is a dangerous service to be in. Then you chose the infantry, which is very dangerous. And once you got to Korea, you were assigned to the staff, but apparently looked for the opportunity to be a platoon leader; it doesn't get much more dangerous than that.

Dulles: Oh, that's why they have to have somebody—they always had to have an officer on that outpost, because it was so critical.

DePue: Were you scared, though, going into those kinds of situations?

Dulles: No.

DePue: What was on your mind, then, when you were assigned to this position as a platoon leader?

Dulles: Well, no particular thing. I very much enjoyed the service, and was sorry that it lasted for such a short time.

DePue: Okay. Can you recall any specific actions, then, once you were assigned? You said you basically had only one week in this before you were injured. Can you tell us what happened during that short week?

Dulles: It was just beginning to snow. The weather was just getting colder. In November, this was.

DePue: From what I know about Korea, it's a very cold place.

Dulles: Yeah. It was turning out to be very cold.

DePue: Can you describe the terrain where you were?

Dulles: Exceedingly hilly.

DePue: Okay. And I know that if you got farther east, it even gets more mountainous than that.

Dulles: Farther east, you say?

DePue: Yeah.

Dulles: I don't remember exactly how we were in relation to that.

DePue: Can you tell us a little bit about what the front line looked like? Was it a continuous line of trenches, or a series of outposts?

Dulles: No. They were trying to tow a ... a sort of wooden bunker. Trying to tow it onto a certain hill position. The Communists didn't know what was going on, so whenever they started to tow this bunker into the place to observe, they started a terrific amount of shooting of artillery. So they eventually gave up on that project.

DePue: But it was basically static positions?

Dulles: Yes. Very static positions. I personally felt that we should have gone up to the narrow waist, that that would have been the easiest, shortest front to defend. But they decided to sit just on the thirty-eighth parallel.

DePue: Can you describe at all the tactics that the Chinese were using at that time?

Dulles: Well, as I said, whenever they tried to tow up this bunker into a position, they would get a terrific amount of shelling from the Communists. And the Communists, apparently, did not have any shortage of shells.

DePue: Were there any attacks by the Chinese or the Communists against your positions while you were there, other than the artillery?

Dulles: I think so. A little bit.

DePue: How about the American tactics? Did they make sense to you?

Dulles: No. ... Essentially, the tactic was not to annoy the enemy. A war can't very well be carried out on that basis. But I think it was enormously a political thing, and all these decisions were made, not in military terms, but political.

DePue: By the time you were a platoon leader, this would have been mid-November. That was right after the presidential election where Eisenhower won.

Dulles: Yeah. Um-hm.

DePue: And both your father and your uncle were pretty close to the Eisenhower administration.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Did your fellow Marines know about that, about you?

Dulles: I suppose they did. Uncle Foster [John Foster Dulles] was appointed Secretary of State and Father was made the Director of Central Intelligence.

DePue: Do you think your Marines, your buddies in the Unit, treat you any differently because of that?

Dulles: No. Everything went well.

DePue: And I would suspect you insisted that they treat you just like every other Marine.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. That was important to you.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Did *that* have anything to do with deciding to be assigned as a platoon leader?

Dulles: No.

DePue: Okay.

Dulles: Everybody had to do it. I mean, the people who were on this particular outpost were only there for three days, so everybody had to do it.

DePue: I wonder whether or not you want to tell us about the incident where you were injured.

Dulles: Well, I don't remember much about that, except that I did get somewhat hit.

DePue: Would you mind if I read what Mr. Abboud has written about the incident?

Dulles: Fine.

DePue: Okay. I think that would be helpful. Because what strikes me here is the courage you show throughout this entire incident. A. Robert Abboud, who was the Executive Officer for your company, is that correct? –for Baker Company?I –said his friend from prep school went out to a position well in advance of friendly lines the night of November fourteenth. This is the previous evening. And that shortly after his arrival, received a minor leg wound. Later that s—

Dulles: That was not exactly true. There was no leg wound. It was an arm wound. (laughs)

DePue: Okay. Well, I think—and here's the nature of combat –everybody remembers things a little bit differently. I'm sure your memory is more correct, since you were actually there. But having interviewed a lot of veterans, sometimes these stories change from person to person. Later that same night, Abboud continues, "Enemy snipers so angered the Lieutenant, (that would be you) that he charged into the open with a rifle, and opened fire on the Chinese." Do you remember that?

Dulles: ...No. No, I don't particularly remember that.

DePue: "A few minutes afterwards," Abboud related, "the rifle was shot from Dulles' hands, and he received a wrist wound."

Dulles: Yep.

DePue: Okay, so that part you do recall? That's correct?

Dulles: Trivial wound, yeah.

DePue: Okay. Nothing that would cause you to leave the lines?

Dulles: No.

DePue: The medics, then, were able to bandage you up, and you didn't lose any mobility in your hands, or any—

Dulles: No damage, no.

DePue: Okay. Abboud explained that the enemy was at the bottom of the hill, seventy yards away from the Marine positions inside of Bunker Hill. Bunker Hill is a fairly famous piece of terrain in Korea, is it not?

Dulles: Yeah. It was during the war.

DePue: And who was in possession of Bunker Hill at that time?

Dulles: Uh...

DePue: Was it the Chinese?

Dulles: I really don't remember.

DePue: I *think* it was the Chinese.

Dulles: Think so.

DePue: I think so.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Marines on the outpost could hear the enemy digging trenches toward their position. From talking to Mr. Abboud myself, he explained that this outpost that he's writing about here is in front of the main line of resistance by a couple hundred--

Dulles: Upwards line of resistance.

DePue: So it's rather an isolated position?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. And apparently it's very close to the actual enemy positions, as well.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: "The next day, November fifteenth, Dulles determined to call in fire on the enemy at the base of the hill and ordered his men into the bunkers." Do you recall that at all?

Dulles: No. I don't recall that.

DePue: Okay. What has been explained to me is that this was obviously a dangerous thing to do, to be out in front of this observation post, and that when it should have been somebody else's duty, you decided to take it upon yourself to do that, rather than to expose other members of the platoon to that danger.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Do you recall why you wanted to do that yourself?

Dulles: No. I can't remember about that period.

DePue: But in general, was it the assumption that if you're going into something dangerous, then you wanted to set the example?

Dulles: Well, everybody was in a fairly dangerous position.

DePue: Okay. "Then," Lieutenant Abboud said, "Dulles crawled out of the trench system to the crest of the ridge within thirty yards of the Chinese to direct friendly mortar fire. That apparently only there could you observe the mortar fire to make sure it was being effective. One round of enemy 82mm mortar round landed near him, and inflicted a head wound." Now, I understand you're obviously not going to be able to recall what happened after that point.

Dulles: No.

DePue: PFC Joseph Cucia—do you remember him —

Dulles: Cucia—yeah.

DePue: —from New York City?—said that he left the bunker after mortars let up, and heard Dulles groaning. He and a Negro Marine, Joseph Jenkins of Bowling Green, KY—do you remember Mr. Jenkins? —

Dulles: No, I don't.

DePue: Okay. —pulled Dulles to safety with the two other Marines. Jenkins and Cucia covered by artillery and mortar fire, and evacuated Dulles to the main trench line. Dulles was choppered to a medical company, and then to a hospital ship.

Dulles: Yeah. Those helicopters are very good.

DePue: So, again, what I keep going back to here, Mr. Dulles, is from Mr. Abboud's and others' accounts of this same incident, there is an amazing amount of bravery here on your part.

Dulles: No, I don't think that much.

DePue: But that's typical of somebody in positions like this who downplay the courage that you show at the time. You were not concerned about your own safety during this?

Dulles: No, I don't worry too much about those things.

DePue: Were you thinking, did you believe, that you were not going to be injured?

Dulles: I hoped not. (laughs)

DePue: Okay. So can you tell me anything else about the motivation you had during this period of time, because according to Mr. Abboud and others, you suffered *three* injuries—

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: In your own accounts, you were injured in the wrist and then got the head injury.

Dulles: There was one bone fracture.

DePue: In the wrist?

Dulles: No. Above. No, not a fracture. It was just a crease.

DePue: Well, I keep going back to this same thing, but I wonder if you can tell us anything more about your motivations while you were on action up there. What were you thinking, to keep exposing yourself to so much danger?

Dulles: Well, it, I think, produced fairly good results. The line of battle has been pretty much stabilized along there ever since.

DePue: So in other words, that crucial decision to go out and call direct mortar fire onto the enemy positions was very important to the success of your company's mission?

Dulles: I think so, yeah.

DePue: Okay. And from what I've heard from others, they certainly agree with that. These are some general questions, if you will.

Dulles: Um-hm.

DePue: What did you think about your commander and the other officers you served with?

Dulles: Oh, they were all good. I don't remember much about it.

DePue: Okay. How about the other Marines you served with, the Marines in your own platoon?

Dulles: Well, it was a good job. They were all doing their job.

DePue: Well trained?

Dulles: What?

DePue: Were they well trained?

Dulles: Yeah. Um-hm.

DePue: Were they highly motivated?

Dulles: I think so.

DePue: Were they a pretty cohesive group?

Dulles: Yes.

DePue: So there's something about that bonding of being in a Marine company, a Marine platoon in action that—

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: --very strong bonds between the—

Dulles: Yes. They helped pull me out when I got badly wounded in the head.

DePue: Now this war, the Korean War, was the first war, because of Truman's decision in 1948, to integrate the military. Do you recall any blacks? Now, there's one black who was mentioned here in this account. Do you recall how they did? How well was the integration of the military going?

Dulles: I think it went well. I think they did it very well.

DePue: Okay. Did you have any Koreans serving with you in your platoon?

Dulles: No, not that I can remember any translators or anything of that sort. I don't remember anything like that.

DePue: I know that the Army units often had Korean soldiers incorporated in with their line units. KATUSAs, they called them.

Dulles: KATUSAs?

DePue: KATUSA, which stands for Korean Augmentees to The United States Army. But apparently the Marines did not do that?

Dulles: They hadn't back at that time. They may have now. I suppose they use everybody who has particular linguistic ability where they are needed.

DePue: Do you remember any of the other ROK [Republic of Korea] units? What was your impression of the Korean units?

Dulles: Well, I didn't see anything about that, whether they were good or not.

DePue: Okay. And you didn't really have a chance to see or encounter any Korean civilians?

Dulles: No.

DePue: Okay. Can you tell us any other really memorable experiences during those three-plus months that you were assigned to the battalion, and then the company?

Dulles: No. I have no particular recollection of anything.

DePue: Okay. Do you recall writing letters home? Keeping in pretty close contact with your family?

Dulles: Just a little bit, but it was such a short time.

DePue: Yeah. Okay. So your recollection is that you wrote letters, and received letters.

Dulles: Yeah. Um-hm.

DePue: Okay. Do you recall anything that was especially humorous that happened while you were assigned to the unit?

Dulles: Uh... No.

DePue: Okay. How was the food?

Dulles: The food was quite sufficient and nutritional. Nutritionally good, I think.

DePue: Okay. But I imagine you were living on C-rations and K-rations, that it was a rare occasion you got hot food.

Dulles: Well, I suppose when I went out on the outpost, that was just for three days. Back on the main line of resistance, they would have standard rations.

DePue: Okay. But nothing in particular sticks in your mind about the nature of the food, other than it was good?

Dulles: Well, nothing.

DePue: Okay. What I'd like to go into now, Mr. Dulles, and this is again up to you, let's first talk about the nature of the wounds you received. How were you injured?

Dulles: Well, first of all, a couple of times I've gotten wounded in the arm. And then the third wound went into the brain.

DePue: And what are the consequences of that injury? Can you talk about that?

Dulles: Well, my eyesight is just one quadrant, and my hearing is also defective.

DePue: Okay. You were hit on the right side?

Dulles: Yes.

DePue: So your hearing was affected on your left side?

Dulles: Yes, I guess it's totally deaf on the left side.

DePue: And are you blind in the left eye, then?

Dulles: Uh... in the left quadrants of vision. It's not so much a matter of which eye.

DePue: Okay. And it affected your short-term memory?

Dulles: Yes. My memory's still very defective.

DePue: Your long-term memory is obviously very good, though?

Dulles: Yeah. Quite a lot of that still survives.

DePue: Okay. Can you tell me, then, about your recovery, or is that difficult to recall now?

Dulles: No, I don't think I *can* recall much about that.

DePue: Okay. Do you mind if I go through what I know about it? Kind of a timeline, what I know? Maybe you can talk about some of these things a little bit?

Dulles: All right. Um-hm.

DePue: You began your recovery in Japan...

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: And it was about this time, while you're recovering, that your Company Commander recommended you for the Navy Cross.

Dulles: Um-hm.

DePue: Now, (laughs) again, we go back to this issue of courageous actions. You don't get nominated for the Navy Cross for doing normal things.

Dulles: Um-hm.

DePue: This was for the act of bravery, both on the fourteenth and the fifteenth. That's what you were nominated for. Your mother, I'm sure you're aware, you heard later, that your mother visited you while you were in Japan.

Dulles: Yes.

DePue: You apparently don't recall anything about that incident, though. From what I know, you were still in a coma at that time.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: And then you were shipped back to the United States, and eventually ended up in Bethesda Naval Hospital.

Dulles: Yeah. I've always thought that the reason Forrestal jumped out of that hospital is that it sounds like government haunted house night, the way the wind whistles

around it. I think that they very obviously tried to get James Forrestal to kill himself, because he could have been put in the Army Hospital, which is not a high-rise building.

DePue: So Forrestal was also at Bethesda Naval Hospital?

Dulles: Uh, yes. You remember he killed himself?

DePue: Well, you have a better memory of that than I do. I had not heard that.

Dulles: I think what he did, that he was upset by the strange noise of Bethesda at night.

DePue: Now, I know that after you were—I don't know when the dates are for this—but you were eventually released to your parents' care?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: How long did you live with your parents? Do you recall?

Dulles: In Washington, DC? I really don't know.

DePue: Okay. This would have been while your father was Director of the CIA?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Was your mother working at the time?

Dulles: Uh... I don't think so.

DePue: So she probably had much more to do with your care than your father did.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: And then you spent some time in a sanatorium in—

Dulles: Switzerland. Yes.

DePue: It's the Sanatorium Bellevue at Kreuzlingen, Switzerland? Is that—

Dulles: Kreuzlingen [pronounced differently from above]

DePue: Kreuzlingen? [echoing Dulles' pronunciation] Okay.

Dulles: It's downtown Constance, Germany. [Constance is next to Kreuzlingen over the border in Germany.]

DePue: Do you remember anything about that sanatorium?

Dulles: Well, it was a very good sanatorium. It had good food, and so on.

DePue: Did you spend several years there, or just a few months?

Dulles: I think several years.

DePue: Okay. And I know eventually you lived on your own for a while in New York City.

Dulles: Yeah. And I got mugged once there.

DePue: Do you remember the year that you were living on your own in New York City, roughly? Was that in the early seventies, perhaps?

Dulles: I couldn't remember, really, when that was. But I do remember that I got mugged there. [It was about 1973.]

DePue: Well, sir, you and I share something else in common, because I have been mugged in New York City. (Dulles laughs) At Hell's Kitchen, many years later. Why did you choose New York City?

Dulles: I'd always liked that very much, but what I didn't realize was that the civilization I had grown up in there no longer existed. It was the Port of New York. Then in the Eisenhower Administration, they put in the seaway, so the Port of New York no longer existed.

DePue: Do you recall when you moved out to Santa Fe?

Dulles: Uh... No. I guess my sister was living there, so she said, "Come and live with me."

DePue: Okay. And you've been here for the last, what? –thirty years?

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. Well, it's a gorgeous place to live. I can certainly agree with you on that.

Dulles: Yeah. Um-hm.

DePue: Anything else you want to say in terms of your recovery? Challenges that you had in the recovery?

Dulles: Hm... No. Just that New York is not, by any means, the sort of place I started out for the first decade or two of my life.

DePue: Okay. I'd like to close with a few more general questions, sir. Looking back at the Korean War today, do you think the war was justified?

Dulles: I think it was necessary, yeah. The enemy aggression had started it.

DePue: There's been an awful lot of discussion since the end of the Korean War about how it ended as a stalemate, that in World War II, the United States clearly won the war. The Korean War ended it a tie.

Dulles: Yeah.

DePue: Do you think that that was the right decision at the time?

Dulles: Well, I would have thought it would be better to advance up to the narrow waist of the peninsula.

DePue: But even going to the narrow waist, it still would have been a stalemate after that.

Dulles: Well, yes, but it would have been a much more supportable place to end the war at, since they wouldn't have had such a long line to defend.

DePue: Okay. You've gone through an awful lot in your life. You contributed so much to your country. What lessons would you like to pass on to future generations about your own experiences about the Korean War?

Dulles: Well, I had so little experience there that I don't have very much of an idea to pass along to add to other people.

DePue: Okay. Would you have any advice for future generations, or wisdom to pass along?

Dulles: Well nothing in particular that I can think of.

DePue: Okay. How about anything else you'd like to say? Any closing comments on your part?

Dulles: No. I don't think so.

DePue: Well, I want to thank you very much, Mr. Dulles, for this—

Dulles: Thank you very much.

DePue: It's important for us to hear these kinds of stories, to get an appreciation of what things were really like firsthand. It's an important piece of history, and I really appreciate your taking the time to do this with me.

Dulles: Well, as I said, one thing, the really basic fact that I had never realized was that Allen Welsh Dulles was a German spy.

DePue: Okay. Well, again, thanks very much, Mr. Dulles, and it's been a pleasure.

Dulles: Well, thank you.

(End of interview)

NB: Content items in brackets [] are edits provided by Dulles's sister, Joan Dulles Talley.