



**An Oral History Project  
by The University of Texas at Arlington**

Interviewee: Dr. Wendell Nedderman  
Interviewer: Melissa Gonzales  
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Gonzales: This is Melissa Gonzales. Today is Tuesday, April 30, 2013. I'm interviewing Dr. Wendell Nedderman for the first time. This interview is taking place at the University of Texas at Arlington Central Library located in Arlington, Texas. This interview is sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts. It is part of the Maverick Veterans' Voices Project.

Dr. Nedderman, where are you originally from?

Nedderman: Oh, I came from Lovilia, Iowa southeast of Des Moines.

Gonzales: Did you have family members who were in the military?

Nedderman: No, I had a sister, and that was all, no. I was the only one. I was the first generation in the military.

Gonzales: Did you participate in ROTC in high school?

Nedderman: I did not. Didn't have the opportunity. It was a very small high school with a graduating class of twenty-three.

Gonzales: Did you participate in college?

Nedderman: No, did not. I went to college on a shoestring. In fact, I rented a room that had a cellar—I mean, a basement, and one room had a cook stove in it. I cooked my own meals for three years. It got a little tiresome at times. But I had wanted to graduate from Iowa State, and I was willing to do anything that it took to get away from the farm and graduate from Iowa State.

Gonzales: Was there a particular incident or person who influenced you into joining the Navy?

Nedderman: No, really not. I was like half the crew on the *USS Patterson*, had never seen the ocean until I joined the Navy. So really I tried for the Air Force and they kept delaying, and so I said, "Well, I'll join the Navy."

Gonzales: Did they—had you already filled out the paperwork for the Air Force?

Nedderman: Yes. Yes.

Gonzales: And they let you switch?

Nedderman: Well, the Air Force was—I got approval later, but in the meantime the draft board was looking down my throat and I couldn't wait for the Air Force. So I said, "I'll take the Navy." And in the Air Force I requested B-29 flight engineer as the duties, which I'm lucky I didn't make because the B-29s had problems, and we lost many of them over in the Pacific. So, you know, maybe things turned out better. Who knows? (laughs)

Gonzales: So did you join—did you enlist after graduating from college?

Nedderman: No. I went in the reserves when I was a junior, and they would let me finish if I was on an accelerated program, which I did. So then I graduated in March of '43, sent to the Naval Academy through Reserve Midshipmen's School for four months, commissioned me

as an ensign, and sent me to the *USS Patterson*, which was in the New Hebrides in the far western Pacific at the time.

It was an advantage getting on a smaller ship. On a destroyer with a crew of 250, an ensign or a lieutenant JG is somebody. You get on a battleship, you have to be a four-striper before you're somebody. So destroyer duty was all right, a little like the times.

Gonzales: Do you remember what training was like?

Nedderman: Yes. At the Naval Academy, you know, we had a course in electricity, a course in the maintenance of ships. It was kind of general stuff to kind of acclimate you to what's going on.

Gonzales: And how long were you in training?

Nedderman: Four months.

Gonzales: Do you feel that was enough time to prepare you for being on the destroyer?

Nedderman: Well, keep in mind that I had graduated with a degree in engineering before I went to there, so, yes, I think I was prepared.

But one of the great strengths of our Navy—and maybe I was sort of typical—as I say, a crew of 250, probably half of them never saw the ocean before they joined the Navy. But the adaptability of young Americans—give those some training and pretty soon they are first class seamen. And that was one of our

strengths in winning the war was the adaptability of young people to learning. Another one, of course, was the millions of young men who went in the service and then they let women into the workforce. I remember a big sign, “Rosie the Riveter.” Well, a lot of things took place, but it was people that was important.

Gonzales: Did you have any influential instructors or mentors at the Midshipmen’s School?

Nedderman: No, did not.

Gonzales: What were your responsibilities while you were at the Academy?

Nedderman: Well, of course, we had drills, physical fitness were taught. We were given instruction on marching, but mainly it was the academics. We had four courses, I think.

And I remember Harry James had a program at four o’clock in the afternoon. A famous trumpet, and while we’d rush to get—four o’clock get there and hear Harry James. Imagine being able to play a trumpet like that and married to Betty Grable at the same time! (Both laugh)

Gonzales: So when were you—do you remember when you were deployed to your first assignment?

Nedderman: Yes. Yes. We were—as I say, the New Hebrides was where the ship was at the time. I had to get on a troop ship in California to get out to Hawaii, and this ship just rolled. It didn’t pitch. I didn’t get

seasick when it did. So I said, "I'm one of those people who don't get seasick." So then I get on this little destroyer and we get in heavy seas, and I've never been so sick in all my life. And on the ship I was assigned to, the first three days out, I had terrible seasickness, went around carrying a bucket while you were on watch. But after a while it was alright. (laughs)

Gonzales: What were your duties and assignments on the destroyer?

Nedderman: I was engineering officer afloat, but that doesn't mean you do other things on a destroyer. You cross a lot, combat information officer, where you have radar surface and air, and there needs to be a commissioned officer there. So I had that duty, officer of the deck. At times you were cross-trained to do many different things. On a destroyer it was small enough that you could do that.

Gonzales: Do you recall those first days in transitioning from civilian to military, and what that was like?

Nedderman: Oh, from civilian to military, well, I was in awe of the situation, I'll say that. I considered myself an old dumb farm boy from South Iowa that went to a one-room schoolhouse. And Annapolis just overwhelmed me. But I said, "Other people are doing it, so I can do it." (laughs)

Gonzales: Did the training you had prepare you for being on the ship because was—

Nedderman: Yes, I think so. I think so. You learn and know what traditions of the Navy and learn some of the things about it. I remember when I got on ship, somebody said, "How about a cup of joe?" "What is that?" "Well, a cup of coffee." "Why do you call it a cup of joe?"

Well, Josephus Daniels was secretary of the Navy during the Woodrow Wilson administration, and he decreed that alcoholic beverages were not to be consumed on ship or in a naval installation onshore. So in honor of his profound announcement, he was remembered as having a cup of joe.

Gonzales: (She and Nedderman laugh) Never knew that.

So did you see any combat, and how long did it take for you to see combat if you did?

Nedderman: Well, I saw a lot because I spent over thirteen months in the far western Pacific during the height of activity. The Saipan Operation, the Marianas, the Battle for Leyte Gulf at the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, kamikaze days. I personally saw at least ten ships get hit by the kamikazes, if not at the time immediately thereafter. And fortunately for us, in the early days they were concentrating on the large ships. It's only at Okinawa that they sent out two thousand kamikaze sorties. At Okinawa you were right there at their doorstep, and that's when they took in small ships too, but in Okinawa we lost over forty destroyer-type vessels due to

kamikazes. Kamikaze meaning divine wind because three hundred years ago, they were about to be invaded and a typhoon came through and blew the enemy away, so it was a divine wind.

Gonzales: So were there many casualties on your ship?

Nedderman: Not many. We were strafed by an aircraft carrier off of Taiwan. Japanese torpedo planes were coming in low. I could see this—I happened to be topside, I saw this aircraft carrier, a 40 mm. just following those planes. I said, “Surely, before we’re lined up, they’ll stop firing.” They didn’t. They strafed us from stem to stern or stern to stem, and there were quite a number of injuries and I believe two deaths.

And of course, a burial at sea is a terrible thing to have to watch. Put the body in a heavy canvas bag, put a five-inch shell, which weighs sixty-five pounds, in, sew it up, and you have the ceremony, sliding out from under the flag. I was touched by this, but then I was given the duty of going through the belongings of these guys who were killed to—this wouldn’t fit today maybe—to see if there’s anything there that would embarrass the family. That was my assignment. And you could use your judgment what might embarrass the family. So that was my job. But other than that, we were lucky. We were on a charmed ship.

Gonzales: I imagine it was a very stressful situation. How did you manage the stress while on the ship?

Nedderman: Well, you didn't see casualties and ships being sunk and people dying. You think there's a possibility that someday may be you, but also maybe not. So I didn't worry about it. I was in pretty good shape.

One thing I did find interesting compared now. I have a granddaughter in Nairobi, Kenya and one in Georgetown, Texas, and they talk to one another and see each other face-to-face. Back in my days in the Navy, it might be three or four months before you got a letter because there was ship somewhere that was trying to catch up with you. So I still stand in awe of the communication of today. I think there's too much of it, frankly. (Both laugh)

One thing I would like to mention, my observations at Pearl Harbor. May I?

Gonzales: Please do.

Nedderman: I had a brother-in-law who was on the *Oklahoma* when it capsized and went over. The Japanese made a disastrous mistake—disastrous for them. They hurled—they sent in two strikes and they hurled all of their energies at these old battleships that really weren't worth much. They could go under fifteen knots, couldn't keep up with the fleet, maybe a platform for a shore bombardment,

but they weren't worth much, and yet the Japanese concentrated on those totally, on those old battleships.

And part of that, I think, was the admirals tend to look to a future war in light of the previous war. World War I the battleship was a capital ship, everything was around the battleship. In fact, the Japanese even in World War II thought how the war would end is, they'd line up their dreadnaughts, we'd line ours up, and we'd slug it out and see who wins. That was a rather naïve way of looking at it, but we found out very shortly the aircraft carrier was the capital ship.

So by wasting—I understand after two strikes, Yamamoto, who was the top Navy admiral, was a little disappointed. They hadn't sent a third strike to wipe out millions of barrels of fuel oil, the dry docks, the machine shops, those were unscathed. And here's where the humongous mistake was. They put all their energies in the wrong thing. So now, had they wiped these things out, we would have been in terrible shape because we'd had to send ships to California to get them repaired. Soon as the smoke cleared, our folks started repairing, and so that was the first big mistake that the Japanese made on their part. And it would've been a catastrophe if our basic facilities had been wiped out.

But this whole idea that the battleship was the capital ship, that's old, old stuff, but admirals always have the mistake of looking back a war. (laughs)

Gonzales: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

Nedderman: Yes. I was upstairs on Sunday afternoon at 321 South Hazel in Ames, and my landlord stuck his head in and, "Have you heard the latest? They just—a sneak attack on Pearl Harbor." And that was the first I heard.

And of course, this is the last war that I think has had the total support, 95 percent, of the public. This sneak attack while two Japanese diplomats were in the outer office of Secretary of State Cordell Hull to talk about, I guess, improving relations, and while they're waiting this attack takes place. And so the sneak aspect, I think, bothered people, and of course, Yamamoto said, "If Japan doesn't win the war in the first six months, they won't win it," because Yamamoto had lived in the United States and he said, "The industrial power of the United States will eventually overcome us," and that's the way it happened. That's digressing a little bit from your question—

Gonzales: Oh, no—

Nedderman: —but I had to get that off my chest. (laughs)

Gonzales: Did you do anything for good luck?

Nedderman: No. Some people did.

Gonzales: Like what?

Nedderman: Carried a rabbit's foot, blah, blah, blah, or some little old relic that had a personal meaning to it. I didn't do any of that. I'll do the job I'm supposed to do and not worry about it. That was helpful. Plus it was exciting 5 percent of the time, boring 95, and 5 percent terror. (laughs)

Gonzales: So what did you do for entertainment during the times that it was dull?

Nedderman: Well, there wasn't much opportunity. Let me point out that the Navy—well, there was six months I didn't even—we were screening aircraft carriers. A task group of carriers would be about four carriers circled about twelve destroyers with sonar gear, submarine protection, anti-aircraft, and so forth. And there were six weeks I never even saw land. And then in thirteen months I had my feet on dry land a total of twenty-four hours and thirteen minutes, and that was on some atoll with sand and palm trees, taking crewmen over to have their allotment of beer on shore, so they couldn't do it at sea, you know. This is one of the junior officer's duties. (laughs)

So any time we went into port, we'd go over to some big ship and get a movie. So that's what we entertained ourselves with, but

whenever we stopped overnight, we'd get to see a movie, set it up back there on the stern, and I guess our other entertainment was listening to Tokyo Rose telling us how badly the Japanese were whipping us. (laughs) But you didn't have a lot of time at sea for entertainment. You stood two 4-hour watches, either eight to twelve for twice a day or twelve to four or four to eight.

When you'd go to relieve the man you were going to relieve and you had to get up a half an hour early, then it'd take a half an hour for him to get caught up, so we were talking about three 5-hour time consumptions in a day. And then in the morning there was always general quarters at just before sunrise because that's when the submarine menace was the best.

And of course, another tough thing about it, the portholes had to be closed at night because you could see the glow of a cigarette butt a mile away in that pitch darkness. And so you'd close everything up. The only thing that was on the bridge there would be some red blotters—instrumentation, and with no air conditioning it got a little stuffy at times. But I think you can see there was not much time for entertainment. (laughs)

Gonzales: Were you able to take leave at all?

Nedderman: Let's see. We came back to the States for overhaul and then I got, I think, two weeks leave and then we went back to sea, to the

western Pacific. So leave was not necessarily a privilege that you had. It was an accommodation when conditions were such that could be accommodated. This was the Navy. We had business to do. (laughs)

Gonzales: Were you able to see your family during those two weeks?

Nedderman: Yes. Yes. I went back to Ottumwa, Iowa to visit my family, and incidentally, that brings to mind the difference in transportation. Going out to—let's see, not San Diego the first time—San Francisco, I got on a train. It took four nights and three days to get from Albia, Iowa to San Francisco. Can you imagine this? Train stopped all the time. Coming back it was the same thing. That was transportation in those days.

Well, I marvel now, here a few years ago one of our distinguished electrical engineering professors was going to Tokyo to make a pitch, and he'd get on the plane at DFW and twelve hours later land in Tokyo, and that just boggles an old country boy's imagination. But it would take three weeks aboard a ship. So a lot of time was spent on the train if you had to go anywhere.

Gonzales: Did your family do anything that specifically helped with the war effort?

Nedderman: As farmers, they produced farm items. My dad ran Hereford cattle. He had hogs and he had sheep, was kind of multi. And I think that was a contribution.

Gonzales: So after serving overseas, when did you return after the war?

Nedderman: Well, let's see, in August or September when the war ended, I was switched to a new destroyer—no, we took the old one around to the East Coast and decommissioned it. Then I was assigned to—I didn't have enough points to get out—so I was assigned to a new destroyer as chief engineer out there at Pearl Harbor. So my last six months, I was on this fairly new destroyer, 697. We went around and put in at Brooklyn Navy Yard, and I didn't decommission it, but that's where I spent my last six months, going and coming, riding the train.

Gonzales: So what did you do in the days and weeks after ending your service? Did you go back home afterward?

Nedderman: Well, I got out of the Navy in May of '46 finally. And so I wondered what I was going to do. And to make a long story short, I went to see my favorite prof. at Iowa State. He said, "Have you ever thought about teaching?" I said, "No." "Well," he said, "I was at an ASCE [American Society of Civil Engineers] meeting in Kansas City and I happened to meet the chairman of the department from

Texas A&M civil engineering. He's looking for a couple of young instructors." And so that's how I got there.

Which brings my little old lecture to my sons occasionally: Life is a series of forks in the road. And it's interesting how things work out. If I hadn't got out of the Navy at a particular time, had I not gone to see Professor Karrites, had he not happened to go to an ASCE meeting in Kansas City, if he hadn't happened to talk to Dr. Wright from Texas A&M—I tell my wife, "You just wouldn't have caught me then." (Gonzales laughs)

She was the daughter of a physics professor at Texas A&M. College Station was their home. Got to Texas Woman's (University). So after she graduated from Texas Woman's, that was about six months after I went, I went to College Station in January, met Betty [Vezey] in June, and we married in December.

Gonzales: Oh, my goodness.

Nedderman: Yeah.

Gonzales: So did you—when did you decide to go back or to get a master's degree?

Nedderman: Well, when I joined the faculty at A&M, I worked on a master's degree on the side. And then I took a two-year leave to go back to Iowa State for the PhD. So in a twelve year period, I spent ten years on the faculty at A&M, which was a happy time.

Gonzales: And did the GI Bill help with that?

Nedderman: Oh, yes. That was a lifesaver. The state of Iowa gave a bonus as a state, and then the GI Bill was—that was a wonderful thing for us. And you felt like you were getting kind of repaid for all those days out in the Pacific although that was duty.

Gonzales: So how was it transitioning from military to civilian?

Nedderman: Oh, I made it very well, I mean, it was no problem. I had a cup of joe occasionally. (Both laugh) But no problem in the transition, but I'll point out I didn't go through the traumatic experiences.

I was aboard ship at Iwo Jima and watched when they land, and, boy, I doff my hat to those guys that had to hit the beach. They were traumatized. They couldn't help it because they were taking on—you know, Iwo Jima—we escorted—four of us escorted the *New Jersey* and the *Iowa* while they bombarded—this was Saipan, the first one. And then the air corps—the Air Force maybe by that time—bombed very heavily, and you watched that and said people can't survive that. The effect was virtually zero. They were so dug in, four levels, that these big projectiles coming in like this (gestures) were ineffective. So these guys going ashore—what they were facing was an enemy who was dug in, who was willing to die, who knew that they would not be saved, but to surrender was an unthinkable thing to do, and so there was in some cases a 98

percent fatality rate on the part of the Japanese because their own idea was on behalf of the emperor, who was divine, on behalf of their nation to fight to the death and take as many Americans with them as possible. So these Americans that land on the beach, they had to go and dig them out cave by cave, and that's the reason our casualties were so high.

So the Japanese were—this country had never faced an enemy like that before, and as one high ranking Navy official said, “If those Japanese at Saipan had been Americans, every one of them would have gotten the Congressional Medal of Honor.” But that's the kind of enemy we faced. Fight to the death.

Gonzales: Do you feel that your time in the Navy affected your career as a professor and as an instructor?

Nedderman: Well, I think this time in the Navy was a maturing process with an old farm boy, who began to see the world in a different light going into all these experiences. So, yes, I think you also learn to appreciate certain things that you didn't appreciate before. That was part of this maturing that took place in the service particularly in the heat of action in the far western Pacific. You give thanks that you're still alive. Yes, it had a profound effect on me.

Gonzales: Do you think it directly affected your leadership skills?

Nedderman: Oh, I don't think there's any doubt about it. Aboard ship even one and a half stripes, lieutenant JGs had got training in this, and the chief petty officers were the ones—they were kind of a privileged group. They were the ones that really directed the crew, and I don't know why it was all the chief petty officers were overweight, and they were bunked in the front.

And one night I was in the combat information center and it was a moonlight night, and the word came down from the bridge, "It looks like there are mines ahead, and we're going to be in them before we can stop," and I could feel the throb of the engines in reverse. When I saw that hatch upfront there pop open—and those overweight guys, they had no trouble coming out just like that (gestures) because those mines, those things they were floating oil drums, which was unusual being so far from land.

Gonzales: Do you ever hear music or sounds or smell certain things that remind you or take you back to that time?

Nedderman: Well, for quite awhile after I got back, the music of Harry James brought back memories. (Both laugh) And of course, it was the Big Band Era. When I was assigned to the *Patterson*, I stayed in San Francisco for two weeks, so I went to a couple of Big Band shows: Tommy Dorsey and that beautiful Kitty Kallen, how—my, she could sing like a songbird. The Big Band Era lasted a very short time after

the end of World War II, but while it did last, at A&M they had a big dance in Sbisa, and Carmen Caballero came, which was—this is big, big time. So that brought back memories, and anytime I can hear a recording of the songs that were very popular back then, that brought back memories. So, no, you never completely forget.

Gonzales: Did you form any close friendships while you were in the military and do you still stay in touch?

Nedderman: Yes. Onboard the *USS Patterson* in the wardroom, officers' country, I had the top bunk and Will Lester had the bottom bunk, and we became very good friends. He got out early. When I got out, I went by San Francisco to see him. When they had their first baby, I sent them a thing. So I had three or four friends where the friendship lasted. I can't say that we really tried to develop something.

Gonzales: Did you join any veterans' organizations, and do you attend reunions?

Nedderman: No. I have not. I have never gone back to reunions, a crew of reunions. Let the past be the past. Let's move on. I'm not for one—I've seen my brother-in-law—I've seen some of his films. You know, the guys get up and they start reminiscing and the tears go down their cheeks, and, oh, this is for the birds as far as I'm concerned.

Gonzales: Were you awarded any medals or citations?

Nedderman: I was not. I deserved one, but I didn't get it. (laughs) But I did my job.

Gonzales: Yes.

Nedderman: That's what I expected to do. I was not a hero, didn't try to be a hero although I had a close call at Iwo Jima. Shall I mention this?

Gonzales: Please do.

Nedderman: It's dusk we have a task group of carriers and destroyers circling, and they do a formation. A group of Japanese torpedo planes came in from the west fifty feet above the water. In other words, they were going to launch torpedoes. I happened to be in the after damage control party, and I looked and over one side of the task group, here is one plane that is separated from the others kind of sneaking in by himself. He crossed the stern very low. I could see the whites of his eyes.

And then the *Bismarck Sea* aircraft carrier was close to us, and he crashed into the side of that aircraft carrier. And of course, those small carriers loaded up with aviation gasoline and gunpowder, pretty soon they're just flaming hulls. And on ship the sailors jumping overboard, pretty heavy seas, some of them drowning with lifejackets on them.

So anyway, me and another lieutenant JG reservist—not the two trade school boys who were of the same rank, who didn't seem

to be around at this time—the two of us volunteered to get in a boat in rough seas and go out and pull in as many guys as we could. We'd go out and just like fish. They didn't set up, we'd just pull them in and just stacked them up until we got all we did, and then we'd make the trip back. The sea was heavy and the boat would go up, the crew would grab these guys and pull them out, and then they'd pull them out. We made several trips and on one occasion the coxswain broke or missed the rudder for guiding this boat. And he managed to jury rig something that worked. If he hadn't, we would have gone broadside and gone over. So we pulled in 106 sailors.

In 1946, I was at the Ford garage in Albia, Iowa talking to this young guy who was kind of the manager. And so we were talking Navy, and I said, "Well, where were you?" He said, "Well, I was on the *Bismarck Sea* when it was sunk." I said, "Well, what destroyer saved you?" He said, "Well, it was the *USS Patterson*." I said, "Man, I was in the whaleboat that pulled you out of the wreck, and here we are in Albia, Iowa." Well, it's interesting how some of these things keep popping up. But anyway, that was—you could hear shrapnel things exploding, whizzing through the air. That was kind of nerve-racking.

Gonzales: In 1976 you were inducted into the Scabbard and Blade Military Honor Society. Can you describe that for us?

Nedderman: Well, that is the honor society. There was a ceremony. I felt greatly honored to be invited. I'd like to think it's because I deserved it. (laughs) I'll say this, twenty years I was president, I was a strong supporter of ROTC, and even during the Vietnam War, when ROTC was being kicked off campuses in the East Coast and Sgt. Gonzales, who was assigned to us, who'd been in Vietnam, he told when he set foot in California—San Francisco people spit at him. But I was determined that we would always have a hospitable atmosphere for ROTC, and I think we did everything we could to support them. Now, the honor society was established during that period of time. I'd like to think that this was significant during difficult times when the Vietnam War and Vietnam War veterans were despised.

Gonzales: What was your role in forming the Hall of Honor ceremony here at UTA?

Nedderman: I'm trying to think of the gentleman who was really responsible. He went to Georgia here a while back. He passed away. His name escapes me, but I think it was really his idea to have this honor ceremony, and so he came to see me and I supported him. I thought it was an excellent idea. I like to see people honored who are deserving of something special.

Gonzales: And then later you were involved with the Corps Advisory Council?  
Did you help form that as well?

Nedderman: I don't recall much about that one. I think I was involved, but I can't remember how much.

Gonzales: So what advice would you give current cadets here at UTA?

Nedderman: I would say make the most of a great opportunity, and that will pay great dividends in the future. Make your university proud of you. Make you proud of your university. Pride—and be enthusiastic—pride and enthusiasm are two of the most powerful emotions for people to perform.

In forming a new school of engineering, we got the PhD ten years after we were formed, which was unprecedented. We were lucky in hiring a number of faculty from industry who were outstanding but who were intrigued with the idea of being on the ground floor. And I've told groups this time and time again.

Why were we successful? I was in awe of these guys. You take people who were talented and who were enthusiastic about what they're doing, enthusiastic about the future, enthusiastic about the whole operation, who have pride in what they're doing, that is the most powerful medicine I know of in success.

And so I would tell these cadets, you have the opportunity for a great future. Capture it. Be enthusiastic. Take pride. As you

might guess, as the founding dean of engineering, one of my duties was head cheerleader. (Both laugh)

Gonzales: Given all the changes that have happened here on campus in the last eight to ten years, what would you like to see happen in the future on campus?

Nedderman: Well, the easy answer is to continue what we've been doing. I've always said, "UT-Arlington is a positive slope institution." You plot time against progress, it's always up. The last seven or eight years have been truly remarkable.

And I have often said this: "President Spaniolo came along at just the right time, conditions were just right, and he took full advantage of it." He's a great communicator. In fact, that was his field at Michigan. Now, while he used it here, he had the confidence of the board of regents and the chancellor's office. He has a tremendous amount of energy, he knows how to excite people and collaborate. He was the right man at the right time, and I would like to see—I think each president, hopefully, builds on the shoulders of the previous president. I would think the guy that followed me although I had a little bit to do with—well, I'm not sure about that. But he built upon the precedent of Dr. Witt, who did a great job. So I see nothing but a great future for A&M [UTA].

You know, in dealing with atomic materials, they talk about reaching a critical mass. When you reach a certain point, then things begin to blow all over. I think UTA has already reached the critical mass where things are going to go places. I think we can take great pride in what is being done.

Gonzales: Is there anything that you would like to contribute to the interview that I didn't mention already?

Nedderman: May I look at my—

Gonzales: Sure.

Nedderman: —note here? I jotted down a few things just in case you asked.  
(Both laugh) And you have certainly covered a lot of them.

One of the issues that people are still debating: Was the atomic bomb necessary? And it certainly ended the war in a hurry and in my opinion saved the lives of millions of Japanese in the process because what were the conditions that had been reached right there at the very last? There was no merchant fleet. U.S. subs, incidentally, are not given enough credit, the silent service. U.S. submarines had sunk three thousand Japanese ships during the war, and so bringing in supplies from Korea and Indonesia, this was cut off completely. Their rail system was destroyed. All of the ports were mined. B-29s were making hundreds of sorties every day dropping incendiary bombs. This country was being destroyed, in a

state of destruction, and the atomic bomb ended it. Otherwise, there would've been millions of Japanese, in my opinion from what I've read, who would've starved because all sources of food were cut off. And so I say that by using the atomic bomb, they may well have saved the lives of many Japanese. No, but that's a debate that will continue, and I don't question President Truman's motives in the process.

Gonzales: Well, I want to thank you, Dr. Nedderman, for participating in this project. You're very thoughtful and very informative. It's been a pleasure talking with you today, and I want to thank you for your service and for your contribution to the Maverick Veterans' Voices Project. Thank you.

Nedderman: Well, thank you for your very nice and generous comments. I've enjoyed it immensely and I thank you all for asking me. (end of interview)

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