**Video Recording Log**

**Veteran Alexander Samaras**

**1. Name and address of collector of interviewer.**

Name of Donor/Interviewer: H.F. Williamson

Address: 300 N. Goodwin Ave.

City: Urbana

State: IL

Zip: 61801

Telephone: 217-333-7300

Email: billw@illinois.edu

Partner organization affiliation (if any): WILL AM-FM-TV

**2. Name and birth date of the veteran or civilian being interviewed at is appears on the Biographical Data Form**:

Name of Veteran/Civilian: Alexander Samaras

Birth Date: 06/29/1921

**3. Recording format**

VIDEO type: Mini DVD

**4. Estimated length of recording (in minutes):** 62 minutes **Date of recording**: 11/07/2007

**5. Location of recording:** WILL AM-FM-TV, 300 N. Goodwin Ave, Urbana, IL 61801

**6. Please log the topics discussed in the interview in sequence.**

00:00 Introduction

00:31 Before war—Illinois State Normal University—two years at University of Illinois, then transferred—junior in 1941

01:00 After Pearl Harbor, thought about finishing college before service—Navy had V7 program—allowed you to finish degree and then go to active duty

01:35 Enlisted July, 1943—junior, working on degree—V-12 program for enlisted men—daily exercises

02:20 Graduated in August, in September reported to Tower Hall, Chicago for mid-shipman’s school

02:30 90-day-wonders

02:45 Apprentice seaman after one month, midshipman after 2 months

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03:00 Commissioned Enson, U.S. Reserve

03:10 Tower Hall—busy schedule

03:45 Married wife, leave until end of January

04:00 Went to Solomon Island, Maryland—training for LCTs

04:15 Before graduation, everyone asked what duty they preferred—he asked for submarine duty—no one got what they wanted—getting ready for invasion

05:00 Maryland, LCT 509—crew, training

05:30 February, went to New Orleans to pick up ship 709—not delivered—assigned LST 510—ship that carried LCT on top of it

06:50 LST, LCT—cranes

07:25 No training on LCT in Gulf

07:47 Went to New York in LST—loaded with ammunition

08:49 Went from New York to Halifax—convoy of about 30 LSTs, several destroyers—North Atlantic—treacherous body of water, bad storms

10:30 Attacks by German submarines—2 ships lost, hit by torpedoes—no way to rescue anyone because the water was so cold—no effort to pick up survivors

11:18 Junior officer on convoy—his boat hit in port stern—didn’t explode because it was a dud

12:25 Under siege from Germans

12:57 First destination was North Ireland—then Wales, Plymouth, England

13:25 22nd April, LCT 709 launched—take ship and list it, cut lines and drop it into water—tow it to wharf, he took command

14:20 Crew—16 men

14:50 50-caliber machine guns—taking in supplies

15:29 22nd May—radio set on secret frequency

15:37 Had about a month to train crew—simple to operate, no practice landing

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16:09 Only one landing before D-Day

16:21 Secret frequencies—2 Army officers from 50th Signal Battalion came to inspect ship

16:50 Aware they would be part of the invasion force once they arrived in England

17:25 30th May—top secret meeting to receive package of information—pictures of invasion beach, obstacles on beach, time tables of tides—Operation Overlord

18:35 50th Signal Battalion would be on his ship and on the 710—important—had to make the beach, had to deliver these people so they could set up communication center for Omaha and Utah Beach—extremely important to study and succeed

19:38 22nd May: radio set to secret frequency—31st May: ship sealed—June 2nd: loaded 50th Signal Battalion

20:20 Last thing to come on deck—communications center—could listen to New York on the radio—amphibious—if nothing else made it, the duck would—important

21:10 Log book [reads]—June 3rd 1944

21:28 Last briefing at Maypole—advised there would be possibility of Germans using poison gas

21:45 Issued impregnated coveralls and gas masks—uniform, coveralls, side arm, life jacket, helmet, gear, gas mask—very heavy and cumbersome

22:45 Left Dartmouth, England June 3rd—bad rains and wind, could not see, soaking wet

23:45 0600 hours—6 knots maximum speed—could only make 3 knots—June 4th, ordered to go back to Weymouth, England—D-Day delayed 24 hours

24:22 Arrived at Weymouth, England—tied up at 1800, slept

24:30 0500 next day underway to France—light rain, heavy seas—going 6 knots—poor visibility

25:05 Reached transport rendezvous off of Utah Beach at 2200 hours on June 5th—dropped anchor, stood 2nd watch until 0200 on June 6th

25:25 Dawn, sky cleared—sight was awesome, never forget it—planes overhead at 0200, loud like a freight train, continuous, blinking V for Victory signs

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26:10 In every direction all you could see was ships—LCTs, LSTs, Destroyers, Cruisers, Battle Ships—5,000 ships total

26:48 Overhead the sky was almost black with planes—B-17’s, fighters

27:18 Craft was designated on-call, had to wait for beach to clear—50th Battalion would tell them when it was safe to take them in to beach

27:45 On the way into the beach hit a sand bar—sand bar was not listed on list of possible obstacles for invasion

27:55 Craft was probably 50 yards off beach, standing in a few feet of water—duck had no problem, but lost about 3 jeeps, trucks made it okay

28:45 At 1245 hours unloaded, 777 and LCT sunk on port side—bodies floating in water in life jackets—obstacles, mines on beach—artillery fire—German 88’s

29:29 As craft was about to retract, another LCT came in too close and cable got wound around port screw

29:44 Cable was about 200 yards and made of steel—meant to help pull off of beach when leaving

30:20 Spent a couple of hours with the coxswain using a hacksaw underwater to cut through cable

30:35 Only had two engines to run on—German 88’s exploding all around

30:58 Went to repair ship to get new anchor and cables

31:20 Second day—strafed on beach by two fighter planes—last two German planes in area

31:56 Worked all five beaches—Juno, Gold, Sword, Omaha—unloaded supplies, troops, food, water, ammunition, vehicles—British using American ships, too

32:52 Carried prisoners to ships—most glad to be out of war

33:12 Taking injured to hospital ships

33:15 Worked 24 hours a day—whenever called had to go right away—took turns leading with executive officer, 12-hour shifts

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33:44 Sometimes would not get a call for 6-8 hours and could relax—sometimes could get on beach for a couple of days

34:17 Beach after invasion

34:40 2-3 storms—could not stay on Channel, had to go up river until it passed

35:10 Back to England at Christmastime

35:15 Repaired engines, new engines, diesel engines—repair ships, repaired right in water

35:55 British battleship Rodney—having trouble with German U-boats—asked 6 LCTs to protect it by mooring alongside—if torpedo hit, would hit them first—did this for two nights—if torpedo hit, would go under them and hit ship anyway—offended at request

37:50 Back to England, leave time—helped with Christmas programs for kids, played piano—3 months in England before back to the States

39:20 Stayed in ship, moored, last one on ship—brought back a lot of secret material—packed up sea chest, was told 50% chance he would get inspected

40:43 LCT gradually torn apart—years later was put back together in another country—assembled in sections to start so easy to take apart

41:36 Went home, 30 days leave—promoted Lieutenant J.G. April, 1945

41:55 25 April, went to California then to Okinawa via Hawaii, then Guam, Saipan

42:00 Commanding Officer of United States Navy, Lieutenant--Executive Officer on LCSL 81—had rockets—looked like small destroyer—was ocean-going

43:05 Radar picket duty—all ships circled island of Okinawa—there to protect from kamikaze and from people on mainland coming to blow up ships—“skunk patrol”

43:47 Invasion over, still cleaning up

44:00 Japanese having rough time, started using kamikazes—radar patrol duty—constant

44:30 Nothing more frightening than kamikaze—seeing man in the cockpit

44:53 Never hit by kamikaze—near misses—shot down 5 kamikaze planes—nervous duty

45:15 There was very little warning, then they kept coming—see them diving everywhere—shoot ones coming at you—flying from mainland Japan

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46:25 Picket duty until end of August—then to the Leyte Gulf and Philippines

46:55 Getting ready for planned invasion of Japan—next big order was going to be for invasion

47:20 Atomic bomb dropped—predicted American casualties—still on 81

48:15 Typhoon—rough weather

48:55 Navy in occupation—patrolled islands

49:35 Went on land in Japan, saw temples, got a samurai sword

50:27 First week in Japan, had to wear sidearms—was rough—trains crowded

51:15 December, 1945—accumulated enough points to go home—took 25 days to get home by troop ship—arrived in Los Angeles, CA January 20th—honorable discharge from Great Lakes, IL on February 4th

52:10 Glad for the experience—relished it, though worried

52:45 Not well trained—time was the problem—90-day-wonders

54:02 90-day school—ridicule—studying 6am to 10pm—navigation books

55:55 When they went to Tokyo, he had to set the course, charted the whole way there, even during the typhoon

56:45 Some servicemen bitter—he liked it

57:10 Used to keep in touch with LCT crew—best friend died in 1976

58:20 Reflecting on experiences

59:00 Talks about wife, married 46 years—her life on home front—she did not hear from him until August after the invasion—she thought he was dead—war was rough on people at home—rations, war factories, victory gardens

01:01:30 Wrap-up

01:01:45 Video of model ship