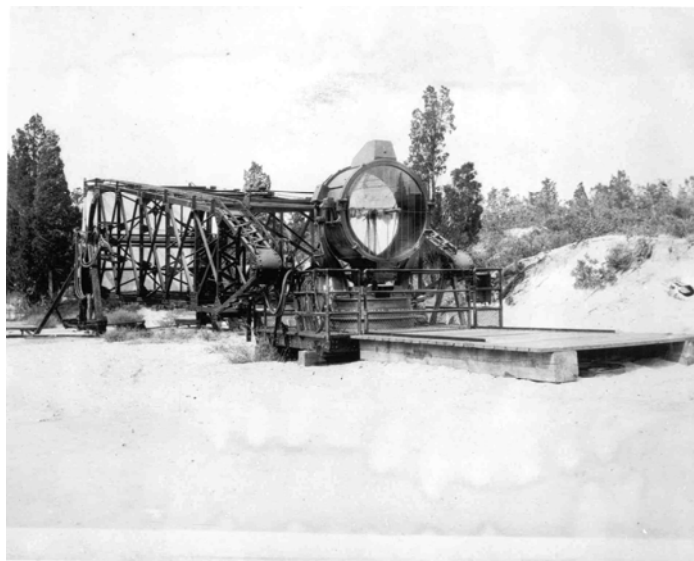


Sandy Hook, Gateway NRA, National Park Service
An Oral History Interview and Searchlight Site Locating Visit with
Colonel Henry Neri, 245th Coast Artillery
Battery Commander of the Searchlight Battery during World War II
Interviewed by Elaine Harmon and Tom Hoffman, NPS
January 22, 1989
Transcribed by Mary Rasa, 2012



Coast Artillery Searchlight tower in raised position at Fort Hancock, c. 1940.



Coast Artillery Searchlight in lowered position. This type of searchlight used a counterweight to raise and lower the structure.

All photographs and maps are courtesy NPS/Gateway NRA

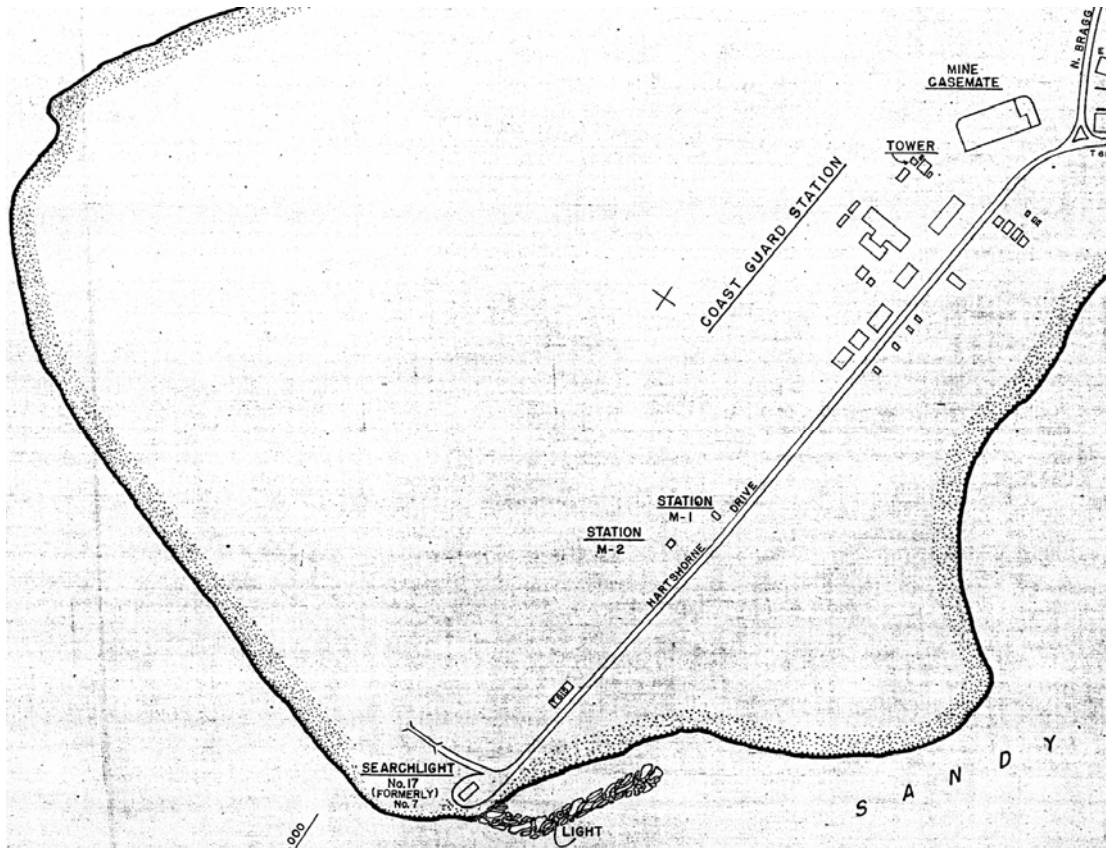
Editor's notes in parenthesis ()

EH: Today is January 22, 1989 and we are interviewing Mr. Henry Neri who presently resides in Little Silver, New Jersey.

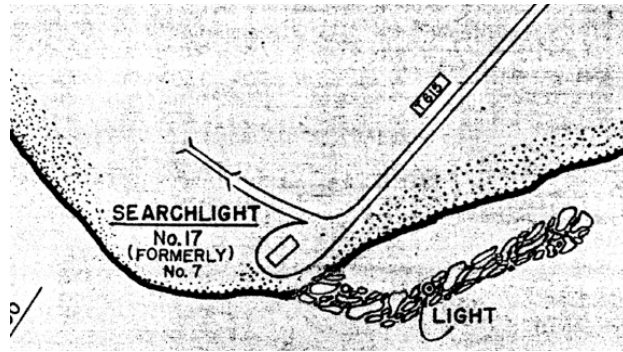
(Tape stops and restarts where interview will begin.)

EH: We have driven as far north as we possibly can into the U.S. Coast Guard Boundary and we are attempting to reconstruct the searchlight tower placements starting from Number 7 which is at the north end and in descending order down to Number 1. What was located at Number 7? What was that like?

TH: Do you want to describe that again for us?



Portion of Map titled, "Location of Fortifications Structures General Map." The map is dated 1944.



Close up of Searchlight location from above map.



Coast Artillery Searchlight tower in wooden structure.

HN: That was a wooden building, two and a half stories. The searchlight was enclosed in a compartment on the second floor with sliding metal doors that opened up and the light was powered by two four cylinder gasoline motor generators which were located on the first floor. That light designated as Light Number 7. (It) was to provide searchlight services to the entrance, the water entrance areas to the harbor of New York City.

EH: We were talking before earlier that although the map shows many, many higher numbers that you were mentioning that it was probably proposed but not actually in fact did they go beyond Searchlight Number 7.

NH: Yeah. Well my opinion, I haven't seen the proposed rules and orders but there were always proposals made for additions and improvements and expansions depending on the progress of the War. Some of them, while they were planned never actually were built. It is my opinion that the lights that are shown to the north, 13, 14, and 15 I think never were installed. Those lights were never finally installed. The numbers on the other lights along the Fort Hancock shores, those numbers were never changed because the expansion

never took place. It was considered for the entire War that what we had was sufficient to meet the requirements under the existing conditions.

EH: In looking at a site map called, "Location of Fortifications Structures General Map," which is dated 1944. Searchlight Number 7, although it's indicated as number 17 was at the absolute tip of the Hook more toward the west side northwest end of Sandy Hook.

NH: That's right. The area to the east of the light was all mainly all swampland and the tides, at high tides the water would come all the way in leaving the area where the searchlight was located actually a peninsula. We had to have rocks put in on the east side to give additional protection to that strip of land.

TH: The diameters of these searchlights, they were the 60 inch?

HN: The reflector was 60 inch, the largest searchlights in existence at that time, also the most powerful. On a clear night those searchlights could reach the horizon.

TH: Out at the ocean.

HN: Out towards the ocean. That is right. It was amazing on an absolutely clear night you couldn't see the beam. There wasn't anything in the atmosphere that would absorb the light within the beam itself and all that you could see when the light was traversing, well being driven from right to left that suddenly a ship might be seven, eight miles out and would illumine brightly and then disappear again and see the light was traversing left to right. It was an amazing thing. And that was on nights that were very clear. On nights that weren't clear we had fog or any kind of atmospheric, any kind of moisture in the atmosphere it was difficult because the beam from the searchlight would light up all of the moisture in the atmosphere. You got a sort of very bright haze.

TH: Yeah. A haze effect. Now we were talking about this earlier, your main target would have been warships, right? That's what...

HN: That's right.

TH: How about airplanes because in World War II you know that was...?

HN: Well, airplanes had several systems for locating airplanes and determining that airplanes were in the area. One was through a sound locator system which had very limited range and also through radar which also had limited range.

TH: I am just swinging around here. This is Battery Peck.

NH: Battery Peck.

TH: This is where they got the two 6-inch barbette rifles that were transferred down to Gunnison during World War II. I don't know if you had anything up in this area but...

EH: It said Searchlight # 16 on the map. Does that translate to Searchlight 6, Henry? Because actually it says Battery Peck, Searchlight 16.

NH: Searchlight 6 was located at Battery Gunnison which was located next to the Non-Commissioned Officers Beach Club. I think that's what it was on a mound right out in the open and there was a little sort of a housing, a house or a shelter that was built for it in which the light was rolled in and kept out of the weather and brought forth only when required. During the War it was required at all times so the light was usually outside at all times.

TH: Right out in the open?

HN: Right out in the open.

TH: What about here at the Battery Peck? They didn't have any?

HN: No. We didn't have lights. The only light that we had between 7, was between 7 and 6 at the end of Gunnison Road. There was nothing in between. Now, anti-aircraft lights, that came under a different organization. The seacoast lights that we are speaking of did not have the mission of covering for anti-aircraft.

TH: So, there were two different...

HN: There were two different. It was beyond the capability of the light to act as an anti-aircraft light. First of all, it couldn't elevate to those levels.

TH: So, what you commanded, was your mission was to spot the ships?

HN: Seacoast, seacoast. It was in support of the seacoast guns.

TH: Okay, so then your seven searchlights were for spotting seacoast, for the ships, okay.

NH: And any other coastal activity along the shore.

TH: You were telling us that one story which, right now we are behind nine-gun battery headed south towards Battery Potter. Now there's the top of Potter up there and you were saying that was the Harbor Entrance Command Post (HECP).

NH: That's right.

TH: Where that one ship was coming in. Could tell us that story again about the admiral or whoever?

HN: Oh yeah. The Harbor Entrance Control Post was established for the purpose of controlling all of the defenses to the entrance of New York Harbor. There was a steel gate there that prevented any boats from coming in except when identified and had the right to be there, military right to be there. Such as spy ships, battleships, warships whatever. That gate went from the tip of Fort Hancock toward Tilden, remained closed to shipping except when ordered by proper authority to open the gate to allow friendly military type ships or military support ships to enter or depart. And if a ship came in unannounced and unscheduled it was challenged. It was found to be an uninvited ship or an unwelcome ship, could possibly be fired on.

EH: Who was the high ranking officer who felt he didn't have to be announced?

HN: He got a shot over his bow.

EH: And who was that fellow again?

HN: I don't remember who it was but it was a general. He thought that his authority was above the authority of the safety of the entrance of New York.

TH: Then what kind of ship was it? Was it the Army boats that...

HN: It was a military ship of some kind. I don't recall what it was but he came in on a motor boat of some kind, open motor boat. He was told to halt which he refused to do and a shot was placed over his bow. He believed us the second time.

TH: Okay, we are swinging right now. Here is the front entrance to Battery Potter. We are wondering if this is what you were describing earlier. Up here was the Harbor Entrance....

NH: HECP, the Harbor Entrance Control Post was located above and below here for a while was located the Headquarters of the Harbor Defenses of New York. Battery Potter. It's an old Battery.

TH: Now, did you spend any time up here you were saying earlier?

NH: Oh yes. Sure. Oh, it was my station for a while, a long while. HECP up there Harbor Entrance Control Post and here, of course, they had the water leaking through down the ceilings onto their working areas. (laughter) They kept moving their desks around.

TH: Even back then? Because now it leaks like a sieve back then it was doing the same thing. When did you find yourself over here? Would it be like during the day? Would you be here at nighttime or...

HN: It was a 24 hour operation. You could be here anytime depending on what was transpiring. There were always officers on duty.

EH: Was that around 1940? You know, early 40s?

HN: Well, during the entire War and for a year or two prior to the War.

TH: Was this area heavily guarded being such a very important part of...

HN: Oh yes.

TH: Would soldiers challenge you here, even as an officer?

HN: Absolutely.

TH: Do you recall anywhere specifically?

NH: The guard had areas that were set out for him to...

TH: Patrol.

NH: Patrol. He was armed and he had guard ammunition which was the 30.06 combat ammunition, the lighter type of cartridge but very uncomfortable if you ever received one of those things.

TH: How did you arrive? Would it be by staff car or truck or?

HN: Bicycle. On foot, whatever transportation that was available which was very scarce.

TH: Would the Hook area, especially Fort Hancock be in wartime was it all blacked out at night?

HN: Absolutely.

TH: I guess you were pretty careful about that.

HN: Not only that but civilian areas along the coast were also blacked out. All the way down to Asbury Park and below and in order for some of the businesses to remain open at night, cloth shields were mounted along the outside part of the boardwalk to shield the light, the limited light that was permitted to shield that light from any observer who might be cruising right out in the ocean there.

TH: Okay, we are going to head south and we are going to go towards, here is Battery Granger just like Nine Gun, the disappearing guns and you were telling us a funny story and you were told to look through one of the spotting ...

HN: Oh god, yes.

TH: Can you tell us that story?

NH: Well, we all start a new job brand new, no experience, no knowledge and we think we know it all and because I knew it all I was given the job of looking through this telescope at a target. "Hank," he said, "You look telescope and keep those crosshairs on that target and don't move from that. The information that we are going to ask you is very, very important to this operation." So, I glued my eye to the glass as ordered and in a moment or two I was darn near blown off the area by a disappearing gun that had come up from no where about 15 or 20 feet away and fired away. He said that was one way to break a person in to find out how loud these guns are and believe me they were loud.

TH: It shook you up, right?

NH: You are darn right.

TH: Where did that take place? Where did that happen to you knowledge or recollection?

HN: I think it was Gunnison.

TH: Down at Battery Gunnison.

HN: I think it was. Yeah.

TH: When it was a disappearing 6-inch.

HN: Disappearing 6-inch gun.

TH: In your estimation how fast could a gun crew load and fire a 6-inch disappearing gun down there?

HN: About 3 to 4 shots a minute.

TH: From each gun?

NH: From each gun.

TH: That's pretty darn good.

NH: You are damn right it is good. Don't forget those guns had to be lowered and the breech had to be opened and the barrel had to be swabbed to take all of the sparks and whatever remained from the previous shot and remove it and clean the barrel and the shell had to be rammed in place and then the cartridge bag had to be put in place, the breech block had to be closed and locked in place and then the primer placed in the breech block and then the gun was ready for firing. All of these operations took time. they had to be done with care and cleaned and required about enough time so that at the

maximum four shots per minute could be fired from each one of the disappearing guns. Actually we fired about three for safety reasons and more well for safety reasons more than anything else.

TH: I have often been told that those 6-inch rifles, those 8-inch rifles had a much sharper crack to them.

HN: Yes they did.

TH: Hurt your ears?

HN: Oh yeah. You know it. I have one deaf ear as a result of it. The other ear is only about 10%. I have to wear hearing aids as a result of that but then my job was that I was required that I be located right alongside the gun which is one of the worst places to be when it was fired. The concussion was very sharp. But you had to read the readings on the axle at that point of degrees and elevation, temperatures and all that stuff. That is where you had to be.

TH: We are coming up on the Sandy Hook Lighthouse now and you were telling us that your tent and your soldiers too, right of the men you commanded was back in this area?

HN: That's right. The officers tents were on the other side from this point, from on the other side of the Lighthouse and a row of tents, pyramidal type tents in which five officers or four or five officers were house. A little pot belly stove that gave you heat during the wintertime and it was the first year before the barracks were built.

TH: Was that a coal burning...?

HN: Coal burning little pot belly stoves.

TH: Which probably didn't heat too well in a pyramidal tent, right?

NH: You had to huddle around the stove but then some people got over ambitious and put a lot of other things in the pot belly stove and the sparks came out of the top of the chimney and burned the tents down.

TH: Like what things would they put in there?

NH: Wood, charcoal, anything that was handy, grass, dried leaves. Sure it was out of order. They shouldn't have done that.

TH: Right across from the Lighthouse, right back in here is the old mortar battery but in World War II this was the Harbor Defense Command Post (HDCP) where General Gage had his communication. There was radios down here, teletypes. Is this familiar to you? The old mortar pits down here.

HN: Not much, no.

TH: Okay. And then here we are coming back into the Fort area again. Here's the, one of the Firehouse, Gas Station, PX over there. Looking at a World War II map of the tent city support buildings, that right there is listed as an officers' latrine building right back in there. Can you see it there in the trees? And then over here these were the enlisted men's latrines and mess hall and all the tents started over back in here.

HN: That's right.

TH: And also over here too. This has been paved over since World War II.

EH: We are heading eastbound on Gunnison Road.

HN: We are coming to an area now where we used to supply the regiment, rather the Post (with) beef. The hindquarter, the side quarter, all the beef came in and were stored in this building here which was sort of a refrigerator building.

TH: This building right here?

HN: This building right here and over here was the office of the director of supply for the Harbor Defenses of New York. It was his job, the job of that office to determine...

EH: 302. (Today, these buildings are part of the Marine Academy of Science and Technology Campus, MAST)

NH: ..which organization received the hindquarter and which organization received the forequarter and which organization received the neck and other parts and there was always a constant fight as to who would receive the hindquarters; that being the most choice. We always had a gang of people out here fighting for the hindquarters. We had to be very careful, who, you know, which organization received them. We tried to rotate the distribution of parts so that everybody was treated equally.

TH: So, this building 316 was where the...

NH: 316 is where the beef came in.

EH: Refrigerator.

TH: And right here is where the...

HN: Right there is where the S4 for the Harbor Defenses of New York had the supply officer and his staff, the clerks and the sergeants' who were in charge of distribution, operators so that each outfit received what it was supposed to receive and the quantities it was supposed to receive and also the items.

EH: That's building 302. Okay.

HN: It was a very, very important building.

TH: I notice that on either side of Building 316, we are right opposite it, these were mess halls.

HN: They were mess halls.

TH: You had mess halls.

HN: And that was a maintenance shop over there for communications people.

TH: This building coming up.

EH: On the left?

HN: Yeah. They did experimental work and maintenance work and had all kinds of people who...

TH: 305.

NH: 305. Yeah.

TH: Building 305.

NH: Who, part of the rounds with communications is trying to make improvements here and there. It was a very effective little building. Some fine soldiers came out of that place, very intelligent people, smart people.

TH: Then, of course, right here to the south of us what is now Parking Lot G was Tent City which extended all the way back through here.

HN: Tent City, yeah. That's right. That's right.

TH: And you had probably hundreds of tents here and they also put some wooden barracks back in here later too.

HN: Oh yeah. Well, of course, they were going from tents to barracks as fast as they could be built. We had all kinds of contractors coming in building barracks for us. We had to keep under constant supervision to make sure that the material used was the proper kind of material, wood not entirely green. Some of those boards were so green they twisted like (inaudible). We wanted to make sure what they put in was according to specifications not according to what the contractor here thought they could get away with.

TH: In fact, there is a concrete foundation right there that is probably part of because there is long concrete foundations that run right through here and they probably had some of the wooden barracks right in here.

HN: Of course, the barracks are all gone now.

TH: Yeah. And this was all tents all the way back here to the wood line right here. I guess the company streets were battery streets, by battery? There used to be a railroad line running right up through here too.

HN: The railroad line went from the entire length of Sandy Hook all the way down to the point. There were branches off that supplied the, that supplied some of the heavy gun batteries, a delivery of ammunition, a delivery of shells and other equipment that would be required. And little by little those railroad did disappear to the day we no longer had them.

TH: Do you remember a very high tower, a steel girder tower that stood right here called Gunnison tower?

NH: Oh yeah. Very tall. They asked me to climb that tower once. I said, "Nope. I am being transferred."

TH: Well, it stood right here.

NH: I couldn't have gone more than five feet up the ladder without freezing. So, I can't stand heights. But we did have a Lieutenant, my gosh, a Lt. Carroll who could climb up that thing like a monkey and he loved it. He liked to be way up there out of sight out of reach.

TH: Going up all those ladders and everything he was...

HN: A hot pot of coffee on the stove. But you know, the, not the Red Cross but the other organization now....

EH: The Salvation Army?

HN: The Salvation Army. They would climb that tower. They would climb all the steps to all of our towers and bring hot coffee to those men and bring cakes to those men and bring sandwiches to those men. I will never forget the good work. The fine attitude of those people, they were absolutely outstanding in every way. The soldiers appreciated them and they were always totally and thoroughly welcome. I can't say that about some of the organizations that had the responsibility, the duty and the assignments of providing the same kind of service. Sorry about that but that's a fact.

TH: We are at Battery Gunnison.

HN: That's Gunnison. That's our old Battery. That was a disappearing gun at the time.

TH: And then in World War II they converted it into the barbette.

HN: They took all of the guns. They took all of the disappearing guns out. They were too slow. Their range was low. Their maintenance was high. From the standpoint of artillery efficiency it didn't compare with fixed, with the fixed type of equipment which incidentally now is also obsolete. The enemy can stand out 1,500 miles and bombard, attack an enemy post, an enemy installation completely out of sight. Submarine underwater can fire missiles with only its little periscope showing. There is no way in the world of locating those things except from overhead. By the time we are ready to do anything about it they would disappear. There is no defense against it, certainly not with Coast Artillery.

TH: Against the submarine.

NH: Against the submarine.

TH: Which you saw. Which you said, you saw off the south end of the Hook.

NH: We saw them. We saw them at the end of the Hook, absolutely. The Germans thumbed their nose at us, laughed at us. (They) ridiculed us. We went down there the next day with 155s (mm guns). If those things ever came above the water again they wouldn't have to time to thumb their noses.

TH: What was the routine here at Gunnison? Did you ever get over here and take part in the guns drills?

HN: Yeah. Sure. Most of the firing we did was sub-caliber firing. We put a smaller diameter tube in the main barrel of the gun and fire one pounders to save ammunition to save projectiles and things like that. Then there were times too when of course we fired service drills which required the use of the full size projectile and propelling charge, primer and the whole thing.

TH: And you would have to have a towed target? When you did that you had to have a towed target out in the water.

HN: That's right. I was on a boat once taking pictures of the splashes from the tug. It was a tug of course with a long 200 foot line towing the target. From the back of the tug you could take pictures, photographs of each shot, the overs, the shorts and all that. They were doing the same thing from the Post to determine the lefts and rights. So from those photographs we could determine where each shot landed so that we could make corrections to our method of firing the gun for windage and whatever. One day when we were in the process of firing, service firing, a fog developed. A surface fog, it was the kind of fog that resulted in complete coverage of the target and of the tug except for the upper tip of the smokestack that was on the tug. The only thing that was showing or

visible from the shore was the upper part of the smokestack. They were tracking on the smokestack thinking it was a target. I was on that tug and the first shot that was fired hit the tug right at the smokestack. It was a glancing blow. Bounced off the tug and it threw the tug way over on its side. We finally came in and there was a hell of a dent in that boat. It wasn't so funny sitting in there listening to this thing coming in not knowing where it was going to land. You move here, you move there. Where is it going to land? Where do you move to? So you just sat down there. You said, "What the hell. If it is gonna land it is gonna land." And that's all you couldn't do anything except wait for it. And it landed. It landed right on the side of that tug. We brought the tug in. boats came rushing out to see if anybody was injured. It was a very excitable day. The shooting was very good, absolutely perfect. Wrong target.

TH: Got something to show for it.

HN: You are damn right they did. A nice big dent. (laughter)

TH: In wartime, were the soldiers living right out here, tented out by the gun battery or Gunnison if you remember that?

HN: In some areas, yes. And before the barracks were built some of these areas had barracks areas built so that they would have good, good, you know, shelter because it got pretty darn cold out here in the wintertime. Otherwise they were in their barracks buildings here. All along here there were barracks buildings. Some places where the barracks didn't exist and it was located far from the main section of the Post. Temporary barracks were built and provisions made so that they would have shelter.

TH: We are gonna head straight south to the next searchlight spot which is right down here. This is the searchlight area which is just south of Battery Gunnison down there.

NH: South of Battery Gunnison.

TH: We are going south right now. Of course, this is more modern. This was built in 1971 here, the Sewage Treatment Plant, but that is 1941 right here.

EH: Building 310?

TH: Yep. And then...

NH: Oh gee...

TH: There's the Generator Building. Building 350 and inside, look through the window in here, Colonel. Look inside.

HN: Yeah. There is an old generator. I was in this building. Let's see. It's open.

TH: You want to go in?

HN: Let's take a look. (Tape stops and restarts.) (inaudible talking)

EH: So there were four, four pistons you said? Is that correct? There were four pistons, this equipment?

HN: Four cylinders.

EH: Four cylinders, excuse me.

HN: A four cylinder engine, a gasoline powered engine.

EH: Which is still in this building no less.

NH: 25, 50 KW, 50 KW generators which aren't here anymore.

EH: Was the interior wainscoting as you remember it?

NH: Pardon?

EH: Was there wooden wainscoting? What was the...

HN: It was as you see it.

EH: Oh really. It was bare concrete?

HN: Except all nicely painted and fixed up very nicely, gray floor, enamel floors. You know, we had a system with the Navy. The Navy had several boats out here. I got friendly with one of the guys, one of the warrant officers, they didn't call them warrant officers. What was the grade for the Navy? Specialist, whatever it was. This man was in charge of the ship which is still in operation and we had sort of a trading arrangement with each other. We couldn't get paint. (There was) no way at all of getting paint. We needed gallons of gray paint for all these buildings and white paint. So, he had gallons of white paint and gallons of gray paint that he didn't know what the devil to do with. He needed sheets for bedding. He couldn't get sheets for his bedding. Lo and behold, we had 115 excess sheets to our credit which we had piled away in secret. So we said, "Hey look, we got extra sheets, you got extra paint. How about making a trade?" "Fine." Boom. (laughter) So we got all the paint we wanted. We painted everything up. He got the sheets and they could go to sleep and everybody was happy. But you know I used to go on board that ship and talk with him and half the time we would solve problems for each other. He had this table in his table in his room a beautiful office room and alongside the table was a dumbwaiter with a sliding door and we sat there. He would take his phone up and blah, blah a couple of words and I couldn't hear what they were. He said, "In a second you can see what the conversation was about." So, a little light lit up over the door. He opened up the door and pulled out a tray of coffee, buns, there were

sandwiches. There were all kinds of junk on there that were delightful. He pulled them right out and says help yourself. We do this all the time. (laughter)

TH: Gee if we had that arrangement...

HN: He knew how to live. Believe me.

EH: What would be this little archway in the northern most part of this?

HN: I don't know what that was. I don't know what that was. Probably a part in there that is missing. I don't recall what that was.

EH: And then there is two corner closets here, set right into the corner.

NH: Yeah. Must have had paint and stuff and oil and things like that stored there.

EH: Equipment.

NH: That thing I don't know what that was. The roof...

EH: It was still like this corrugated metal roof when you were here?

HN: Oh yeah. Just as you see it. Oh yeah. That was very waterproofed. It was very nice.

TH: Once again in wartime I guess men were stationed here?

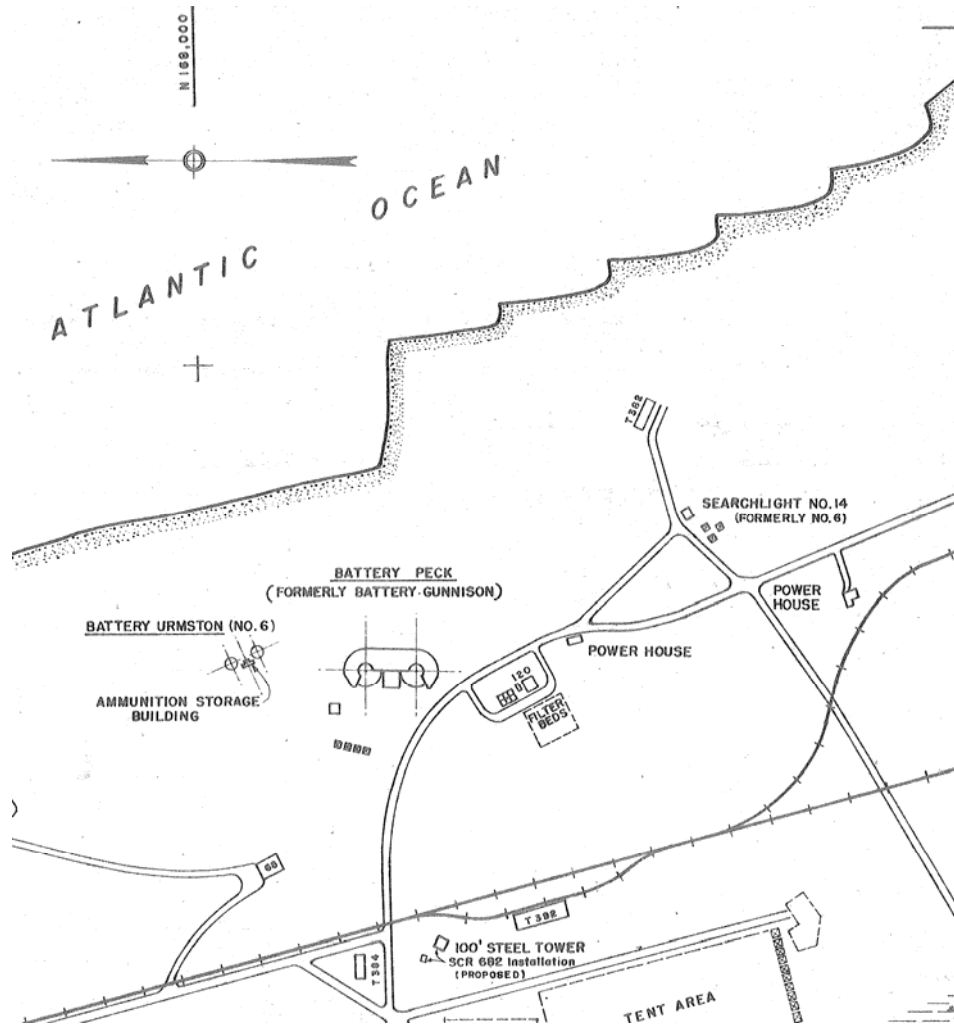
HN: Oh sure they were. Absolutely. All night long.

TH: In readiness, right.

EH: Assigned?

HN: Those engines were in perfect condition. You press a button and off they went. We had some of the finest technicians you could hope to have. Beautiful people, wonderful people. (Walking outside. Some words are inaudible) Up on the hill there.

EH: Up on the hill?



TH: Well, the map show back over here. I was gonna...

HN: Back over there?

TH: Yeah. Let's go and look.

HN: Could be. But I think it was up on that hill though.

EH: Was it a fixed tower or a movable in other words it lied down and came up?

NH: The tower was right on the mound up on the hill and the house was there too where it slid into the house. That's right.

TH: We are parked right here in front of it.

HN: That's right. That's right.

TH: This is the traffic island right here on our left.

NH: It was up here somewhere.

TH: Well, it shows it 6

HN: Searchlight #6, oh alright.

TH: And then there was a wooden barracks, Barracks 382 at the end of the road. But this is the searchlight. That right there. Now we are right here.

HN: Now I was looking in the wrong direction.

TH: Yeah.

HN: Alright.

EH: South.

TH: It's right to the southeast of us. Right over there, that spot.

HN: Then just take this road and take you right to you there.

TH: Yeah. Let me drive us over. Why don't you hold the map?

NH: Searchlight #6. There it is. God bless that light. That was the only one between this point and the one #7 at the tip. There wasn't anything in between.

EH: That's all you needed actually?

NH: Seacoast (for the guns) it wouldn't be necessary to have anything in between.

TH: Here is the, up on the dune here.

EH: Just at the curb.

TH: See this is the road we are on now. This is the road that goes around this and there's the old road. They have got it blocked off now but there's the old road that goes out right here. Your searchlight was right up on top of that hill to your right, #6.

HN: You know, I still say it was on that hill over there.

TH: Back up where the...How was this searchlight mounted was it in the concrete foundation or...

HN: Well, you had the hill of course and there was a platform and a house, a shelter for the searchlight and there were tracks and the searchlight came out of the house onto the

hill and when it was not in use it would be rolled back into the house itself and the house wasn't anything much different from this except that it was about half the size.

TH: We got pictures of that. We got pictures from I think the National Archives. We have two prints and I have often wondered where that because it's on tracks and come out of that little house.

HN: That's right.

TH: And I have often wondered where it is.

HN: It wasn't here.

TH: Okay let's look down this way.

NH: I know right well it wasn't here because I come out of that power house many times and walk straight over.

TH: To the hill that's up over here.

NH: Over there. That's right. That's right.

TH: Okay.

HN: I could be wrong. I will find out when I get over there.

TH: But you have a hill here.

HN: That's right. There was a hill. We went from here across the way, boom. There it is right there. And this thing here, when did this come in?

TH: In 1971, long after.

NH: It might have been here.

TH: Yeah. Right where that is.

NH: It could have been there.

EH: Facing, opposite 310?

TH: Yeah.

HN: This of course is the gun battery. It wasn't there so it must have been where that new structure is.

TH: Okay.

HN: And that's it. It certainly wasn't where it was designated. It wasn't located there at all.

TH: Okay. Let's get this again. Because this newer Sewage Treatment Plant is built into that dune up there so that must be it.

HN: Well, when they built that thing they probably leveled it off a lot too.

TH: Oh yeah. That's why...

HN: It was higher than that.

TH: But it was an actual small building.

NH: That's right.

TH: Where they could push on tracks right out to...

NH: That's exactly right.

TH: That was its shelter then. They had it for a shelter. Okay then our next one would be way down here near the radar site.

HN: Yeah. Wait a minute. We are going down in this direction now.

TH: It should be right off in here. Which of course....

EH: Two additional tower lights? Is that what you are saying?

HN: (inaudible) towers. The towers that came up like this and came down like this.

TH: Oh that is way down in there.

HN: Way down in there. And the one that isn't there is the one that we put in as an after wards to illuminate the waterways in the back.

TH: The one that is way down by Plum Island?

HN: Yeah.

TH: On Plum Island.

NH: That's the only light we had on that side.

TH: Okay.

EH: You are saying on the bayside.

NH: Yeah on the bayside.

EH: Tower #1 at Plum Island was the only illumination is that right?

HN: Pardon?

EH: I am just double checking.

TH: The Colonel was saying that they had opposite Plum Island they had a searchlight but during the War they also placed one on Plum Island.

EH: Right.

HN: They used on the tracking department and they thought somebody stole binoculars. So went sent some people down there to scrape around and sure enough they found the lenses, the prisms, the binoculars were completely destroyed but the prisms made of glass were still there so we were safe. (After a tent fire at Searchlight #3, the Army investigated to find the glass from the binoculars to make sure they did not set the fire to steal them.) We were honest again.

EH: How about that small telescope you have that was on display? Was that from a telegraph tower?

HN: Yeah. That telescope which the lens is broken in it that was used to help identify ships that were coming in and going out. The telescope that was used...

EH: For Western Union.

HN: Yes. For Western Union, so called, Western Union tower was used in there together with that signal carbine lantern two of those things, I hauled them out of that building, the telescope and the lantern. That's where they came from and I assume that it was used for the purpose of besides somewhere. Maybe there is something still left.

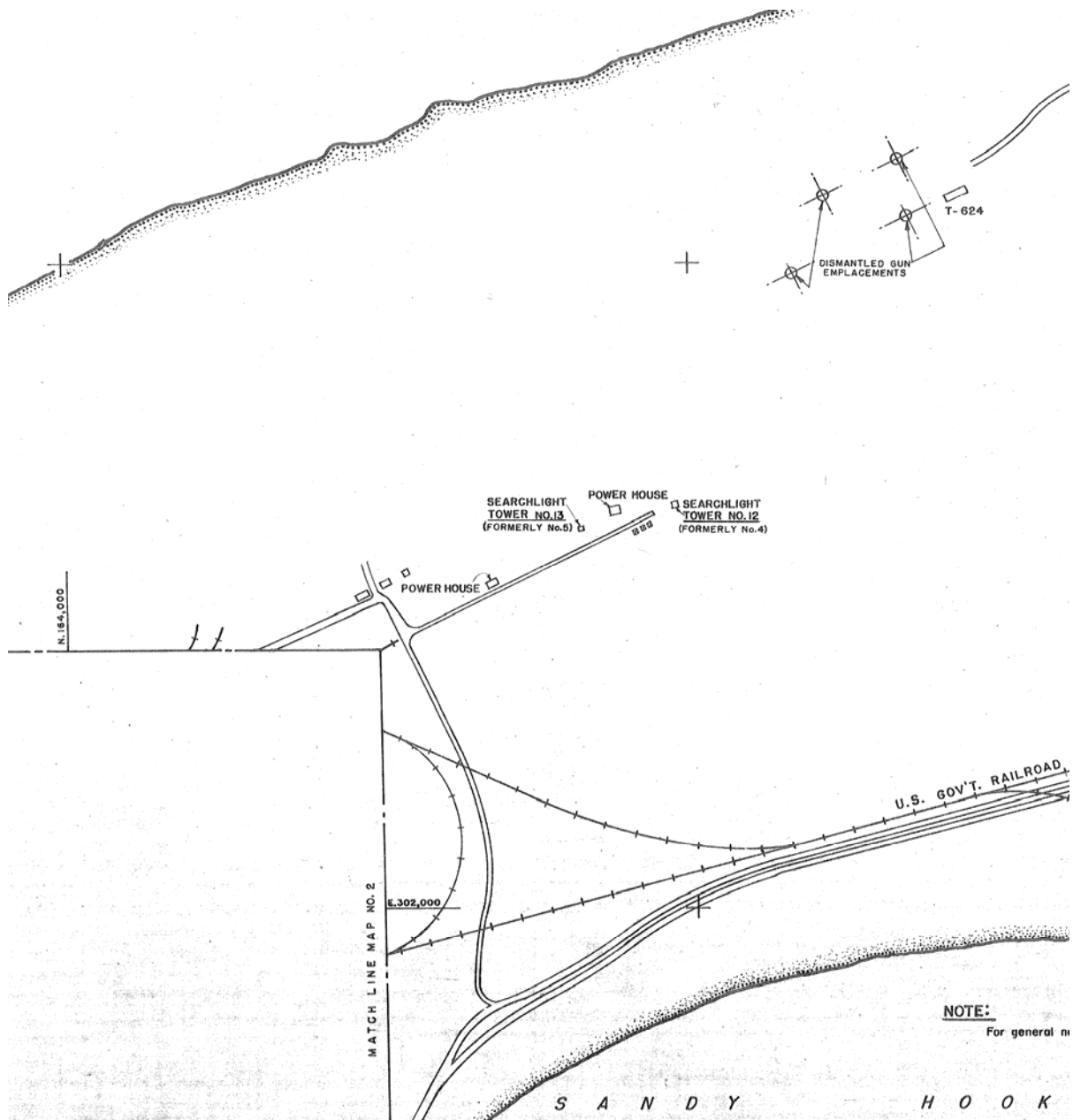
EH: We are at the intersection of Atlantic and the 90 degree curve just south of the curve walking due east where there was a small bombproof constructed to...

NH: For the protection of the...

EH: To protect the soldiers...

NH: Personnel.

EH: In the event that they came under attack. We are walking east and it is sort of a well beaten path. (This is the South Beach Dune Trail that ends at the 90 degree turn on Atlantic Drive.)



Portion of Map titled, "Location of Fortifications Structures General Map." The map is dated 1944.

TH: Walking south.

EH: South. I am sorry.

TH: How many times did you go down this road?

EH: The remains of 412 which is listed as a power house. Heading southbound

HN: (inaudible) (Story about a holly tree which can be read in his other interview)

TH: Colonel, there is the counterweight right there to the east of us for #5.

HN: That sure is. That sure is. A beaut isn't it?

TH: Yep.

HN: I forget how many tons that was. That was around 15 anyhow, 10-15 tons.

EH: Tons?

HN: Yeah a ton of weight would be would power that thing up. We used these hills to cover and protect the searchlights when the searchlights were down in their lowered position. When they went up in the upper position, of course, a lot of those trees had been cleared away so that searchlight was just clear.

TH: It would go right up and over and be clear.

NH: 50 or 60 feet. I forget how high. The anchor is still there.

TH: Really? To anchor down the tower?

NH: Yeah. And there is some more over there. Sand covered.

TH: And there is your counterweight.

HN: I have got photographs of all this stuff.

EH: In his photo album. Your scrapbook?

HN: Yeah.

EH: I remember.

HN: Photograph of all of this stuff. Every bit of it. The railroad, searchlight and this guns and everything.

EH: There is a young cedar growing out of the counterweight. Incredible.

TH: And they torched. It looks like after the War, Colonel, they just torched off the tower?

HN: Oh sure, they just torched everything.

TH: They just scrapped it up.

NH: Came in with the torches and everything.

TH: You have got the hills back up in here. This is one large hill. I would like to try and locate your dugout. That fascinates me. Was it back in here some where?

NH: No. It was along the road on the way in.

TH: Really?

HN: About half way, half the distance.

TH: So like between where we came in, where we parked.

HN: And where we are now.

TH: At #5 Searchlight.

HN: As we got out it will be on the right. The dugout that we, there was an old tower here on the Post consisting of power that went up and then there was housing on the top of that thing about 60 feet high which was no longer in use and had been tumbled. So, what we had were these big tubes, these round tubes about seven or eight feet in diameter, steel, just laying down. And we used those things as underground bombproof for the men. We dug it out with bulldozers. (We) laid these things down. People did this. Laid these things down and we had (inaudible). In there we had our command post we had shelters for the men and we used in the wintertime during extreme cold weather we had a pot belly stove in there. A little pipe going up. It was a beautiful installation. All communications we did ourselves.

TH: Right down here? Right here?

HN: Yeah. As a matter of fact, that one down there off this road consisted of these tubes, two of them. One along side of each other. A little dining area.

TH: Do you think it is in there somewhere?

HN: Probably removed. As you go down the road about half way down on the right hand side there was an entrance coming into it.

EH: Home away from home.

NH: Tables for playing cards and all this kind of stuff.

TH: But you weren't playing cards you were waiting for the enemy. (laughter)

NH: Oh yeah sure. They knew it was a waiting thing. They didn't know if it was coming or what. And there was one big scare when the *Bismarck*, I think it was the *Bismarck* the big German battleship with 18-inch guns on it, the biggest guns of any ship. Broke free and was on its way over here. New York Harbor, but there were two battleships, English (ships) and also an aircraft carrier with airplanes happened to be in the area, the luck of it and they sunk the thing. If that didn't happen we would have been under siege. With 18-inch shells, my friend.

TH: Yeah. I wonder how well the sand dunes here would have...

HN: Oh it would have blown the place apart. Six shots and there wouldn't be any more left of it.

TH: Fragments of concrete. Now we are going to walk in...

HN: You know the utter destruction of this place, of course, it was all obsolete, I mean what's you gonna do. So, is the horse and wagon and milk wagon. But it always seemed to me that a little bit could have remained because of its historical....

TH: #4 counterweight.

HN: Yeah. That could be. But I was trying to locate the location of the Power House. That's gone.

TH: Yeah. The Power House should be according to the map somewhere right here.

HN: That's right, exactly.

TH: We will have to be on the lookout right here.

NH: (inaudible)

TH: Yeah. That Power House would be right over there where that red ribbon according to this map is, because if that's the searchlight counterweight.... Is that what we have here? The counterweight? It's a rectangular piece of concrete with a lot of steel girder in it. So this must be searchlight #4.

NH: How many tons could you say a thing like that weighs?

TH: I don't want to mention it again.

EH: It's hard to imagine. Yeah.

TH: Ten at least.

HN: Oh, more than that.

TH: 20?

HN: Yeah. 20 would be more like it. That's one heavy piece of stuff. I have seen one map, of course, I can't recall. It's not this one. Yeah, this is it because those little squares with the x's through them indicate tents here. Did some of the soldiers stay in tents down this way?

HN: Yes. Sure.

EH: It looks like three tents.

TH: Three tents right across over in that area.

EH: Due west.

TH: We are here. So, right at the end of the road right over there at the west side of the road.

HN: The lyster bag was a drinking bag, drinking water.

TH: That you could hang from a tree or a tripod, right.

HN: You hung it from a tripod and the bag was in the middle. It had a nice big solid chunk of ice in this one. (laughter)

TH: Because it was so cold here.

NH: Ice water.

TH: Ice water.

NH: Gee whiz we had to haul down pots of hot food here to keep these guys warm. We did everything we could to make these guys as comfortable but they had to stay here. The day was maintenance and clean up and at night time it was on duty. 24 hour a day people.

TH: Snow, rain, cold.

EH: What an assignment.
(Tape stops and restarts)

TH: To our east towards the ocean that's where theoretically that's where the enemy lurks. Did they have soldiers here like 1942, 1943 patrolling out there?

HN: Sure there were. There was an Infantry regiment.

TH: The 113th Combat Regiment.

HN: The 113th Combat Regiment that in support of the artillery...

TH: Patrolled?

NH: Patrolled the coast area. Of course we patrolled our own areas.

TH: Right in the immediate vicinity of your searchlights.

NH: Yeah. We patrolled that. That was our responsibility.

TH: I am just interested and all you're back here and you have to be accountable for your area, yet you know, you had soldiers out there, I was wondering if you ever...

HN: The security of our own area was our responsibility. We had to do that.

TH: Did any of your men, you know, ever see the patrols walking the beach.

HN: Sure. They knew each other. They passed words and all that. One day we had two senators approach the searchlights in Sea Bright. Two senators, United States senators and they were halted. And right here on each of the two senators was a bayonet. So help me.

TH: Right at their stomachs.

HN: They were on property that was secured and there was a sign there. "No Trespassing. Military Reservation," Blah, blah, blah. So, they were going to see what it was all about, these two senators. They found out quick what it was all about. They reduced themselves, "Sorry sir, no trespassing." They were very polite but firm so they left. We got a letter of commendation from these two senators. Got a letter of commendation for the security and the men doing their jobs and he wanted to know the names of the men so he could write them a personal letter. These two men received a personal letter. What we did in the battery area we had a not a review but a formation. We called these men out in front of the formation and presented each one of them the company commendation for their attendance to duty and all this sort of thing. We gave them three day pass.

EH: Oh wow.

TH: To be elusive. Now that is Power House number 413 because we are now leaving Searchlight #4. We are almost back to where the road ends. You can almost see where that road ends over there.

HN: That's been taken out altogether. No question about it. That's been taken out just completely. It's gone.

TH: The Power House.

NH: Yeah. The Power House, the engines, everything. There maybe a pipe or two sticking up. A piece of concrete, nothing more than that.

TH: This is where it was, Colonel.

NH: Yeah. You got a base right here. Yeah. Yeah they just destroyed it. Smashed it completely. Got rid of it. There is some metal work over there.

TH: There is a lot of concrete fragments.

HN: Oh yeah. This is where it was located.

TH: Right up behind this large sand dune.

HN: Yeah. That's right. Sure enough. Yep. (Tape stops and restarts) Barbed wire up along there. Possible approaches to areas that were not guarded, you know. You couldn't guard every square inch of the place. It was impossible. You did the best you could with barbed wire. There were no lights. Guarding the place was a big problem here, big problem.

TH: Really?

HN: Oh yeah. Wide open. Every inch of shoreline to guard on both sides. (Tape stops and restarts.) You never knew what he was going to do. You would walk along this road you would see two horses up there. One with his aide and him on the other one.

TH: Really? General Gage.

HN: Gage.

TH: I hear he liked horses.

NH: Oh yeah he was on his horse with his aide.

TH: What makes it hard here it's pretty overgrown.

NH: Somewhere in here, somewhere in here was our dugout and I tell you, you are not going to see it from here because it was way in.

TH: Oh in there.

HN: Oh yeah. Quite a ways in. I would say probably 75 feet anyhow.

EH: Oh wow.

HN: 100 feet. Oh yeah.

EH: Were the red posts very much the way boundary lines were marked, is that it?

HN: Red posts, I don't know where that comes from.

TH: See we are right by this Power House. We are back at Power House 412.

HN: Yeah.

TH: You were saying this was the main one for the searchlights and that this one was the north one.

HN: I don't think we used this. I don't think this was in use. It was a Power House but I don't think it was in use. There was one Power House with two power plants in it. That was up there not far from the light. Those were the tower lights over there which was gone. This we didn't use. I don't know what this is. What is this? (inaudible) (Tape stops and restarts)

HN: Gasoline was almost impossible to obtain and so was transportation. Tires, my god, forget it. Oh geez.

TH: Yeah rubber, tires, and gasoline.

NH: Forget it.

EH: Therefore the bicycle was the most common.

HN: I had, I had the biggest supply of rubber tires in the whole harbor defense.

TH: Really?

HN: You know why, the remote controllers were on mounts with four wheels. The searchlights were on mounts with four wheels. The power plants were on mounts with four wheels. There was 16 tires to each searchlight that I had.

EH: Oh my goodness.

HN: Do you know where they were? All piled up in storage and all those pieces of equipment were on jacks and were on building blocks and the Army was crying for tires and I wanted to give it to them and they wouldn't take it because they belonged on the searchlights that weren't using them. Isn't that crazy?

EH: Geez, ironic. Yeah. (Tape stops and restarts.)

TH: Same poison ivy.

HN: Same thing. (laughter) The old stuff died out and was replaced by the new stuff. It's all the same thing god bless it. Beautiful, utopia. (Irrelevant conversation to interview.)

TH: The aircraft guns over there.

EH: Just south of the visitor center.

TH: Yeah. Southeast.

EH: Where there were anti-aircraft guns.

TH: Yeah. South and east. There were three concrete. I have got photographs of them during the storms of 1977. The dune which was quite high there was eroded out and these big concrete platforms just fell off the dune right onto the beach and then gradually just sunk out of sight. I saw one of them was chopped up by our maintenance people. But I mean it was a huge piece of concrete that was chopped up quite like the concrete counterweights for your disappearing searchlights.

EH: On one of these maps it says tower C and D. Do you think that would be it?

NH: C and D we didn't refer to them as C and D. So I don't know what that could be.

EH: Well, its printed towers and then in pencil it says C and D. It's due east of Arrowsmith along Atlantic Drive. I don't know what that meant.

TH: Okay we are headed south and there is Plum Island over there on our right. We are going to swing around. Get down to the south end here and swing.

NH: I had a light on that island there.

TH: Right. That is what you are telling me.

HN: That's where the fire on that tent occurred. Right at the top of that mound was a searchlight that searched this whole area in here for Germans finally come in.

TH: Where would you shine the light? Would it be...

HN: Inward.

TH: Inward towards the bay.

HN: Inward that whole area in there. People didn't like it.

EH: You mentioned that you created a small temporary bridge just to get out there.

HN: Yeah.

EH: And you had orders to create.

NH: Right from here. Right from here. You see where this land meets here.

EH: Yeah.

NH: We had a small bridge that we built to cross over the water area.

EH: And you had one week in which to construct this.

HN: One of these. I think this was it. I guess this is where we were where we built it right in here. The light was then on that end of the spit of land. That's it right there.

TH: What I am going to do is go to Plum Island. There is the center of it. All the vegetation, all the trees and everything somewhere up in there is where your searchlight was put in, right? Somewhere out on the island there, Colonel, your searchlight? I am going to park us right opposite where it's connected. See the sand.

HN: Yeah.

TH: I am wondering because on the map it says the searchlight is over here.

HN: We never had a light there. We never had a light on that side.

EH: On the ocean side.

TH: Right here, right here where the parking lot is.

HN: We never had one in here.

EH: That too was probably proposed.

NH: We had one in there for the backside but we didn't have one here because we had that railroad light down by the gate.

TH: Right.

NH: And the next one was Number 6 up in here.

TH: They don't show anything.

HN: Right here we have the gate.

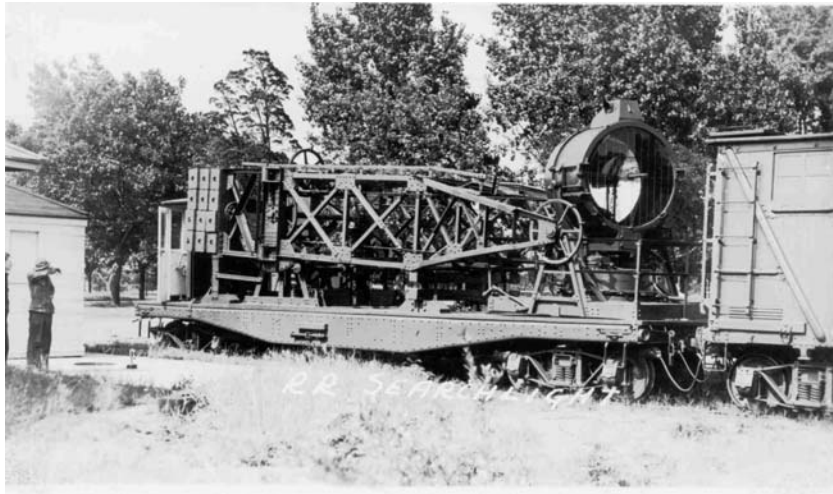
TH: Right.

HN: What we did we brought a railroad car down in here and stop around in here somewhere.

TH: Alright. That's the toll plaza now.

HN: Just inside of the gate.

TH: Right.



Coast Artillery Searchlight on a railroad flatcar.

HN: We parked our searchlight train which consisted of a flatcar and the searchlight and the boxcar which contained the two power plants and on the flatcar the searchlight was mounted on a tower that was raised by a crank handle and the thing came up and you had now a searchlight on a tower which was about 50 feet in the air. Now to give the entire installation stability the flatcar had outriggers on it which swung out and clamped it to the ground so the platform of the car wouldn't wobble.

TH: Stabilize it. Yeah.

NH: Stabilize the whole thing. So, every time that thing was set in place these stabilizers had to be used to stabilize the light and then we had communications lines that were already installed see underground cable lines that we hooked into that gave us communications to the control tower which was on the post. So that, from the control towers we could control these lights. Lights on, lights off, search right, search left all those commands for all of those lights and it simplified your communications system because these wires were already in underground communications wire.

TH: Where was the barracks? Was it the same area down there where...

NH: The barracks were, well, let's see now, in addition, let me think about this now. We had two I am not sure if there was one tower or two towers just outside the gate, right in here somewhere right here before the bridge there were two towers, searchlight towers. Searchlight was raised on a platform and then lowered. The tower remained stable, of course. It was a permanent construction and then inside of the four corners of this platform that raised up on cables and lowered.

TH: Really? Wow.

HN: Well, what happened, you had a crank down here with a cable that went up over a pulley at the top and attached to the platform carrying the searchlight and you had four such cables. And cranking up you got this side and cranking up you got that side and you raised the tower you raised the platform. You had to be careful you didn't tilt the thing. It had to be coordinated evenly.

TH: Yeah. Evenly.

HN: One day the way those cables went up and around and attached to the platform all they had there was a thimble. The cable went around and clamped. I said, "That clamp is gonna give away." "Oh now, that clamp is gonna be alright." "That clamp is gonna give away and the platform is coming down." And they said, "No. It's gonna be alright," and I put it in black and white. I was gonna give these guys a letter explaining that this is not right from an engineering standpoint that thing is going to fail. So, it did. One day it came down. Zoom. The cable gave away at those clamps. The clamps slipped or whatever and it came down. Destroyed the entire light. The only thing that was left of the searchlight was the front door, the glass door in absolutely perfect condition laying on a complete mess of destruction. It was a comical thing but not that way. So that was the end of that. Now after that of course, they said, "Well, we are not going to lower these lights anymore." I told them not to keep putting those lights up and down you are gonna have an accident. They wouldn't listen.



Searchlight tower in Sea Bright after the cable snapped and the light fell.

TH: But it was somewhere down here where the barracks got destroyed?

NH: Yeah. The barracks, let me see now. Here's...

TH: That's the railroad bridge.

NH: That's the railroad. Here's the gate. And the barracks were located in here.

TH: Okay. That would be the toll plaza area.

NH: Yeah. Just on the inside of the...

TH: Seawall.

NH: Seawall. The ocean just came over it and wiped it out.

TH: Sure. I believe that. And this is also the area, the south end of Sandy Hook where you saw the U boats out there?

NH: Correct.

TH: And are you sure they were U boats.

NH: You are damn right they were U boats. Let me see. They weren't on this side. No.

TH: That's the ocean. They gotta be out in the ocean.

NH: They weren't out in the ocean.

TH: They can't be in the river.

NH: Where the hell were they?

TH: That's our side.

NH: They weren't in here. They were down here. That's where they were.

TH: Off Sea Bright because that is south of us, you know, the town of Sea Bright is south of us.

NH: I think they were even south of Sea Bright. They were in a little inlet something like this that came in like that see. Down here somewhere south of Asbury Park. Quite a way down.

TH: Are you talking about Manasquan Inlet, Manasquan Inlet?

HN: I could be.

TH: That's way down and that's an inlet open to the sea.

HN: That's right. And we had a report that they came in there and made faces at us and laughed at us. That was the end of it and then we had our 155 (mm) gun down there and we never saw them again.

TH: About what time period of the War was that? What time period of the War? Was it early in the War? Because I know 1942 they were hear right off the coast sinking...

HN: Sure. It was about that time. It was about that time.

TH: Weren't you, searchlights kind of give away your position, right? I mean you can blind an enemy but it also gives away your position. How did you feel about that?

NH: Well, we figured we were going to blind them so much that they couldn't aim their guns at us. We said, "We will take it for what it is." That's all we could do. We didn't have anything such as black light in those days.

TH: I want to go by the Gatehouse because that is still standing down there, the red brick building. That will maybe give you some bearings.

NH: Yeah. Oh the Gatehouse is still there yeah. (Tape stops and starts)

TH: Wheels that you could transport it out there and then...

HN: Absolutely. That's how we got it out there.

TH: Was the position sandbagged? Did you put sandbags around it?

HN: Oh yes. Oh Yeah.

TH And your men were armed with rifles. Did they have small and pistols?

HN: Yep. Sure.

TH: And you were looking for any enemy activity like saboteurs and...

HN: Sure.

TH: That must have been. Was that after...

NH: This side more than from that side.

TH: Yeah but sneaking across here because it's so narrow.

NH: Oh yeah. Absolutely.

TH: Because you remember back in June 1942 when the German U boat landed saboteurs out in Montauk Point. I bet that is when they placed you over there.

HN: Yeah. They sent some of our people out to Montauk Point.

TH: Really?

HN: Transferred them to another unit that was out there.

TH: There's the Gatehouse. That's the...

HN: They asked for people for that detail or a permanent transfer. We sent 8 balls.

TH: You did.

HN: They said, "What do you want to give us these 8 balls" "You gave them to us."
(laughter)

TH: Now I wonder if this is the area down here where you had those searchlights that could go up and down? Because that's the railroad bridge is...

NH: Well, where was the main entrance?

TH: This was it. Right behind us.

NH: Then the searchlights were right here.

TH: Right here. Okay. They were right in here.

HN: Right in there.

TH: And this is where you lost your barracks too?

HN: Yep. That's where we lost the barracks if that was the main entrance.

TH: This is it. Right here, right behind you.

HN: Just inside the main entrance.

TH: Okay, it was right in here then.

HN: About a hundred, hundred and fifty feet, no more.

TH: That's the south end of our toll plaza.

NH: That's where we used to bring our railroad searchlight.

TH: Right in here because they used to run right in here. The railroad bed was right here. How about the Navy? What I understand when they were over at Floyd Bennett Field and that was a Navy Air Station they used to have patrol planes and like dive bombers that used to be called out if there were U boat sightings.

NH: That's right.

TH: Did you ever see the planes flying around?

HN: Oh, yes. Absolutely. When I was in the HECF we called them in many times to investigate possible crossings by unknown watercraft especially when they weren't sighted. You know, they were there because of underwater readings from bridge work, wire work on the ground under the water, when they crossed these loops we would get a reading on the meter that there was a crossing. We looked out at that point with the glasses and the radar and pick up. See nothing, that was an underwater craft right away. We would call in the Navy to investigate.

TH: And they could do that with patrol planes and I have read from Lakehurst and Cape May they used to have blimps.

HN: That's right. They were constantly out here floating around.

TH: This must have been something to be here with all the traffic, the convoys, the Navy ships.

HN: That's right. This was a very, very sensitive area. First, you have greater New York. You had all the industries in this area. You had the Harbor Defense Area all of it was in defense of all of these installations and all of these defined areas all these various kind of support areas. God knows what, to support the war effort ships coming in and out with all kinds of material, food, fuel, everything you can imagine. All of your war materials, tanks, all things came in and out of New York Harbor and from that standpoint it was extremely sensitive. Any kind of an enemy ship that came in here could really deliver a death blow. We had ships coming in with submarines right at their tail.

TH: You mean trying to use them?

HN: Trying to use them as a shield against being observed by electronic equipment, electronic equipment picked them up. The only defense of that was to stop the ship expose the ship, that's the only thing you could do. That was better than expose the whole damn harbor. You had to expose the ship and have planes come over and balloons come over and do whatever you could to protect yourself.

TH: Sure.

NH: Don't forget that most of these ships were equipped with 6-inch guns fore and aft. And they had gun crews.

TH: Let me ask you also like after Pearl Harbor and 1942, 1943 were tough years because we had to build up.

NH: Oh god, yeah.

TH: All the materials, the manpower, the training and then, of course, launch things like D-Day in 1944 and I am sure that everybody was like really on their toes in 1942-43 in harbor defenses, you know, always on the lookout. But what about as the War was won? As Russia closed in, you know, France and England and American Forces closed in on the other, you know, as we got into 1945. Did the tensions here around the harbor ease up or...

HN: They still had Japan.

TH: Yeah. But I am saying, you know, did the watches get laxer or get more confident.

HN: They were lighter but there was still 100% coverage. But not as heavy as when you had the German fleets floating around and all that kind of stuff. They were much lighter but the watch was still in effect. They expected the Japanese to come over. They figured the Japanese would become more desperate because they were by themselves. They would try anything to deliver an extremely effective blow with of course was the Harbor Defenses of New York. What better than to lob a couple of shells into New York City?

TH: Just for the propaganda.

HN: Just for the effect. That's right. Psychological effect and everything else. Can you imagine what would happen in New York City if a shell came in Time Square? The panic. Where would they go?

TH: Yeah. You know everybody felt pretty scared right.

HN: You talk about civil defense that we talk about evacuation. Evacuation where? New York City is an island. Where would they go? They start talking about Civil Defense dugouts, shelters and barrels of water for shelters and sandwiches and food and crackers and food and cans for food and shelters and all of it was absolutely worthless. Where do you shelter two or three million people?

TH: Yeah. (Tape stops and restarts)

NH: You had the 113th plus various smaller outfits, police units, things like that. It was a hell of a lot of troops.

TH: Sure. (Tape stops and restarts.)

EH: We did not locate Searchlight Tower #3 but if you could pinpoint it. If you could still see it today on the main map here the general map of 1944. Let's review them in fact.

TH: The Guardhouse or Gatehouse.

EH: The Gatehouse.

TH: The south end.

HN: The Gatehouse that was the railroad, the railroad light. Let's see 1 and 2 were the two towers down here. So that was 3.

TH: But that's, there are the bridges. The railroad bridge and there is the bridge that is still down there today, the traffic bridge, so I am trying to figure out where those two towers were down there. Is it where the overpass is now? Where inside the Gate, the Main Gate?

HN: The tower that we had inside the Main Gate was a railroad car. So, we didn't need the other towers. The other towers were out here, the permanent towers.

TH: South of the Gate?

HN: In Sea Bright. Near Rumson Road, not quite up to it.

TH: That's umm. We have got pictures in the Lent collection. Those are the ones that would go up on the platform.

NH: Up and down.

TH: Well, that is where those private beach clubs are now.

NH: That's right.

TH: Those two side by side.

HN: Exactly.

TH: Just before the Rumson to Sea Bright Bridge.

HN: That's where that one came down and smack.

EH: That explains that. Okay.

TH: So it's not. So, the only searchlight you have at the south end of Sandy Hook was the railroad.

HN: The railroad.

TH: Searchlight just inside the Main Gate.

HN: That's right.

TH: Okay. That settles that.

NH: That's right.

EH: Then there was Plum Island.

NH: That, of course, was on the inside. Wait a minute, the inside.

EH: The bayside.

HN: This was the bayside. That's right.

TH: There is Plum Island.

HN: There was one light on there. That searched the inside area.

TH: On the backside, the bayside.

HN: The bayside. One light we had doing that.

TH: I don't think we asked you. How did you manhandle it out there?

NH: We had a crew sleeping there.

TH: I mean, how did you get it out there on the island?

NH: Oh, well we built, of course we came down this way that was easy but to get it off the road and over the parapet here, the wall we built a ramp and we built a ramp on the other side and I think we also put some bridge work in for the men to go...

TH: A path, a footbridge.

HN: A footbridge, yeah. For the men to, this whole this bridge was from here a pretty good distance out to there because at high tide it was all covered with water.

TH: And its soft sand.

HN: Soft sand. That's right.

TH: You will find it at times is very soft.

HN: So, we had to build a pretty long bridge in there for which we received all kinds of commendations and all this sort of stuff.

TH: So, you had your searchlight was on the wheels on the rubber tire wheels.

HN: That's right.

TH: And then you set that up with your power plants out there.

NH: Well, of course, we raised everything on jacks.

TH: Yeah up.

NH: And put them on building blocks and things like that for all of the equipment.

TH: Right.

HN: We brought the tires in and like the old tire story we had tires but nobody would want them. You couldn't get tires but they wouldn't take our tires, 16 tires, which were the normal tire used in almost every kind of vehicle. 16s.

TH: And then you sandbagged the position on Plum Island.

HN: Sandbagged the position.

TH: In an area how big? How big was the area that included the searchlight, the power plant?

HN: Oh, pretty big. There was plenty room. Plenty room.

TH: Were there any soldiers living in tents?

HN: We had a tent out there with a heating system and it was protected as best we could. We had a double tent, one on top of the other with air space in between. We had flaps on the side. We had sandbags around it to give it further protection. The whole thing burned down to the ground.

EH: Amazing. Now getting back to my question was where if you could locate Searchlight Tower # 3 do you presume it might be?

NH: Searchlight Tower #3?

EH: Right. That's the only one we haven't pinpointed, right?

NH: Searchlight Tower #3 we are not getting together on this. I don't know what you are talking about.

EH: If there were 7 towers, and we traced 6 of them.

HN: You had 1 and 2,

EH: Right.

HN: 3, 4 and 5, 6 at Gunnison and 7 at the point.

TH: Yeah, but we are saying we can't find...

HN: So you have one and two towers, you got those settled. Three was the railroad.

TH: The railroad searchlight. That was a mobile searchlight.

EH: Okay. That answers that. Okay.

NH: It was a mobile searchlight. 4 and 5 were at..

TH: Down here at the dirt road.

NH: We went there. We went in that side road to go in and 6 was that old Power Plant. We walked into the old Power Plant up on the hill. You have got it located on the wrong hill and number 7...

TH: I don't. It's an Army map. The Army's got it wrong. (laughter)

HN: Well, they have got a lot of things...

TH: Yeah.

HN: But 6 was on that other hill. No question about it. No question about it.

EH: Where the Water Treatment Plant is now.

NH: Yeah. That is right. The Water Treatment Plant was not there at the time. The hill was higher and the light was on top of it.

EH: And then #7 was at the north...

NH: In a building all by itself.

EH: West end of the tip.

TH: That was the wooden frame building where they can remove the sides and there was your searchlight.

HN: That's right. It was part of the building on the second floor of the building. The power plants were on the first floor of the building.

TH: It was self contained right in the building. So, I guess this one here was for right in the harbor for sweeping the harbor.

HN: And around back here.

TH: Yeah right. On the backside.

HN: Take this whole thing from here all the way around.

TH: Earlier on which you also which I would like to get on tape from (inaudible) is the fact that you worked out that schedule especially like you were saying like the light on Plum Island, you could burn it out if you used it...

NH: Oh yeah. Sure.

TH: The original order was what, all the time?

NH: That's right. The original order was all the time. There was no reason for it.

TH: So you were telling us...

HN: We worked out a schedule for all of these lights whenever they had to be turned on for you know constant surveillance where it was three minutes on two minutes off and maybe two minutes on and five minutes off and all this. We had five or six schedules. You know 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6. So everyday we say tonight you use schedule number 1. nobody knew what tomorrow was gonna be. And then we would use schedule #4. Then maybe we would even change the schedules around. You see. We changed the content of each schedule so that no.....

END OF INTERVIEW