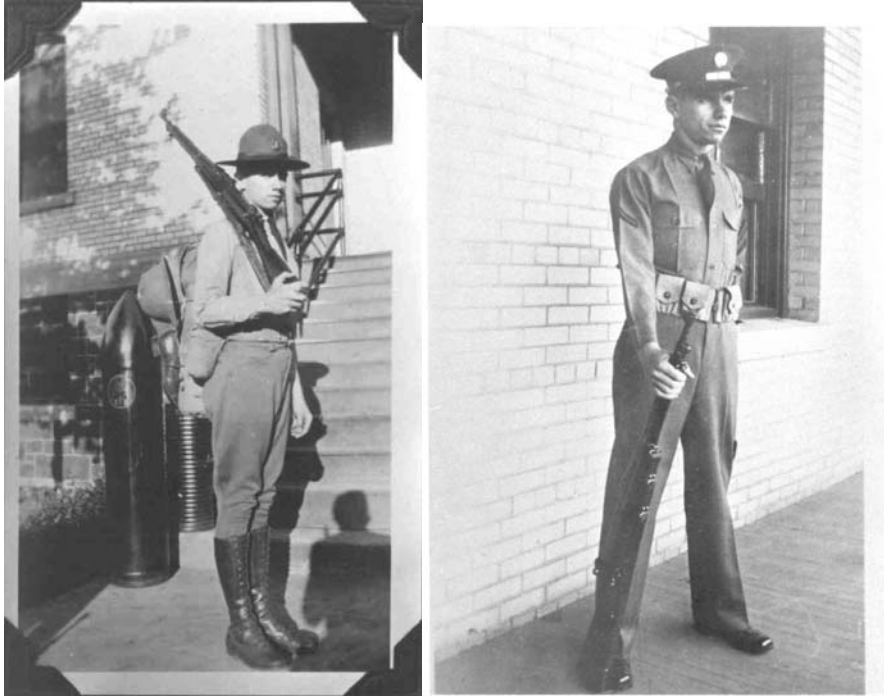


Sandy Hook, Gateway NRA, National Park Service  
An Oral History Interview with Al Zwiazek  
52<sup>nd</sup> Coast Artillery Battery C  
1937-39

Interviewed by Elaine Harmon and Tom Hoffman, NPS  
May 15, 1988

Transcribed by Mary Rasa, 2012



Al Zwiazek in front of Barracks 74 in two uniforms. The uniform on the right replaced the uniform on the left in 1938.



Mr. and Mrs. Zwiazek in 2003.  
Images are courtesy of NPS/Gateway NRA

Editor's notes in parenthesis ( )

(Parts of interview not relevant to Mr. Zwiazek were not transcribed. Audio had many problem spots with cars, airplanes and fumbling with the tape recorder.) ("A Walk in Time" starts with an overview of Sandy Hook by Tom Hoffman.)

EH: It is May 15, 1988. My name is Elaine Harmon, Museum Technician and we are recording, "A Walk in Time," with Al Zwiazek, veteran of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Coast Artillery and led by Tom Hoffman, Park Historian.

TH: (Overview not transcribed.) (Introduction of Al Zwiazek.) Since we don't have any soldiers around here in uniform I would like to show you what Mr. Zwiazek looked like when he served here back in the 1930s, 1939 when he was in an Army uniform. This is on your barracks porch though. This almost looks like this porch right here but your barracks was right around the corner right here facing that parade field over there and I think this was, was this when you were getting ready?

AZ: Getting ready to come out to mount guard here. The class A uniform for guard mount.

TH: Why don't you hold this and we will start with that one.

AZ: You want me to talk?

TH: Yes. Yeah go ahead.

AZ: Well, anyway this is what the soldiers looked like through the summer, the spring, the fall and (inaudible. Talking is not near microphone). Ordinarily, I tell people about the guard mount here. I don't know if I should be doing that. This is one of me making believe I am firing one of the .45 automatic pistol. A colt automatic was actually a semi automatic weapon, model 1911.

Visitor: You wore the garrison hat here?

AZ: Well, in the summer time we wore, that's the campaign hat.

Visitor: The campaign hat, yes.

EH: Could you describe your uniform for us?

AZ: Yeah. In the summer we wore the same uniforms that we wore in the winter except we didn't wear the overcoat or the blouse on the Post. Off the Post we had to wear the blouse. We could not go anywhere without the blouse, slacks and garrison hat. The only change was the khaki shirt, the light colored shirt. In the winter, we wore a heavy wool flannel shirt. Of course, in the summer we shed the blouse on the Post in the heat. We wore boots and breeches and Mrs. Harmon here has my breeches there that I wore here from when I came here in 1937 and they were worn until about April of '38 when they

took away the breeches and issued slacks. They didn't take them away and garrison shoes.

Visitor: Are they all wool?

AZ: All wool right (inaudible) elastique, but its wool. Then these boots first went on your feet and on your legs over your leggings. You had to put these on early in the morning for reveille. So, we all had tricks as to how we were going to do this, you know. Well, one man one time in the wintertime thought, "Why should I put on my breeches? No one will see when I am outside. I will have my boots on and my overcoat." So, he went out there and he stood reveille and when he was running up the steps the first sergeant saw him and he called him down. He saw his underwear. (laughter) He took him down and put him on KP or something. Well, anyway in 1938, April we went into slacks. These were my last pair of boots. I gave them to the Museum several years ago. Fifty years old.

EH: Made them well.

AZ: When I first came here when we were on guard mount we were armed with the .45 caliber automatic pistol. It was a United States pistol caliber .45 Model 1911A1. It was a semi automatic. It had a clip and shells in it. Put the slide back like the sneaky fool forgot to do when he tried to kill President Ford. (Inaudible) So, we carried both on guard post here. In 1938, the commanding officer came here and he made us carry rifles. This is a United States rifle caliber .30 Model 1903. This rifle is called commonly the Springfield rifle made in Springfield Massachusetts at the Armory there. Later on Mr. Garand perfected a rifle called the M1, the Garand M1 rifle. (Inaudible) and that replaced this rifle during World War II. During World War II, we had these before we got the Garand's. We had Remington's and Enfield's. This is a Springfield. It took five rounds into the chamber. Five rounds and you walk your post with five rounds with this rifle. Of course, we used to drill with a bayonet on this rifle also. Once in a while we got some colonel that was really G.I. We would have to walk post with the bayonet on the rifle. This rifle weighs a little over nine pounds. With the bayonet it's something like 10 point something pounds.

Visitor: That was \$21 a month. That pay. Right?

AZ: Not even \$21. \$20.75. (laughter) They took a quarter out for the Old Soldier's Home. They deducted it. I paid in but I can't get in there because I didn't retire from the Army. (Inaudible) This is a friend of mine, anti-aircraft gun. That gun was behind where the Visitor Center (Spermaceti Cove Life-Saving Station) is now. We had two of these anti-aircraft guns here, 3-inch guns. We were sent every now and then to fire them. You can't, there is nothing there now but sand, all washed away. This friend of mine who enlisted on the same day as I did. He joined the Army in Newark standing next to me. We were sworn in and we were friends. I am going to see him May 26<sup>th</sup>. 51 years and we are still friends.

TH: That's the type of hat.

AZ: Now that's the kind of a hat we wore known as the campaign hat. We wore these in the summer on the Post. Off the post you wore a garrison cap. This red means artillery. Coast Artillery and Field Artillery wore red. This insignia is my original insignia, 51 years old. I made it here into this bolo tie. Red, Artillery, Coast Artillery, Field Artillery, Anti-Aircraft. Infantry was blue. You saw blue here like this gentleman's jacket. That was the Infantry. Yellow would be Calvary. You could spot a soldier and know just where he is from and know how much he makes if you know your stuff about uniforms. This is sort of a clunky campaign hat, but ours were like Tom's nice, flat, G.I. with the insignia. This insignia we wore here in the summertime when we didn't wear the blouse. When you wore the blouse you had one on each lapel. (Inaudible) We used to tack these down and they wouldn't flop around underneath and some fellas used to go out and get these hats blocked and shore it like cardboard stiff. They looked very peaked here. In the winter, or when it rained or snowed we wore a campaign hat. Summer always on the Post, (we wore a) campaign hat. (We) went out on pass, garrison cap. Garrison caps had a visor to it. Later on during the War, they made the overseas cap the garrison cap and this old thing with the visor was known as the service cap.

TH: So, there is a story connected to this. I don't know if you want to tell it now about the discharge of the pistol going off right here on the porch.

AZ: There was a Captain Goth here. He was officer of the day that certain day. We had guard mount out here in front of this Guardhouse every day. The guard changed every 24 hours. So you have this guard mount. So what you had to do with your pistol, the officer of the day came up to you. We had to, you were supposed to press a little button. He releases your clip, your loaded clip. You had in this hand if you held your pistol like this for inspection and the officer of the day would take your pistol and look at it and see the ammunition in your hand in that clip, magazine. Then what he is supposed to do there is a little lever. He slides the bolt forward on the pistol. Pull the trigger. Put the clip in. So this fella by the name of Hartel is standing right in front of the officer of the day with the clip in. He had the slide belt forward. That had a shell in the chamber and now he pulled the trigger. Boom. The bullet went right through the brim of Captain Goth's campaign hat. The poor guy turned white. You know, he came this much from being killed. You know, when you fire a round accidentally in the Army that warrants a special court martial. You could go to jail for a while. (Inaudible)

TH: (Information not transcribed about National Park Service origins.)

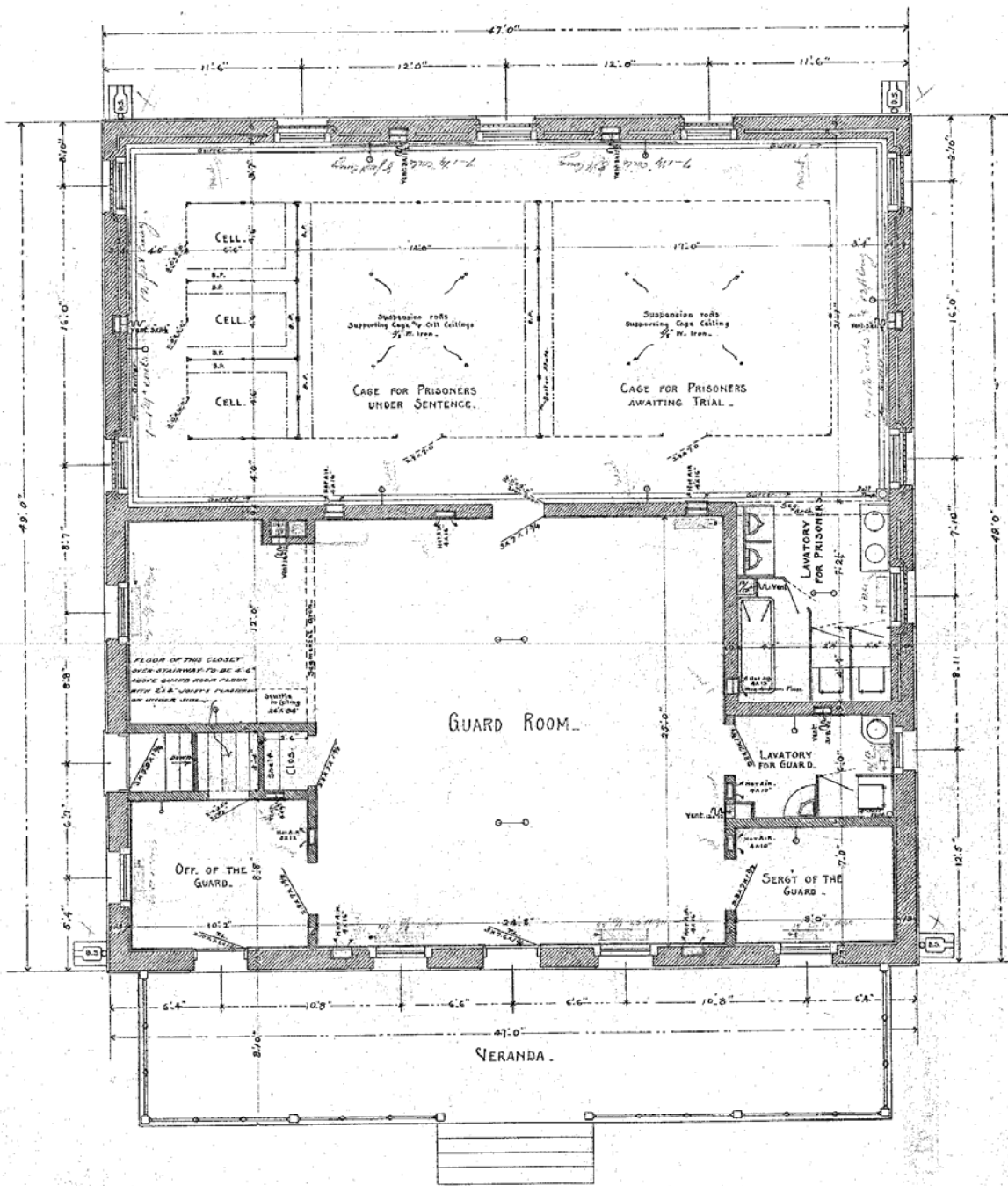
AZ: What I would like to say pertaining to uniforms, we the Artillery, wore boots. The Air Corps wore boots like I showed you before but we had wrapped leggings. We didn't wear them, but the Infantry and some of the other branches did. They wore wrapped leggings. They never had boots. We had boots. The Calvary had boots. The Air Corps had boots. (Inaudible) See when here, when I was here we had four posts that sentries walked. That's all around this block. You needed three men for each post. But there were two, three posts which were only walked from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. So you had these

sentries left over. But they went out and guarded the prisoners on guard. And #1 post, the only post that was manned for 24 hours was right in front of this building (Building 28). You people seen the unknown soldiers' tomb in Washington? Every Guardhouse like this in the Army had the #1 post. The sentry walked that post. He had certain duties to perform. People think it was just for show. It wasn't just for show. He would be out there and if he saw the commanding officer he would say, he would turn around and say, "Turn out the guard, commanding officer." If the commanding officer saluted, that meant he does not want the guard. If he didn't salute, that guard had to come out there for inspection. And he would also turn out the guard for the officer of the day, national colors, armed parties. He would report when the sentries brought the prisoners in. He would report to the corporal of the guard. He would say, "Corporal of the guard, so many prisoners." The corporal of the guard would say, "Turn them in." He would be ready for them in here. The prisoners would walk in. The sentry would unload and finish with that detail. Anyway, those fellas who walked the night post guarded prisoner during the day. Number 1 post didn't guard the prisoners. They usually tried to pick a sharp looking guy for #1. He worked 8 hours out of 24. Two on and four off and when it came to guard mount here they had two extra men. There's two men more than they needed. What they would do, the officer of the day would inspect these men. They would inspect these men and pick the neatest ones, the two neatest men who knew the most about that Army as orderlies. One would be the commanding officer's orderly. One would be the adjutants' orderly. If you were selected as orderly you didn't have to walk the post and you slept in your own barracks at night. You didn't sleep in here fully clothed. Then the orderlies would go over to Headquarters, that building right there walk in there and the old orderly would put his arm out. He had this red brassard on like the Military Police wear with the blue and white. He would have a red brassard. The new orderly would move this brassard and hand it to this fella. This fella would slid down that new brassard onto the new orderly. That made him officially the new orderly. He had that job for the rest of the afternoon and then in the morning. He got a pass for a day and half. I made orderly a lot of times. It beats walking post. So, that's what it was. You had to know your stuff. Your equipment had to be in shape. People used to borrow other peoples rifles like my rifle number is 374378. The guys would borrow it. I would buff the wood with linseed oil. It made it shine. The whole Army used linseed oil and people would borrow it, other soldiers and they would try to become orderly. One guy got himself a new pair of boots. He had fellas carry him down the steps so he wouldn't wrinkle his boots. He wanted to make orderly. Carry him down in E Battery, next door to us. And then march like this to this place here and he didn't make orderly anyway. (laughter) You know, you have to do other things too. You have a bugler of the guard. You have 12 sentries. You had two men for, that they are gonna pick for orderly. You had three corporals one for each shift which is called the relief, one for each relief and the sergeant of the guard. If they had a larger mount, they didn't have it here but I served elsewhere later on we had a larger guard, there were two sergeants. The senior sergeant would be commander of the guard. The junior sergeant was sergeant of the guard. Here, they just had a sergeant, while I was here. I don't know what they did during the War because I was elsewhere but that was mounting guard here took place every day but we had got our turn at it maybe every ten days, every twelve days. You know, we had a duty roster. Came over here and did

guard. If it was the weekend, that's tough luck. You are working or KP or whatever. But I didn't mind it too much.

Visitor: Is this the only stockade they had right here?

AZ: At that time, yeah. This is called the Guardhouse. Stockade in the Army is a larger place with buildings that are surrounded by a fence. That's a stockade. They had disciplinary barracks. They used to have them on Governors Island, Castle Williams. Then they moved out to Fort Leavenworth. I understand they had something like that here during the War. I wasn't here then. It's a Guardhouse. Sentries sleep there when they are not walking post and in the back is where the prisoners were. That's not called the jail in the Army. People say that to let you know that was a place where prisoners were kept. In the Army you don't use that term. Guardhouse, Guardhouse means where sentries sleep and where prisoners were kept. That was a Guardhouse. Well, you say, what did they do? One lady from Canada said they had nothing to do so they used to go out and get drunk. No. You work somewhere, you don't come to work on Monday you don't go to jail. The soldier doesn't get back here on Monday when he is supposed to he could be court-martialed and he goes in there. See. He is not a criminal. Or if he is late or if he gets a little nasty with some sergeant or officer he'll get in here for insubordination. But once in a blue moon we did have some bad boys in here. We had this one fella who shot, a bullet accidentally went through the brim of the cap, the hat. This man and two other guys stole the pistol, .45 from here. They went to Newark. They held up (inaudible) so they have solitary confinement cell in there. Everybody can see them for those people kept there we were taken turns after we walked off our post watching these guys so they don't get together and tell the same story. Well, they were court martialed. They get a lot of time for stealing. It's five years minimum for stealing a pistol. But this one fella wanted to get into West Point. The guy who did the shooting here, he wanted to get into West Point and he re-enlisted. He didn't get into West Point, he re-enlisted. So they had to let him go because he did not get caught on his first enlistment. He had already gotten an honorable discharge. He was on a second enlistment so they couldn't punish him for that finding on the other hitch but they didn't know about it then. Anyway, guard mount, this is post #1 was primarily the guardhouse here. Post #2 was around the back of the barracks here, behind those officers' quarters around here. You walked two hours, half an hour to walk around. Post 3 was down this way go around these buildings all the way out beyond the Commissary and around back. And post 4 way out in the boon docks. They had a railroad roundhouse over there, locomotives there, cars. We had railway artillery here. Officers' Club, Battery Potter. We are going to take a walk there. You will see. That was post 4. Post 4 had a, police close reported you know by sounding off, so and so in order. Post 4 was so far out in the boon docks they had a buzzer right in here. The corporal of the guard had a little room in here. He sat there and the post 4 man would turn this crank on this little building down there near Battery Potter. Turn the crank and the corporal here would hear that and he knew post 4 sentry was just there. As soon as that sentry left that spot he didn't know where he was or what was happening. You know you weren't in touch with people, the rest of the world when you were out here. But, where is Hoffman, I need help. What's next, Tom? What should I say?



— FIRST STORY PLAN —

SHEET N<sup>o</sup> 4. (30) 6 SHEETS  
 Q.M.G.O. 1893 SCALE 1/4" = 1'  
 1/20

Plan of Quartermaster Department Guardhouse, 1893. This was altered at Fort Hancock when constructed in 1899. The solitary confinement cells are on the right instead of the left.

TH: How about, do you want to go over the guard mount right here where it happened?

AZ: Okay.

TH: Then we will go on out walk.

AZ: Okay. You people can stay here, just look down here. I will tell you what happened. (Audio is very poor in this section. He is talking about how guard mount worked. This can be read in detail in Mr. Zwiazek's May 18, 1986 interview.)

We would have a battery commander. He was in command of a battery which is like a company in the Army. A battery is Artillery. And he would have two or four guns in that outfit. Like our railway guns. We had four but we always fired two. And of course, we would go out to these other gun emplacements, disappearing guns. We usually fired two guns. That battery would fire at those positions and set batteries also. Your company would be a battery. When they fired the guns they were also batteries. Battery Gunnison, Battery Peck, Battery Granger. They had names. Battery was used in two ways. In lieu of company, the Artillery, you were a battery and then you went out to those gun emplacement which were called batteries which were two or four guns. Had four (guns). Fired two (guns). Once in a while two of the battery commanders were first lieutenants. That was Hideland and Louis Beasley. This man Hideland, later on became the commanding officer of the *ORD*, the mine planter *ORD*, *the General EOC ORD*. He left our outfit and went over there. Elaine knows more about these buildings than I do. What was in this building?

EH: Commissary.

AZ: Commissary. This was the Commissary where the guys would pick up their rations. (Inaudible)

EH: Could you tell us about your insignia?

AZ: Okay. The insignia, I am wearing it here.

EH: Right.

AZ: This is a French locomotive. This regiment, 52<sup>nd</sup> Coast Artillery was formed during or just prior I think it was to World War I. Our guns were taken to France. The trucks had to changed on the gun carriage, the gun cars because the gauge in France is different than the gauge here. This is a French locomotive, not American. This was one of the locomotives (inaudible) of firing positions. Red is for Artillery. (Inaudible)

TH: Here is your 12-inch mortar right here and this is what Al served on.

AZ: These are the guns that someone asked me about the battery. That was one of the two guns we fired. We always fired two. (Inaudible) and of course, you had a sergeant or



gun commander. He was in charge of the gun crew, a buck sergeant and 28 men on this crew for this gun. See, it took a lot of work. Every minute you could fire a round by hand, you know. So you had two guns. (Inaudible several people talking)

TH: See, the idea is with Al's unit is with heavy artillery on flatcars you could go up and down Sandy Hook but you could also go up and down the whole Jersey shore from here roughly 130 miles south to Cape May to repel and invasion with heavy guns mounted on a flatcar. That must have been something on the ears when a 12-inch diameter mortar fired its half ton projectile up in a high arc to go out into the ocean.

AZ: The 12-inch mortar made a very loud roar but a longer barrel gun makes a sharper crack. That 155(mm gun), the long barrel crack is sharper. This made a lot of noise and the flames and the smoke and everything were closer to you because the barrel was short but it made a very loud roar. It was a sharp crack.

Visitor: There was no railroad ever built though was there down to...

AZ: There was a railroad all over the place.

EH: There was...

Visitor: No. I mean you are talking about 130 miles to the south there wasn't.

AZ: They had civilian tracks all over, all over. I forgot to mention this in 1938 we went to Delaware, Cape Henlopen, Delaware which is near Lewes. We rode there by train with our guns.

Visitor: It's a nice state park now.

AZ: I think it became a fort for a while, Fort Miles. Something like that. That's where we went with our guns, our guns from here. In April of 1938, we went down to Delaware. We fired our guns from there. We lost our, if we fired real well we wore an E on our sleeve, a red E. Well, we lost it in '38 because the guns, the old guns that we decided to use that year and you know put the others aside that we used the year before and the bolt sheared off the first round from each gun. Large bolts like that sheared off. They said they were crystallized. The steel was crystallized. So we had to suspend firing and wait for parts to come down from Aberdeen, Maryland. We lost our E that year but in '39 we got it back.

TH: The bolts you are talking about are down here? These mounting bolts.

AZ: No. No. Up in here.

TH: Up in the top part.



12-inch mortar of Battery C, 52<sup>nd</sup> Coast Artillery at Lewes, Delaware.

AZ: Up in here. In there like this the large bolts. The gun went like this. I was on the ground. That day I was working on the (inaudible). We used to alternate, change. The gun went like that. Everybody saw something fly up. You inspect everything. Each person has certain things to inspect. The sergeant in charge of the guns says, "Number 1 gun out of order." Boom, the other gun goes off. 30 seconds later the other gun goes off. That sergeant say, "Number 2 gun out of order." Both guns, it's unbelievable they both of them broke the same way like somebody sawed the gun the bolts.

Visitor: Did they need a powder man on that? Like a 5-inch 38 we had aboard ship there we used to have a projectile man and a powder man.

TH: Yeah. Same thing.

AZ: They had five men up there on the breech. Five men up on the breech. (Inaudible) You had a bag of powder and you had a primer and then you would have a lanyard attached to where that primer was, to that mechanism where that primer was. The guy would pull the lanyard and the primer would light the propelling charge and that would create that explosion which would make that shell move, 1046 pound shell. You know, the range wasn't that great because it was a high trajectory. It was meant to drop over mountains or on the decks of ships. We had blunt tips on the shells. They weren't pointy. If they were pointy they would make an angle like that and glance off the deck flat. It wouldn't go through the deck. We put sand in during peacetime instead of explosives in the shell itself. The sand to make the shell weigh a certain weight and exact weight we wanted. Of course, you had to worry about ballistic density, all kinds of other things and wind velocity and weight of the shell, the whole bit. And if you varied the

weight you would have more problems so you always made the weight the same. It was an interesting thing for an 18 year old guy. Guns going off. Wow.

TH: When you fired those guns, the mortars, did you ever see the shell splashes I mean when you actually fire the round out off shore?

AZ: Oh sure. You can first of all, another fella and I we have been friends now 51 years we were assigned the first job was to go out check the targets. We could see the splashes. We decided to (inaudible) boat. They were firing what they call sub-caliber ammunition, smaller ammunition. I can explain that in a while and this radioman man, you know that dot dash stuff, Morse code. He frantically notified them they are tracking the boat, not the target. The range section is tracking the wrong thing.

Visitor: How far behind the boat would the target be?

AZ: Quite a ways. I don't know how many yards.

Visitor: 200 yards.

AZ: A couple of hundred yards. Several hundred yards. (Inaudible due to wind and airplanes.)

TH: Another thing I want to point out is a day in May 1937 when a famous airship, the *Hindenburg* used to make its Atlantic run over from Germany. And it was always a big whoop de do when it came over New York City. And that day, May 6, 1937 which last year was what the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Hindenburg* blowing up at Lakehurst, New Jersey down here. She flew right off of Fort Hancock right over here over Sandy Hook Bay and Al was here that day. And another gentleman another former comrade in arms of Al's, Mr. Ed Gilder who is keeping History House. That is his station wagon over there. He is keeping that officer's home which we call History House open today. Were here that day, and of course, the Post got word that there was this tragedy with the ship crashing. And was it your battery, Battery C?

AZ: Yeah. See, the various batteries used to take turns to go out on these various occurrences. Like when the Morro Castle burned, E Battery went out there. When the *Hindenburg* went down C Battery, the next door battery, the battery I was in went out to Lakehurst. I was in the hospital that day. I went into the hospital with poison ivy. Well, this fella here who was standing by this gun who was a friend of mine we enlisted the same day he was one of the fellas who went out there. Gildner also, they went out there to guard the wreckage of the *Hindenburg*. So the next morning one of the fellas that went, 100 men from C battery went and there were like maybe 200 in the battery so the next day one of the friends came over to the hospital to see me and he told me about this tragedy. I didn't know anything about it. We saw it go by. We saw the *Hindenberg* go by right over the water here. Close, you know, near they probably were taking pictures of our fortifications. I don't know.

TH: Yeah. But all the soldier formed a big ring of soldiers around all the wreckage and the *New York Daily News* has an aerial, had an aerial photograph in their centerfold the next day showing the tremendous wreckage. You can see all the soldiers from Al's battery ringing the wreckage there.

AZ: My friend picked up little pieces of fabric and a small piece of the framework metal and he tore the fabric in half and a piece of that metal he gave to me. I have it at home somewhere. My kid, my daughter who is 40 now, when she was a kid she took this stuff to school for show and tell.

TH: We had a question too just earlier about what these buildings are. The concrete platform right here. This was a wooden building. This was a coal shed and if you look right here you still see the spur line railroad rails coming in to bring in the coal cars right here and shoot the coal from the railroad cars into the wooden buildings to store here and then soldiers would come on fatigue detail. Right, Al? Pick up the coal and make deliveries to all the houses. Coal was your source of heat. And also in the back there where you see some trees growing, this was a big coal field. Big mountains of coal were all stored back here. This is an area that supports, you know, your living out here. You know heating your homes. Then you have these warehouses. Everything imaginable, furniture could be stored here, beddings, linens. Everything needed by the soldier to live out here comfortably was all stored in these big warehouses. In fact, this is misleading. A lot of people when they are driving around the Fort area and they see the bars on the window here they think this is the jail but this is too keep any unruly dishonest soldiers out because nobody lived in here at night. This area even today is kind of lonely and very, very dark and even when the Post was active there was nobody in this immediate vicinity. So, all the windows here have the bars on them.

AZ: They just had that one lonely sentry walking around here.

TH: That one little U walking.

AZ: I was one of them a few times.

TH: Here is the Movie Theater here on your left front. Right here this large building was the Post Movie Theater.

AZ: I think I got my uniform in here. I think this was the Quartermaster out here.

TH: Yeah, Quartermaster Warehouse.

AZ: You got your uniforms here (inaudible) and then you had to report to the battery commander. He was a bruiser. (Inaudible) I liked him though. Yeah I liked big guys once they were (inaudible).

TH: This building here that is in very poor shape. This was the Post Bakery. I was told by many a veteran here that you could smell all that hot fresh bread being baked as you did those lonely guard walks right around in here.

AZ: It sort of felt warm.

TH: The brick ovens are still in there. Over to the right and in the right hand corner there is a lot of roof and ceiling on top of them but you might be able to see the brick ovens in there, very long. They made a lot of bread all day.

AZ: Somebody made a lot of bread in here. We didn't. Was this the Finance Department? Finance?

TH: Maybe in your time it was. This was, see where there used to be a big wide door in here. This was originally, this side was the blacksmith's shop when it was built in 1898 and the other side was for machine shops. You know if they had to make anything here at the Post.

(Conversation with visitors not about tour.)

AZ: That was made by a guy, perfected by this Major Rodman.

EH: Thomas Rodman.

AZ: They would, when they made that canon they would cool it from the inside out. That used to be over here. (20-inch Rodman Gun)

Visitor: What period of time would that have been used?

AZ: That was made right after the Civil War. This building, (Building 36) I don't know what it is now that used to be a stable for horses and mules. And that gun there used to be right here. This post 3, post 3, every post had a place where you could take shelter for 10 minutes. After you walked a post for an hour you could take a break for 10 minutes if it is raining, inclement weather. This is where we could take shelter if we were on post 3. Well, one of your general orders says to talk to know one except in the line of duty, right. But I tell you I am going to admit something. I used to talk to the mules in there. (laughter) Because they didn't answer back or anything. They usually just look at me with their big ears. I used to step in there for a little while. You know to dry off for a little bit. And if the officer of the day couldn't find you he knew you could be in there. Anyway, that was the place where you took shelter on post 3.

TH: As we make our turn here on your right, the Post Firehouse and we still have a fire engine in there because park ranger staff here is also the Fire Department. I was telling you right here is the old mule stables and in its career it went from a mule stables. Were there still mules here when you were here?

AZ: (Inaudible)

TH: Horses too.

AZ: I was here in the late '30s.

TH: Right. And in World War II this was converted into a barracks. So I hope they cleaned it up well. (Tape cuts off and restarts.) (Conversation not relevant to interview.)



Fire at Fort Hancock Officers' Club, April 9, 1938.

AZ: I was telling you about this building, the officers' quarters. (Building 114 Officers' Club) The building was red brick. Well, there it was when it was on fire. (Looking at photograph) See it over here. This day we were getting ready to go to New York to participate in the Army Day Parade all dressed up, Class A uniform boots and breeches, nice. All of sudden the fire alarm went off and the bugler sounded the fire call. All the buglers on Post pick it up. The Bugler of the Guard sounds fire call. All the other buglers have to go out and pick it up wherever they are. We had a pull post carts and what not and take fire extinguishers and run over here and firemen came, you know the regular firemen. Of course, we are supposed to help too. What we did was haul furniture out. We thought we were in Niagara Falls. Water was flowing down the stairway and we were pulling out this large piano through the front door and different chairs and things. We are soaking wet and then we marched right over to the boat. (We) got on the boat all the way up to New York up the East River to 100 and some odd street there. The boat docked and we walked across to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. (We) marched down 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue like nothing happened. Everyone dried off real nice. You didn't have to worry about the creases with breeches, you know. (laughter) That heavy material held well. Like it didn't wrinkle, you know, like other stuff. But anyway that's the story about the fire. Of, a lot of people crawling all over the place. You can see by that picture April 9, 1938. That was just before we were switched over to slacks.

(Looking pictures not audible)

AZ: That's in Lewes, Delaware. See the recoil. See how its' kicking back.

EH: Oh yeah, you can see the recoil.

TH: The tree with all the green leaves is back there. Looking at the front of it and you can't see in that picture you can't see the back coming out. That by the way, is the oldest Army building out here and originally it was quarters for the officers who were working here at the Sandy Hook Proving Ground testing the weapons before Fort Hancock was built. This was a Proving Ground and officers, of course, needed a place to live and that was their home. That was their quarters and when the Proving Ground moved from here to Aberdeen, Maryland the Proving Ground property became part of Fort Hancock and the officers at Fort Hancock promptly made the building the Officers' Club, beautiful mansion building up there.

AZ: Shall we continue?

TH: Yeah. Let's just go around by the bunkers. We will walk by the bunkers back to the museum. Al, do you remember the glass greenhouses that stood right over here on our left?

AZ: Yeah. I sure do. I remember them well because one of my colleagues was transferred over here to take care of the boiler that they needed here to keep the flowers growing.

TH: Real tough duty.

AZ: Yeah. Well, they got rid of the guy. He hated to bathe and all of that so they shoved him out here in the greenhouse. Let him work in the dirt. They used soft coal here you know. I want to tell you a very small short story about what happened here one night. Battery potter and the Sergeant of the Guard that night, Sergeant Potter was Sergeant of the Guard. He is supposed to be at the guard...(Tape ends. Interview ends. Story is transcribed on the Zwiazek interview from 5-31-87)

**END OF INTERVIEW**