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This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

Oral History Number: 276-009

Interviewee: Richard D. Taber

Interviewer: Wendy Hall

Date of Interview: March 25, 1992

Project: UM Wildlife Biology Program Oral History Collection

Wendy Hall: Continuation of interview with Dick Taber on 3, 25, 92 [March 25, 1992] at his residence. Dick, my next question was where were you stationed while you were in the military?

Richard Taber: I was in the Marine Corps. I entered the Marine Corps in May of 1942, had a training as an artillery officer, and was stationed in an aircraft battery in American Samoa, Tutuila. Stayed there until September of '43 when I had (unintelligible) and came back to Naval Hospital in Oakland, California, was reassigned to the Naval Rocket Base in Hawthorne, Nevada, for a couple of months and then to the Marine barracks at the naval operating station in Kodiak, Alaska. I remained there until August, 1945, when the war in the Pacific was over.

Then I was stationed on a command ship of Admiral Fletcher, going to Japan. By this time I was a captain and I was captain of the Admiral's Guard, and went to Japan and participated in the surrender of northern Japan. Returned to Adak, Alaska, where I was commanding officer of the Marine barracks on Adak until February of 1946 when I returned to San Francisco, my home, and was on terminal leave. I came out of the service as a captain, but to my great surprise, a year or two after the war was over, I received a warrant signed by the Secretary of the Navy that I was now a major. That is the extent of my military career.

WH: What were your duties?

RT: When I was in the artillery, my duties were range officer, which is a person who figures out where to point the anti-aircraft guns in relation to where the airplanes are. The rest of my duties were more administrative duties because I was always with a unit which functioned basically as the police for the Navy and so it was a law enforcement position in both...in all my bases I was on after that. So the duties of the Marine Corps were the security of the naval base.

WH: Were there any honors that you received while in the military?

RT: No, no medals or anything except I got promoted.

WH: What was the effect of the Great Depression on wildlife in the 1930s?

RT: When I was in my teens I lived in northern California in the country for a number of years, and the deer population—which is one of the more conspicuous animals—the black-tailed deer

population was just recovering from the, you might call, the frontier times, when people shot whatever they wanted whenever they wanted. So that during the '30s, the early '30s, the deer population was recovering with relatively effective protection. There wasn't very much poaching and I was aware of. Deer were steadily on the increase and, in general, during the '30s I would say that enforcement of wildlife conservation regulations was pretty effective. Wildlife populations did indeed increase. At the same time, there were a lot of people around during the Depression who didn't have much money to spend. In that particular area, it was a regular thing for people to go out at Thanksgiving—as Thanksgiving was approaching—and try to bag a wood duck for Thanksgiving dinner. They weren't concerned about licenses or seasons or anything like that. During those hard times, people will certainly think about eating before they think about whatever the law is.

WH: Okay, that was my last question. Thank you.

RT: Okay, great!

[End of Interview]