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Carmen Artero Kasperbauer

January 27, 1992

Unknown Interviewer – Majority of interviews conducted by Rose Manibusan or Daniel Martinez.

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Interviewee: Carmen Artero Kasperbauer

Military Rank: Civilian

Interviewer: Unknown

Unknown (Guam?)

Date: January 27, 1992

[00:28]

Q2: War in the Pacific, 92, 1, take 1

Kasperbauer: Hi I'm Carmen Artero Kasperbauer, today is January 27, 1992, Monday, and incidentally, it's also my mom's birthday, God rest her soul.

Q: We're here to talk a little about your involvement in 1941. Can you go back and explain a little bit about the preparation mass at the Immaculate Conception and kind of start from there, what that was about?

Kasperbauer: On Monday December 8, 1941, I was dressed in my angel outfit and of course that is the feast of the Immaculate Conception, so my sister Maria who is a year older than myself and I were dressed to go to church and my dad took us there. Mom had to stay home with the other children because she just gave birth to Virgie in October, so she was unable to go to the mass and the procession. Our nanny or maid had helped us gather all the petals and put in our little baskets, so we walked over to church. We were in church and the novena was started and we got out and sang our song of *Pau Pau Nani'nai* and we were throwing our flowers into the altar and then after that we sat down.

Bishop Bulanu started the mass and it was toward communion time, I think, when we heard airplane drones coming from far away and they kept coming closer and closer, and everybody just started murmuring and everybody seemed to stop in their tracks. I couldn't make out what it was, when you're a six year old girl you don't quite understand what is going on. Later on it became louder and as it got louder I got really excited because I thought it was Pan Am Clipper coming to Guam, so I said to the girl next to me 'Pan Am Clipper' and then my sister

Maria who is always the older to see that I mind my manners poked me and said 'famatkilo pachot-mu' 'keep your mouth shut'. So then it sounded like a whole lot of Pan Am Clippers were coming, and then everybody started getting—the adults—really nervous and excited. Bishop Bulanu stopped doing whatever he was doing and he went up to the pulpit and he said something, but I didn't understand because he's a Spanish priest and he had a heavy accent, also I didn't know what was being said--later on the planes left, but we heard an explosion someplace--and then after he was done talking, people just stayed, and he led us into some prayers. Then after that when we didn't hear anymore planes approaching, he let us go. Later on I found out that he was telling the people that he was told from somebody from the Governor's office came to tell him during the communion that the Japanese had already bombed Pearl Harbor and the Japanese planes are going to be coming, and I guess they started from Saipan, so they are very close to us and so he told the people that after the planes will leave for us to hurry home.

[00:04:50]

So my sister and I were running out, and everybody was screaming and running and acting really crazy. The women took off their high heels and they were holding them and running. Then my sister and I couldn't find my dad and we didn't know which way was home and so we started crying, we felt lost and we felt abandoned, we didn't know where to go. Then later on my mom's sister auntie Anna found us, took us back, she was so comical with her high heels in her hands and took the two of us and led us and then we started running away. Later on another Japanese plane came down, swooping down on us, so we took cover under somebody's house--in the old days before the war there were homes that were built on stilts and they put wooden fences around it--so we hid in there and landed on top of some turtles that were being raised, and later on after the plane left we came back out and she took us home. When we got to our house I saw that my dad had our big--our transportation, it's like a jitney filled with our household goods and my mom was sitting in the front holding my sister Virgie and all my younger brothers and sisters were in there. I got really angry because I felt like if auntie Anna hadn't found us and we hadn't gotten there maybe my dad would've left us, and I felt really devastated by that. But the only thing that I was concerned after that was to run upstairs to the house and get my clown suit because I was a clown in one of the plays at

school, so I managed to do that I escaped from the grasp from my dad and then went and got it and then got in the jitney. As we were driving away people were just all over like crazy, and they hanging from the front, the back, the sides and then my dad couldn't drive because everybody that was sitting on the hood of the car was blocking his view, so he had to go out there and start pulling people and pushing people and hitting people, and it shocked me because I've never seen my dad do anything like that in my life. After the war he told me that he did not abandon us, that he asked auntie Anna to take care of us and bring us to the house because he felt at that time he had to just run home to help mom and the little baby and all the little ones and get ready, but it was not until after the war when I learned that, so it was very painful to know that you thought your dad left you. So we came up to [unclear-tauquwa], which is now [NCS] across the street from here, and we stayed in our ranch. At times my mom would go to Agana to get rice, and once in awhile I would accompany her, and it's always a scary thing to ride the Japanese truck to go to Agana for that.

[00:08:25]

Q: After riding the truck up there where did you stay, in [NCS] the whole time?

Kasperbauer: Yes, we stayed in our aunt's house. My grandfather and family lived in their aunt's house, right in front, after the main gate on [NCS] that was the officer of the day's building that was my grandfather's house and then further down it was our house—our aunt's house—so we stayed there. Only occasionally did we go down to Agana, at one time my mom was really scared, I remember being with her in that truck to go to Agana, and people were led to get out of the truck, and you have to bow down to show respect to the guard or whatever and if you don't do then you would get punished. I remember one person didn't bow down all the way like he was supposed to and so he started being hit with the butt of the rifle and then taken away, that's all I saw, that was really scary when you are a little girl. Then we went down to Agana, and my mom had to stand in line for many hours just to get some rice. Later after the war I learned that on those occasions that my mom had gone several times, she was carrying one time a letter inside her clothes for Mrs. Johnston from [Tweed], and I guess I could imagine why she would be very scared at that one time that we were apprehended because that one guy didn't bow down like he should, she was afraid that we would all be

searched. When we went down to Agana at that time we were able to stay at our own home in Agana, but later on we weren't able to do that anymore because the Japanese threw out all of our household goods and used our house as their headquarters.

When we were living in [unclear - Toguwa], I remember my dad and mom always preparing food for my dad to take into the jungle, and we were always hungry, we were lucky we had one meal a day. I was always resentful that my mom and dad was preparing this food to be taken into the jungle and I had no idea who it was for, later on I found out that it was for—
[Interrupted]

Q2: War in the Pacific, 92, 2, take 3

Q: You were talking a little bit about the life on the ranch, can you explain a little about what the ranch looked like, you also mentioned that your father was bringing food into the jungle?

Kasperbauer: Yes, like I said we were living in the ranch further in than where my grandfather's ranch is and for the first--I don't know how many months or maybe close to a year we were just living on our own. The Japanese were building a lighthouse toward—further in by the ocean. After awhile I remember our maid was helping my mom with some work--it seemed like there were a lot of secretive things going on at the time and I kept on trying to find out because you know they don't little kids what's going on, but as a little kid you get curious, you want to know. I saw some khaki was being hung out on the line and I know my father is the only male in the family and I didn't know whose trousers those were. Then after that that's when my father started taking food into the jungle and I resented it because I was always hungry, and later on my father was not taking food everyday, but he was taking it every other day and I still was resentful that—

[Interrupted]

[00:13:45]

Q2: War in the Pacific, oral history, Mrs. Kasperbauer 92—2, take 5

Kasperbauer: As I was saying earlier that when I saw some khaki trousers hung up on the line I started wondering whose trousers they were because my father didn't wear those kind, but I never was able to find that out at that time. My father was taking food into the jungle everyday and I was resentful of that because we never had enough food to eat and we couldn't eat between meals and we had very little to eat during mealtime, and later on my father was not taking the food—

[Interrupted]

[00:14:57]

Q2: War in the Pacific, oral history, Mrs. Kasperbauer 92—2, take 6

Kasperbauer: After we left Agana on that day December 8th we came up to [unclear - toguwa] and we lived in our aunt's house, which is further in from my grandfather's, and we were living trying to adjust to our ranch life--no electricity, no running water, an outhouse, things like that--and we were able to make it fairly decent as far as having enough food in the beginning of the war, but eventually things start to get a little bit harder. One day there was some secret confrontation or secret discussion that went on between my mother and father outside the house, and I didn't know what it was and I kept trying to find out. Later on I saw that our maid was helping do laundry and I saw some khaki trousers hanging on the line, I knew they were not my father's and nobody else wears trousers in our family because my father was the only adult male, I never found out who they belonged to until after the war. Then my father started taking food to the jungle everyday and I was very resentful because I was always hungry and I was very very skinny.

After awhile my father was not taking food into the jungle not everyday, but every other day and then later on it's twice a week, and then I started helping him, he'll carry one gunny sack and I would carry a gunny sack and we would go into the jungle. Later on he would take my gunny sack and he would give me an empty gunny sack and say 'you gather some federico while I take this' and I would say 'but where are you going with all the food and why can't we have some?' He'd said 'it's for the Japanese over in the lighthouse' because earlier I told you

that the Japanese were building a lighthouse. We always had to watch when we were in the jungle and trying to cross a path, so that we would not be seen by the Japanese in the lighthouse, I was a little girl and I didn't connect the two, how come we were bringing the Japanese the food in the lighthouse, how come we were hiding and waiting until they are not looking in our direction to come out to the open to cross the path, all this thinking later on after the war. One time when I was helping my father bring food into the jungle, and it was around December, he told me to gather federico while he went up I guess to give Tweed some food. He was gone for a long time it was a very long time for me as a child it was very long, and I got hungrier and hungrier and I got all the two gunny sacks full of federico nuts and he still wasn't coming. Then I started thinking that maybe he was treating me like the story of Hansel and Gretel, maybe I was eating too much food at home and it was his way of getting rid of me because he just didn't have enough food to feed everybody at home, but I still didn't understand why there wasn't enough food for us kids and himself at home, and why would he take food to the jungle, so I really started crying very hard calling for him 'papa where are you, I promise I won't eat much food at home anymore just take me back home please' and that was very real for me, and later on he came and he said that he was sorry, he was detained and said something about wild pigs and boars that detained him. So we carried the federico, we put the federico sack on two sticks, put it on our shoulder and took them home. I helped him a bit with the taking of the food to the jungle and then later on it turned out to be he would do it by himself and only once a week. Later on the American planes and ships were coming in and there had been some other commotion that started happening around the ranch house, and I overheard my mom and dad talking about we better go to the Japanese concentration camp so that we will not be suspected and I didn't know what we were going to be suspected of.

[00:20:40]

But more incidentally before I go into that I remember one time I was playing outside our ranch house and there was this huge concrete water catchment, very deep, very big. I used to go down in there during dry season to clean it all out and my dad would hoist me down, we would clean it and then get out and that would be to catch rain water, and we used to give rain water to all our neighboring farm people. So after that time after I cleaned it out it was really empty and it has a really nice echo, so I used to--one day I was imitating a bird, I was leaning

halfway in saying 'tweet, tweet, tweet' and all of a sudden my mom came running out, she pushed me away and said "famatkilu nunca agonta'lo[not English] 'Carmen, shut up, don't ever say that' and then she hit me and kicked me and her foot landed right on my nose and I was bleeding and I was crying. I thought my mom really hated me and I carried that--I had lots of painful things during this war because things were not explained to me and I didn't know--we kids felt like our parents didn't love us, but what she was doing--we learned later after the war many people were tortured before they were killed because of Mr. George Tweed, and there I was imitating a bird, saying, tweet, tweet, and when my mom hit me it was not because she hated me it was because she was trying to save my life and the life of our family, of course, I didn't understand that until after the war when she explained it to me.

But anyway after that we continued to do this activity of going to the jungle and bringing food to Tweed. However, when my father first saw Tweed, when Mr. Pangelinan brought him over, he said he saw this gaunt looking person with a long beard, hollow eyes and it reminded him of Jesus Christ before he was crucified and he remembered the learning he had in the biblical saying, I am my brother's keeper, so he took him in, not because he's somebody special and because he's Mr. Tweed, a great American guy, but because he felt that he was his brother's keeper.

There were a lot of people who wanted to help save him because of their belief in American democracy, not because he was somebody special or a special American hero, and that's why my father kept him. Then when there were few people getting angry about turning himself in, my father refused to let him turn himself in, he said 'if you turn yourself in that means death to me, my wife, my kids, my father, my mother, my whole Artero family will be dead, so no way, over my dead body will I let you turn yourself in'. While Tweed was hiding he had no idea what was going on in the minds of the Chamorro people, he had no idea some of them wanted him to give himself up, but we felt if he gave himself up he would not survive, he would be killed and along with him, us, and that's why--a lot of things that were done that were bad, but we really believed that what my father did was right and we all stood by it and a lot of people too felt that way.

[00:25:05]

Q: Why would the Japanese be so interested in getting Tweed, he's one unarmed man in the woods?

Kasperbauer: Because Tweed was the only radio man that was here on the island. America did not tell the navy that was here ahead of time to destroy confidential matter, until it was almost too late, so the remaining soldiers that were here started to destroy all those documents, however by the time the Japanese were bombing and then they invaded the island on the 10th of December, by that time Tweed was not able to dismantle and destroy the radio. The Japanese were so interested in finding him, so that he could put the radio back on, so they could spy on the U.S. military activity in the Pacific that was the reason.

[Interrupted]

Q2: Oral history, Mrs. Kasperbauer, 92—3, take 8

Kasperbauer: I know you wanted to know if I had seen any Japanese during the war, a lot of times the Japanese would pass by our house on the way to the lighthouse they were building, and they would usually try and come during mealtime and they would just chase us off the table and they would just sit down and eat all the food, so when they're done there would be no more food for us to eat the rest of the day. So we'd seen them come to our place, usually our dog would start barking when any strangers are coming and my mom would then hold the baby and the smaller kids near her, she feels that the little children would protect her from being raped or molested, while the rest of us older one were sent into the jungle to hide and I would climb a tree and watch and wait until they're gone. Once in a while like I said if you're seated at the table they would come and chase us away and eat the food and then they would go on their way.

Q: What do you remember about your father coming to you and you would have to be gathered up and go into the jungle, can you talk about that?

Kasperbauer: You mean before when the bombardment started to happen?

[00:28:04]

Q: Yes when you knew you were going to the cave.

Kasperbauer: My dad—when the Americans were approaching the island and bombarding the island, my dad decided to take the last of the provisional food up to Tweed's cave, give it to him, and tell him he can't bring him any more food, so when he went up there and he brought back the food and he seemed very happy and of course we kids were very happy too because now we have extra food to eat, but we didn't know what he was so happy about. I heard him talk to mom about going to the concentration camp and then we were getting ready to go to the camp when Mr. Pangelinan and his family came and joined us, so we were going to get ready, and then Pop went to look for the cow to pull the bull cart and he couldn't find the cow, I don't know how she got loose.

Later on American planes were coming and shooting, so we all ran to a nearby cave in the jungle, and my dad told us to go and get some remaining eggs from the hen house. My cousin and my sister and I went over to get the eggs and on our way out we met two Saipanese and they started asking us if we knew Mr. Pangelinan and right away my cousin said 'yes, he's right down there with us', I got really scared and upset for divulging our secret hide out. So we didn't get the eggs, we turned around and took the two guys back and there he told Mr. Pangelinan that the Japanese wanted him to pay them for all the eggs and farm produce he had given them, but everybody started crying and saying 'John, don't go' but he said 'no I'll go, I have nothing to hide, if it will help save my family I will do that' so we all cried and he left.

Then later on we went back to the ranch to get ready to go to the concentration camp when these two Saipanese came and told my dad the same thing, my dad said 'no the Japanese are not going to be paying me for anything, during this bombardment why would they come now and ask me to come for repayment?' Then I remembered there was a rifle or shotgun in the hollow of a tree my dad was hiding, then I ran and took it and said 'papa, papa here I found a gun' he took it and pointed it at the two men and said 'I'll kill you before I let you go, tell me the truth, why do you want me to go with you to the Japanese?' They said, 'when Mr. Pangelinan was tortured and while he was unconscious he kept saying the word Antonio Artero' then he died, of course my dad was all shook up when they said that. My dad said, 'I'm

not going to let you take us, you go ahead and hide, or go back to the Japanese if you want to and I'll take care of my family' then dad changed his mind, and took us to Tweed's cave. But before that when my dad took the last provision of food, I forgot to tell you that he found a note from Tweed saying that he signaled a ship out there, a destroyer or whatever and they came to pick him up, so he was off the island.

[00:32:08]

So we went and hid in his cave that was sometime in July I think July 12th or 13th or something like that and we stayed there until August 8th my birthday when—. On our way up there my mom lost a baby because it was a very difficult jagged edge to climb and you really have to use your hands and your feet to climb up, my mom was pregnant and she lost a baby and she was injured very badly and sick up there. There was some family squabble between my dad and my uncle, he left--my uncle went--and stayed with my grandfather and my other cousins and aunties. I got really angry--we kept praying and saying the rosary, so that we would not be bombed by the Americans, so I threw my rosary against the cliff and I said 'I'm mad at God and I'm not praying anymore because he's not listening to us'. I went up to the outside and I started watching the ship come in to the island on Asan area and then the shipped opened up and all the men started coming on the land, a lot of fire going on--shooting I guess—then more bombing started to happen on our area and then all of a sudden I heard this voice saying 'no, no the Americans are here' that was my cousin coming up, leading two American soldiers and my father said 'you're lying to me you told the Japanese we were here' 'no no look up, there are two Americans' so as the men were coming up, my dad said to my mom 'they're really Americans' and as the men came into the cave I got scared and took all my brothers and sisters and made them stay in the backend of the cave. Then these two guys came up to us and they really smelled stinky, a different kind of odor that is not the same as the Japanese soldier's odor and I didn't want my brothers and sisters to be harmed, but they opened up a can of food and inside were crackers and biscuits and gum and I melted.

[Interrupted]

Q: We're doing room tone in Carmen Kasperbauer house.

[00:35:01]

[END OF INTERVIEW]