

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

World War II Veterans Project

China-Burma-India Theatre

RICHARD P. VOGELBERGER

Interviewed

by

Jeffrey S. Suchanek

on

May 30, 1981

RICHARD PERSHING VOGELBERGER

Richard P. Vogelberger was born on November 11, 1918 in Boardman, Ohio. The son of Frank and Albertina Beil Vogelberger, Richard was named after General John H. Pershing and was born on Armistice Day. After attending Wilson High School, Richard was drafted into the United States Army in 1942 and assigned to the Horse Cavalry Division. After training with horses at Fort Bliss, Dick was shipped to India where his group transferred horses shipped by the United States, up the Ledo-Burma Road and into the hands of the Nationalist Chinese. The Chinese in turn used these horses in their quest to drive the Japanese out of their homeland. Richard's experiences in the Orient have given him many insights into the climate of the region, the history of the heralded Burma Road, and into the culture and society of the people there.

After returning home and receiving his discharge from the Army on October 8, 1945, Dick found his former job at General Fireproofing waiting for him. On November 9, 1946, he married the former Ellen Bogan and they are the parents of one child, Lee Ann born in 1955.

For his activities on the Ledo-Burma Road, he received the Battle Star along with the Asiatic Theatre Ribbon. A member of St. Lukes Church, Richard also is active in the China-Burma-India Veterans Association, the St. Lukes Golf League and the Saxon Club. Retired since November 14, 1980, he has much time now to enjoy his favorite pastime, golf.

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INTERVIEWEE: RICHARD P. VOGELBERGER

INTERVIEWER: Jeffrey Scott Suchanek

SUBJECT: Use of cavalry in World War II, The
Ledo-Burma Road, Supplying China through
the Himalayas, Indian Culture

DATE: May 30, 1981

S: This is an interview with Richard Vogelberger for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program's China-Burma-India Theatre Veterans of World War II Project by Jeffrey Scott Suchanek. This interview is being conducted at Mr. Vogelberger's residence at 739 Canterbury Lane, Boardman, Ohio on May 30, 1981 at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Mr. Vogelberger, let's begin with some information about your background. When and where were you born? Tell us something about your neighborhood as you were growing up and about your educational experience.

V: Well, I was born in Boardman, Ohio in 1918, November 11, which is Armistice Day, at 6:30 in the morning, which was the time they signed the Armistice of World War I.

S: What do you remember about your neighborhood as you grew up? What was Boardman like?

V: Well, at that time we lived out there by what they called Sprauge Stop, which you never hear of anymore, but there was an article in the paper about that. Everybody wanted to know where Sprauge Stop was. It was along Southern Boulevard, out by which now would be Wildwood Drive. And there were ten relatives that lived in that neighborhood on those two streets. And there were the Beils and the Vogelbergers, which was

a big relationship and it still is today.

S: That was like your own separate community then?

V: Yes, on the two streets, Scioto and, which was Woodrow, but now they changed it to Wildwood. And when I went to school, I used to get the Youngstown-Southern Railroad and go clear to the Northside to go to St. Joseph's School in the first grade.

S: You went on a train to go to school? That's interesting.

V: Yes. It's down along Southern Boulevard.

S: Was that a regular train or was that a trolley?

V: No, that was a trolley. A regular streetcar, they called it the Y & S, and it used to go down between South Avenue and Gibson Street and down that way. And then it crossed over South Avenue at Poland Avenue there and went across South Avenue Bridge and made a left up to where the car barns were, at where the Voyager Garage is. The first street on this side, which I don't know, Champion I believe it was. And they used to back it in there. Of course, they could use it either way, front or back.

S: Now, where was the school in relationship to that?

V: Up there on the corner of Wick and Rayen Avenues, where St. Joseph's Catholic Church was, but it is no longer St. Joseph's Church, but is now the Newman Center for the use of Catholic students at Y.S.U., and behind it used to be the St. Joseph's School that I attended. That's where I went to school for the first grade. And then after I finished first grade there, we moved into the city on Midlothian Boulevard. Then I went to St. Dominic's from then on up through and then to Wilson. And I finished up at Wilson.

S: What year did you graduate?

V: It was 1936.

S: Getting back to your days in the first grade when you had to ride that streetcar, try to put yourself back on that streetcar. As you are going, what do you see?

V: Well, back in those days, why, there wasn't a whole lot to see. You were going down through the back yards. There were homes on both sides of the tracks,

but you were facing the back side of them. They also used to haul freight on that Youngstown line and they still haul freight today. Do you know where I mean?

S: Yes.

V: Yes, on Southern Boulevard there. They used to haul freight down there to all the mills that were down in that area at that time because they had a lot of bulk materials going to different places. The Ohio Edison down there and the Republic Steel, I think they hauled pipe out there too, on that rail.

S: Was it a busy line?

V: Yes, it was pretty busy back in those days. Also, it went clear through Leetonia, Columbiana and down through there. I forgot how far and where it did end up at, but it was a pretty good trip. Up thirty miles, I think, that you could go by streetcar. And that's the way a lot of people used to go to town from out in Boardman. Well, that's the only transportation they had because back in those days, you didn't have too many cars.

S: How much did it cost?

V: It was probably about a nickel, I imagine. A nickel or dime at the most. Maybe not even that because that was back in the late 1920's, about 1928, 1927.

S: Now, did the streetcar run in the winter?

V: Yes, it ran year around.

S: Was it enclosed? Was it heated?

V: Yes, yes. And it had the trolley on the back and the front and they would just change it to go forward or backward.

S: What kind of activities did you participate in during school?

V: All sports, everything I could think of, baseball, basketball. I never played any varsity, but I played a lot of independent ball around town. Mostly hardball and softball.

S: Where did you used to play softball and hardball?

- V: We used to play at Idora, and out in Cornersburg and then all the local fields here, Gibson Field, Evans Field, and Pemberton Park. I played at about all the parks that there are today. They were all good ball parks back in those days too, the way they are today.
- S: When you grew up during the Depression, what do you remember about that?
- V: It was rough.
- S: How did it affect your family?
- V: From Boardman, we moved to 75 Midlothian Boulevard. We lived in the house that is now the Fortunato Funeral Home, and is also the Anstrom, Gustafson, Velker Funeral Home Incorporated. When my parents lost that home, we bought a house on Hilton Avenue, which was a much smaller home. My father was a general contractor and he lost money through the closing of the banks and not being paid by his customers and through the insurances. They'd just come in and take it.
- S: How did that affect your dad and your mom?
- V: They were pretty strong people. It didn't bother them too much. There were a lot of people that I can remember that committed suicide over that, well known people here in town.
- S: Oh, is that right?
- V: Oh yes. I can remember one of the attorneys, he jumped out of one of the office buildings downtown. But it didn't affect my dad too much. He was a pretty strong man and sensible.
- S: Okay, then you said you moved to Hilton Avenue.
- V: Hilton Avenue, yes. And of course, there was no work then. My dad used to get a few small jobs during the Depression that kept us going. And there were seven children in the family. I had three sisters and then the four boys, but it was tough.
- S: Where were you in relationship to the age group in your family?
- V: I was the baby. (Laughter) That's what they called me, the baby. I only have one brother that's left and one sister. The rest have all passed away. But

otherwise, we had a nice life, good family, brothers and sisters.

S: You said that your dad had various odd jobs during the Depression. Can you remember what some of those were?

V: Yes, it would be like repair work in homes and different small businesses. There wasn't much money in it, but enough to keep us going and buy hamburger and beans and pork.

S: Did you have a garden?

V: No, we didn't have a garden down there. No, we never were much for a garden outside of when my dad was young. He was born on a farm, but we never went for that.

S: Can you remember any of the soup lines or bread lines? Can you remember where the people lined up?

V: Yes. Downtown, but I can't remember where it was. I think it was up on Wood Street, downtown, but I can't recall what building it was anymore. I think it was the lower end of Wood Street. They used to call it the Hoover Soup Line or something. I don't know if you have ever read about this?

S: No, I haven't.

V: It was named after President Hoover. "Soup Kitchens," they called it. We never had to go there, so I really never had that much to do with them. Of course, I was young then.

S: What did your parents think about Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal?

V: Oh, my dad, he was a staunch Democrat. Even though he was a businessman, but he was still strong for Roosevelt and also Truman. He liked both of them. You couldn't talk against them. Well, I remember Roosevelt and Truman both. And I always thought a lot of Roosevelt and Truman. Like Truman, he said the way it was and that was it. He didn't pull any punches. He let them have it and that was it.

S: Okay Mr. Vogelberger, let's begin discussing your military career then.

V: Okay.

S: Were you drafted or did you enlist?

V: I was drafted. As a matter of fact, my brother Ray and I went in the same day. We left the same day out of the Southside Library. It was April 8, 1942. And from the library, there was, I think, seven bus-loads of us. And we went to Camp Perry, Ohio. And we were there about four or five days. And then I was separated from Ray, my brother. I went to Camp Grant, Illinois and my brother, Raymond, went to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. And then I didn't see him until we both got out within a week apart. We were both discharged from the Army a week apart. He went to Europe and I went to India.

S: How did your parents feel about you getting drafted?

V: Oh, they didn't seem to mind it too much, because they were good Americans. Well, my mother was worried more but my dad, like I said, he was a strong man and he believed in what was right. So, it didn't bother him too much, but my mother took it a little hard. That's natural for most mothers and they would feel more so than the fathers.

S: At the end of your military career, what rank did you hold?

V: I was what they called a tech, tech corporal, technician or T corporal, they called it.

S: What do you remember about training camp. Was training camp tough for you?

V: No, it never bothered me too much, because like I said, I played a lot of sports. I was always in good shape. And it never bothered me. As a matter of fact, I more or less enjoyed it. Going in there with all the guys. We had quite a few guys from Youngstown with me up there. I think there were nineteen of us from this area that ended up at Camp Grant for basic training. So, we knew one another and we enjoyed it. We had tough days and other days which weren't too bad. And then from Camp Grant, I went to Fort Bliss, Texas, where I got into the 1st Cavalry Division, which is horse drawn artillery and horse troops. In those days, we had horse drawn artillery.

S: You were still using horses at this time?

V: Oh yes. There was about 26,000 horses at Fort Bliss.

S: Is that right?

V: Yes. We had artillery and then they had a remount station where they broke all the horses. They'd buy them for \$160. I think that's what they paid for them. And they'd bring them in there and break them so they could ride them. Oh, it was a big post. I guess they still use horses down there. That is mostly for the top, the generals and everyone that rides in parades and stuff, throughout along the Mexican border at Juarez. Well, that's where all your top generals were. Wainwright, and I think McArthur was there and Pershing also.

S: While you were there, they were there?

V: No, no. They spent time at that base. Back in those days, that was a high class camp.

S: That's right, McArthur's outfit was a horse cavalry if I remember correctly.

V: While he was there, yes. And they had a big polo field. That's mostly for the generals, the elite.

S: Now did you get assigned to the cavalry?

V: Don't ask me. I put in for, I think it was field artillery or tanks, and I ended up with the horses. That's the way the Army worked.

S: Did you mind going into it?

V: At first it bothered me because I didn't know anything about horses or mules, but I got to know them, and I liked them. I really enjoyed the mules more than the horses.

S: Why?

V: Well, they had more common sense, a mule. They say that they are stubborn, but they are also smart. You'd throw a bushel of oats in front of a mule, he'll eat so much and then he'll quit, but a horse, he'll eat that whole thing until he founders himself. And then there were different experiences I had. Horses, are high strung. When they would get caught in a fence, or something, they would just go pulling until they hurt themselves, where a mule would stay there until somebody helped. Which I saw that in India too, when we unloaded off the West Virginia, which was a cattle boat before the war.

They used to haul cattle from Europe and South America, back and forth. Well, they turned that ship for hauling horses and mules. It was five decks, I think. And they made runways up. They hauled, I think it was 700 horses and mules at one time on that boat. It would land in Calcutta and then we'd unload them. It was like a spiral from the bottom deck up. And they'd start the mules up and then go down the gangplank.

Well, many a times a mule would get to the top and he'd stop. He wasn't going to go down that ramp. So, we had to help them. We had a whip like the end of a pick handle with a big, wide, leather strap and we'd hit them on the buttocks. And then two guys, one on each side, with a leather strap would get them behind their legs and sort of help them. And then finally they'd go. But horses, they'd get up there and they'd be all shook up. And we had many of them that would fall off the side and get caught off the side of the gang plank. And they would just carry on something until they really hurt themselves. We had mules that had slipped and they would stay there. That's why I say mules have more or sense than horses. And that's true.

S: Did any of these animals ever get hurt seriously?

V: No, they'd skin their legs, but nothing bad.

And one time we got two hundred horses from Guadalcanal. Well, I guess at the beginning of the war they figured they were going to use horses on those islands down there. So, they took them down there and then they decided that they weren't going to use them so they just turned them out to pasture and let them run wild. So, after about two years, they decided to send them to India. So, they loaded them on a boat and they sent them over and we got them.

And they were the wildest bunch of horses I ever saw. As a matter of fact, they broke out of the corral. They just busted the fence right down after we got them unloaded. And they were running loose in the city of Calcutta. And they were wild, because I can remember once we caught them all and took them into where we were stationed there; it took three of us to take one horse to water. We'd have to have three hauler shanks on them, one in the middle and one on each side, because those horses would bite you or try to stomp you. They were the wildest things I ever saw.

- S: I never heard of horses biting.
- V: Yes, oh yes. We had a couple of guys get bit in the shoulder.
- S: I'd imagine that would be a serious wound.
- V: Oh yes, they would give you a good bite. I don't know whatever happened to those horses, but they sure were wild.

And then this one lieutenant we had, he was an all-American at the University of Iowa--tackle. He was big and strong. Lieutenant Hayes was his name. Back in those days he must have weighed 240 to 250 pounds, and that was big back then. He would handle those horses like nothing. All the enlisted men were all afraid of them. He worked around them all his life, the horses. He come from a farm out in Iowa somewhere and he knew how to handle them. And then we had guys from Wyoming that were regular cowboys, in our outfit also, and they knew how to handle them. But us city boys, we were afraid of them.

- S: Do you think that they purposely mixed maybe some of the fellows that were familiar with horses in with you fellows from the city?
- V: Yes, that could have been, because there were, I would say, about half and half, half city boys and half country. Because I think we had them from Texas, Montana, Utah, and all the states where they had horses. And then the rest of us come from Pennsylvania, which some of them were farmers, and Ohio. The biggest part was Ohio and Pennsylvania.
- S: What outfit was that when you were over in India?
- V: That was with the 1st Vet Company. And then later on we went from Burma and they sent me down to Calcutta, and changed it to the 78th Medical Vet Company. That's when we started unloading and hauling horses over there.
- S: What special training were you given during training camp as far as with the horses?
- V: None whatsoever, not in basic. We didn't get any because we didn't even know where we were going in basic training. I spent two months in basic, and then they put us on a train and took us to Texas and showed us the horses.

S: Just showed you the horses?

V: (Laughter) Well, we had a little bit of training there, once we got there.

S: Like what?

V: Well, how to ride.

S: Oh, you learned how to ride, then?

V: Oh yes. We rode.

S: Was it hard?

V: Oh yes, to ride Army saddle. They used the McClellan saddle, which is a lot different than western style.

S: No, I'm not aware of that.

V: The Army saddle was different. Like a western has the horn on the front, where a McClellan has no horn to hold onto. And it was different.

S: Can you remember some of your experiences? Did you ever fall off?

V: No, but I was kicked a few times. Like in the rear end one time. We had a horse called "Jitterbug." That was back when that was started, back in around the jitterbug era. And somebody named him "Jitterbug." He always pranced around and he never stood still. So, I went in one morning to feed him. I poured the oats in. We had gallon cans and I gave him a gallon. As I got out, just as I reached the end of him, why he let go and he caught me in the rear end and he sent me flying. That was a mule that kicked me there. They can kick forward, a mule.

S: Oh, is that right?

V: Oh yes. They can bring their foot way up and give you a boot. But between the horses and mules, I like the mules.

S: You would say, then, that the mules have a better temperament?

V: Yes. They're smarter. They say, "Horse sense," but I could never see it.

S: It makes more mule sense.

V: Mule sense, right.

S: From Fort Bliss, then, how did you get into India?
When did you find out that you were going to India?
What was your reaction to that?

V: Well, back then I really never gave too much thought about India. When we left Fort Bliss, we went to Riverside, California, Camp Anza. If you were going overseas, that's where you would end up. It was outside Los Angeles somewhere, thirty miles or something. We were there a few days and they said, "Okay, let's go." But we had our winter clothes. And we never knew where we were going until we were out at sea, for I don't know how many days.

S: No escort?

V: No escort whatsoever. We were on an Italian boat. It was the Count De Grande. And that was the same boat that Mussolini took 18,000 troops to Ethiopia on. We had 7,000 and we were in there like sardines. How he got 18,000 on there, I don't know.

S: What was it like? Can you remember what the ship looked like?

V: Oh, it was a beautiful ship. Before the war it was a regular passenger ship. It had beautiful paintings and everything in it.

S: Oh, they were still in there? Was it converted, at all, to a troop ship?

V: Yes, the U.S. captured it, I think it was in South America somewhere. And then it was used. They brought it to New York and refitted it. Then they used it to haul prisoners from Africa to Australia. But we got on at Wilmington, California; it's outside of Los Angeles where we got on the boat.

We were out at sea, I don't know how many days, when the thing stopped right in the middle of the ocean. And nobody knew anything about this ship because it was only a matter of four or five months after they captured it. But of course, it was run by the Navy and the Merchant Marine. Well, they didn't know too much about it, but they had blueprints and everything to check on it. We were out in that ocean for one hour, stalled.

S: (Laughter) You just came to a complete stop?

V: Complete stop. And it was just below New Zealand and they finally got it going. It was something to do with the electrical end of it, I guess.

Then we went to Wellington, New Zealand and we were there about two or three days. We got back on, and then we were out at sea again, and then we went to Perth, Australia. And there I saw all the largest ships in the entire world in the same harbor. It was a sight to see so many huge vessels in one area. There was the Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, The Marathania, The New Amsterdam, The Ill De France, The Acquathania, our ship, the Monticello, and many, many more. I can't remember their names. They were from so many countries, France, Poland, Holland, Italy, England, U.S.A. and other countries, too numerous to mention. We were there for three days.

From there we landed in Bombay, India. But we were on the boat 72 days from the time it left Wilmington, California until we hit Bombay.

Now, when we hit Bombay, we had to stay out in the boat three days, because Ghandi was on his hunger strike and there was a lot of trouble. They had a famine there and thousands were dying alone from starvation right in Calcutta. So, they wouldn't take us off the boat. So, we landed there and the temperature was 135 degrees Farenheit and we had to stay on the boat for three days. So, finally they settled that and then we got off.

Can I tell you about what happened after?

S: Go ahead, sure.

V: So, it was a Sunday in India, when they let us off the boat. So naturally, you know where all the guys are going to head for, try to find something to drink. So, the places were all closed, but they opened them all up. All your stores had big iron gates in front of them to get in. Well, they had them all closed, but they had also a door inside where they closed the store off so that nobody would break in.

So, the liquor stores had guys in there that would come and hand it through these iron gates to us. And it was warm gin, mostly, that we got. We had to be in at a certain time. Before you got on the boat you had to go through a railroad station, and then to the boat. There were so many of them coming

in drunk, and sick. After not having any alcohol to drink for 72 days, then going out in that heat and drinking warm gin, they really got sick. There must have been 700 of them in that railroad station, and they were all throwing up, over one another. You never saw such a mess.

S: Where was this now?

V: That was at Bombay, after we arrived from Australia, where we were permitted off the boat only one day in Australia and one in New Zealand. I never saw anything like it. It was something. They wouldn't let you on the boat if you were drunk, the Military Police. But it was really something.

S: Did a lot of the fellows get sea sick coming over?

V: No, not too many -- some of the older guys, some of the guys that were in the old Army. We had a 1st Sergeant, he was sick the whole trip. And he had something like twenty some years in the Army then. Of course, he never traveled much by boat. Of course, that was a long haul, 72 days.

And then we had a couple of experiences going over there, also, where we had alerts, where they sighted submarines.

S: Oh, is that right?

V: Yes.

S: What would happen?

V: We had one when we left New Zealand. We had a destroyer, maybe one, who went along with us for so many days, and then he'd leave us. He would be way off to the side somewhere. Then we had one off of Australia and we had an alert there.

S: Okay, when an alert goes on, what happens?

V: Everybody goes down in the hole, nobody can stay up on deck.

S: Why do you suppose that is?

V: I don't know. But I know that we were in F Deck which was what they call "torpedo junction". That's the lowest deck and that's where the torpedos hit, (Laughter) below the water line. And we were down there one

day when all of a sudden we hear, "Kaboom!" And here they were practicing. They never told us that the biggest gun we had on that ship was a five inch naval gun and then they had 20 millimeters mounted on the sides. They were all run by the Navy and Marines.

S: They were all regular Navy personnel, sailors?

V: Yes. And there were the Marines also, they manned a lot of the machine guns, 50 calibers. And we heard this, and here they were just practicing. And you're down in the bottom of a ship and you hear one of them five inches, you think the whole boat is going up.

Well they changed the name from the Counte De Grande to the U.S.S. Monticello when the United States took over. And it wasn't the greatest ship, because it even sprung some leaks down in the lower decks. It was old; I don't know when it was built. But it was nice for a luxury liner. I don't think it would have taken too many shells, and it would have sunk. Everything was riveted then on that boat. Today it's all welded. And you could hear them rivets popping and cracking when it would swell and hit big waves. But we had a pretty good time going over there.

We had to take a shower in the morning and, if you got up at 5:00 in the morning you got fresh water; that's the only time. From then on you had salt water. I don't know if you had any experience with salt water. You can't wash with salt water with soap because you can't get the lather off. They had fresh water showers in the morning. I think you had to get up at 4:00 or 5:00. But there wasn't that many showers on that boat, so a lot of guys didn't get them. So, you'd just wash off with water, and you couldn't use and soap because you'd never get it off of you. And then we had the same way with drinking water. It was certain times of the day they had it. You filled your canteen up and you kept it for the day.

S: How was the food?

V: It was pretty good. Well, we had a lot of beans and we had pork. As a matter of fact, one time we had pork and it was all tainted and everybody got sick, dysentery. Boy, that was something. And there were very few guys that didn't get sick over it. I guess the pork was old, or something. And those servers, they don't cook like you would at home to make sure it's well done. I guess that's what caused it. There was dysentery, and boy what a mess that was. Every-

body running to sick bay to get paregoric and bismet.

After we left Bombay, we got on a train and went up to the Ganges River, and then we boarded a riverboat. That Ganges River is a sacred river, where they actually bury people in the water. They'll take them in their beds. They had rope beds over there. They'd tie them in the beds and would throw bed, and all, right in that river, the Ganges. It's a sacred river. People wash in there, and they drink that water and that's why there's so much disease in India. Now, I don't know if they changed since then.

S: Did you actually see bodies in the river and stuff?

V: No, I've seen them bury them, throwing them in the water. But they drank that water and washed their clothes in it, and everything, and that's why there was a lot of disease.

S: Your first impression of Bombay, what did it look like? What was your impression?

V: It's a beautiful city, nice buildings. A lot of modern, big buildings over there. I'd say some of them were as nice as anything we have in this country. All through India, not only Bombay, but Calcutta and the Taj Mahal.

S: Did you see the Taj Mahal?

V: Yes.

S: Were you able to go through it?

V: I never went through it, but I saw it from the outside. While we were there, we didn't have time to visit points of interest, but a lot of the guys did go in. That was in Agra, I think. But they had a lot of beautiful buildings, modern.

For the people that were there, they are all poor, outside of a few. Of course, England took care of that. They were over in India then. They had the Indians doing all their work for them,-- loading boats by hand. They'd have a basket and they'd put the coal in it and then they would run up the ramp and dump it into the hold. And that's how they loaded the ships over there. They'd take it to England. India was under English rule then. Colonialism, the same thing you've got in Ireland today, that's why

they want them out over there. The same reason India ran them out of their country. They just bled that country dry over there. People got tired of it. Now, you shouldn't be putting that in there, they'll think I'm a Communist. (Laughter)

S: I think that's historical fact.

V: Yes, it is.

S: What was the first reaction of the people towards you and towards Americans and towards the GI's?

V: Of course, there was quite a few there before we arrived there. All they thought of was begging. At railroad stations, that's all you'd see were beggars. When you pulled into a station, all they wanted was food, because India was starving at that time. And also Tokyo Rose used to get on the radio and she'd say, "The GI's are coming here, and they Yankee's are coming here, and eating all your rice and that's why you people are starving." That's what caused a lot of that trouble there when we landed there; it was through her. And like I said, there were thousands of people a day dying in Calcutta on the streets just from starvation.

S: You saw that?

V: Yes. They used to load them up in dump trucks and take them out to the burning gats. They'd burn them up. They'd load them in dump trucks.

S: What was your reaction to that?

V: We thought it was terrible, but there was nothing we could do about it, but that's the way those countries were over there. England was over them and they could care less about the people.

S: What was their reaction towards you? Were they friendly?

V: Oh yes, they were friendly. We never had any problems. I don't think I ever recall any uprisings or anything against the Americans, because the GI's all gave them food. If they had any, they would give it to them at the railroad station. Many times I'd give them corn beef, which we used to get in a can, and English biscuits, which were hard as rocks. We'd give it to them. We never had any problems with them. Well, like I said, the GI's all treated them good.

They'd give candy to the kids, which you really ought to feel sorry for a lot of them. They had nothing to eat. A little rice, that's about all they ate.

S: When you'd pull into a railroad station, how many beggars would be there?

V: More than you'd see in a lifetime: in this country.

S: Oh, is that right?

V: Oh yes, every station.

S: That many?

V: Well, like they said over there, "If your father was a beggar, you're a beggar." That's just the way they did it. Right down through the line.

S: That was their caste system.

V: Yes, right.

S: I wanted to ask you about that too. Was that obvious, the caste system? Was there like segregated portions of a town where the rich lived? Was it that obvious?

V: Oh yes. Where the poor lived, they had nothing but bamboo huts, made out of bamboo, or maybe there'd be brick, but nothing on the floor. Solid dirt, and that was it. And then a pot in the middle with a fire in it. The huts were there, especially along the docks where all those that worked for the British lived. That's how they lived. And there would be ten or twelve in one room. They slept on the floor with very little bed clothes. And of course, they never wore shoes over there anyhow, just sandals or tongs.

S: Now, you said you went by train and then by riverboat. How long of a trip was it on that riverboat? Can you describe that trip for us? What did you see as you looked out across the water onto the banks?

V: Well, naturally, you see them washing clothes. The way they wash clothes over there, they get a stone and they beat them. And then they will go down into the water and get some more water and bring them back and keep hitting them on the rocks. And that's the way they washed their clothes.

S: Was the water clear?

V: No, it was dirty, muddy, but that didn't make any difference to them. Like I said, they drank it, and everything, cooked their rice with it. They washed their clothes in it. That was the Ganges. I think that's one of the longest rivers, I believe in India, if I'm not mistaken.

After we left the Ganges, we got back on the railroad again. Then we went another day or so, and got off the train and got on another riverboat, and went up the Brahmaputra River, which is a big river too, and a long one. And you'd see the same thing along both rivers -- the natives washing their clothes, shacks all along, and bamboo huts.

S: It seems like there's people all over the place.

V: Oh, God yes. Everywhere you looked there were people. I was in Calcutta; I was in Bombay, Karachi, Delhi, New Delhi, and Agra. I was in most of the big cities over there--a variety of people in the cities. A few beggars and then you would see these sacred cows walking right down the street. In Calcutta, right down the main drag, and nobody ever bothered them because they were sacred cows. I don't know if you ever heard about them or not.

S: Yes.

V: And even though they were starving, they would never kill those cows. They could be starving, and there could be a cow right there, and they wouldn't bother them because they were sacred.

S: When you were in these cities, where were you quartered? Were you quartered in the city itself?

V: Of course, in Bombay, we were only there a few days. But when I was in Calcutta, we were stationed right outside the suburbs of Calcutta, along the Hooghly River, which is another thing I want to tell you about is the buzzards.

After we moved there, we happened to look down along the river and there's all these huge birds. We couldn't figure out what the heck are all those turkeys doing down there. (Laughter) We had a lot of natives work on the base over there in India. One of the natives said, "Them ain't turkeys, they are buzzards." Here they'd throw all their garbage and

everything in that Hooghly River from Calcutta. And these buzzards would come down and clean it up. And there was thousands of them. You couldn't believe it. The whole banks were just covered with buzzards, big ones like the size of turkeys. And here we thought they were turkeys. But that was what they did with all their garbage. They'd throw it right in the river and the buzzards ate it up.

- S: Were you given any briefing on what not to do in these cities?
- V: Oh yes. You couldn't eat any of their vegetables or fruit like in those market places. You didn't even go near them as a matter of fact.
- S: Why wouldn't you?
- V: Like they had open air restaurants. You couldn't go in there and eat anything or buy any vegetables because the fertilizer was all human waste. And you weren't allowed to eat that. But what they did later on was they had to boil everything, even your drinking water. You had to boil it before you could drink it because there was so much disease over there. Why, you had every disease you could think of from elephantiasis to leprosy. Well, I don't know if you ever read it about this nun that got the Nobel Prize?
- S: Yes.
- v: She was just on TV the other night. What the heck is her name? She was over there when I was there because I saw those leper colonies she took care of. Well, they had them all caged up back in those days. They actually had them in cages.
- S: Is that right?
- V: Yes.
- S: Special sections that were leper colonies?
- V: Oh yes. And I imagine she was there because she's pretty old now. She was probably there when I was there in 1942, 1943. Her name is Sister Teresa.
- S: But you were told like: Don't go swim in any of these rivers.
- V: Oh, no. You wouldn't. The only rivers like the Mogaung River, and the big rivers that come out of the

mountain in Burma. We used to swim in there and catch fish. But down in the city, you wouldn't begin to swim or you'd die. You'd end up with some disease, cholera, which they had a lot of over there, cholera. Well, there isn't a disease in the book, I guess, that they didn't have.

S: When you were stationed in these cities, were you aware of any type of black market operations?

V: No.

S: I mean, did they ever try to buy or approach you to try to get them certain things that they could sell in return for a profit? Were any of the GI's involved in any of this? Do you know?

V: I think at times they were. Most of the guys that worked on the docks were the ones. I guess they caught a few of them over there selling. When you went into a store, or something, and if you had a pair of American sunglasses, or a cigarette lighter, or a fountain pen, they would want to buy it from you, or a wrist watch, too. But it was for their own, not to sell. They wanted it. They were strong after sunglasses because the Army put out some pretty good sunglasses, especially the Air Force had a lot of good sunglasses. But I never knew of any action in black market. Well, in the first place, the people themselves didn't have any money. It would have been the businessmen to get in on deals like that.

S: What was their currency? Do you remember? Was it rupees or something?

V: Rupees, yes. I think one rupee was worth eight cents. God, I don't remember anymore.

S: Did you use American exchange, American currency?

V: No, we used all Indian. We got paid in rupees and annas. I can't remember anymore. I know a lot of those laborers used to make eight annas a day. That was something like eight cents a day, I think.

S: Before, you were talking about the Burma-Ledo Road, when I talked to you before. How did you end up there?

V: Well, after we left the Brahmaputra River, then we got on the train again and we went into northern India, which is Assam Providence, which was the begin-

ning of the Ledo Road. And that's the same trail that Stillwell come back through from China, and that's where they made their road. That road was about 215 miles long. And it run into the old Burma Road. I was stationed at Ledo for six weeks. So, when we went in there, we had to build our own camp. We cut down all the bamboo clumps, and everything.

S: What was the terrain like?

V: Oh, hilly and rain. All jungle is what it was.

S: It was jungle?

V: Strictly jungle, and we cleaned an area out anyway. We went back up and we moved up towards Burma. Then some of the guys came back. They said, "You know where we cleaned all that area up?" That was about six months ago. "You couldn't even tell." That's how fast bamboo grows.

S: Is that right?

V: Oh yes. You can almost see bamboo grow. And that jungle grows. And anyway, that northern India Assam Providence, they claim has the largest rainfall in the world. I think it was 500 inches a year.

S: Is that right?

V: Yes, the monsoons. Well, when we hit that Ledo, it rained for 26 straight days while we were building this camp. And we were soaked. We had no dry clothes because it rained day and night. And I mean rained, not mist. It poured down. And that's why I say everything grows so fast over there. You couldn't believe how fast bamboo would grow.

S: What kind of equipment did you use to clear this area down?

V: We had bolo knives. We had no tractors. No, that was all done by hand, cleaned up.

S: That must have been tough work?

V: Oh, it was, and hot. Not only would it be raining, but it would be 90, maybe 100 degrees Farenhiet and the steam would come right out of the ground 24 hours a day from that heat, and the moisture.

S: Did it get swampy?

V: Yes.

S: How about insects?

V: Oh, mosquitoes. Well, I was lucky. I only had malaria twice, but we had guys in our outfit that had it eighteen and twenty times. Guys actually lost their hair. And then we had couple that had cerebral malaria. It affected the brain, cerebral malaria.

S: Were you required to take atabrine or anything?

V: Oh yes, we had to take it everyday, but you would still get it.

S: Oh, is that right? Did you turn yellow after awhile?

V: No, I never did. But like I said, it never bothered me, but some guys were as yellow as yellow ribbons you see around. And I remember one guy, he was a big farm kid from Kansas, he must have weighed 210 pounds. If that guy weighed 115 to 120 pounds at the time he went home, he was lucky. He lost a lot of weight. And we had guys loose their hair from the high fever. But it was a real rough country over there.

S: Now, this is when they were building the Ledo Road?

V: Right.

S: Did you run into any of the engineers?

V: Oh yes. Well, we were twenty miles up the Ledo Road where we had this camp, then we started getting our mules and horses in.

S: Okay, I was going to ask you, what was your function while you were there? I mean, why were you stationed there?

V: We handled all the horses for the China, British, and the American troops. We had like a big station there. They'd bring the horses and mules up to us. And we had what you call a big dip tank, where we'd run these horses. And they'd jump in. It was sulfa to kill any mange or anything they had. The they would jump in there and then they'd go up and then into a corral. What it was, it was lend-lease to the Chinese--horses and mules. And most of the mules went to the Americans to Merrill's Marauders. I don't know if you ever heard of General Merrill?

S: In Burma?

V: Yes. As a matter of fact, when those guys went up into Burma, they stayed there for a night, because those guys walked 259 miles to go into combat. And a lot of people used to get teed off over there. They'd take the Chinese up in trucks and our guys had to walk with packed mules and everything.

S: Horses and mules were still the main . . . ?

V: Oh yes. They used a lot of them over there off the Ledo Road. And then of course, out in front of it where the troops were fighting, they used a lot of pack mules, the Chinese and the Americans and then the British, too. We didn't furnish too many horses for the British.

And then there was also the Wingate's Raiders over there, which was British. And then you had a lot of, like they call them the Kachins. That was a tribe, and they were deadly with knives. And then the Gurkhas.

S: What is a Gurkha?

V: Well, it was a tribe too. They used a bolo-type knife. They had a little sight in the knife. And they could throw those knives thirty, forty yards and be dead accurate with them. They could split a tree in half with one of them. They kept them razor sharp. And they'd take it and they'd eye through the sight and then take it over their head and throw it. They used to use that to kill Japs and they used it to cut bread.

S: Multi-purpose. (Laughter)

V: They were good troops, though. They also used them in Europe too, them Gurkha troops, in the European Theatre. Of course, at that time they were under the British. I think they used them in Italy and I think Montgomery had some in Africa. But they were real good. And the Kachins was another. They were jungle fighters, and head hunters.

S: I was going to ask you about that.

V: I've seen them, yes. They were way up in northern India and into Burma.

S: Were they called the Nagas?

- V: Naga head hunters, yes. Well, we were always told that they used to pay them fifty dollars for every head that they brought in, the Japanese heads. Of course, I don't know how true it was, but I did read articles on it over there.
- S: But you never had any contact with them?
- V: Well, we used to buy saki off of them, or bamboo juice that they used to make. But every outfit had some of those guys with them. Your combat outfits all had them; especially the Kachins and the Gurkhas. They were real good scouts.
- S: What kind of contact did you have with the Chinese and the British?
- V: Oh, we had a lot with the Chinese.
- S: What was your impression of the Chinese? Were they friendly towards you?
- V: Oh yes. We got along good with the Chinese. We didn't have too much contact with the British. The only contact we'd have is when the troops would be going up the road and they'd stop. That's about the only time. But the Chinese, we had some of them stationed right with us. And they were pretty good soldiers, but once they lost their leader, they were done. Their officers were mean to their enlisted men.
- S: Did you see anything like that?
- V: Oh yes. I forget what happened. One time one of them, he did something to his horse. And he had to run around with his rifle in the air for I don't know how many hours till he dropped. Oh, they used to beat them. The Chinese officers used to beat the enlisted men. They carried a bamboo riding crop. All them Chinese officers had them crops to whack away at them. But they treated them pretty mean. But like I said, once they lost their leaders, they were done.
- S: They couldn't think for themselves?
- V: No. And they way they acted, like in combat, if they'd see a Jap, why, they'd pour twenty rounds of ammunition into them, and then laugh. They were silly people; unlike the Americans, we'd shoot them and that would be the end of them, but that's the way they wasted a lot of ammunition.

S: Did you have any contact or were you near any of the action?

V: Well, yes. Up in Myitkyina, Burma, which was where a big battle went, but we got in there about two days after Merrill's Marauders were up there. They took that base with two Chinese divisions, I think. To show you how the Chinese are, they used to light fires at night so they could cook their rice. Well, the Japanese would throw mortars in there. And from what I was told, some of those mortars went into the American camps and killed some of the Americans. And then I also heard that some of the Americans would shoot over into the Chinese lines to make them put the fires out. So, that shows you the difference between the Japanese and the Chinese. The Japanese ate rice too, but they didn't build big bomb fires to let them know where they were.

S: Do you think maybe that there was so many Chinese that there was just no regard for life?

V: Life didn't mean nothing to them, not a thing. I saw that happen many times. It didn't even bother them when a truck went down off the Burma Road.

S: Did you see that? I mean, did you see wrecks of trucks?

V: Oh yes. I saw Americans that were hauling aviation gasoline and went down, oh God, way down over, maybe 500 feet down off the road and they caught fire, but they did drag these two Americans out. And I saw them in the hospital. I happened to be in the hospital at that time. And back in them days, you didn't have too much medical knowledge. And the only thing they could do for them was to build a tent over them out of a sheet, made it round. And they laid under there with nothing on because they were burnt so badly. And all they would have in there was a light bulb to keep them warm. And I heard later on that one of them died of the two, but I guess the other one got out all right. But they were burned 75 percent of their body because of that aviation gas, but they got out. And they were a mess, and I know because I saw them, oh boy. It's hard to believe that they even got out alive.

S: Describe the Burma-Ledo Road for us. What was that like?

V: Well, it had all kinds of curves and drop-offs. Some places it maybe dropped off 1,000 feet, straight down. And they actually moved mountains into valleys to make that road. And to me that was one of the greatest engineering feats, I think there ever was, because they actually moved mountains. Of course, with all that rain over there, the monsoons lasted six months. And maybe they'd build a mile today and the rain would wash a mile away. But they crushed all the stones that they used. They had big rock crushers over there to throw them in to bust up for the road.

S: Was the road stone or was it dirt?

V: Well, mixed, mostly it was sand and stones. Of course, with all that rain coming down the side, you had a lot of mud and it was real slick. And then during the dry season, you couldn't see! The drivers of all those trucks wore goggles. It was so dusty you had to wear respirators.

S: Is that right?

V: Oh my God, yes.

S: Describe the traffic on there? Was it heavy?

V: Oh yes. When they run convoy, they'd run maybe 200 trucks, fifty yards behind and they'd run for miles. And all you could see was dust.

S: How about at night? Would they run them at night?

V: Well, they would, yes, but it would be very slow. Down at the lower end towards Ledo, of course, they'd drive with lights on, but up above they would use just the blackout lights.

S: Was that an impressive sight to look down and see? Just miles of those headlights?

V: Oh, that was beautiful over there, I mean, at night. And "The Moon Over Burma," I don't know if you ever heard that song, but that was coming over the Himalayas. See, that's part of the Himalayas up in there. And that was the most beautiful thing you ever laid eyes on. We had guys try to take shots of it, but they never could get a good one. But the Army took pictures of it and they were good ones. But that was good, "Moon over Burma." That was a song, like "Moon over Miami." That was beautiful, coming over the Himalaya Mountains.

S: Did the terrain change at all as the road grew longer?

V: No, it kept going all the way up.

S: Was it just jungle?

V: All jungle and no towns. There were little villages. You'd probably get a little village maybe every forty miles or so, but most of them were like head hunters or these jungle people. But you couldn't buy anything there. It was just more or less their own. Of course, they wore very little clothes, only a sheet wrapped around them.

S: Were you aware that the Japanese ever tried to cut the road?

V: Oh yes, they cut the road more than once.

S: Oh, did they?

V: Yes.

S: While you were there?

V: Yes. Well, I was down below, but it happened up above us. But they did away with them. See, that country was so wild, you couldn't travel; it was so mountainous. You'd clean one bunch of Japanese and you were pretty safe that there wouldn't be anymore, because off that road there was no way you could get through. It would take days and days. And you couldn't drop any paratroopers in there until you hit the flat lands like in Burma. Like Myitkyina where Colonel Cochran flew gliders in there. He just died here not too long ago. Once they took Myitkyina, why, it was about over because they had a nice air base over there.

S: How about air attacks along the Burma Road?

V: Above them, down below Myitkyina, Burma, there weren't too many attacks once they took Myitkyina. Then above that, why, they would have strafe [planes]. And then down below where we'd get a lot of these camera planes. What do they call them?

S: Reconnaissance?

V: Yes. They had a name for them over there, but I can't think of it. They took a zero and took all the armor and everything and made a photograph plane.

- S: Oh, they had a name for it?
- V: Yes, I can't think of it. That was a fast plane. What we had over there couldn't even catch them until they got the P-51's over there.
- S: Was there air cover along the road? Do you know?
- V: Oh yes. There was quite a few air bases over there in India. There was an air base at Ledo, and Dum-Dum--some of the goofy names--Chabua. And then, of course, them Hump pilots, they flew continuous right up over the Burma Road, over into China, to Kunming. I never got into China. I just got up as far as Mogaung in Burma. But once you went down in a plane in that place, you were done. They'd never find you. There was a lot of pilots that they never did. Well, that went up from zero to 19,000 feet up to the foothills of the Himalayas. And when we flew up--we flew once through Ledo to Myitkyina--and when you go through the clouds there, it is like an opening at 19,000 feet. They flew by instruments because of the fog, because the clouds were that low. You went through there and you didn't know if you were going to make it or not.

And those Hump pilots were something else, those guys. They flew beat-up, old, patched-up 47's and 46's. I remember when we flew up there, we were in a 46, I think it was. There was about forty of us that went up with baggage, and all, and we didn't know if we were going to get off the ground, because those guys flew old rattle traps. They would tear one apart to fix another one.

- S: Here's one of the questions I wanted to ask you: Since the C-B-I Theatre was sort of the back door of the war, did you ever feel like you were the tail end of the cow as far as the supply line went?
- V: Right, oh yes, we were.
- S: How about clothing and boots and stuff like that?
- V: Mostly it was food. We didn't get hardly any food. What we got was a lot out of Australia. And then after we were there about a year, then we started getting pretty good chow, canned stuff. But we ate that Australian mutton, God, for I don't know how long, and English biscuits as hard as this table. And corn beef from Australia; there's a lot of that over there. But we ate mutton. I don't know if you

know what mutton is. (Laughter) But that's the worst tasting stuff you can eat. It's lamb, but a terrible version of lamb.

S: Did that irritate the fellows at all?

V: Oh yes.

S: I mean, did you feel like the government wasn't providing for you fellows?

V: Well, we knew that the supply, that's a long way, the supply line to India. And we figured, well, someday it will come. And then we had a guy from Arkansas, he was a crack shot, and he used to go hunting. He got us a moose once and a deer. He'd shoot different animals and he'd bring it in and the whole company would eat on it. And then we ate horse meat.

S: You ate horse meat?

V: Oh yes. See, we had a horse there; it was just like an automobile; it was out of line. It's spine was bent so they shot it. Of course, we had vets there. And they supervised it and we had horse meat for 188 guys. We had steaks and hamburgers.

S: It didn't bother you?

V: No, no. We were hungry. There's not much difference in that and beef, outside of that it's more red, but it was good. We had horse meat on toast. We had horses that we'd shoot that had diseases and the Chinese would come and dig them up and take them and eat them even though they were diseased. We'd bury them one day and the next day there wouldn't be any horse there, just the bones. They'd chop them up and eat them. They'd take them back to camp.

We also flew horses up into Burma from Ledo by plane and mules too. I don't know how many we flew up. Over there we also had--I think it was between Mogaung and Myitkyina--a railroad. It was run by two jeeps. Take the wheels off and put regular railroad wheels on it and they pulled the boxcars. Of course, you couldn't stop. They had to start applying the brakes about twenty miles before they wanted to stop.

And also, while we were up there at Mogaung, Lord Louis Mountbatten, why, he happened to be there that one day. And he came there when we got off there.

We had the horses. We had about twenty carloads of horses that we had taken up. He came over and he shook hands with all of us.

S: Oh, is that right?-

V: Lord Louis, yes. Nice guy. Like the British say, he was a real man. The British soldiers themselves, the Wingate Raiders, they really liked that guy. And the Americans did too. We didn't have too much to do with him, but he was the top dog over there, Lord Louis.

S: What I wanted to ask you was: Was there any funny feeling on your part and the fellows you were with? Here you were with horses and yet the war was being won by airplanes? And the Germans were inventing jets and E2 Rockets, and tanks were a major part of the war and jeeps, and you were with the cavalry. Did you feel like you were maybe the last vestige of this type of operation?

V: No. See, you didn't get too much communication over there. Being that it was way up in there, you couldn't get nothing on the radio up there outside of the Army communication and this paper, The C.B.I. Roundup. That's about all you knew, because it was too far. The only other one you would get was Tokyo Rose out of Japan. But you didn't hear too much about what was going on over in Europe. What you read in this paper, The C.B.I. Roundup, that's about all you heard.

S: Even as far as the war?

V: Yes, you didn't know too much about it, even though we were over there with horses and mules and natives. It's like going clear back in the old days of India when Khans and them used to fight. But they didn't use too much mechanical army. Well, finally when they did hit Burma, they used artillery, but still some of it was horse drawn.

V: There weren't many tanks, right?

S: No, no tanks at all up in there that I know. I never saw any. It was mules and foot soldiers.

S: After you came home and you found out the great tank battles in Europe and North Africa and the carrier battles in the Pacific, did it feel like maybe somewhere you had been left behind?

V: No, I never gave that a thought.

S: Everyone felt that they were doing their part then?

V: Right. We figured, "Well, we're over here for a reason," and that's it. No, that never seemed to bother anybody, what was going on in the rest of the world, being that we were way over there. Like I said, supply lines were so far away that you didn't hear stuff for maybe a week after. There was very little radio contact over there.

S: But you did listen to Tokyo Rose?

V: Yes, we could get her all right. She would say, "Get out of there, Yanks, you are eating all the rice." And today I can't even eat rice.

S: Oh is that right? You ate so much.

V: Oh, I can't stand it. My wife loves it and I hate it.

S: You were on the Ledo Road for six weeks, then, is that right or longer than that?

V: Oh no, I was up there actually 26 months, in India that is. But most of the time, I say about 22 months was spent up on the road, the Ledo Road up in Burma.

S: And then all this time your function was just to supply and move the horses?

V: Yes, move the horses.

S: You had nothing to do with supplies?

V: No, we had nothing to do with them.

S: Were the mules strapped up with supplies or anything?

V: Oh yes.

S: What would be . . . ?

V: They carried everything on them from tents to ammunition. And a lot of that went up the road, too, by mules. With the Merrill's Marauders, they carried everything up on mules. Plus, they walked that 259 miles.

S: How many horses and mules would you say, when you were there, went through?

- V: Oh God, thousands. Now, I can't recall how many we unloaded at Calcutta. It had to be up in the thousands, probably 30,000 or 20,000.
- S: How many ship-loads would you say?
- V: Well, they carried about 700 on a ship. Of course, we didn't load all of them. Before we got back down there, they had other outfits, the engineers, they unloaded them. The quartermaster and port battalions did a lot of that until we got down there.
- S: Was there any particular reason why you were taken off the road?
- V: No. Out of our whole outfit, they took twenty of us and took us down there to Calcutta. We'd be down there for so long and then we'd go back up and they'd bring twenty more down, because they figured the engineers, they didn't know anything about handling horses.
- S: How long were you in Calcutta, then?
- V: I was in there about four months, off and on.
- S: And then from there you went home?
- V: Yes. Let's see, I left Calcutta, India, February 3, 1945. I left from Karachi, India. And I got on the plane and we were only up about ten minutes and smelled gas. So, the pilot said, "Fasten your seatbelts, we're going down!" And I thought, "Oh no, coming home we're going to blow up in the air." But we made it back. And they fixed the gas line. They had a big leak in the gas line. Gas was running all over, I guess. And then we were there another hour and they fixed it and we got on the plane.
- S: What was your route home?
- V: Let's see. I have it here in this book. I recorded coming home in all of these notes. Back to the base since the gas line sprung a leak. We took off for Bombay later on, arriving in Bombay, India about 1:45 p.m. We stayed there about twenty minutes, then we took off again. We flew to Abadan, Iran; then to Cairo, Egypt; arriving there March 26, 1945 at 10:30 a.m. We left Cairo, Tuesday, March 27, at 9:30 a.m. and landed at Tripoli, Libya, approximately 4:30 p.m.
- S: Did you stop at the Azores after that or did you just go straight home?

- V: Yes, we did stop at the Azores.
- S: So, how long did it take you, in days, to finally get home, would you say, a week?
- V: It was a week or better, because we were in Casablanca after Tripoli; and then from Casablanca we flew into the Azores, Azores into Bermuda, then into Miami.
- S: What was your physical condition when you got home? Had you lost any weight?
- V: No, I was about the same, around 155 pounds, same as when I went there. Like I said, I was really never sick over there outside of a kidney infection and the malaria. I had it twice, but it was mild compared to some guys. Some of them almost died from it.
- S: Well, we're running out of tape here and you've given us a lot of information about what it was like in the China-Burma-India Theatre and along the Burma Road. This is the first interview we have of someone on the Burma Road. I'd like to thank you.
- V: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW