

**Admiral Nimitz Historic Site  
National Museum of the Pacific War**

**Center for Pacific War Studies  
Oral History Program**

**Fredericksburg, Texas**

**An Interview with**

**Mr. Norman L. Palmer  
Pilot, B-25  
428BS, 310BG**

**April 3, 2003**

**My name is Richard Misenhimer and today's date is April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003. I am interviewing Mr. Norman Palmer by telephone. His address is 1886 Jitney drive, Sparks, Nevada 89434. His phone number is area code 775-358-4248. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific Wars Center of Pacific War Studies for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Mr. Palmer I want to thank you for taking the time to do this interview today. Let me read to you this agreement with the Nimitz Museum. (Agreement read.)**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Let me ask do you have a middle initial?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Norman Lee Palmer.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Agreement read.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Let me start off by asking you what is your birth date?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**September 30, 1922.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Where were you born?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**At Tiosa, Indiana. That's six miles north up highway 31 from Rochester.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Where did you go to school?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I went to Richland Center.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What year did you graduate there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**1940.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you have brothers and sisters?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I had two brothers and three sisters.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Were either of your brothers in World War II?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**All three brothers were in World War II. I was the oldest. The second one James Palmer was in the Korean War and he was killed over there. The youngest one served in the Air Force. His over seas duty was up in Alaska.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And that was during World War II or the Korean War?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**World War II.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Was your middle brother also in World War II?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Then your younger brother came home also is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**The young brother yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**When did you enter the service?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I entered the service in January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1942.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Just after Pearl Harbor.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes well it was a couple weeks.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**On Pearl Harbor Day when they attacked Pearl Harbor do you recall where you were and what your reaction was?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I worked for Sears & Roebuck and Company in South Bend, Indiana. I heard it when they announced it on the radio that Pearl Harbor was bombed.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What was your reaction?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was very surprised.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now when you went into the service did you volunteer or were you drafted?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No I had thoughts of getting into the military prior to Pearl Harbor but I was not of age my father would not sign the paperwork. When Pearl Harbor came I went home and said I am going to go to the service and my father said ok.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Which branch did you join?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I enlisted in South Bend with the intent of listing for the Army Air Corps. When I got to Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis there was no vacancies at that time for cadet program so I had to enlist as Army unassigned.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Where did you go from Fort Benjamin Harrison then?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I went Joseph T. Robinson on February the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1942.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Where is that?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**That is at Little Rock, Arkansas. That was basic training for becoming an infantry**

**medical corps man.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How did you travel down to Little Rock?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**It was by train.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How long did your training there at Little Rock last?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Basic training was only from February 2, 1942 to March 3, 1942 one month later. I was assigned to Fort Benning, Georgia as a corps man in a field hospital.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Had you finished your basic infantry training or did they take you out before the course was finished?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No the basic training was completed that was done at Fort Joseph T. Robinson. At Fort Benning then in the field hospital I was assigned as a corps man and of course we had the normal calisthenics and normal things but it wasn't actually basic training.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Back when you were at Fort Robinson what did you live in there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We lived on a base in a tent with board floors and canvas above.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How was the food there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Great. Every where I had gone in the military I was always fed good.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What all did your basic training consist of there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Drilling, marching that's about it we were always drilling and going on force marches and things of that nature. Camping over night before we come back.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you have rifle training?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Very little it was a medical corps and we didn't have very much rifle training.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So it was medical corps when you were there also?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes that's what that place was it was medical corps training.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How did you get in the medical corps, did you ask for that or did they just give you that?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. At Fort Benjamin Harrison when the Air Force was not available I could go back home or take army unassigned. That was just an assignment that they made, I didn't have a decision.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So they just put you in the medical corps?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What all did you do down at Fort Benning?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**At Fort Benning I was a corps man in a field hospital assigned to the psychiatric ward for 5 months. Then changed to the epileptic ward for 2 months. I was a ward attendant there.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How much medical training did you actually get?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I did not get any medical training. Mostly it was supervision of the patients because they were a little bit unstable in both departments.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**You were at Fort Benning this entire time is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No I was just at Fort Benning those 7 months.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**I say those 7 months you were at Fort Benning Right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**



**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Where did you go from there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Lawsen field is connected to Fort Benning. Through some correspondence I found that they were giving cadet examinations for the Air Force so I went over to Lawsen field passed the test and then orders followed October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1942 to the Army Air Corps. I was assigned to their classification center in San Antonio, Texas.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Then you went from there to San Antonio?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes, I went to San Antonio.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What place did you go to while in San Antonio?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Ok. While I was in San Antonio they had part of their preflight training, it was first. It was strictly ground school and athletics and things of this nature. And I reported to preflight training there in San Antonio on December 5, 1942.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What field was that at?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**It was no air field. It was just a preflight training. They called it on the hill. I guess it's a little bit higher elevation than the actual fields around there. December 5, 1942 is when I started my preflight training. On February 5, which is two months later, in**

**1943 I went to my primary flight training. Which was at Ballinger, Texas.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now back to your ground school. What all did you study in ground school?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We studied navigation, flight characteristics, weather, we had Morse code by audio and also by visual by the blinking of lights, learning Morse code that way.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Then when you got to Ballinger you started your flight training is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**That was my actual flying training yes. We had ground school in the before noon and flight training in the afternoon.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What kind of planes did you have there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We had PT19s. That was a single, low wing air plane.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Open cockpit?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. Open cockpit.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Two cockpits, one for the instructor and one for the student is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes that is right.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you start flight training immediately when you got there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. There might have been a day getting settled and so forth. It seemed like it started right away.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What did you live in there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We lived in barracks.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Had you flown any at all before this?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**None. I hadn't flown any type of aircraft.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What was the sensation the first time you flew?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I got sick. I was alright until, it was only a kind of introductory flight, and I was alright until we started to let down to the flight pattern. And I don't know whether it's the deceleration of the altitude or what but I had to clean up the air plane when we got back. Which was normal for a lot of them.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Was there any acrobatics that time or just regular...?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No just a straight level flight.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**When did you finally solo?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I soloed after eight flying hours.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**That's good. Was all this in the PT19?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What did it feel like to solo for the first time?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Great. It was my first ride in the front seat. Before all my flying training with the instructor was in the back seat. Course I soloed in the front seat. And it was a different perspective and landing and so forth but I managed to do alright.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What were some other things that happened there during that time?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Nothing extraordinary. I lived with my ground school and flying in the afternoons.**

**It was very enjoyable. But that's about the only thing that happened.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How long were you there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**On April the 5, which is three months later, I went to basic flight training in San Angelo, Texas.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What was the name of the field there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Good Fellow Field.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What did you do there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Repeat of what I did in primary. We had ground school. Practically the same thing in our training and education as before. But in basic we flew the BT13. Which was another low winged model plane.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Is that the one they call the Vultee Vibrator?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. The manufactures name was the Valiant but the students gave it the name Vultee Vibrator due to the vibration characteristics when doing spins and other maneuvers.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How did it fly compared to the PT19?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**It was heavier and it had more power but it flew real good.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now this again was an open cockpit?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. It had a continuous canopy with the crew of two sitting in tandem behind dual controls.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Two Cockpits?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Two seats in tandem enclosed by a canopy.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How long did you fly with an instructor there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Three months.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**With an instructor?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Oh with a n instructor? I don't recall but it was.... We had more of a program there. The checking out of the air craft. It only took about five or six hours before the instructor released me. But we also had instrument flying and formation flying and that took an instructor. And that was all through the course. But for actually checking out the airplane it was very minimal.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How about any acrobatic flying or anything like that?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. Very little but we had some acrobatic flights.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Stalls and spins, that sort of thing?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Well stalls and spins was the common thing. When it came to loops and rolls that was a little bit later on.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What did it feel like to get into a spin?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Oh I don't know. I didn't have very many sensations on these things I guess.**

**Exhilarating. All I knew to do what they told me to do.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Anything else you recall when you were there at San Angelo?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We had one death. If that's material to you or not.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Sure it is. Tell me about it.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We had one cadet who was coming in on final and there was another airplane that was trying to obtain the same space. So they got together. One was killed in the one air plane and the other was in the hospital and he was still there in the hospital when we left.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**That was the only accident you had while you were there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you ever have any engine problems or anything with the plane that you were flying?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**I'm sure you had to have engine out practices, is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Oh yes. The instructor would yank the throttle back and say "Okay force landing. Pick a field."**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**That's a lot of fun isn't it?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. Keeps you on your toes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Anything else you recall about your time there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. I can't. They had a swimming pool available to us at when we were at Good Fellow, a civilian swimming pool. Which periodically once or twice a week they took their exercises at the swimming pool instead of at the athletic field.**



**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now was Avenger field somewhere close there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**What?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Avenger field? Where the WASPs were.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**The WASPs were at...they were up on the highway between Dallas and El Paso.**

**They were about sixty miles north. There was another field at San Angelo but it was a Bombardier school. Twin engine C45 type aircraft. Things of that nature.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**When did you leave Good Fellow?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We left I don't remember the exact date. All I know is that on July fifth, just every three months, I started advance flight training at San Antonio Brooks field. Brooks Air Force base.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What did this consist of?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**This consisted of two types of aircraft. They had the BC1, which is followed by a more powerful and better version AT6. They look practically the same. The brakes on the BC1 were sloppy. And few problems ground loops and so forth occurred. But the AT6 was great.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So you transitioned to the AT6 there at Brooks field?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I only got about half a dozen flights in the BC1.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How many hours did you have by now?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I graduated with 165 hours.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**That's when you finished up there at Brooks Field?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**When was that graduation?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Graduation was August the 30,1943.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So you were there not quite two months?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No I was there From July fifth to August thirtieth.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Yes that's not quite two months.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Oh September..**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Yes September fifth would have made two months. Anything else you recall that you did at Brooks?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. We had more solo cross country flight s there and so forth. And formation flying in addition to what we normally had at school.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now on your cross country did you always come back the same day or did you spend the night somewhere before you came back?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. It was a round robin. Actually you mentioned the WASP school? That was in Sweetwater, Texas. One of our flights went up close to Sweetwater. It was kind of a triangle. Went down southeast and came back southwest to Brook Field.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you do much night flying?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. One of these cross country fights was at night. We did night formation flying, night touch and go landings in the other field there. But we had about a third of our flying at night.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Had you had any gunnery practice up to this point?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. No gunnery practice at all.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now when you graduated the on August 30<sup>th</sup>, were you commissioned or what rank did you have?**

**Me. Palmer**

**Yes, commissioned Second Lieutenant.**

**MR. Misenhimer**

**Before that you had been a flight....**

**Mr. Palmer**

**A flight cadet.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And as a flight cadet, what was your pay? Do you recall?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Seventy-five dollars a month.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And as a second lieutenant what was it?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I don't really recall. It was a hundred twenty-five or something like that. I don't recall.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**But more than.....**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Anything else you recall from your time there at Brooks Field?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Then where did you go from there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**From Brooks Field I was flying to the 309<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing at Columbia, South Carolina. And we flew B25 bombers. And when we first got there, the first couple of weeks, we learned to fly the B25. Landing mostly. Then I was paired up with a crew and we took crew training, for overseas assignments.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Where you a pilot on the B25?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was a co-pilot. We went from single engine to twin engine. And they didn't trust me for a twin engine.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So you hadn't had any twin engine training until then?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**That's right.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**About when did you arrive in Columbia?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Let me see. I arrived in Columbia on September 14<sup>th</sup>. I had two weeks vacation back home in Indiana.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Was this your first leave that you had?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**That was my first leave.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**You had been in for over a year at that point.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. January 27<sup>th</sup>.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**About twenty-one months or so, twenty months. What did it feel like, the transition form an AT6 to a B25?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Great really. Flying characteristics were the same it's just a different aircraft. And heavier aircraft, more power but I had no problem.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So your training there was really on the job training?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Pardon sir?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Your training on the twin engine was really on the job training?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes it was.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How long were you there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was there until we got our assignment to go oversea. And on December the 7<sup>th</sup> we were sent to Savannah, Georgia as a crew. And we picked up a new B25. And of course after we got the B25 we did a little flying you know down there. And then on December 9<sup>th</sup>, this was all in '43 now, we were shipped to Morrison field in Florida. And that was our embarkation point for overseas.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Do you recall some names of the members of your crew at that point?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**The pilot's name was Kenneth Jones and myself as co-pilot. And we had a bombardier by the name of Ron Hook. We had a guy by the name of Gerard ..Richard Gerard. George Stewart, engineer and Carl Latchman, radio control. And there was a couple others. I'd have to remember the names to tell you.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**That's okay. What was the total crew on the B25?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**It was six.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**When did you leave for overseas?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We left Morrison field on December the 11<sup>th</sup>. And we went the southern route. Our first flight was on December 11<sup>th</sup> from the US to Bourinquin field at Georgetown, Guiana. In South America. And then on the 12<sup>th</sup> the next day we went to Atkinson Field which is in French Guiana. Then on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December we went to Belem Field, that was in Brazil. And then on December 14<sup>th</sup> we flew into Natal for preparation for a flight to Africa. We left December the 17<sup>th</sup> '43 and we landed on the Ascension Island in the mid Atlantic. The next day on the 18<sup>th</sup> we went to Robert's field in Liberia, Africa. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> is was Rufisque Field at Dakar, Africa. And then on the 26<sup>th</sup> we went to Marrakech, Morocco.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now on this trip were you all alone or were there other planes with you?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Up to this point...up to Natal we were alone. And then when we left Natal for the Ascension Islands we were in a group of several aircraft.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**All of them B25s or what?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Most of them yes were B25s.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**For that crossing did you have to put in extra gas tanks or anything?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. The mid Atlantic was in our range. Of course if we got lost or something why it might not have been. Then to Robert's Field in Liberia we were by ourselves. Then**



**the rest of the way we were by ourselves. Where did I end at?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Marrakech.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Marrakech? Ok that was on the 26<sup>th</sup>. And then on the 28<sup>th</sup> we were sent up to Casablanca. That's in Morocco. There we received our combat assignment. And then on January the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1944 we were sent to Algiers. On January 8<sup>th</sup> we flew into Phillipville, Algeria. There we joined the three tenth bomb group (310). And we were there just about thirty days, combat crew training, formation flying, gunnery practice and so forth.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Earlier you had gotten to the 309<sup>th</sup> bomb wing, but this is not the same right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**The 309<sup>th</sup> bomb wing was a state side wing in preparation for the crew training there. But once we got overseas then we were assigned to the 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. After our training there, actually the 310 Bomb Group went through the north African campaign. And when they and the British drove Rommel out of north Africa, these groups regrouped to rebuild and the 310<sup>th</sup> was sent to Phillipville and that's where we joined them. To build up their crew strength.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now was the entire 310<sup>th</sup> medium bombers?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**The 310<sup>th</sup> was completely, they had three B25 groups. One was the 310<sup>th</sup>, the other**

**one was the 321<sup>st</sup>, and the third one was the 340<sup>th</sup>.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**About how many planes in a bomb group?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**There's three squadrons of sixteen planes each.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What squadron were you in?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was in the 428<sup>th</sup>. On February the 7<sup>th</sup> the group was ready to go forward, so we ferried everybody up to Ghisonnaccia, Gare, Corsica. And we spent ten days getting acclimated to overseas, low flying was being done at that time. But by February 17<sup>th</sup> was our first combat mission.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And where was that to ?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**You want to know the place we went to on all of these missions?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Well not, well were was the first one to?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**The first one was too Port of Orbetello. And that was on the mainland of Italy.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you fly everyday or how often?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Not everyday but I flew quite a few missions. Let me see here, the rest of the month of February I flew five days. And then do you want anything further or what?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Well in those first five days did you hit mainly the mainland of Italy?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. with the exception of two missions. And the two missions were one in France and my last mission was the day before D-day in France.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Ok the first time you attacked a port, what were some of the other targets you had?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I've got those here too just give me a second. At the Port of Orbetello it was just strictly a port. We sunk four ships at that port that day.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How many planes were on this raid?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We flew by squadron. Usually three boxes of four. Which is twelve airplanes usually.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So you sank four ships that first time?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes these were, they weren't huge ships. The next day on the 18<sup>th</sup> we went back and sunk a tanker on that day. But the other were smaller.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Small cargo ships?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What were some other targets that you hit?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Ok on the 20<sup>th</sup> we went to another harbor which was Viareggio Harbor.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now let me get a little bit straight on my geography there. Were you north of Rome at this point or south of Rome or where were these planes or targets?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**All of my missions were north of Rome. However the ground forces were stalled around Napals and Casino. At Viareggio Harbor they had marshalling yards along side of it. We hit those and we also sunk another tanker.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Marshalling yards, railroad marshalling yards?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now on any of these missions were any of your planes shot down?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. All the time I was over there my squadron did not lose a plane.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you encounter any enemy fighter aircraft?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes in southern France. On my last two missions.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**But here in Italy not then?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No we didn't have any.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How about antiaircraft fire?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Lots of it. Skies were black on practically every mission.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Was your plane ever hit?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. Do you want to go to that one?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Sure let's go to that one right now.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**That one was on my thirty-seventh mission. And that was over Ficullo. Which we had a railroad bridge as our target. And the flack was heavy and we had a close burst on the left front side, which the flack hit our left engine. We had an oil sump in the engine and a piece of flack hit the oil sump in the engine and we lost all of our oil. And we had to feather the engine.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So you went thirty-six missions without getting hit, is that correct?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. We got several holes in practically all missions.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now on these missions what altitude did you fly at when you were over the target?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Medium altitude, usually nine thousand feet to eleven thousand feet.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Relatively low really.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes it was. My first three or four missions those were all low level. Five hundred feet.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you do any skip bombing?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. That's what we did on low level.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Was that pretty effective?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes, it was effective as much as our pilot, he had control of the shooting and the pilot was pretty good. So we hit what we could.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now when you were that low did you also strafe targets?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. We took over a B25G, which had 20mm guns in the nose and we had two machine guns in the wings, and had two package guns, one on each side.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And they were fixed firing not movable?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes they were fixed. We had a total of sixteen guns. And we had a 50 caliber.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And you had one on the top and the bottom also?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. We didn't have any on the bottom but we had a top turret with two guns.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now the 20 mm was this twin or single?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Single.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And it was fixed in the nose or where?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And about how many rounds a minute would it fire? Do you recall?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No I don't.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Was it pretty rapid fire though?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. We also had a seventy-five mm canon in our nose of our aircraft.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What did that do to the aircraft when that fired?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Seemed like it temporarily stalled and then went ahead again. It was quite a jolt.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**I can imagine. How was it loaded?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**It was loaded by our navigator. The cannon came through where normally the crawl space is to go from the cockpit to the bombardiers compartment. On the solid nose aircraft with the cannon, the cannon was in that crawlway and it recoiled back into the cockpit. And that navigator had a rack of shells. He loaded it and kept it...**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Each shell separately. Did you have a bombardier at that point?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**You also carried bombs too is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**



**Yes. On that airplane the pilot shot everything and dropped the bomb.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you fly mostly on the G model or what?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. I don't know when we changed over with the glass nose with the bombardier.**

**But it was a few missions.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So your first missions were on the G model that way?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes the airplane that we took over.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you become a pilot?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. I flew forty missions as a co-pilot. And then we went on a vacation or RR as they called it. Then when I came back I started flying as the pilot. And I flew thirty more missions as a pilot.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So you say it was seventy missions then for the mediums.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**About how long was your normal flight?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Most flights being of course it was midway up on the leg of Italy we had to fly kind of straight east or a little bit northeast on our missions. Most of our missions were from two to two; thirty hours long.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Round trip?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**One reason I guess why we had to fly seventy missions. Two missions that we'd flew to Avignon, southern France were four hours on one mission and four ten on the other.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And this is round trip or one way?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**That's round trip.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**This is also from Corsica is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**That's a lot of missions, seventy missions.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yeah that's quite a few.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Was any of your crew ever wounded or killed?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. None was killed. On one of the missions I found imbedded in my left hand a shrapnel. A piece of shrapnel that was very small, about the size of a pea. A vegetable pea. And didn't even realize it had happened until after we got back. Some of the rest of the crew had similar types of things but nothing very serious.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And you were very fortunate for that many missions.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes we were.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now what Air Force were you in?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**12<sup>th</sup> Air Force.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What were some of your more memorable missions?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Well I got other than the one that disabled our left engine, I had a mission at Ferrera. That was my sixty-first mission. That was on 7/8, what would that be June 8<sup>th</sup>?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**July 8<sup>th</sup>.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**July okay. July 8<sup>th</sup>, after we left the target, one of my five hundred pound bombs did**

**not drop off it stayed in the bomb bay. The bomb is held by a shackle with two attachments to the bomb. One of these attachments was loose, the bomb was in kind of a forty-five degree angle and the propeller from the wind, these are fuses as the nose propeller, when it goes down the propeller turns and when it stops turning the bomb is armed. There was a danger with it hanging that way so I turned the airplane over to the co-pilot and we were out over the sea at this time. Without my parachute, had a pretty good crew man that was beefy and he held my ankles and I took the escape axe and lowered myself head first into the bomb bay, and I chopped the bomb loose with the escape axe.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**With the axe huh?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. And for this I was awarded the soldier's medal.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What mission was that on?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**That was on my sixty-first mission.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And that was the only time something like that happened to you?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. Once was enough.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Yes I can imagine.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Another time on one of my Avignon missions in southern France, my sixty-eighth mission, as we left the target a squadron of ME109 German fighters came out of the sun. We were going southeast. Head on and they made one pass. A 20mm from one of them shot into my right vertical stabilizer in the tail, and it went back to the hinge when it exploded. And in exploding it twisted the vertical stabilizer to the point to where it was unusable. So I couldn't use that on flying home. However as long as we were flying level in formation and so forth and no extra stress on the airplane I was able to get it home and make a normal landing. That was the last bad thing that actually happened to me.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now the vertical stabilizer is what lets you turn left and right is that correct?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. The B25, are you familiar with the B25?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Yes I am. It has twin tails.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes it has twin tails. And on the left it has a fixed portion but then it has a vertical stabilizer which is hinged in two places. The shell went in the leading edge of the fixed portion of the tail. It got back to the bottom hinge and that's where it exploded.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So neither one of them would work at that point then is that correct?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Well that's right. I don't really know to tell you the truth. All I know is that I did not use my aileron coming back. Not my aileron but my vertical stabilizer. That's what I use when I turn.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now your vertical stabilizer is controlled with a foot pedal right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**That was one point of interest there because I wasn't sure if the vertical stabilizers on a 25 were independent or if they were hooked together and if one were jammed if the other one wouldn't work.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No, they are hooked together. I just couldn't use it very much and maybe I was able to move it a couple of inches with the foot pedal. But I relied on my ailerons for control and turning. Course we had the elevators on the tail which worked alright.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Help you with your altitude right. When you made a turn you kind of skidded in without those vertical stabilizers.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Well yeah it wasn't an ordinary turn.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What are some other things that happened?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**That's all that happened in my combat tour.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Let's continue on now. All you were flying was out of a Corsica is that correct?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So when you were bombing southern France was that during the invasion of southern France?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**It was two days before they invaded southern France.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And that was August of forty-five I mean forty-four somewhere along in there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**My last mission in Avignon was 8/7. So it must have been 8/8.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**I know it was about two months after D-day and Normandy.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Anything else you recall about any of your combat missions?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Not on my combat missions.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So when you finished up there then what did you do?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was sent home. I went home on a... I went down to Naples and let me see...Naples, Italy and departed on September 13<sup>th</sup> on the ship Santa Rosa. In a convoy of nineteen ships.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Let me ask another thing. During your combat time did you have the whole crew, the same crew the entire time or did you get a replacement from time to time?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. When I got my own aircraft I got a new crew. The old crew stayed with the original pilot.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Well the first thirty or forty missions was the same crew is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes that is right.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you all always fly the same airplane or did you fly different airplanes?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No we flew the same airplane. We were assigned an airplane and if the airplane was out we didn't fly.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So you flew the same airplane all the time?**



**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Either as a co-pilot or a pilot which ever plane there...**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So on September the third you left on the Santa Rosa I believe you said?**

**Mr. .Palmer**

**We left the thirteenth. September the thirteenth. We left Naples, Italy on the Santa Rosa.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And you went from there to where?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We arrived in New York on the Hudson river on September twenty-sixth.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now on that trip back you say you were with a number of ships?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. I don't know whether they were strictly escort ships or whether they were going back and forth with something. But we certainly woke up and here these ships were along side us.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you have any submarine scares or anything on the way back?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**None whatsoever. We had a load of German prisoners on board that came back with us.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now where were they kept?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**They were kept in the bottom hold part of the aircraft. Excuse me the ship.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**About how many of those were there? Do you have any idea?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I have no idea.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**A large number?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**There was at least a couple dozen.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**There wasn't hundreds or something like that?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Beg your pardon?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**There wasn't several hundreds or something like that?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No I guess not.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did they have guards on them I assume?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. They were guarded all the time.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Then you arrived back in New York I believe you said?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Arrived in New York on September twenty-sixth.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What kind of reception did you get there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Nobody met us. We just parked and went to our separation or our assigned station.**

**Where ever that was. I can't remember the name of it.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Were they mostly Air Force men coming back or a lot of army or just what?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No there was all services.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So when you got to New York where did you go?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I went home on leave. But I had to report to Miami Beach, Florida on October twenty-first. That was purpose processing back into the United States and getting a new assignment.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Where were you assigned to then?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**On November seventh I was assigned to Altus Advanced Flying School in Altus, Oklahoma. It was an advanced flying school where they taught instruments to the pilot and flying weather instruments.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**You were there with an instructor then?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was there as an instructor. I came home with four hundred and forty-seven hours and thirty-five minutes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Total hours including training and all?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Total hours. And I didn't do any flying in anything up to this point arriving to Altus, Oklahoma.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What all did you do there in Altus?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was an instructor for the cadets in the advanced flying school. Teaching them to fly instruments, formation and weather.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What kind of planes were you flying there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We had UC78 Accessna twin engine.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Is that the one they call the Bamboo Bomber?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Was it a metal plane or a wooden plane?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**It might have been wood though. Wings and tail unit were wood, fusel eye was welded steel tubing.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Twin engine is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Twin engine yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Something like the T11 or the C45?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes but it was a.....**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Single tail rather than a twin tail?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How long were you there doing that?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Not too long. I transferred from Altus and reported to Brooks Field in San Antonio again on March the 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**After the war or 1945?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**March the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1945.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Okay the war was still going on at that point.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**At this time we had excess pilots and I was sent there. At Brooks Field I imagine we had about 50 to 60 excess pilots. They had B25's and T6's there for these pilots to get their flying time in and being that I was a combat B25 pilot they made me an instructor pilot. I flew with these pilots to get in their 4 hours a month time.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So they can get their flight pay?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. I did that job until June the 16<sup>th</sup> of 1945 when I was transferred to Love Field in Dallas. That was the ferry command up there. I flew with ATC flying C47's out of Dallas to Tucson. A crew from Stockton, California, would pick the aircraft up and fly it into Stockton. These are all cargo type planes. Then the plane would come**

**back from Stockton to Tucson we would pick it up there and fly it back to Dallas. It was just a relay. Then it went back to the east coast then back to Stockton California.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Were you carrying some type of cargo?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**When we left Dallas we went to El Paso Texas and then from there we picked up cargo and went to Tucson. Then the aircraft went with this other crew and when it came back it had cargo we would fly back to Dallas.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**From Dallas to El Paso were you carrying cargo or was it empty?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We were always carrying cargo.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What type of cargo do you recall?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**A lot of it was maintenance type items, engines, smaller aircraft parts, and all of it was related to the Air Force.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**We are moving them from the east coast to the west or from the west back then?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. Instead of one crew flying all the way through they had it divided into three areas. East Coast to Dallas, Dallas to Tucson, and Tucson to Stockton.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Would you stay a couple days in Tucson or how long?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No just over night we had about a 6 or 8 hour delay.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**There was a number of planes doing it?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. It wasn't always the same airplane we left that came back.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So it was kind of a sky train across there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**How long did you do that?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was there at Love Field for a year. During that time it must have been 3 or 4 months doing that. We also had to fly storage aircraft to the depots. We were already flying extra airplanes to depots at that time. I flew a C47 for a group of pilots that picked up airplanes and flew them into the Arizona depot. I would fly out to this field pick the pilots up and bring them back and I did that on several trips.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**These planes were being put in storage out there is that right?**



**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. Dry storage outdoors. While I was there at Love Field the ferry command had control of six P38's and I was interested in flying a P38 and there was a pilot there that had flown them. I asked him to give me a little ground school in it. There is only one pilot to the P38. He gave me about an hour instruction then I fired her up and took off and flew about 2 hours and landed it. I ended up ferrying all 6 of these to San Antonio for storage down there. So I got a little time on P38's.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**The P38 has a counter rotating prop is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I don't know whether its counter rotating or not it may have that but its twin boom you know. (Note by Mr. Palmer - I checked and the props are counter rotating. They each turn toward the fuselage.)**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Yes twin boom twin engine, right. How was flying a P38 compared to a 25 or a C47?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Well you could do more with a P38. On one of my local flights, I had 4 or 5 local flights there just because I loved to fly the P38. In flying T6's and so forth we learned loops and rolls. When you do a roll you get your wings vertical and you hit the top rudder to hold the nose up at the horizon to complete your roll. The 38, has a steering wheel. I did the same thing with the P38. But when I hit that top rudder instead of holding the nose it just shot up nose high and I spun out, it took me about**

**10 thousand feet to get out of it.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Good thing you were high huh?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. I never did any of these things low. It was part of the ferry command. That part of it moved to Topeka, Kansas on June the 10<sup>th</sup> 1946. Then the ferry command there all I did was ferry aircraft. My first assignment we had about 100 aircraft in storage at Dodge City, Kansas. We would pick them up there and fly into Denver, stay over night and then the next morning we would fly into Utah at the depot there. Then we would stay over night catch the air traffic command ATC aircraft back to Topeka, about a day at Topeka and I would have my assignment again. I would just do it over and over again. I did trips to there, I did trips to Mobile, Alabama, and I did trips to Pennsylvania for the rest of the time that I was there.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What kind of planes were these now?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**These were surplus type airplanes T11, C45, AC10's type aircraft.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Trainer types?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Trainers yes. They were trying to bring them back to service at some of the depots out in Utah. They were refurbishing them and trying to get them to fly up again.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Let me back up a little bit. In May of 1945 Germany surrendered do you recall where you were and what you heard about that?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was at Brooks Field.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you hear about Germany surrendering and any kind of celebration or anything?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No not that I recall.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**In April of 1945 President Roosevelt died. Do you recall hearing anything about that or any reaction to that?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No reaction everybody was sad I guess.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**In August of 1945 Japan surrendered, VJ Day, any celebration then?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was at Love Field then and when I heard it I was taking a trip over to Fort Worth and I heard it on the radio.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**When did you finally get out of the service?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I retired February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1962 after 20 years.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So you made a career in the Air Force then?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes, I had an assignment after the war was over to Japan, Korea, I toured over seas assignments that way.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Were you involved in the Korean War then?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. I came home about 2 or 3 months before the Korean War.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**When did you go to Japan?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was brought to Japan on USAT General Blanchford ship on June 18, 1947.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What did you do in Japan?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I had a couple assignments based between Topeka and Japan and I was flying the Douglas B26's. I was assigned to the 38<sup>th</sup> bomb group flying B26's at Itami airbase in Japan. We flew all kinds of training missions, gunnery missions. We were always doing gunnery, bombing, formation flying and we patrolled the Japanese Sea between Korea and Japan.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Against the Russians or what?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No, we just patrolled, reporting any activity in that area boats, ships, and so forth.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What was the highest rank you got to?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I retired as a Major.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now back in World War II what all medals did you get?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I got the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Soldiers Medal, and the Air Medal with seven Oak Leaf clusters. And I got the Distinguished Flying Cross earned on my mission No. 61 on July 8<sup>th</sup>.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**The Air Medal, you got those for ever so many flights so many missions I mean?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**They gave you Oak Leaf clusters rather than another Air Medal?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Right. A total of eight air medals but seven were clusters.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Any others?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No that's all other than service medals and things of that nature.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**The Air Force didn't give battle stars did they?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Not that I recall.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you get back with any souvenirs from over seas?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No I didn't bring anything back with me at all.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you ever seen any USO shows?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I never saw any USO shows.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Only at Naples when I would be down there getting ready to come home and I went down there on recreation leave they had a Red Cross building there with 4 or 5 employees. They had recreational items, coffee shops and just places you could lounge around in.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**When you were over seas how about getting mail, could you get it regularly?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**It seemed like I got my mail pretty regular.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What did you think of the officers over you during World War II?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I had great officers. They were very experienced. None of them were..well when I got there I was in a replacement group for a group that had practically of North Africa. They were all well knowledgable. Very easy to get along with and I enjoyed them very much. Some of our officers in our group were part of Jimmy Doolittles raid on Japan.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Who was the Commanding General for the 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Cannon. I think Cannon or John K. Cannon, I think it was.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Kenny was in the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force down in South Pacific.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Kenny was in the South Pacific.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**With MacArthur that's right.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was under his command in Japan.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Were you?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Where was that air base in Japan? What part of Japan was that?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Osaka. It's where Japan kind of turns and the land starts going southwest. It's on the bottom there.. Next to the harbor.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**On the main island?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Kobe is on one side of the harbor, Osaka on the east side of the harbor, and on the north part is Itami Air Force base.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**But it's on the main island of Hokaido?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes.**

**Mr, Misenhimer**

**Now when you where on Corsica what did you sleep in there?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**We were stationed at Kusun air force base and they already had prefabricated buildings there. It was no tents or anything.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**And you said everywhere you were the food was good right?**



**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. In fact in Korea, this was after my flying. I had an event in flying that I haven't told you about yet. But I was grounded for an aircraft accident but they allowed me to finish out my tour of twenty years. So I took this tour to Korea and I was an administrative officer there. And was in charge of base facilities, the air men, and also on a couple committees for the legal office. So we had good buildings and also the Officers Mess. I was the chairmen of that. So we had a very good Officers Mess. We had a Colonel that loved to hunt and that was a good place for pheasant. Every weekend I was in charge of the base and he was in charge of the hunting. And we ate a lot of pheasants while we were there.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Do you want to tell me about the experience that got you grounded?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. On October 29, 1954 I was flying out of, can I give you a little history before that?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Sure go ahead please.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Okay. When I came back from Japan flying B26s, they disbanded deactivated the 38<sup>th</sup> bomb group. And I came back as a replacement as all of us did, the pilots there at that base, came back as replacements pilots to Travis Air Force base in Californis. As replacement crews as pilots to a B17 group that was stationed at Clark in the Phillipines that was coming back to Travis at the same time. So I got**

back there. When I got to Travis I became base operations officer. I flew a few B29s there. Flew a few B17s there til they both deactivated and started bringing in heavy cargo airplanes and B29s. Then I got this base operations job. And I was in base operations until July the third of 1953. I decided I wanted to get into the B47 program. You know what the B47 program is?

Mr. Misenhimer

That was a jet. One of the first jet bombers I believe.

Mr. Palmer

That was the six jet bomber it was the only thing we had at that time during the cold war. It was between the B29 and the B52.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had a crew of how many?

Mr. Palmer

Three. On June the third 1953 I submitted an application for the B47 program and on July the third I reported to Elington field in Houston for my first phase which was the observer training on the B47 aircraft. I was there until September the twenty-eighth. Then I was transferred to James Conley air force base in Waco, Texas for my basic overseas B47 type course. There we learned to navigate by radar mostly. And also in addition to my training there for this, this flight had some excess pilots, like us, that needed flying time. They had a couple B25s and they made me the instructor pilot for the B25. I had a double duty while I was there. And then on March the 26<sup>th</sup> 1954 we were transferred to Forbes Air Force base, Topeka, for my combat group training. I received my crew and did a lot of

educational work in weather and so forth and training. And on June the 7<sup>th</sup> of 1954 I was transferred to McConnell Air Force base with my crew to the advance flying school B47. And I went to the B47 program and went back to Forbes in August the 21<sup>st</sup> '54. After I learned how to fly at the McConnell Air Force base we flew missions, combat type missions, weather missions, aerial refueling hookups, things like that and so forth. And on October the 29<sup>th</sup> I had a night refueling mission and was to take off and meet the tanker over St. Louis and have my refueling. On climb out on this mission, at eleven thousand feet, the B47 had a reverse aileron control. The airplane went out of control and spiraled in. I ejected at about thirty-five hundred feet, and as far as I know I was the first pilot to successfully eject from a B47 as a pilot. And the rest of the crew went in with the aircraft. They found me and I was taken to the hospital in Kansas City because it was closest to where I crashed. At the medical center there, University of Kansas Medical Center. And later transferred to Forbes on February 8<sup>th</sup> of '55. And I did my further medical there until I was finally able to move and be transferred. Because they didn't have a rehabilitation facility to take care of me, I was sent out to California, Dublin Parks Air Force base there strictly on medical facilities. And then I was released January the 20<sup>th</sup> 1956 and was assigned to Bakersfield, California to the ground observer corps. And the ground observer corps was a facility that observed aircraft traffic between radar sites in the country. We had a lot of vacant spots that wasn't covered by radar. So the observation, the ground observer-squadron had these observation posts nicely in spots and they reported air traffic. Of course we had a big plastic board there at the center. Where all this traffic was spotted and so forth.

**Then while I was there I got the assignment to go to Japan. And I departed Travis air force base to Tachikawat Air Force base in Japan on July 11<sup>th</sup> '57. And I was then sent to Kunson Air Force Base Korea. I left there on June the 15<sup>th</sup> 1958. That was just a year assignment. And then I was reassigned to Chanute Air Force base Rantoul, Illinois until I retired on February the 7<sup>th</sup> 1962.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So the reason you couldn't fly anymore was health reasons is that right?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yes. It'd be my right knee was completely dislocated, and they had to put it back and run a cord through my knee with a button on each side to hold it. And then a cast. My right forearm was broken. My left clavicle bone was broken. So I was immovable, I couldn't move for quite awhile. Of course when I came back to active duty, so to speak, I could not fly. I was grounded permanently.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now you say you were the first pilot to successfully eject from a B47. Had others tried it and not made it.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No, I was the first pilot to successfully, I believe I was the first pilot to successfully eject. The early model aircraft did not have a type of canopy which hinged to the back and when the ejection process started the canopy swiveled back behind the second pilot in the back. We had several decaps, cutting their head off whatever you call it. Decapitation?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Yes, decapitated.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**Yeah I think there was one observer type in the B47, the observer in the nose or bombardier, the tripple threat person in the nose, had an ejection seat that went down underneath the aircraft. And I think it ejected the individual off the coast of Africa or some place in Africa....?**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**So when that problem with the aileron would happen of course you couldn't control the plane?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No I couldn't control. And that's when I decided to leave the airplane. Started the procedure and evidently my chute or chair was the one that worked. I don't remember pulling the trigger, I don't remember actually doing it in the aircraft away from the damage to my body. Must of hit something. The chute had this automatic feature, a barometric pressure device, at a certain level the chute would automatically open. I did not remember departing the seat. As far as the chute goes the first thing I remember was a shock from the chute opening. We were doing about six hundred and fifty knots when I left the airplane. And I felt the shock, I saw where the airplane landed, but I was oscillating in my chute and I was caught in an oscillating chute. If you grab ahold of the risers you could slow your oscilation down. That's what I tried to do but I couldn't move my left arm because of my shoulder bone being broken and I couldn't move my right because of my right arm being broken. I must of passed out again. The next thing I remember is hitting the**

**ground. And I woke up and I was on my back in corn field with my head propped up on a stubble of corn. It was November and the corn was gone. But they take something and go over the corn stalks and bend them over to about six eight inches high.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Were you able to send any kind of radio message before the crash?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. None whatsoever. It was so fast.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Were you ever involved with any B36s?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**They had B36s in Travis when I first got back there. I was a friend of an engineering officer which was also the test pilot for the aircraft in his group. In the B36 group he asked if I'd like to have a ride and I told him yes. I got in the airplane and we preflighted for two hours. It wouldn't pass preflight so I had to get out.**

**That's as close as I come to a B36.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Anything back about your World War II experience you recall?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. I can't think of anything.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Your World War II units, have you had any reunions?**

**Mr. Palmer**

I was unaware of my group having a reunion until two years ago. I was always looking for my Bomb Group. But I understand it was 57<sup>th</sup> wing of the 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force was my wing number. And my first original pilot about three years ago wrote a kind of a history of his military career, he got out after the war for his family, and in writing this up he was trying to find the crew members. And he could never find all of us. And finally about two and a half years ago I got a notice through Social Security that somebody was trying to contact me and gave me a phone number. I called it and it was him. Kenneth Jones, he lives at Seattle, Washington at the time. There's only three members of my crew that is left. He, myself, and this other kid Carl Latchman who was our radio operator on the original flight crew. And we made arrangements and got together. About three months later I went up there and had a ball. That's when I found out that the 57<sup>th</sup> wing was having these reunions. Last October they had their reunion here at Reno. And I was able to go for my first time. And it was for five days and it was great. So They're having them every year but I'm eighty years old I don't know if I'll be going to them anymore. My bedroom had got a nice picture of B25s strafing a harbor in the South Pacific. On each side of it I have a model of a B25 and a B26. Since my wife died I've converted our big bedroom into an office and a room. And on the wall I have a big Robert Taylor painting of B29s and the escorts going to Japan. On each side of it a companion print of the B17 that I got with the B29s. On the left I got two B52s in a picture. On my desk I got a picture of a B47 with a model of a B47 on it. And I got a plaque. Can I read you the plaque that I got?

Mr. Misenhimer

**Yes please.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**When I ejected from the B47 and in the process of the hospital term I received a plaque and a card with the same thing on it for my wallet and it says :**

**\*\*\*\*\* Know all men by these presence Capitan Norman L. Palmer is a life member of the Weber Booster's club being duly qualified by reasons of having been being boosted out of an intolerable situation by a Weber Ejection Seats. \*\*\*\*\***

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**That's quite an honor.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I thought that was pretty nice.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Out of all the planes you flew, what would you say was your favorite?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**The B47 was the easiest plane I believe to fly. Yet it's been noted to be a killer aircraft. I've done some research on B47s through my daughter's computer and so forth. And I got a lot of articles on a lot of accidents that the B47 had. A lot of them with nuclear ground accidents and so forth. But I think that was the easiest plane. You flew it right you were okay. But I think the B25 might be first and my B26 second.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**What did you think of the B29 when you flew that?**

**Mr. Palmer**



**B29 was heavy but it was sluggish. I mean you would turn your control about forty-five degrees and maybe three to five seconds later it would start to turn. But other than that it wasn't bad.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you ever fly the Martin B26?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No. Never did. At Sardinia an island south of Corsica had the old B26 outfit. And we had a repair depot at our base in Corsica and several B26s would be shot up so bad they'd come in and land there and get repaired.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Why do you think you never lost any aircraft in you forty missions or whatever?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**I was twenty years old, too young to be scared and not old enough to know very much. So I don't really know. I guess maybe we were lucky. We had good pilots. They were at the point of close formation flying. And we excelled in that and I think, I don't know. We flew in formations of three squadron formation, group formation at times. And the other squadrons they lost while I was there two or three airplanes. But we never did.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Now the German flak had a reputation for being pretty accurate.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**They were. In fact we had a couple airplanes that the 88mm shell went completely through the airplane. Didn't explode but it just went through and made a big hole.**

**They were very good.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**Did you ever have fighter escorts?**

**Mr. Palmer**

**No fighter escort over Italy. By going to this reunion and hearing these guys talk they had a lot of fighter escorts after they moved back to Italy. After Corsica when the bomb line got up to the Po Valley and the Brennen Pass area, the aircraft squadron moved over to Italy and they got a lot of aircraft fighter problems there. But I guess the Tuskugee air men took care of a lot of that.**

**Mr. Misenhimer**

**The record shows that they never lost a bomber that they were escorting to any fighters.**

**Mr. Palmer**

**That's right.**

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