

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

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

**Mrs. Anita Borchers
Wife of Eddie Borchers
Logistic Command Officer**

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Ms. Lane: I'm Martha Lane. I'm doing this interview with Mrs. Eddie Borchers for the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas and this is an oral project. I'm going to let Mrs. Borchers tell her story.

Mrs. Borchers: My name is Anita Borchers. The date is September 26, 2003. I live at 158 Triangle B-Lane, Fredericksburg and I'm speaking for my husband who took some of the pictures that are shown at the museum. His name was Eddie Borchers and he passed away June 15, 2003.

Ms. Lane: Tell us about Mr. Borchers. Was he stationed in San Antonio?

Mrs. Borchers: He wasn't in the Army. He was Civil Service and he was at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio.

Ms. Lane: How many years was he at Kelly?

Mrs. Borchers: Many. Off hand I can't tell you. These pictures were taken November 16th, 1945, when this all took place. The planes in the photo, from Kelly Air Force Base, were being sent to Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. They were various kinds of planes. It says here Flying Fortresses, and Liberators and others. I thought some were bombers. I can only tell you what this newspaper wrote at the time. They call them Flying Fortresses and Liberators. The war was over and they were surplus and were sent to Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. And he, with other men, were sent there to disassemble the planes. He was sent there to disassemble some secret things that were in these airplanes. He had the clearance for that. And

the other men were with him, and a few soldiers were also stationed there.

And finally this is what it looked like (showing photo). They called it the Billion Dollar Junk Pile. And the mission was finally accomplished and that is why we were there. There were a few soldiers, and the commanding officer was Major Piester (sp?). I don't remember his first name. The soldiers lived on the base. And one thing that they did keep up...Eddie and I lived on the base also, we had a beautiful little set up there. Major Piester loved a good time and he did keep up the club. We would have dances and they would send the bus into the little town of Walnut Ridge to bring girls to come out and dance with the boys. I guess they had a name for it. It could be part of the USO.

They came out and we always had a very good time. Here is a picture of me, one where we were dancing. Just across from the base there was a prisoner of war camp, and they were German soldiers. They did not come to the dances, but occasionally they would pick them up in a truck, and take them to the fields and they would help the farmers. That's what I understood. And when they would drive by we would just wave. They were the nicest, friendliest boys, but I never got to talk to any of them.

Ms. Lane: About what year were these parties?

Mrs. Borchers: It was right after the war ended about 1945. And these prisoners were still there. And they had a chef, or one of the prisons could really bake good cakes. And several times we had special parties at the club
And they would bake a cake and the Major would bring the cake in. They did beautiful work and tasted perfect. That happened several times and I would have liked to have met him. But I never

got close to the prisoners. My husband worked but there were good times.

Mrs. Lane: So what was he doing?

Mrs. Borchers: He was mostly taking the secret things out of the planes. I don't even know myself what they were. But the other boys and soldiers would help disassemble the planes.

Mrs. Lane: Where was Mr. Borchers from?

Mrs. Borchers: Right here in Fredericksburg. Born here. And he went to work at Kelly Air Force Base in 1941. And he and I were married in 1942. He was sent to various schools and studied. The Government was good. It really educated him in many things. The first one was Patterson, New Jersey, where he went to school for automatic pilot work. After that they just kept sending him to schools, as he was an intelligent man. He had many awards and writings of his awards.

So that's what we did in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. They had all these planes and before they disassembled them, he thought they were beautiful so he took a picture of each plane. I found out now that at the Nimitz museum it's called Nose Art. And I did not know that. I wondered to myself would the Nimitz be interested in having the pictures, but I did not have the nerve to go there and ask. Then my nephew took them. My nephew's wife, who is my husband's niece, went to her class reunion. And this friend of hers was interested since she works at the Nimitz. And that's how the pictures got there. And they were very interested and wrote letters how interested they were. And I thought that was the end of it. But Eddie deserves the credit for all this work and I would like for

him to be recognized. (Ms. Lane and Mrs. Borchers look at pictures of the planes and men, and make comments.)

The other men weren't doing what Eddie was doing. His work was secret things inside the planes. Walnut Ridge is a very small town but had a newspaper and wrote the story. The story does say that the planes were surplus equipment and awaiting salvage operations. The radar equipment, engines, tires and a few other parts are salvaged and scrap from which the aluminum will be claimed. See they did reuse parts.

(Ms. Lane and Mrs. Borchers reviewing other pictures.)

Ms. Lane: Now were you born here in Fredericksburg?

Mrs. Borchers: Yes, my maiden name was Metzger. That's a common name here. Everybody knows that name.

(Reviewing pictures)

Ms. Lane: Did your husband have anything to do with the Nose Art.

Mrs. Borchers: No, he just took the photographs. I was told at one time that some soldiers are so intelligent and artistic they painted these. I don't know how they had the time to do it.

Ms. Lane: While your husband was at Kelly Air Force Base, what did he do there?

Mrs. Borchers: He was at first with automatic pilots, and other things with the airplanes. He didn't fly himself. One time we went to Spokane, Washington, for months, we were in Walnut Ridge, we were in Fort Worth, Tucson, Arizona. I could not always go with him but

he was in many places where I could not go. If he could drive there, I could go with him. But even if he flew, I would follow him later after he got settled.

Ms. Lane: Mrs. Borchers, thank you for sharing your information and your husbands photographs with the Nimitz Museum.

Transcribed by
Evan and Virginia Roberts
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