

**THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR
(ADMIRAL NIMITZ MUSEUM)**

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview with

**Charles W. Mann
Captain, U.S. Air Force
N. Africa, Iran, Casablanca
December 3, 2003**

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is December 3, 2003. I am interviewing Mr. Charles W. Mann on the cruise ship Rhapsody of the Sea in the Gulf of Mexico. His home is 519 Sarah Ann, Nacogdoches, Texas 75965. His phone number is 936-564-8156. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific War, Center for Pacific War Studies, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer

Charley I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today and thank you to your service to our country at that time. Let me start by asking you what is your birth date?

Mr. Mann

October 27, 1916.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you born?

Mr. Mann

Evansville, Indiana.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Mann

Evansville, Indiana Central High.

Mr. Misenhimer

What year did you finish there?

Mr. Mann

1934

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do when you finished high school?

Mr. Mann

Worked at the bank.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of work did you do at the bank?

Mr. Mann

I was starting out as a messenger and then I ended up in the finance department and then into a branch finance business they had in Paducah, Kentucky. And at the finance institution I was on the road contacted dealers and contacted delinquent accounts and repossessed cars and all that good stuff.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what bank was this?

Mr. Mann

The Citizens National Bank in Evansville. But the name of our company in Paducah was Southern Commercial Corporation.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now, this was during the depression. How did the depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Mann

Well, my family – my father was a police officer and my mother was just a housewife like most women were at that time and so he had a steady income, but it was very meager. My mother was a good manager and we got by and then I early on I had the urge to get hold of a little money so I started caddying at a golf course in Evansville at the

country club and I had to ride my bicycle about five (5) miles out to the golf course and caddy in the hot sun and the hills and the usual fee at that time was \$.75 for 18 holes. If you did a pretty good job you'd usually get a dollar for 18 holes then I'd have my four quarters and I'd go home and I'd feel it. Then also how the depression affected me – I'd get a food allowance when I was going to high school at \$.25 a day which would've covered if I would eat at the school cafeteria, but I didn't eat there I went to the restaurant not far from school and I ordered a bowl of chili for \$.10 and I would fill it with oyster crackers so I would fill myself up with chili and oyster crackers then I'd go to the dime store in town and get me some chocolate coated peanuts – chocolate covered peanuts – and then that was my meal, that was my lunch and that's how I did it and I always traveled back and forth to school to home by bicycle.

Mr. Misenhimer

So when you finished high school you were able to get a job at the bank.

Mr. Mann

Oh yes, yes I got – they took me on and then in the bank where I went from messenger to – went into the clearing department and the bookkeeping and I did and then when the bank organized this finance company which is like a finance company financing cars for dealers and then of course retail clients and they like CIT or Commercial Credit Corporation or GMAC, of course we were small and I had always, whenever I took a job why it was one that I was going to stay with so I stayed with that job. However, then out of Paducah, Kentucky and I traveled Kentucky and part of Missouri and southern Illinois. I became real well acquainted with a dealer over in Mayfield, Kentucky and he and I got along very well together so then after I got notice I was registered for the draft in

Evansville, Indiana which was actually my home even though I was living at the time in Paducah and I got notice, my mother told me that I was to be drafted in October of 1940 would be drafted in October 1940, that was the second draft, I don't know when the first draft was – sometime earlier. So then I played a trumpet in high school band and I had a pretty high chair there so I had some friends that were playing music in Evansville and they said we're in a band in the National Guard here in Evansville. They said why don't you come and get in the Guard because then they won't draft you, but you're going to go into the service on January 1, 1941. So I said well that sounds like a good idea to me so I got into the band in the National Guard and then in January 1 when we get mustered in to the Federal service for one year and of course the boys that had already been in there they already had the rank they were Sergeants and Corporals and so forth and so on and at that time why the Buck Private- which they nicknamed me Buck- was \$21 a month, but a Corporal made \$54 a month so they said well we can take care of you and give you a specialty rating and that will give you more money so I was happy with that because I wanted to gather a little money always, always. I got a specialty rating and I was paid \$56 a month, but a Corporal was just making \$54 so I was never interested in being promoted to a Corporal or a Sergeant because I was making more money than the Corporal was and so then along came – we thought we were going to get out at the end of December 31, 1941 and along came December 7th and that stopped the whole thing so we didn't know what was going to happen to us and so we were kept into the service and then our band – I was still in the band and a bugler by the way – and then we were transferred up to Fort Thomas Kentucky which is a big fort there and our band was transferred up there to be the band for Fort Thomas Kentucky so we're happy there we were going over to

Cincinnati every night and enjoying life and although the war has now started and I - we got word from headquarters at Fort Thomas that there was a war show, a traveling war show and they needed a couple of instruments, they needed a trumpet and they needed a sousaphone so I kicked my name into the pot-I said yes I'd like to go get in on that so another fellow and I out of our band we volunteered and so they - we were chosen and so we did this war show deal. What the war show was - there were two shows - there was one that was the stage unit that was a Glen Miller deal and then there was a field unit. The field unit was just like a circus and we traveled in a big train and of course we had everything - we had an infantry, we had the flame throwers, we had the artillery, we had a couple of airplanes that at the shows at night they'd fly over. So anyway, we got up to where our orders were to meet the show at Soldier's Field in Chicago, Illinois so my buddy and I we get up to Chicago and go to Soldier's Field and there's no show there so we go into town and of course the army had taken over all the big hotels so we went to the Stevens Hotel which was one of the finer hotels in Chicago at that time on Michigan Avenue and we told them we said here we are we've got orders to meet a show at Soldier's Field and it's not there we need a room so they gave, assigned us a room so we went to Soldier's Field every morning and no show there. The show had not arrived back in; I think they were in Omaha, Nebraska or somewhere coming from the west and the show didn't get there so we screwed around all day and all night running around Chicago and enjoying life and then the next morning whenever we got up which was always a little late we'd go out to Soldier's Field; no show, no show so we had another day to fool around in Chicago. So finally the show arrived and then we got assigned a tent, we were living in tents at Soldier's Field because the show would be there ten days -

every place we played we did a ten day deal. We got assigned a tent my buddy and I and of course everything had to be perfect because we were always on display. The public would come and they'd get to see how the soldiers live and we got a double allotment of clothing because we had to change clothes twice a day – because we always had to look good when we eat in our line, in our food line why we always got usually a double portion there to make a big impression on the public. Of course our beds always had to be made, our shoes had to be there and shined and ours were already perfect because we were still staying at the Stevens Hotel and we weren't living with the show, but we would get to the show the next morning in time for rehearsal. Finally, the Sergeant in charge said something's not right and said – because our beds were always made up never, never messed up and our shoes were always shined and he said something's not right said you have to stay here this is where you stay so we had to check out of the Stevens and stay with the show and then when the show finished Soldier Field in Chicago then we moved over to Cleveland, Ohio- I forget the name of the field.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the purpose of this show? Was it selling war bonds or what?

Mr. Mann

Selling war bonds, selling war bonds.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me back up a little bit further here. When you first joined the National Guard, what unit did you join there?

Mr. Mann

It was the medical unit – I forget the number of it.

Mr. Misenhimer

It was the Indiana National Guard?

Mr. Mann

Yes, Indiana. I forget it must have been the 42nd division. I think it was the 42nd infantry division we were in the medical unit.

Mr. Misenhimer

But how did you wind up in the medical? How did you wind up being in the medical unit?

Mr. Mann

That was where the band was assigned. The band was assigned to the medical unit because if we had been assigned to a field unit or anything why we wouldn't be able to practice – see all during the day we had to practice our band had to practice, we had to play, learn new tunes and we had to practice.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you take any basic training or anything like that?

Mr. Mann

Whatever there was, we were Camp Shelby in Mississippi. By the way, I didn't say that one. We went into the service on January 1, 1941 we were assigned to Camp Shelby in Mississippi and then that's where the whole Indiana National Guard was and then they had the various divisions, artillery and so forth.

Mr. Misenhimer

So what all did you do at Camp Shelby then?

Mr. Mann

We played – we had to practice everyday. But of course, there was a certain amount of basic training, but not very much because you can't mix all that and then be a musician too so you've got to chose between the two.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any kind of weapons training, rifle shooting or anything like that?

Mr. Mann

Very, very little. Very, very little.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now when you joined the National Guard that was in what month?

Mr. Mann

I joined the National Guard in October 1940.

Mr. Misenhimer

From October until January 1 when you were activated, did you have meetings every month?

Mr. Mann

Oh yeah, yes, yes. Like the old National Guard, Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were still playing in the band at that point?

Mr. Mann

Yes, always. When I joined the Guard I got in a band and I stayed – I was in the band.

Mr. Misenhimer

You didn't have to go through all the basic training?

Mr. Mann

Just a certain amount, not too rigorous. So then we'd go – I'm in the war show – and then we'd go from Louisville to St. Louis.

Mr. Misenhimer

You went from Chicago?

Mr. Mann

That's where we joined the war show. Although the show had already originated in the east somewhere and it traveled over and they had – I don't know how far west they got – I don't know whether they go to Denver or not, but I think they came from Omaha into Chicago where we joined. Then we go on down from there to Louisville and St. Louis and then we went to Dallas. So, in Dallas I got word that my father died and I went to the commanding officer and he gave me a pass a leave and so I go home back to Evansville, Indiana and attend his funeral and then I stayed there until the show – oh from Dallas I left – and then the show traveled to Houston, Texas and then I missed Houston and then I joined them back when they got over to New Orleans. I missed Houston, Texas – I went over to New Orleans and that's where I rejoined them and then we played the show and then we got word that we were going to disband – this show was going to disband – in Atlanta, Georgia in December for the winter months. So, now this was the fall of the year we were in New Orleans we got word that there was going to be a OCS – sign up people for OCS and so my buddy and I said yeah we want to go to OCS because after all we weren't going to – the war was going on and we decided we needed to do something rather than play an instrument. So we go to the board – the OCS board – and he decided to apply for Quarter Master and they were taking candidates for all services so I said well I think I'd like to get in the Air Force because I had taken a little flight training – private

lessons and I said I'd like to get in the Air Force so I go to the board and both my buddy and I we got accepted. So we go then from New Orleans – the show traveled to Birmingham, Alabama – and then we traveled to Atlanta, Georgia and then Atlanta that's where we broke up – in Atlanta. So in Atlanta why I find that I'm going to go to the Air Force OCS at Miami Beach, Florida and it wasn't starting – my class wouldn't start sometime until January. So there in Atlanta we were living in Piedmont Park and it was right over the Christmas season and it was raining like crazy and the ground was all wet and muddy and that's where we were living and I – my buddy and I would go into the USO every day because they were breaking up and our – by the way our unit, our original band unit that we had left in Fort Thomas, Kentucky to get into, to join the war show our original unit was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division (Airborne) they were going to be paratroopers, they were going to be paratroopers in that outfit so we were happy to have been accepted to OCS. So we go to town during the day to the USO and get entertained and everything, in fact our Christmas dinner I drew the name of the Chandles family which belonged to the Coca-Cola family – the Coca-Cola people in Atlanta and I go to their house for Christmas dinner and it was a of course a big lavish house and the second floor of the house looked like a toy store and that was for all their kids and grandkids and they even gave me a present of, a Christmas present a bottle of Old Spice aftershave lotion and I have used Old Spice aftershave lotion ever since. So anyway, we were in the, spending all of our time and then have to come back and get into these old wet, these wet tents and everything and sleep so one of the Sergeants there said listen said you guys are on your way somewhere and said we need some help around here and he said I'm going to give you a job at the office. Okay. So he gave me a desk and a telephone and I

hadn't been there but a couple of minutes and the phone rang and some lady on the phone says I have some old southern lady – said I feel so sorry for you boys there in the mud and she said I live at the Atlanta Biltmore and said I want a couple of you to come and be my guests and stay here. I said lady I'll have you two boys there real soon. So some guy comes along and I said you come with me we're going to town, we're going to the Biltmore. So we go to town and meet this lady and she tells us, now I'm an old southern lady and I know you boys are yankee boys and said my table is over here and said you can sit anywhere you want at any table you want and you sign my name to the ticket. So instead of living for a couple of days there in the mud in Piedmont Park why this old boy and I – and I never did even know who he was - he and I were living at the Atlanta Biltmore, eating there and signing her name. So that was fine. Well then it came as I say the show was breaking up and everybody had got their assignments was leaving, they'd get on a bus and go to here and there and whatever and so here I am still there and they said where are you going and I said well I'm going to Miami Beach, but my class doesn't start 'til such-and-such a date. So I said give me a delay in route and I'll go, I'll be in Miami Beach when I'm supposed to be there so sure enough I go home and at the bank why they would always say well – we see you more here since your in the service than we ever did when you were working here. Anyway, I go home and when my time came why I pay my own way down to Miami Beach and I register into the OCS and then I – you know you can always keep your ears open to find out things – and I found out something about go to the finance officer and get your mileage because I wasn't furnished a train ticket to go from Evansville down to Miami Beach. So I go to the finance office and I say, so they pay me my fare down from Evansville. So I'm there for

six weeks. Now in the meantime, now all I was was a Private all this time, when we were in Fort Thomas Kentucky we had to go over to Cincinnati every night and visit and we met some ladies, there were real ladies, and this one lady her husband – his name was Carl Bier. I'm in Miami Beach I had already done my first six weeks and then the class graduates and then I become in the upper class and when these boys were graduating at the end of my first six weeks why they'd come back and we'd say "where did you get assigned, where did you get assigned?" Some of them would say "Oh, I knew where I was going, I had already had arrangements or I was going to go back to this place or that place." I thought that sounded like a pretty good deal, so I remembered our nice lady that we met in Cincinnati and her husband, Carl Bier was the head of one of the railroad union – I don't know if it was a conductors union or what. Anyway, he was traveling the United States and was always gone during the week, went home on the weekend. While we were there in Fort Thomas visiting Mr. Bier and I would go out to the country club and play golf – I liked golf. So we would go out and play golf, he and I became well acquainted. He was a gentleman and I was a gentleman. I got to thinking about this at the end of six weeks and these old boys knew where they were going to be assigned so I decided to write to Mr. Carl Bier, my friend in Cincinnati, and the air transport command Ferry division of the air transport command headquartered in Cincinnati and there was a general in charge of the division, General Tunner. I wrote to Mr. Bier and I said I'm about to graduate here in six weeks from OCS and I would like to be assigned to the Ferry division of the air transport command and it's headquartered in Cincinnati. So many days later I get a letter back from Mr. Bier and he said "well, I went over and met General Tunner and he said that I told him a friend of mine needed an assignment." So

the General decided it wouldn't be too good to have you assigned here in Cincinnati so he said you're going to get an assignment in Nashville, Tennessee at the Ferry field at the airport in Nashville, Tennessee. So sure enough we go through our final six weeks and we graduate and we go up to – I forget the town north of Miami Beach – that's where we were getting our assignments so the whole group of us goes up on a train and get there. We got up and everyone would be called in one at a time or two at a time, and all at once all that was left was me and another guy. Of course, I didn't know him and he didn't know me and I said "do you know where you're going?" He said oh yeah, I had arrangements made I'm going to be stationed at Ferry field in Nashville, Tennessee. I said I think that's where I'm going to be. So we go in together and sure enough we get assigned to Ferry field in Nashville, Tennessee. He was a lawyer or law student, he was in the judicial part. So he gets assigned there and I get assigned there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me back up, how long was your OCS?

Mr. Mann

Three months. Ninety days. You know they called us ninety day wonders.

Mr. Misenhimer

And then you were commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Air Corps?

Mr. Mann

That's correct.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of ceremony did you have for graduation or commissioning?

Mr. Mann

No sir.

Mr. Misenhimer

Nothing at all?

Mr. Mann

It was all business.

Mr. Misenhimer

They just gave you a gold bar and that was it?

Mr. Mann

They give you your gold bar and certificate and they release you from your – the listed the man's assignment and you get appointed a commissioned officer.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was OCS, pretty rough or what?

Mr. Mann

Oh yeah, you talk about basic training. It was something, but still I was determined I know what I'm going to do and I'm going to do it. Whenever I made my mind up that's where I was going to go.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now you were older than the average person at this point too, you were 26 by now right?

Mr. Mann

Yeah right at it. I guess I was. Anyway, we're in Nashville and so I was appointed to the Adjutants office and I was an administrative assistant to the Adjutant to the base Adjutant Then of course we had a Colonel who was the C.O and while I was there. Vice President Barclay was from Paducah, Kentucky. They had an airstrip built there in Paducah,

Kentucky for whenever dear Alvin got home. They decided they were going send a little cadre up there to shoot landings, but our boys had to shoot a lot of landings and they were busy there in Nashville because there was the Vaught aircraft factory there. That was good; I thought I'll take that assignment. I keep having a little cadre and we go up to Paducah, Kentucky and I have me a jeep and a gas coupon book and everything. I had an enjoyable time there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you live in there then?

Mr. Mann

I think we flew back to Nashville; it's not too far flying back.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you didn't stay overnight?

Mr. Mann

No. We'd fly back to Nashville. For lunch we'd fly anywhere we'd want, fly up to Cincinnati or anywhere we'd want to eat lunch.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of plane were you flying in?

Mr. Mann

We flew in all different planes. The one I went up in when we first went to Paducah we were in a four engine B-24. I was standing there in the cockpit before we landed in Paducah and I looked out to the right and all at once there were two engines dead and I thought oh my god we're going to crash. Well, they feathered the prop. The pilot would cut those two engines off and see what the co-pilot was going to do with the plane and

have to land it with two engines. I really had a chill when I saw that. That's what we did there we just shot landings and came on back. Then I was promoted to Adjutant and always the assignment from then on the table of organization would always call for a Major for that position and here I was a Second Leuitant so they shot me up to a First real quick, as soon as the time came.

Mr. Misenhimer

What does an Adjutant do? What is his job?

Mr. Mann

He takes orders from the Colonel and he distributes them and we write out all the orders, signs them by order of Colonel Smart. First of all, when I first got to Nashville here I am a Second Lieutenant fresh out of OCS and really had had very little training with a gun. I would be getting orders down that we're going to have to do this – a lot of these pilots we had were airline pilots and they put them in the service and give them a rank of Captain or Major and they don't know anything about a gun and they don't know anything about the service. We'd get orders that we'd have to train these guys. Of course they'd make me the range officer and I don't even know doodly squat about firing a guns or anything, but I learned and I could strip a .45 with my eyes closed and put it back together. We had a good deal going. We got everybody trained and then the big order comes down that everybody that hasn't had an oversea assignment must go over. This included General Tunner, he hadn't been overseas. Everybody must go over. In the meantime, we had at the base some service secretaries – girl secretaries. The Colonel got the first choice of secretary out of the pool and I got second choice. I had Marjorie, which is now my wife. We get these orders and we've got to go overseas. So I told my girlfriend, I'm old

enough we'll get married or you'll never see me again. Because when I go overseas I don't know what I'm going to do. So we decided to get married. I told the Colonel I don't want assignment to go all the way to the CBI, China, Burma, India, that was flying the hump. I said we're going to go on a honeymoon and then I'll settle my wife in Evansville, my hometown and get her a job with the bank. Then I said give me a call when you've got something. Sure enough after so many days I get a call telling me I got you an assignment. I said good, is it all the way? He said no. I said that's good. I get my orders and I go to New York. I leave my wife, my brand new bride in Evansville, Indiana and I fly to New York. We're going to fly overseas on a commercial plane not in a GI plane. So we get there and these commercial planes had a modification and they weren't flying right. So I went to a hotel in New York and I'm on thirty minute notice. Wherever I was, if I wasn't in the lobby or my room in the hotel, I had to call a certain phone number back every thirty minutes and identify myself and they'd say what I should do. This happens for ten days. I'm on thirty minute alert for ten days. Finally, we get the ok that the plane is modified now and we're going to go.

Mr. Misenhimer

What are some things you did in New York? Did you go to any plays or anything while you were there?

Mr. Mann

Everywhere. If I'd go to a show I'd have to get up every thirty minutes and go to a phone and call a number and say this is so-and-so. Then we get over and we land in Casablanca. Casablanca French Morocco. We get into Casablanca at two o'clock in the morning and the next morning I go to the headquarters. I'm assigned to the North

African Division of the air transport command, that's the official division. I go to Casablanca and I go in the office and tell them who I am and he said I don't know what you are here for. I said ok and go into town to the USO and visit them everyday. After a couple of days there I go into the Adjutant's office and she says "I got an assignment for you."

Mr. Misenhimer

What day did you arrive there, roughly?

Mr. Mann

September or October of 1943.

Mr. Misenhimer

You got married in 1943, right?

Mr. Mann

I got married in 1944.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you arrive there in September of 1944?

Mr. Mann

Yes, September of 1944, because the war ended in 1945. So I got an assignment for you and I said where are we going? Here I am 4000 miles from home in Casablanca French Morocco and he said "We're going to assign you as base Adjutant at Abadan, Iran" and I said where in the hell is Abadan, Iran?

Mr. Misenhimer

So you're going to Iran then?

Mr. Mann

I check into Abadan Iran and I am the base Adjutant. We have a C.O. there at that time was a Lt. Colonel from California. Shortly after that there was assigned a new Lt. Colonel. That was Colonel Chester McCarthy, who was a lawyer from Portland, Oregon. High class politician is what he was. We had at the base a B-25 modified that we could travel around in. Our base in Abadan – We had Bahrain Island we had a cadre down there, we had one at Habanya Iraq and then had one at Tehran Iran. Sometimes I had to make contacts or take payrolls to those four. Then at one time I got a six week assignment to Habanya Iraq. I'm sitting in the office at the airport one morning at Habanya and I look out the window and here is a US Plymouth car not a GI car with Indiana license plates on it. I thought the heat's done got me I've done gone crazy. I got to checking around and what is was was somebody from the Baghdad state department had come down to Habanya to catch a GI plane up to Cairo for a dental appointment. It's a thousand miles up there, but that's how far you had to travel if you had anything to do. From that contact I got invited to a party in Baghdad one night. I don't really remember whether it was a state department party or a Red Cross party, but it was a party and it was a big one. It had two dance bands and all kind of people there. They served martinis, and you'd be standing there talking to somebody with a martini glass in your hand and if you'd take one sip while you were there talking, the waiter would come by and fill that thing. So it was always full. So I ended up pretty polluted that night, but I lived through it. At the hotel where I was staying, I couldn't find my room, I opened the door and there was a couple there in bed so I got that door closed quick and I got away from there with my life. I found my room and went to sleep and the next morning I got up and got in my jeep and headed 75 miles to Habanya. Habanya is over fairly near the Iranian border.

Whereas, Habanya is down at the head of the Persian Gulf and then right across the river from Habanya is Basra Iraq. You hear all about Basra now, but that's southern Iraq. We had various incidents happen there, I know one time down in Bahrain Island a work crew was driving through some project of some kind and turned and it threw one of the natives out of the truck and killed him. Of course the law over there is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth so the man in charge of Bahrain called and said I restricted the driver of this truck to quarters and you better come get him, otherwise the natives might come and get him. We flew down and picked him up and heisted him out and sent him on up to Cairo and so we got him out of the way and saved his life. We had various incidents like that happen. These natives, they are so slick and keen and clever. We had a couple of houseboys, you never know the age of these. You may think you have a 17 year old houseboy and hell he may be a 35 year old man. Anyway, we had them. WE had all these pilots come through from the States and going over to the CBI. Sometimes someone would come through and the next morning they would come to me and complain, saying I had some money and it was stolen – it must have been the houseboys. We had two houseboys, one was Hamsa and one was Said. I said no they're not that type. One time I went up to Cairo for a little R&R and I remember when I came back, I had spent all my money in Cairo except a five pound Egyptian note, which is worth \$20 US. That's all I had, I had no other change, no Iranian reals no other coins at all. The next morning I get up and go eat breakfast and come back and I start getting my stuff together and I couldn't find my five pound note. So, I called Said in and I say "Said, Where's my money?" Oh no, I didn't do it. So I say ok take your clothes off, so my roommate in our quarters why we got Said in there and say strip down we want to look

you over. We checked him over. We go over his shorts and everything and couldn't find anything. I'm feeling around and I felt something in a seam and what he had done and probably everyday he went home with money. He had a slit in here and he'd take that money and wad it up – he didn't take coins it was folding money. We eased that thing out and there was my five pound note. I said Said you're finished, you're gone. We got rid of him. Then another incident, Hamsa came in one day and says Captain – by the way I'm promoted to Captain. Because the table called for a Major I get promoted. The Colonel then Colonel McCarty got promoted from Lt. Colonel to full Colonel so he shoots me up one notch. He and I are good buddies. Anyway, Hamsa comes in and says he has to quit his job and leave Iran and move to Iraq. He said that somebody from Iraq had come over and killed his uncle and therefore they have the privilege of moving over to Iraq and killing one of that man's family. That's the law and it's legal. So we lost those two houseboys and that's the way we lost them.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you live in there?

Mr. Mann

We had quarters. We had nice buildings. I know one time we had a party, we had no white girls, we had Russian girls refugees did all of our work, our laundry and all of that stuff. Our open bar at the officer's club was Russian vodka and grapefruit juice that was the drink. We had a party, so we sent a plane up to Cairo and we'd get all the white girls, English or American white girls that could come and go over to a hospital in Iran and pick up plenty of girls and bring them over. By now it was real real hot. This is the summer. Summer of 1945. It was hot and these poor girls came down and they got so

hot they went to the billets they were assigned in the shower and they took their clothes off and they just had a ring. They'd get in the shower go back in line and go back through the shower. Then the next day the party's over, get them back on a plane take them a thousand miles here and a thousand miles there and distribute all the girls. Then I'm going up to Cairo for a little R&R and our Colonel was a pilot by the way, he had his wings. We had this nice B-25 converted and he takes me to Cairo and he says ok we'll meet back. On the way up we get word of the Atomic Bomb. He said "I'll need to stay at the base. I'll leave you in Cairo for a couple of days and I'll go on back and I'll run the show." When I got back then of course as soon as the war got over they started this point system of releasing. Well, I don't know if I ever really figured out how many points I had, but we always were getting new assignments. By the way, when I first got to Abadan it was supposed to have been a six month station because of the heat and no one would be used to it and the heat would drive you crazy. At the end of six months you got a reassignment up to a base in the Mediterranean, we had bases all along from Cairo clear to Casablanca about four different bases up there on the Mediterranean. He got assigned (Colonel McCarthy) to Tunis Algeria and he wanted me to come along with him. He said I'll get you assigned. I said no, I'm going home, the wars over now. I said no I've got to get home; I've got to get back. Had I not gotten married before I left I would have stayed with this man because the Colonel ended up years later a three star General and I could have been right on his coattails. I wait my time and it wasn't very long and I got my assignment back to Casablanca. All this aircraft now was coming back from the CBI and we called it war weary because the boys in maintenance they weren't too enthused about keeping things going and keeping things just right. There was

trouble. I don't exactly remember the station, but I know somewhere out of Cairo we are going down for landing and I look out and here's a big ball of fire – an engine is on fire. Another one we land and we have a flat tire on the landing and that's a thrill when you hear a flat tire on an airplane when you're landing or taking off and it explodes. Then from then on the engine had a miss – from then on into Casablanca. This is a 4000 mile journey from Abadan back and the engine is missing and I said this is my last war wearyes. I'm not going to get on any more war wearyes. So, I get into Casablanca and I report to the Adjutant and he says "Oh good, you're my replacement." I'm going to be the Adjutant of the North African Division, this is a real assignment. I said I'm on the way home. No, you're my replacement. So, I found out they had a golf course out of Casablanca in one of the villas where the Generals would stay. I got from special services a set of golf clubs and golf balls and everyday I'd go out and play golf. This guy's waiting for me to come in a be his replacement so finally he caught me one day and he said I got orders to go home. Tomorrow you're going to be the Adjutant. So tomorrow comes and I arrange to get my orders written to send myself home because all these war wearyes would come back and all these pilots, I knew practically every one of them, and I'd take them out to play golf. They'd say are you going home? I'd say yeah, so come on and play. He'd say I'm all alone in this plane just me and my crew, we don't have any passengers. I said no more war wearyes, I'm not going to get in them anymore. It came along a liberty ship was leaving Casablanca headed back for Baltimore. I said that's mine. So I write my orders out and put myself on this liberty ship. I get to the port, get in line and they were just 36 of us going to be on the ship other than the ships crew. This guy turns around and says, "What are you doing here?" I said I told you, he

was the guy I was to replace. I said I told you I was going home, I'm not going to stay here and work anymore. Sure enough, he had married an American Red Cross girl while in Casablanca and he and the girl were on the ship and I was on the ship. Thirty six passengers on this liberty ship. That damn thing was sitting up out of the water about six feet and we got into a storm and we got knocked around, but anyway it was a real, real experience. I got on back and in the mean time my Colonel, Colonel McCarthy from his assignment in Tunis, he gets assigned to the CO of Washington National airport. Like I say I could be on his coattails all this time. And he's the CO at Washington National now. We get on into Baltimore and I process on and get back to meet my wife in Cincinnati and I think I got mustered out at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. I was really fortunate all the way through the service, I felt that I had served my country, especially after that first year before the war had started yet, I had done I thought a pretty good job in five and a half years. I would have liked to come out a Major, but if I'd have stayed in Casablanca probably two or three months I would have got it, I'd have been a Major, but I didn't, I decided I'm getting out. I meet my wife and go back to my job in Evansville, Indiana at the bank and I go back with them. My wife's uncle had an automobile dealership in Nacogdoches, Texas. They are all Tennessee people from Lebanon, Tennessee, Wilson county Tennessee which is out of Nashville. He had this automobile dealership, he and his wife, but they had no children. He would welcome somebody that he could depend on and trust as his successor to help him out in the business. So my wife and I immediately travel down to Texas to visit with him and I looked the situation over and talked to him and decided that was it. This was 1946. I say ok I'll deal with you, but in this small town of Nacogdoches there wasn't any place to live. He says when I find

you a place to live I'll let you know and you can come on down. In the meantime, I go and work for the bank. When I got out of high school I was never off a monthly payroll. I was either on the banks payroll or the GI's payroll, now I'm back on the bank's payroll. I never missed a month of drawing a paycheck. Then I get back home and I get a phone call from my friend in Mayfield, Kentucky that I was well acquainted with when I lived in Paducah and worked in Mayfield. He said I've got an Oldsmobile dealership in Dyersburg, Tennessee and he said I've the franchise, I've got all the money arranged for and he says you're 50%. I said Glenn, I made a deal with my wife's uncle in Texas in a dealership down there. He said no, you're making a mistake you come with me. 50%, everything's here, all you got to do is just come down and you're part of it. Which is a real deal. I said no, I made a deal and a deal is a deal. So that was it and I didn't go. Every year we would back from Texas to Tennessee to visit her folks we would always go through Dyersburg and then also to visit my folks in Evansville. We'd go to Dyersburg and stay with them a night or two and he'd say I feel like every time I see you I feel like writing you out a check for five thousand dollars. I said just write that thing out, man I'll take it, but he never did. I stayed with them and we got there in 1946 and I joined the country club in the fall of 1946 after I moved there. I was a member of that country club up until January 1, 2001.

Mr. Misenhimer

This was the country club in what town?

Mr. Mann

Nacogdoches, Texas

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of dealership did you have there?

Mr. Mann

We had an Oldsmobile, Cadillac and GMC. It was a good dealership. We had good connections. I came on with the Texas Automobile Dealers Association. I was the director of that. Every year we would have meetings in some big town, San Antonio, Austin or wherever. Then we'd have a post convention meeting in Mexico or Hawaii or Las Vegas or somewhere. I had good connections. I was in good with the factory; I went to General Motors Institute (GMI) in Flint, Michigan for about six weeks. I took a course there. I became the dealer; it was just one of those good things. Everything worked out for me, I'll tell you that. I was tickled to death.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you still have the dealership?

Mr. Mann

No, I sold it in 1983. Twenty years ago last month in November. I sold it, it's a young mans game running a dealership.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you been retired ever since then?

Mr. Mann

Yeah, played golf. I played golf everyday. I got out of my wife's way. My wife was a good, faithful housewife. I didn't want to get in her way so I got up and went to the golf course everyday. I had all good acquaintances, if you choose your company you can have some of the best acquaintances on the golf course there is. When I look back on my life – I even started when I was at the bank back when I got out of high school – I was a

caddy, one of the officers and I became good friends and my goodness when the bank would close and I mean by now I'm in the bookkeeping department. He would come up from his desk – an officer's desk- and he would help me do my bookkeeping so we could get out to the golf course. All of my really, really good acquaintances – I had doctor friends on the golf course, bank presidents, we were always real good friend.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned you had this party there in Iran. Where you able to get any booze and that sort of thing?

Mr. Mann

Russian vodka. The only time we got any kind of an alcoholic drink at all would be when a Navy ship would come into the port at Abadan. The Navy, boy they took care of their boys, they had all the good stuff and we could get stuff from them. I became, not addicted, but I liked vodka and grapefruit juice. That's the only drink I used to drink.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had an officer's club there. You couldn't get anything but vodka there right?

Mr. Mann

Right. In Abadan we had Russian guests at our base and at Teheran we were guests of the Russian base out there. Of course, we all got along well with the Russians. Like I said all of the girls that worked at our base were Polish refugees.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have language problems? Did they speak English?

Mr. Mann

They learned enough. These boys from the States would come in headed for the CBI they would come to breakfast in the morning – for instance he would say “I want my eggs sunny side up.” She said look – they called the eggs yakiyuki. Yakiyuki up, yakiyuki over, or yakiyuki scrambled. That’s it, either up, over or scrambled.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you bring home any souvenirs?

Mr. Mann

No, I didn’t fool with any of that. I could have a machine gun, I could have had anything I wanted but I didn’t want it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now in April 1945 President Roosevelt died. Do you recall hearing about that and what reaction did you have?

Mr. Mann

Let’s see, that was just before the war ended. No, of course we hear all that on the radio, but no reaction.

Mr. Misenhimer

In May of 1945 Germany surrendered. Any reaction to that?

Mr. Mann

Well, it was favorable. But we were down here in the heat. We were sweating in 115 in the shade. All we wanted to do was get to somewhere where it was cool.

Mr. Misenhimer

Of course, then you heard about the Atomic bomb you said dropping.

Mr. Mann

Oh yeah. The Colonel and I were on our B-25 when we got that message.

Mr. Misenhimer

That made you happy, right?

Mr. Mann

Oh boy, we knew it was getting close to going home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me how you had this airplane fixed up, this B-25.

Mr. Mann

It was just; there wasn't any armament on it. It was just nice inside, we had nice leather seats. You didn't have to sit on iron, it wasn't ultra fancy, but it was a comfortable plane to go places.

Mr. Misenhimer

It was not pressurized though, right?

Mr. Mann

Oh no.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had to use oxygen.

Mr. Mann

Oh no.

Mr. Misenhimer

It was pressurized?

Mr. Mann

Yeah. Any big planes were pressurized. We didn't use oxygen.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was there a pilot assigned it all the time? Who flew it? Was there a crew assigned to it permanently?

Mr. Mann

No. The Colonel did all the flying of this B-25.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the planes that came into your field were in transit to CBI?

Mr. Mann

Correct. In fact one time Madame Chaing-Kai-Shek came in one afternoon. In the summertime it gets so hot there and the tarmac would get so soft that it would be like mud. The Madame came in and they called into operations and said they were going to land with Madame Chaing-Kai-Shek. They said you don't land in the afternoon here, you can't land. They said we're coming in. So the Colonel and I go out and meet the Madame and take her to his house there out at the field. The Colonel had a house and I lived in the officer's quarters.

Mr. Misenhimer

So when they landed did they go through the tarmac?

Mr. Mann

Oh yeah. It just sunk, they were taken a chance. It was soft stuff.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got home did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Mann

Not I.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you had any reunions?

Mr. Mann

I've gone to several of our reunions. I really didn't know or recognize very many people.

Mr. Misenhimer

These were reunions for which outfit?

Mr. Mann

The Ferry division of the ATC. It was then air transport command now I think its

MATS.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of ribbons or medals did you get?

Mr. Mann

When I was a GI I got a good conduct medal. That was the only medal I got, but I never was in a war zone.

Mr. Misenhimer

But you got the victory medal?

Mr. Mann

Yeah, nothing special. All I did was as an employee. I was just an employee really, but someone had to do it.

Transcribed by:

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