

National Museum of the Pacific War

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*Interview with Loyd Eugene Jensen
United States Army/Army Air Corps*

Interview with Loyd Jensen

Interviewed by Ed Metzler

This is Ed Metzler and today is the 6th of October, 2005. I am interviewing Mr. Loyd Jensen. This interview is taking place in Houston, Texas. This interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Parks and Wildlife for the preservation of historical information related to this site. I'd like to start out, Loyd, by thanking you for being willing to spend the time this afternoon to tell about some of your experiences over in the China, Burma, India theater. Let me ask you to start by giving us your full name, date of birth, where you were born and a little bit about your family.

Mr. Jensen: My name is Loyd Eugene Jensen. I was born 24 September 1919. I was born in a little town called Norway, Kansas. It was all Norwegians. Most of them had immigrated from Norway. At the age of five, my family moved seven miles north to a place called Scandia, Kansas, which was all Swedes. I remained in Scandia and went through grade school and graduated from high school there in 1937. Since this was the heart of the depression, most of us immigrated west. I stayed in Colorado for a few months.

Mr. Metzler: Let me interrupt you by asking you, what did your dad do for a living?

Mr. Jensen He was a farmer when I was very young and then we moved to the town and he ran a service station. Then, in 1935, again during the depression, we were flooded out and so we had couple of tough years. He worked wherever he could. Then he and the rest of the family moved to Colorado and he worked in a company that manufactured farm implements.

Mr. Metzler: Where in Colorado?

Mr. Jensen: Denver. That's where he retired. In the meantime, I didn't like Colorado and I moved to Los Angeles.

Mr. Metzler: So you were out on your own then. How old were you?

Mr. Jensen: Yes. I was almost nineteen. Then I was in Los Angeles until before the war and at this time, in 1940, any one that was over twenty-one had to register for the draft. You had to be twenty-one at the time. Unfortunately, I was twenty-one in September. In October of 1940, I was drafted into the Army.

Mr. Metzler: So this was before wartime? You were drafted.

Mr. Jensen: Right. On December 7, 1941, I had almost eight months service and I was in the Army Quartermaster Corps up with McClellan Air Force, well, it wasn't Air Force base then, it was McClellan Field in California, near Sacramento. That got awful boring, working in the commissary, a few things. But, I did make sergeant there. I volunteered for the glider pilot program and was accepted. I went through two

phases of that.

Mr. Metzler: Why glider pilots? That just sound exciting, or....?

Mr. Jensen: At that time, to get into the cadets, you had to have a minimum of two years college and I didn't have two years of college. The glider pilots looked like a pretty good deal. You get to fly airplanes.

Mr. Jensen: Did you get flight pay?

Mr. Jensen: Oh Yeah.

Mr. Metzler: That was fifty bucks a month, or something, right there?

Mr. Jensen: Well, I was a buck sergeant and I was getting \$60.00 when I was going through, a month, so I was getting \$30.00 flight pay. So I made ninety bucks. The first three months, when I was drafted, was \$21.00. That was gross. By the time they took out for a little laundry and few things, many times it was \$11.00 over the pay table. Anyway, I got into the glider pilot program and spent several months. At that time, the powers to be decided they had enough glider pilot programs so I never completed the program. At that time they said that since you guys have got quite a few hours in light airplanes, because that is how we started out, flying light airplanes before we got into the gliders, they said, "If you guys join the cadets, we'll accelerate your course." So I signed up for cadets. I graduated from the flying program.

Mr. Metzler: Where?

Mr. Jensen: Marfa, Texas. Of course I went to two other units to get the training. You had primary basic and event (?) and I got my wings and commission at Marfa, Texas in January of 1944. We had our choices of what aircraft we wanted to go into and I decided I liked the B-25.

Mr. Metzler: Why?

Mr. Jensen: I don't know. I just, it was nice looking airplane to me. I had never never been in it; hadn't been around it very much. I accepted and we went back to Sacramento at Macer (?) to learn how to fly the aircraft. We got sixty to seventy hours there. Then we went to Columbia, South Carolina where we got our actual combat crew training and I picked up my crew. My training then was with my navigator, my engineer-gunner, my radio-gunner and my tail-gunner. We trained as a team and we got another sixty to seventy hours.

Mr. Metzler: So let's see, how many is in the crew of a B-25?

Mr. Jensen: Well, I was training as an "H" crew. That's the one that had the cannon in the nose.

I didn't have a co-pilot. Now the ones, the "J", which had the bombardier, it had a co-pilot. They still had the engineer-gunner, radio-gunner and the tail-gunner.

- Mr. Metzler:** So that's six?
- Mr. Jensen:** They had a five, or six man crews. When we finished our training we were assigned to go over to India and there I was assigned to the Twelfth Bomb Group. It was a B-25 outfit composed of four squadrons and the headquarters. One squadron was on detached service, so basically, where we were flying out of, a place called Finny (?), India.
- Mr. Metzler:** Can you spell that?
- Mr. Jensen:** Well Finny (?) is still there. But it is now part of, I never can pronounce it.....
- Mr. Metzler:** Bangladesh.
- Mr. Jensen:** Bangladesh. Which is the very eastern part of the old India.
- Mr. Metzler:** It used to be Pakistan.
- Mr. Jensen:** It is still on the map as far as the latest map I've seen. That was where our units were stationed and we were separated, each squadron was dispersed, but we used the same runway, of course.
We lived a bamboo hut. That's where the bashas, that's how we got our name, "Bashas". All of the bamboo huts with thatched roofs were called bashas by the Indians. We lived in the same old bashas that the Indians did, except, a big difference, we had concrete on our floors where they had dirt. We had no electricity, no running water, outside latrines and we rigged up some fifty-five gallon drums and the bearers would keep them full of water so we would have showers as it was hot. It stayed hot the year round.
- Mr. Metzler:** So it was very tropical there?
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah. Well we were almost, right on the Bay of Bengal; probably fifty miles north of the Bay of Bengal. We were there thirteen months. You couldn't put prisoners in a place like that today, you know, it would be.....
- Mr. Metzler:** Cruel and unusual punishment?
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah. That's right. Well, we didn't know any better, so, and while I was there then I flew sixty-seven combat missions. They were pretty much routine. We'd get a few, maybe a little ack-ack. But, you know, it was fine. The weather was more of a problem than anything. Our main mission was to fly close support for the British Fourteenth Ground Army. They had the whole British Fourteenth Army in Burma. We started supporting them in northern Burma at a place call Mishinow, don't asked me how to spell it, because if you did, it was a way of spelling it that it was

pronounced like it does. But it's in northern Burma.

Mr. Metzler: Pronounce it again.

Mr. Jensen: Mishinow. We flew close support all the way through until the British finally captured Rangoon. At that time....

Mr. Metzler: Now is Rangoon to the south of where you were?

Mr. Jensen: When you're in Rangoon, you're as far south as you can go.

Mr. Metzler: Right down on the southern tip of Burma?

Mr. Jensen: Yeah. Yeah. That was the capital. Of course, it's not Burma now; it's some other name now.

Mr. Metzler: Myanmar.

Mr. Jensen: Yeah. Since we couldn't...our B-25s did not have the range to hit any targets in China from where we were. Since they figured the old airplane was getting old, they sent over a bunch of brand new Douglas A-26s.

Mr. Metzler: The widow maker?

Mr. Jensen: No. That was the Martin B-26. But after the war, we discarded those Martin B-26s. It was a junk pile. Then we renamed the Douglas A-26, and it became the B-26 and that is the one we flew in Korea. The Martin, World War Two Martin B-26, was disbanded and sent to the scrapheap in the sky. Then the Douglas A-26 became the B-26 and that was a beautiful airplane. I was made an instructor and was checking out the, it was pretty routine job to check a B-25 pilot out in the A-26. We got that completed and we had everything packed up and waiting for orders to move somewhere in China. At that time, the big bomb hit and the war was over. So since I had been over there thirteen months they sent me home.

Mr. Metzler: Now did you ever have any contact with the British, or any of the British in the Army, or did you just.....?

Mr. Jensen: Yes. Well, this was a funny situation. The field that we were at was owned by the British. The ground maintenance was Australians. They are a nice bunch of people, I tell you, them Aussies are great.

Mr. Metzler: How was that?

Mr. Jensen: Well, I mean, they are just....they're friendly, they like a good time and they are, kinda like, people I grew up with.

Mr. Metzler: They get along with you and you get along with them.

- Me. Jensen:** Some of those guys had been over there four or five years. We got short of summer rations and we had to use some of their rations and I tell you, I don't think I could survive thirteen months on some their rations.
- Mr. Metzler:** What were they like?
- Mr. Jensen:** Well they were canned stuff. I mean they weren't very good. I mean ours wasn't anything to write home about. But they were a nice bunch of people. As far as having direct contact with the British, no. Even though our Supreme Commander of the Tenth Air Force was Lord Louie Mountbatten. I never met him, but everybody that had known him, or met him said he was a heck of a nice guy. That's about all I know about him.
- Mr. Metzler:** So were any of the officers over you, that you reported to, were they British?
- Mr. Jensen:** No. This was all, everything, as far as the unit was concerned, was 100% American. The rook commander was a full colonel.
- Mr. Metzler:** And what was his name?
- Mr. Jensen:** Oh golly. We had a two or three of them over there in the fourteen months and I, frankly, when it comes to names, I don't do.....
- Mr. Metzler:** That's all right. I didn't know you had several of them.
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah. They rotated to. Then each squadron commander was normally a major. I had two squadron commanders in the thirteen months I was there. They flew missions just like everybody else. The poor old ground people, they didn't rotate. The crew chiefs and the ground crews and armament people, they just stayed till the war was over. All the air crew members could go home at fifty missions. That included the enlisted flying personnel, the gunners. But the ground people had to stay. There was no rotation for them.
- Mr. Metzler:** So did you have the same crew the whole time, or did you get a lot of turnover?
- Mr. Jensen:** No. When I got over there, I flew very few missions with my entire crew that I took over because, there would be certain shortages. When we got there they were short of navigators. So my navigator, he had his fifty missions in a long time before I had fifty. I mean, so he had to fly more missions. It was very seldom that you actually flew with your own crew because, we had no choice on how they were scheduled. We checked the board at night, twelve aircraft, who was the crew and gave your aircraft number and what time to report to briefing and that was it. The navigator that I took over with, he and I were room mates in our little old basha.
- Mr. Metzler:** So there was two guys in a basha?

- Mr. Jensen:** In this case, we had. I mean, they vary. These were just an old hut about fifty foot long and they had little bamboo partitions and maybe there was ten rooms, if you can call them rooms. There was no doors and no windows. They're just, I mean, they were pretty crude. We had to have mosquito nets. But it was so hot there, I mean anytime, you just lay there in your sweat. Of course, there was no air conditioning.
- Mr. Metzler:** Sounds like Houston.
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah. I get tickled at these people today. Boy, the air conditioner's out, they can't make it. Anyway, that's basically what occurred during the war as far as I'm concerned. We bombed a lot of troops. We bombed railroads, we bombed bridges, a lot of bridges.
- Mr. Metzler:** Let me come back. You used a word earlier and I just want to expand on it. You said the , "bearers". Tell me about; these must have been the Indian locals?
- Mr. Jensen:** Everybody had their own personal bearer and this is why. He made up your bed. I mean, when I say personal, my room mate and I had this one bearer and he, this is back in the caste system. The bearer was a pretty high caste. We also had a sweeper and that was a pretty low caste. The sweeper would come in and sweep the dirt off the floor and stuff. But the bearer, he's the one that made up your bed. He took your clothes and had them laundered and our laundry was over in another rice paddy. He would see that they were clean and make sure our lister (?) bags for our water was available so we could shave and wash. He took care of everything. The one time, to show you how strong that caste system was, we fired the sweeper because, I don't know, he would never show up, or something. So things started piling up and I told the bearer, "Sweep the damn place out!" and he would not do it. So I said, "If you don't, I'll fire you." "No. I can't do it." So we fired him and then we hired him back and I swept the place out. (laughs).
- Mr. Metzler:** So much for breaking the caste system. You weren't going to be able to do it.
- Mr. Jensen:** He was a nice young fellow and I think.....
- Mr. Metzler:** Now, could they speak English?
- Mr. Jensen:** Oh Yeah. He spoke pretty good English. He had some education. I don't think he had gone too far, but, I think most of the kids, over there, that went to OT school, learned English. All the heavy work was done by a lot of Indian women. They did a lot of the road work.
- Mr. Metzler:** Now they were being paid by what, the U.S. Government, or what?
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah. Well I don't know whether they were being paid by the U.S. or the British. Because, see, as the British owned the base. They were responsible, indirectly, for the.....like I say, the Australians were supervising the maintenance. So whether the

Aussies....I'm sure the British were paying them. They usually got, I think the going rate there was about fifteen anders (?) a day. That's a half a rupee. A rupee, at that time, was thirty cents. I don;t know what it is today. But they worked like heck. I mean, a hoe and a shovel and an old wicker basket, carrying dirt and stuff. A lot of women were barefooted. Nobody wore shoes over there that I saw. We were right in the heart of a very, very poor village. We lived in the same kind of huts they did. (laughs).

Mr. Metzler: You mentioned mosquito netting and of course, that brings the issue of disease and malaria and dengue fever. Were you troubled with any of that?

Mr. Jensen: Yes. We had quite a few people that got malaria. Now we took, I was real careful, of course, this was back in the days you could use a DDT bomb. You had like a spray like this. They looked like a bomb. They were so big around and so big and they were metal. We could spray the heck out of things and keep them pretty good. We would spray our beds and nets and so forth and then we took Atabrine tablets once a day. That was, kind of, a synthetic quinine. So I was pretty lucky. I never got malaria. But, a lot of people did over there.

Mr. Metzler: So what, did they sick enough that they had to be sent off to the hospital, or another place?

Mr Jensen: Oh yeah. Some got so bad they had to send them home. I was real careful. I got pretty good indoctrination from a doctor at our rep-o depot. They told us things that we should be careful of.

Mr. Metzler: You mentioned the briefing room in getting your beefing before going on a flight. Now I think we've all seen the TV shows and the movies where all of that happened. Describe to me what a typical briefing might be, or how long it would last.

Mr. Jensen: Everyone that was going on that mission would be in the briefing room. Again, this was another larger, bamboo hut. And they had some big maps up there on the wall. They would go over it and say, "OK. Your carrying five hundred pound bombs today. Here's the target." Whether we were going in medium altitude, of course we never flew at high altitude; medium altitude, or low level. We would go over what enemy action we could expect, based upon intelligence they had. Then we were given the exact take-off times. In other words, we had start engine time, taxi time, depending on where you were in the formation. We usually flew twelve ship formations.

Mr. Metzler: And these were all American crews then? No British mixed in?

Mr. Jensen: Oh Yeah. It usually took thirty to forty minutes depending on the target. Our squadron, where we were housed, was a good five or six miles from the runway. So, they would load us up in the....

- Mr. Metzler:** Five or six miles?
- Mr. Jensen:** Oh yeah. We were scattered pretty good. One squadron wasn't too far,, but we were about six miles. So we would load up in old six-bys and haul us to our airplane. We would check it over and crawl in and however (unintelligible), start the engines and taxi out. You didn't have a radio contact, no radio contact with the tower the first part of the take-off (?).
- Mr. Metzler:** What kind of instructions would they give you in the event you were shot down? I mean, just.....
- Mr. Jensen:** This was pretty standard. In other words, most of the Burmese were friendly people. I mean, they were considered friends. We had intersurvival kits. We had always carried a hundred silver rupees in a belt around us. We knew to contact these certain people, if we could find them, and they would, supposedly, help us. There were some people that, before I got there, that had bailed out, I guess, and weren't captured. So, I think, 'cause I don't think any of the Burmese, and there were several different classes. There was the Kachin and several other types. They all seemed to be friendly to the Americans at that time.
- Mr. Metzler:** But the Japanese obviously still had control of that part of Burma, or that part of Burma, or most of Burma.
- Mr. Jensen:** As we pushed them south, then they would go in there and built, you know, the Burma Road and the other roads in there. I guess at one time, they controlled the whole state. I mean, the whole country of Burma.
- Mr. Metzler:** So what kind of targets did you tend to have? Railroads?
- Mr. Jensen:** Well, we had a combination. Some railroads. Now Burma was pretty crude country. They didn't have ship(?) to major cities, too much available. The Japanese had ammunition dumps and lots of bridges. We only had one, or two roads, so if we get the bridges out then the Japanese couldn't move their big stuff.
- Mr. Metzler:** So were these like the bridge over the River Kwai type bridges, or big steel trestle bridges, or what?
- Mr. Jensen:** Well, you've heard of the road to Mandalay? Well that's the Irrawaddy River and that is a major river. It handled some pretty good sized shipping and they had a lot of bridges. We hit several of those.
- Mr. Metzler:** Were you part of the bridge-buster B-25s?
- Mr. Jensen:** There was another outfit over there that said they were the bridge-busters. But I'm not so sure that they busted any more bridges than we did. (laughs).
- Mr. Metzler:** Well, did your outfit have a name?

- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah. We were called the,, "Earthquakers". Twelfth Bomb Group, Earthquakers. They originated, they went to Africa first after they were formed back in the States. So they fought the African Campaign. I mean the group, not the people. When the African Campaign was over, they moved that group then into India and that's when I joined them. We still get together once a year. I just got back from Little Rock last month where we had our, forty-something reunion. They been having a reunion every year, I think, since....
- Mr. Metzler:** This is the Earthquakers?
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah.
- Mr. Metzler:** How many people were there?
- Mr. Jensen:** We had, almost, about a hundred and fifty. So now this includes wives and a lot of grand kids. I took my son last year. We still got a pretty active group. We're getting old.
- Mr. Metzler:** Aren't we all? Tell me about the Mitchell B-25.
- Mr. Jensen:** Well it's just a great airplane, in it's day. Now let's face it, it 's a prop job. It's noisy. That's why I can't hear so well anymore. But it was very reliable. You didn't have any quirkish systems about it. The fuel system was simple. It took off real easy and landed real easy. It was a tricycle gear. The early models were a little faster because they didn't have all the armor on them. The later models, they put more armor on them and they mounted more machine guns and that slowed it down, but it was still.....It was such a good airplane we used it in advanced training for training students. We stripped it down. I really liked it. It was just very comfortable and you didn't have to have a bunch of checklists and everything to figure out how to fly the thing.
- Mr. Metzler:** So it was a sweet flying machine, huh?
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah. The only bad thing about it, it didn't have an auto-pilot on it, so you had to fly that thing every minute you were in it.
- Mr.. Metzler:** No cruise control?
- Mr. Jensen:** No cruise control, no auto-pilot, no nothing. But, other than that, I really liked that old bird.
- Mr. Metzler:** So what do you think was the best mission that you had then. I mean was there one that sticks in your mind; a particular bridge taken out, or....?
- Mr. Jensen:** Well, golly, it's so long ago. I think, probably the two or three that I flew and enjoyed the most.....for some reason and I forget why it was necessary, but we flew

into Mandalay and landed there. The British, no, it wasn't Mandalay, there was an airfield then. The British were trying to enter Mandalay. So we flew in about six, or seven, aircraft and they were able to refuel us and rearm us so we could fly constant missions there for two days. That was fun. So, at least, I got to set foot in Burma for about a few hours.

- Mr. Metzler:** So did it look and feel about like it did in India?
- Mr. Jensen:** I wasn't there long, but I can say I been to Mandalay. Or near Mandalay.
- Mr. Metzler:** Or the famous Road to Mandalay. But you didn't do it by road.
- Mr. Jensen:** I can't think of anything else.....I did get into, I didn't know it at the time, because I didn't know I, we weren't to hep on hurricanes. Of course, they're called cyclones over there. All at once, we were flying, coming home from a mission, and it was rough. I mean, it was shaking us up and down, and all at once, we flew right into this perfectly calm. "What in the heck is this?" And then, of course, we flew out of it and got shook up again. Well, essentially, we flew through an eye of a cyclone, or hurricane. Back in those days, we didn't know what that was.
- Mr. Metzler:** And the weather boys never bothered to mention that to you.
- Mr. Jensen:** Well, you know, I don't think the weather people knew about the eye of a hurricane. Weather forecasting was pretty spotted, particularly during the, well, it was pretty haphazard during the monsoon season. The have a good monsoon over there.
- Mr. Metzler:** What does that last, half a year?
- Mr. Jensen:** Not quite that long where we were. We had to scrub a few missions where we couldn't get off. Let's face it, we didn't have all the weather equipment we have today. You know, we didn't have any auto ILS (?) and all those systems.
- Mr. Metzler:** Now how many missions did you fly?
- Mr. Jensen:** Sixty-seven.
- Mr. Metzler:** And you did that over a period of, what did you say, thirteen months?
- Mr. Jensen:** Well, I was over there, let's see, I was over there a total of fourteen months, but I was in a rep-o dep for about three weeks before I joined the unit. Then we flew our last mission. Let's see, the war was over what August? I think we flew our last mission the last of June, or the first of July. Because, you know, we couldn't go any farther. We just didn't have the range to bomb China from where we were.
- Mr. Metzler:** And the front had pretty well moved into China.
- Mr. Jensen:** Well, Burma. Burma belonged to the British. It was completely liberated.

- Mr. Metzler:** It had been liberated? I was just trying to get a feel for how many missions a week you might fly. I mean, was it everyday, or every other day?
- Mr. Jensen:** Well, no. We had enough crew members. We normally, our squadron, we normally flew four to five missions a week. You have to stand the airplanes down. You got to work on them. You can't fly them every day. So, I don't know, maybe I averaged, I don't remember. I should have kept a log on all those missions, but....
- Mr. Metzler:** That's all right. I was just trying to a feel for how non-stop it was that....
- Mr. Jensen:** Well, from August to September, say I joined in September, through June, I got sixty-seven missions.
- Mr. Metzler:** So nine months, sixty-seven missions, so you know, that's.....a...
- Mr. Jensen:** It was no hardship.
- Mr. Metzler:** So what did you did in the time in between missions, I mean, that' s just polish your shoes, or what?
- Mr. Jensen:** We were rigged up with very little space. We were right in the heart of a bunch of rice paddys. We had very little space to....we did have volley ball courts. Then I took the crew, we went on a hunt, a boar hunt, and then I did get a trip the Taj Mahal Diagra (?).
- Mr. Metzler:** What did you think about that?
- Mr. Jensen:** That was great.
- Mr. Metzler:** How did you do it? Did you fly over there, travel on the surface?
- Mr. Jensen:** We took a B-25 over there. (laughs) The fun part was, everybody got what they call R&R leave. They could go someplace. I and two, or three other fellows went up to what they called Simila , way up in the mountains, north of Delhi.
- Mr. Metzler:** Sim....S-I-M?
- Mr. Jensen:** S-I-M-I-L-A, I believe. It is about seven, or eight thousand feet up there and that's where, at that time, of course, Delhi was the heart of the British Empire. During the real hot portion of season, most of the British would send their families up to Simila. So, it was a place that had good restaurants and a lot of French (unintelligible) up there.
It was very cool. It's the only time I ever slept under blankets was up there. We rode a, well, they flew us into Delhi in a B-25 and then we had to take a train. That was funny. It was pretty crude. We paid a guy there to, we couldn't get to first class, so he cleaned out a cattle car and we all rode together in that thing up the mountain,

so it turned out to be a real good deal. That's just before the war ended. We had just finished out training in the A-26. In fact, I had one false report that the war was over but, it was a false one. I was still back at the base when the the official came in.

Mr. Metzler: So how long were you on R&R up there?

Mr. Jensen: I think the whole time we were gone about seven days.

Mr. Metzler: And you saw the Taj Mahal. What was your impression there of that?

Mr. Jensen: Oh, that was great. We hired a personal guide and he took us through there and then he took us over to Shagahan's (?) palace. He was the old boy that had it built. This was more interesting, in some ways, than the Taj. He could tell us exactly where everything was done in each of these rooms and so forth. I forget how many wives he had. It was a very interesting trip.

Mr. Metzler: What's your overall opinion of India, having been there for a year and seeing both the good and the bad?

Mr. Jensen: Well, it's still bad because of the population and I just don't see how they're going to keep all those people working. I mean, it's, they breed pretty fast.

Mr. Metzler: What was it like while you were there? I mean, was it a war torn area, or..?

Mr. Jensen: They liked us, I think. The ones I was around. But they were so poor.

Mr. Metzler: Have you ever been back?

Mr. Jensen: No.

Mr. Metzler: And so, if you weren't on R&R, in between these flights, what were you doing for recreation?

Mr Jensen: I did a lot of reading.

Mr. Metzler: A lot of reading and a little volley ball.

Mr. Jensen: Yeah. Of course we got three movies a week, but they were sixteen millimeter and they were outdoors. We had a big sheet. Of course, if it rained, we had no movies that night. (laughs). Of course, some of those movies.....we normally got three a week. Of course, we had a club and we had a ration, I think we got, if I remember, a case of beer a month, per person. If it was on time. We were fortunate that Finny was on a major railroad from Calcutta. We were pretty fortunate that we got supplies pretty good. We got a fifth of bourbon and a case of beer. I played a lot of poker.

- Mr. Metzler:** Did you ever mix with the fun loving Aussies in any of the leisure?
- Mr. Jensen:** No. Where they were billeted, they were a long ways....we had no transportation, I mean, individuals had no transportation. Once in a while you could talk someone in to borrowing a jeep because, I had a lot of friends that I trained with, in the other two squadrons. I was in the Eighty-first. We had the Eighty-second and Eighty-third. I tried to get together with them once in while if I could beg, borrow some transportation. It got pretty dull.
- Mr. Metzler:** Loyd, I've got a map here of the general area we are talking about. It's not a very good quality map but, I was just wondering if you could point to, roughly, to me where you were stationed. There's Calcutta there.
- Mr. Jensen:** We were about sixty, eighty miles northwest of Chitigon (?).
- Mr. Metzler:** OK. So that's fairly close to the Ganges River coming in there.
- Mr. Jensen:** Oh yeah. I remember I flew currier. We had to fly a daily currier and it was rotated between the three squadrons. A daily currier to Calcutta to pick up important papers, mail....
- Mr. Metzler:** Did you ever got to Calcutta?
- Mr. Jensen:** Oh yeah. Many times; flying the currier.
- Mr. Metzler:** What was that like?
- Mr. Jensen:** Well, it was just no problem at all.
- Mr. Metzler:** A huge city, huh?
- Mr. Jensen:** Oh yeah. I spent a little time in there. I got to travel around. Very dirty city sometime though. Then we took off and flew all our missions over there in Burma.
- Mr. Metzler:** What was your closest call when you were flying any of your missions. Ever take any hits on your aircraft?
- Mr. Jensen:** I think weather was probably the....you get into some of those weather problems and when you were over those Shin hills (?), you know those hills? We had to fly over some hills that were eight to nine thousand feet just to get into Burma.
- Mr. Metzler:** Those are more than hills.
- Mr. Jensen:** You fly in some of that severe weather and you get shaken up and get in the severe down drafts and so forth, why, it kind of puckers the old purse strings. (laughs).
- Mr. Metzler:** So what was the funniest thing that ever happened to you over there? Anything

come to mind? Anything that you can share with us.

- Mr. Jensen:** Well, most of the funny things happened in the officer's club. (laughs). We had a couple of navigators; they were real comics. They would take all the popular songs and make, not always dirty songs, but they had a knack to keep the tune and get the words out and they had everybody laughing like hell. Then, one time, of course, everybody smoked back in those days. This one guy, sitting here with a can of beer on the table about half empty and this other guy sitting there stuck a cigarette in it. That was common. When a can was empty you put your cigarette out in it. I really thought that guy was going to shoot him. I thought, I never saw a man get so mad in my life.
- Mr. Metzler:** So his half drunk beer suddenly had a cigarette ashes in it.
- Mr. Jensen:** His beer had gone to pot. (laughs). I don't know. I have to think about some of the things that happened.
- Mr. Metzler:** So there wasn't this drive to make your own alcoholic beverages, because there was no other?
- Mr. Jensen:** No, no, no.
- Mr. Metzler:** They seemed to have plenty of lubrication just coming from the normal rations.
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah, unless you were a real drunk, you know. Of course, if you knew you were going to fly the next day, I never touched it then. I don't know of anybody that was a real, real drunkard over there. You couldn't be too much on that ration.
- Mr. Metzler:** So what was, probably, the most troubling, or the toughest period of time, or experience that you had when you were over there?
- Mr. Jensen:** It was pretty trouble free other than the....maybe sleeping. You know, it was so hot, but somehow or other, we got through. Of course, we were a lot younger then to.
- Mr. Metzler:** Did you get pretty close to some of your fellow crew members?
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah. We were pretty close.
- Mr. Metzler:** A band of brothers type?
- Mr. Jensen:** No. We weren't that close, but we, our enlisted crew members were separated. I mean they were in another area. Of course, they had their own club, dining hall. I guess some of the things that I missed most was fresh fruits and vegetables. I know when I, I was one of the few that got to fly back, rather than take the boat back after the war. I landed in Miami and I went into a restaurant there and they had five salads on the menu. I said, "Bring me everyone of those, one at a time." (laughs).

- Mr Metzler:** So you were going to catch up for lost time.
- Mr. Jensen:** And fresh milk. Those were the two things that I, probably, missed more than anything.
- Mr. Metzler:** So you had fresh cooked food then, from and mess hall?
- Me. Jensen:** No. Very few fresh fruits. We did, back in those days, the powdered milk, powdered eggs was terrible. Our mess hall bought duck eggs. Fresh duck eggs from the natives and they were pretty good. After you got to eat them, they tastes just like an old, regular egg. Fresh meat was very,very scarce. So we had a lot of canned stuff. Oh, there was some fruit that we didn't get on the market. They grew some pineapple and, I guess, bananas. And, of curse, the water was so chlorinated. That that was another bad thing.
- Mr. Metzler:** The water would be bad otherwise.
- Mr. Jensen:** They would pump it out of the well. They had a little well there they would pump it out of. But they would have to chlorinate it pretty heavy to make sure it was good. Then, no ice. That was another thing. No ice. Once in a while, we would load a bomb bay rack.....(Side one ends).
- Side Two:**
- Mr. Metzler:** What would you do with the hundred and fifty pounds that were left?
- Mr. Jensen:** We cooled the old beer down and had a little in the bourbon.
- Mr. Metzler:** So you actually had some cold beer then, a that point? But, otherwise, the beer was.....
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah. It was well water, but it was very much cooler than the beer itself. I didn't go much for beer.
- Mr. Metzler:** So this concept of a little Indian cook, cooking all these neat, Indian dishes for you guys is, it didn't work that way, huh?
- Mr. Jensen:** That didn't happen at our place. No, we just had a central mess hall.....(Tape pauses).
- Mr. Metzler:** What about communications back to the States? I mean you write regularly to family and they to you?
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah. It took awhile, I mean, there wasn't any e-mail and that kind of stuff. I would say, probably, about two weeks we got...I wasn't too much of a letter writer. I wrote enough to take care of my folks, of course. I was single.

- Mr. Metzler:** Now you mentioned, right at the end, that you started piloting, was that the B-26, or the A-26?
- Mr. Jensen:** Well it was the A-26 at that time.
- Mr. Metzler:** At that time, and then later, it got changed to the B-26. And this was the Douglas?
- Mr. Jensen:** This was the Douglas.
- Mr. Metzler:** So tell me about that aircraft. Compare and contrast it to the B-25.
- Mr. Jensen:** Basically it flew almost identical. It was an easy aircraft to fly. It took off and landed with the same characteristics. It was about, or, thirty to forty knots faster. It was, again, no co-pilot. The navigator sat in the right seat. And at that time, we modified them for trainers. But at that time, there was no controls, what-so-ever, on the right side. That was a disadvantage on any long flight. Again, no auto pilot. But it was a nice, slick, easy flying aircraft.
- Mr. Metzler:** Did you fly it in combat as well, or was that pretty much after the war was over?
- Mr. Jensen:** No. I flew it when I went to Japan during the occupation. I was in a squadron of B-26s. I flew it there.
- Mr. Metzler:** So, tell me, then, about when the war ended and then how you ended up in the occupation forces in Japan?
- Mr. Jensen:** Of course, that took a while. When I came back, 'cause I was shuffled around there for a couple of three months because they didn't know what to do with those guys. So I got into reserve training.
- Mr. Metzler:** Now, this is Stateside?
- Mr. Jensen:** Yeah, this is Stateside. I was at Tucson. Davis-Monthan. We had a bunch of old T-6s and T-11s and the reserves could come out and we would check them out so they could fly. No pay or anything. It was pretty haphazard right after the war. I stayed there and then in, let's see, '47, I went to Japan during the occupation. '48, I'm sorry. While I was in Japan the Korean War started and I was in Korea then about three weeks after the Korean War started.
- Mr. Metzler:** How long were you in the Korean conflict?
- Mr. Jensen:** I was over there about nine months. Then I came back, and stayed in Japan then for a longer period of time.
- Mr. Metzler:** So how did it feel being in Japan after having fought them?

- Mr. Jensen:** That was funny. It's amazing, the Japanese people, individually, are very nice people. We had a maid and a houseboy. The maid's parents were actually killed by the bombers. By the bombing. She was very nice and I had a bunch of Japanese working for me at the job I had and they were great. I mean you would never know they were our enemies. It's hard to explain how they, those civil (?) leaders, could take those people and make the worst people you want to know out of them and, all at once, come around. They are very intelligent. I mean, they were smart people. It didn't take them long to get back things going again.
- Mr. Metzler:** So after you were back in peacetime, did you ever think back, or give much thought then to the war years. I mean, was it something that stayed on your mind, or just pretty much passed away.
- Mr. Jensen:** No. I can't say that I had any bad dreams, or anything like; you read about some of these people that, and I'm sure they went through, I know some of these prisoners of war went through hell. Particularly those guys in Corregidor and that area. I'm sure that they still have nightmares that are still alive. But, fortunately, I never had the experiences that would say I should have anymore problems with it.
- Mr. Metzler:** Well, what else comes to mind about those war years, now that we're talking about it, that you want to share with us?
- Mr. Jensen:** Well it's a shame that we had to have these late ones, particularly this Vietnam thing. I was over there to and, of course, I was there before the actual fighting started. I was over there as a MAG advisory.
- Mr. Metzler:** As a what?
- Mr. Jensen:** As a MAG, Military Assistance Group, advisor. We advised to the South Vietnamese Air Force. The whole MAG was Army and Air Force and a little Navy, I guess. I was advisor to one of the Air Force staff, because they were a very small Air Force at the time. The only bad thing with that was it was a unaccompanied tour, so I was over there a year without my family. That was the only bad part about that. I found the Vietnamese people to be very nice and very intelligent. I guess the best part of that tour was I got to fly the R&R troops to Hong Kong several times. (laughs). We had an old C-47 and we would load them, the guys would get a week off. We'd load them up in a C-47 and fly them up to Hong Kong.
- Mr. Metzler:** That would be one big party, I bet.
- Mr. Jensen:** I did that about four, or five, times. I even had a charge account up there. Of course, this was before credit cards. There was no credit cards back in those days. It was fun.
- Mr. Metzler:** Well, Loyd, I thank you for spending the time with us and I mean, I think it's always nice to hear of another B-25 pilot. I know there are several of them around in this group that's here today.

- Mr. Jensen:** I'm also a member of the Commemorative Air Force. It was the Confederate Air Force and we had to change the name and you know why. So I been a member of that for a good many years. Whenever I renew my membership, I always send a little donation to the one of the B-25 aircraft that I got to fly here a few years ago. My son made arrangements so that I could fly it on my eightieth birthday. That was six years ago.
- Mr. Metzler:** You and I were talking about that earlier. That felt pretty familiar then, huh?
- Mr. Jensen:** Oh yeah. It felt right at home. If I was a wealthy man, I think I would own one, or have a interest in one.
- Mr. Metzler:** That way you could land and take off yourself. You wouldn't have to be restricted to just just level fly. Well, thank you again, Loyd for spending the time. I appreciate it.....(Tape ends)

Proof

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