

## Charles Borchers Oral History Interview

PETER RIESZ: Today is October the 24<sup>th</sup>, the year 2000. It's about 1:45 in the afternoon. We're at the home of Dr. Borchers in Victoria, Texas. I'm Peter Riesz, interviewing for the MOWW. Good afternoon, Dr. Borchers. How are you doing today?

CHARLES BORCHERS: Fine, Peter. And you?

PR: Great. First of all, give me your complete name.

CB: Charles Lewis, spelled L-E-W-I-S, Borchers, B-O-R-C-H-E-R-S.

PR: When were you born?

CB: December 23, 1924.

PR: Where were you born?

CB: In Lavaca County, near a community up there referred to as Hope, Texas.

PR: Was your dad's ranch there?

CB: No, we ranched eight miles farther down in the southern end of the county. Because of bad roads, etc., etc., my mother's due date, she came up to stay with her sister-in-law until I was born.

PR: Where did you go to elementary school?

CB: I went to elementary school over the line from Lavaca County, over the county line in a little school called Lander School in DeWitt County.

PR: L-A-N-D-E-R?

CB: L-A-N-D-E-R.

PR: Is that one of those country schools? County school?

CB: One of the best educative years I had, really. There was one teacher for 10 or 15 students. There were three grades in each room. Three-room school. I went there through the eighth grade.

PR: Where'd you go to high school, then?

CB: Yoakum High School.

PR: What year did you graduate at Yoakum?

CB: Nineteen-forty.

PR: Tell me what you did after you graduated from high school.

CB: At that time, I wanted to go to Texas A&M. I was 15 years old when I graduated from high school. There's a story as to why I was only 15. My mother had been a schoolteacher. And we lived way down in the county, far away from even Lander School. In fact, we moved closer to Lander School so my older brother and I could ride horseback three miles to get to Lander School. Therefore, my mother taught my older brother. I'm 16 months younger than he. I listened at night as she tutored him after the first grade. Then

the family moved up to where for the second he could begin riding and learned at school. He would come home at night, and I would listen again while he was in the second grade. So, I was started in the third grade when he was in the third grade. After two weeks, the teacher sent a note home. "This boy belongs in the third." So, then I went up with my older brother. And he and I went on through high school, together in the same class. So, I entered senior year in Yoakum High School at the age of 14 and graduated at 15.

PR: That is really a story. Don't you wish you could soak up knowledge the way your mind was soaking up knowledge in those formative times?

CB: Yes. I must have been, number one, devoted to my mother probably. Number one, I was probably lonely for my brother's activities and I wanted to participate with him. Whatever the reason, though, (laughs) I soaked it up.

PR: You got (inaudible) to reading and listening, too --

CB: Exactly.

PR: -- instead of horsing around and watching --

CB: In that day, we had spelling lessons. And we had arithmetic lessons. And we had writing lessons. Those little country schools have a lot of merit. They really do. There are not any of those left anymore, of course.

PR: No, unfortunately. I hope these politicians get around to reinforcing those younger reading lessons like you're talking about in those younger ages. Jean used to be a teacher. She reinforced that if you don't have them started by the third grade, why, forget about it. They're going to be behind, behind, behind.

CB: Well, you might say I had a private tutor through the first and second grade: my mother. She had been, I think, an elementary teacher at Hope, Texas, prior to -- my father got out of the service, from World War I service, in late 1918 or early 1919. I think they married in probably '20 or '21. Something like that. Then they moved down to the ranch, where she wasn't supposed to do any more teaching, until my older brother came along. And she must have done a pretty good job of laying the groundwork. But we had discipline in my family. My father was a disciplinarian.

PR: I didn't know Borchers was a German name. (laughter)

CB: It is.

PR: Is it?

CB: Oh, my father spoke German.

PR: Oh, no kidding. Yeah, that's right. Regimentation.

CB: He had everything but a whistle. If he'd had a whistle, he'd have blown it. (laughter)

PR: Did he get goosebumps when they played some of that old German march music? He'd step right out?

CB: Deutschland (inaudible) is a tremendous piece of music.

PR: That's a good Methodist hymn, by the way.

CB: It will make you swing to attention, I tell you.

PR: You know it's in our Methodist hymnbook, too?

CB: Is it really? I didn't know that.

PR: Oh, yeah.

CB: I didn't know that. (laughter)

PR: About once a year they play it. And it just gives me goosebumps. (laughter) That's what my father always said. He said, "All Germans need to pump off the French is a drill Sergeant, a band, and a direction to go, and they'd be off. Be in Paris.

CB: That's right. (laughter)

PR: Oh, golly. We're recording this, too, I think. (laughter) I distracted you.

CB: I'd like to hear you play that back in a few minutes. (laughter)

PR: I distracted you from the course, here. So you wanted to go to A&M, you thought, originally.

CB: I did.

PR: What transpired then?

CB: Well, I went to business college to become 16 years old. So, I killed a year and had shorthand, typing, bookkeeping, and business letter writing.

PR: Where was that?

CB: At Baldwins Business College in Yoakum. And my older brother did, too. The following year, then, in 1941 we went off to A&M together. And then Pearl Harbor occurred during that freshman year for both of us. I finished the first year at A&M. Of course, by the spring of 1942 we were fully at war, though we weren't equipped. The United States wasn't. We were equipping ourselves at home to really get ready and win that war. I came home then. At that time, I would have been 17, I guess, when I completed my first year of college. I came home. By that time, ranch labor had been drafted. It was lean. I went to work at the ranch. I stayed there then for nearly two years or a year and a half. I had become 18, I guess, when I went. Yes, I was 18 and a half, nearing 19, when I went in the service. My older brother went in, in 1943. And I went in, in September 1944. That fills the gap pretty well, telling you what I did between high school and military service.

PR: Did you get a draft notice or have to report for a physical first?

CB: Oh, yes. I had one six-month deferment.

PR: I guess you'd registered when you were 18, probably.

CB: Oh, yes. Still have my card.

PR: Did you get drafted or did you volunteer? You saw you were going to be drafted?

CB: I had a conference with my father at the beginning of this deferment. And I told him I felt like it was about time I ought to go in and that I should. He had some reservations, having been in World War I. "But if you want to go, son, then I admire you for it." He didn't have to sign anything, because I was aged to go. Therein I began my Infantry training. He and his generation, World War II veterans, referred to "soft spots" in the service. And those were places like truck drivers and Quartermaster people, and cooks and bakers. You missed Combat Infantry by getting those kind of places. Or get in the Air Force, or even in the Navy. You got a dry place to sleep every night, until you get blown up. By the time I went in, if you can see, hear, and walk well, (laughter) you were in the Infantry. You really had no choice. Actually, I was in ROTC Infantry in A&M. So, I knew how to march and column-left.

PR: So you'd had sort of a little bit of what you cover in basic.

CB: So I had some basic military training, yeah. Right.

PR: When did you actually go in the service?

CB: In early September. I can't remember the date. 1944.

PR: Where were you sent? Was that in San Antonio, you went in?

CB: At Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio. We were there the usual three, four, five days before orientation and what have you. They loaded us on a train that evening, late. And I went to Camp Hood, Texas. It's now Fort Hood.

PR: What did they do with you at Camp Hood?

CB: It basically had been an anti-tank training center for the United States Army. I had some anti-tank training, but mostly Combat Infantry. Infantry replacement was the category. I went through whatever it was, 90 days or 100 days.

PR: Basic training.

CB: Basic training.

PR: Did you have a lot of calisthenics? Field marches? Physical conditioning?

CB: Oh, yeah. I was in good physical condition, having been a cowhand and cowboy for the 18-month period. I was able to do a 48-pound pack and a (inaudible) rifle in quick-time and double-time for 12 miles with no problem. (inaudible) followed behind, that's an ambulance to pick them up as they passed out. (laughter) And I never had any problem



because I'd shift into "second wind," as they said, and just keep on running. They had us trained to be able to run across Europe if necessary. By that time, the Battle of the Bulge had occurred. As you know, it began in December in Europe. And the tides had turned, and they were shipping us all to the Pacific.

PR: Were you trained in a unit, or were you just as replacement?

CB: Replacement. I missed that. There's a lot of *esprit de corps* built by training with a unit. And I didn't get that till I got in the Philippines and joined the 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry.

PR: Did you have these Close Combat courses? Live fire? That sort of thing?

CB: Oh, yeah. "Killer's combat" is what they called it at Camp Hood. We had the obstacle courses and crawling under fire, under live ammo.

PR: Were there barracks by that time, at Hood?

CB: Oh, yeah.

PR: Meals were tolerable?

CB: Meals at quarters were real good, hot-cooked meals. Out on bivouac, of course, we were getting trained, and they were on K-rations and C-rations. We'd go out for three or four days at a time into the hills around Camp Hood and sleep on a blanket in a pup tent, etc., etc.

PR: When did you finish at Hood, and where did you move to after Camp Hood?

CB: I finished there right after Christmas, in early January. Sent home for the usual furlough. I think it was a two-week furlough. Shipped to the West Coast, to Fort Ord in California. They trained us there until they had a convoy-full, headed to the Pacific. We debarked under the Golden Gate one afternoon, about 6:30, when the western sun (inaudible) on it. And it looked golden. Some 23 days later, we docked at Hollandia, New Guinea, having gone south of Hawaii and within land sight of Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands, and onto Hollandia, New Guinea.

PR: Do you remember the name of that ship?

CB: USS... I think it was *Sturgeon*. *General Sturgeon*, yeah.

PR: Do you have the sail date and the arrival date in your records somewhere?

CB: Might have, but I don't know where (inaudible).

PR: I'd like to get those details eventually, but I wouldn't expect you to have them on the top of your head.

CB: I think the name of the ship was *Sturgis*.

PR: Was it a smooth trip, do you remember?

CB: It was smooth.

PR: No typhoons? Seasick?

CB: No typhoons. The latter half of it, for the last 10 or 12 days, I was detailed Military Police to help maintain order on the ship. We ran into Japanese submarine territory, so we had to start zigzagging. The decks were blacked-out at dusk. And our job was to keep everybody below deck, nobody coming out. It was a court martial offense to light a cigarette or anything. And that wasn't too pleasant. The ocean temperature became 86 degrees. And down in those hulls it was hot, sweaty, muggy.

PR: Was this a complete troop ship, just packed with troops, top to bottom?

CB: Three thousand two hundred replacements.

PR: These are all Army?

CB: All Army, mm-hmm.

PR: And in 23 days you got to...

CB: Hollandia.

PR: Were you in a convoy, by the way, or just a solo ship; do you recall?

CB: The latter 5,000 miles was in convoy.

PR: That's a long way. (laughs) Twenty-three days? That's around the world four times.

CB: Yeah, when you mention cruises to me, I've been on two or three within the last 10 years. (laughter) I've had a cruise.

PR: You had a cruise. Lord, you've had one.

CB: The one coming home, that was a luxury scene compared to the one going over. (laughs)

PR: What was it going over? These bunk beds, five-deep?

CB: Six-high. And in the hull -- I wasn't down there too often, being a Military Policeman -- number six sweated on five, four, three, two, one. (laughter) And the six and five sweated on four, three, two, and one.

PR: Smell and stink.

CB: The stench became noticeable.

PR: You were lucky to be on the patrol deck up above, then. Still had to sleep down below, but you could get out of it, anyway.

PR: We still had good food when the whistle blew, when the signal came to go to the galley. We had amazingly good food.

PR: They give you three meals a day, or did they cut you to two?

CB: Oh, yeah, three hot meals a day on that ship.

PR: That was the highpoint of every day, I'm sure.

CB: (laughs)

PR: Did you see anything in the way of other ships? Any activity?

CB: Enemy activity? No.

PR: Submarine territory, but no sub was spotted.

CB: Right. Radar was new then. And I think they thought they had sounded one some distance away. Things tightened up for 24 hours. After that, it got back to the usual aboard-on-some-submarine routine.

PR: Where did you say you docked at?

CB: Hollandia.

PR: What's that, on the northern coast of New Guinea or somewhere?

CB: I have no idea. (laughs)

PR: I think it is.

CB: We were there a short period. In fact, we didn't even debark other than maybe get a pass and go to shore. That kind of thing. There was still a lot of enemy activity inland, in the mountains. But the strategy by that time had been adapted, and quite correctly so, by General MacArthur. "We won't worry about killing them all. They'll starve to death if we just blockade them and leave them alone. Make sure that they don't get any help or supplies." And that happened. That happened. That was his island-hopping technique.

PR: Cut them off and ignore the (overlapping dialog; inaudible).

CB: Avoid our casualties. Just for the sake of cleaning it out when you don't need to clean it out? They'll die a natural death up there in the mountains.

PR: Especially the Japanese. So tenacious. So against surrender.

CB: Yeah.

PR: Just a few days, and then you sailed out of Hollandia? Where were you bound for this time?

CB: I went to Manila Bay.

PR: Right to Manila Bay?

CB: The Leyte campaign was ending. I was in the Luzon campaign.

PR: What timeframe are we looking at now, do you think?

CB: Oh, gee, probably March of '45.

PR: And you went right into Manila Bay. Had Manila been captured already?

CB: Oh, yeah. Mm-hmm. Yeah, my combat activity began about 12 miles up in the mountains, outside of Manila. The city of Manila was secured. It still had to have some "cleaning up," as we say in the military.

PR: When did you join your Armored Unit?

CB: You mean my Infantry unit. I went to the 5<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot. There's a humorous story attached to that. Somebody among us 3,000 troops on that ship had acquired

the mumps. (laughter) And they told us we were quarantined for the mumps.

PR: The whole ship?

CB: Yeah. They unloaded us at the 5<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot via Army personnel trucks.

PR: This is in Manila, now?

CB: This is on Luzon, outside of Manila, where the 5<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot was. They issued us our rifles and carbines, packed in a heavy grease called cosmoline, sealed in a bag. They had two or three 55-gallon barrels out for us to soak the cosmoline off and assemble the rifle, and told us that we were under quarantined for the month, and continually quarantined. We'd be left 24 days. (laughs) That night at eleven o'clock, they came into our tent and said, "The 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry got shot up bad today. Get ready to leave here at 4:00 a.m." The quarantine suddenly ended. (laughs) That's the way it went. So, we boarded trucks at four o'clock.

PR: What division were you in for a day that was there? Was there a number to it?

CB: That was a replacement in the replacement depot. I'm sure they had us numbered. Maybe the 1005<sup>th</sup> or something, (laughs) or whatever.

PR: In one day, you were a part of the 112<sup>th</sup>.

CB: Within 24 hours, I was part of the 112<sup>th</sup>. We loaded on trucks that next morning. I'll never forget that. When I saw those damn trucks, I knew this was for real. That truck hadn't been washed (laughter) in six months.

PR: Spit and polish was gone.

CB: Of course, there was a driver and a shotgun rider. We loaded, I'd say, 12 to a truck or maybe 16 to a truck, and headed up in the mountains. After four or five hours, we began to see dead Japs on the sides and burned down Aviators and so forth. We had an idea that they weren't just kidding about this thing. I was dumped out about noon, I think it was, after an eight-hour ride.

PR: Do you think this was north of Manila?

CB: The China Sea would be to the east... Yes, it would have been north of Manila. Yeah, mm-hmm. Corregidor over to the left and China to the right. I never thought about that, but it would've been in the mountains north of Manila, at a little resort town called Antipolo. And of course, it was burned to the ground by the time we got to it. We could see the Japs on the opposing hill; I would imagine two or three miles away. They were milling around up there on the mountain. The funny part, though, is that (laughs) I fired the first run in that gun, having never fired it before, that night. Didn't know if the damn thing



would fire or not. (laughter) (inaudible) But of course it worked, so... (laughter) You talk about preparedness and SNAFU and all that. Somebody said, "They need (inaudible) up there. Get ready." And no one said, "Have you fired your weapon?" They had told us, "You need to clean them because you're going to fire them tomorrow." (laughter) We didn't have any place at night to fire a rifle, anyway. I've always had a laugh about that, though.

PR: You went right onto the line, then.

CB: Yeah. About 11:00 p.m. that night, the Japs started infiltrating. We had a barbed-wire entanglement encircling the whole deal. Tin cans and bells on it, and so forth. If anything stumbled into it, it was an alarm signal. A water buffalo stumbled into the whole thing. (laughter) We found the culprit. My platoon reportedly, by ammunition count the next morning, fired 15,000 rounds. (laughter) We had a dead -- what is a water buffalo, anyways? We shot a buffalo. (laughter)

PR: He wouldn't float?

CB: But we had a water buffalo and a few Japanese fairly close. The closest one wasn't within 50 yards, I'd say. Something like that. We kept a hail of fire going. (laughter) Then they tried to punish us: each new man with an old man.

"Old man" meant a man who'd been here before, been in action.

PR: Survived a battle already.

CB: Right. And he was a real steadying influence. After a day or two or three, then of course you filter out and get on your own somewhere. So, that's where it started.

PR: Were you assigned to -- this is 112<sup>th</sup>? What's the official...

CB: 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, which was the ground Infantry-type unit attached with the 105 Artillery Battalion. And the two together formed what was called an RCT, a Regimental Combat Team, which was a miniature -- and still is, I think, in the Army setup -- a miniature division. It could move in any way.

PR: So you weren't assigned to a division at all.

CB: At that time, I was RCT, Regimental Combat Team. That's (inaudible). My assignment actually was 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment on the 112<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team. Incidentally, the history of the 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment is interesting locally, if you knew Charles Scott [Hamley?] here at the bank, Bank & Trust Company. He's deceased now. He trained with the 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in Brownsville, Texas, in 1941. And then he was shipped to CBI theater, I think it was. But the 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry had horses. And he was the only living

man in Victoria, when I came here, that had ridden horseback from Brownsville to El Paso. (laughs) He rode a military horse from Brownsville, Texas, to El Paso, Texas. The regiment didn't have to.

PR: What did you have for vehicles? Obviously they weren't horses by this time.

CB: Jeeps and personnel carriers, four-by-fours and two-by-fours (inaudible).

PR: Any tanks intrinsic to you?

CB: We didn't have any. I had no personal tank around us. I personally didn't see a tank around me. Had they been necessary we would've gotten them, because there wasn't anything that we needed we couldn't get ahold of or get there.

PR: Really? If you asked for it?

CB: Right. The power that we had then, it needs to be told. No one had ever told me that we were a second-rate power until John F. Kennedy ran for president. He persuaded the country that a military had gone down to where we were a second-rate power. But I never heard a person in military service with me during World War II who didn't really believe we were going to win that war. We could tell them, "We need a P-38; we got a man in a cave up here." And here would come a damn P-38 aircraft with a torpedo underneath.

And he'd try to get it in that cave. Think of the power, the resources we had. You had to be proud to be in an organization or belong to a country that backed you up.

PR: Really did. The amazing thing to me is how you guys went and you did it, too. You didn't bellyache about it. You didn't complain about it. This was just something you did for your country. And you came back home, and you fit right back into society again. You didn't bellyache about what the country owed you, they'd screwed up your education, they'd screwed up your business, whatever. You came back. Guys went to school on the GI bill. They got married, started a family, started a business up, used their head. And it's amazing, that experience in that war gave guys the --

CB: I really didn't know what it was to question authority. That was part of our schooling initially. And being raised in a disciplinary family, I was taught at an early age.

PR: You had confidence in the people above you, too. They knew what they were doing, all the way up to the president. He had a direction and knew which way you were going.

CB: Absolutely.

PR: They wouldn't lie to you and tell you some other story. Anyway, how long did that battle last? Was this the hit-and-run battle?

CB: I think it was about six weeks.

PR: Were they constantly falling back, or was it sort of static? The Japs trying to get through where you are, or did you keep advancing slowly?

CB: We kept advancing. Yeah, we kept advancing. As I told you, the city of Manila at that time had been occupied by US forces. Surrounding it, though, all of that had to be rattled out.

PR: Those were horrible battles, weren't they, around Manila?

CB: The Japanese were a hell of a lot worse than the Germans. My greatest fear when I was in training was having to fight the Germans, knowing German people as I do. But the most cunning fighter on the ground is the little Japanese. They were trained to die for the emperor and that kind of thing. They were fanatic. They were a fierce little individual. They carried a lot of firepower. That's what does the job, (laughs) is the firepower.

PR: About six weeks, you had pretty heavy battle back and forth. Did they have any artillery? They dropping shells on you? Mortars? Or was it mostly small?

CB: This was in mountainous territory. It was largely small weapons and small arms. Grenades.

PR: Were you on the line sort of continuously, or...?

CB: Yeah, pretty continuously, for about a six-week period.

PR: Were you in a squad or a platoon, by the way, or a...?

CB: I became a Squad Leader pretty quick. I held every other listing grade between -- I made PFC by act of Congress by be being in combat. Anybody in combat became a PFC.

PR: Oh, I never heard that.

CB: And then you go to Corporal, Squad Leader, and then a Buck Sergeant. You wouldn't be a Platoon Sergeant. The Platoon Sergeant was five-stripe. Staff Sergeant was four-stripe Sergeant. Then the five-stripe Sergeant. But I went from four, to six, to First Sergeant. That's six-stripe, right there. Just by circumstance.

PR: In the same timeframe?

CB: No, that occurred when I was in Japan. That was over a six- or eight-month period.

PR: How many men were you in charge of then, as you moved up, as a Squad Leader?

CB: The squad was 12. Platoon was three times that.

PR: Did you get a Platoon Sergeant then as one of your...

CB: I was either four- or five-stripe. The actual Platoon Sergeant designation in the [TONE?] is five stripes. I think I skipped the five, though. A lot of times, you did the job whether you had the stripe or not.

PR: How would your orders come down? What to do, what you were to accomplish? Objectives and things?

CB: From the Company Commander to the Platoon Commander to the Sergeant.

PR: Pass the word down?

CB: Yeah, mm-hmm.

PR: And of course, the Platoon Commander didn't do it.

(laughs) The Sergeant had to get the guys moving and got it done.

CB: The guy who really got them out of the holes and got them to do what they were supposed to do if there was any reticence -- and it was fear, usually -- was the actual Sergeant right there. He's the last one that has to do it.

PR: Did your unit ever come under heavy fire? Take a lot of casualties?

CB: Small-arms fire and a few grenades. The Jap grenade, I don't know whether you're familiar with it. It had a little pressure cap on top that they would tap on there. This was a fault in their routine. They'd tap on the helmet, and that set it off. We pulled the pin. But we could hear that snap, and we knew it was coming. And you'd take cover. You'd hit the ground and hope it doesn't land on you.

PR: You mean, you'd hear them click it on their helmet?

CB: Yeah, they had to click it on something. That set the fuse.

PR: And we pulled a pin that wouldn't snap till you threw the thing.

CB: We pulled the pin. And we had a little jingle that we would say that occupied the required four seconds before you let it go. Then when the handle flies, it's getting ready to go. You want to be sure it's all the way.

PR: What's the four seconds? I hadn't heard that.

CB: You want a little delay, because they can pick it up and throw it back at you. We called it "Let it cook a little."

PR: And then what would actually activate it was the handle flying off the -- when you released it.

CB: That's it. When the handle flew, that triggered it. And if you let the handle fly out of your hand, you knew damn sure you were getting rid of that thing within three or four seconds.

PR: Yeah, it's going to go off.

CB: As you know, (inaudible). It really tore up in little square fragments.

PR: Were they very heavy? Like a baseball? Or heavier than that? Lighter than that?

CB: I should know how many ounces. They weighed a pound and a half at most. It was heavy enough to where it gave you something that you could throw easily. If you tried to



throw up a black-eyed pea, you don't get anywhere with it.  
But this thing weighed a pound and a half.

PR: Where'd you go after this battle?

CB: That's what I started to tell you. I wound up back in the medical tent, sick as a damn dog. I had hepatitis at the end of about six weeks. I guess it was hepatitis. Who knows. I was lying on the tent. I could still see tracers and that kind of thing at night. There was still activity around there. But about the third or fourth day, a medical Sergeant came in and said, "We just dropped a bomb, a new bomb, on Japan. The rumor is, this thing is about over." That was the first atom bomb. And then whatever the time-period was between Hiroshima and Nagasaki, when it fell we had orders in to move to Japan.

PR: Right away?

CB: Right away.

PR: So you never went back up on the line again.

CB: No, from that hepatitis episode, I never was in action again, actually.

PR: Why wasn't it malaria? Did they do some testing on you?

CB: I'm sure they tested me. But they told me I had hepatitis. I was sicker than a damn dog. (laughs) You got my word.  
(laughter)

PR: Oh, no, that's...

CB: Anyway, as I think back on it, an order was issued to the Yellow Ball Transport. These were all colored people. They allowed them to take the Governor's Oath and also cut a hole in the mufflers so they could make noise, those trucks. And it had a big yellow ball painted on the hood. When the General Order came down to move the Yellow Ball Transport Company in, Military Police knew it was automatic. "Clear the roads, because they're coming." That gave these fellas a feeling of egotism and what have you. And they'd drive those things day and night. You could see the miles of dust as they were coming to us. They loaded this whole outfit, though, in about six hours. Weapons, vehicles, men, supplies, ammunition, everything was loaded and ready to move in six hours.

PR: In the whole Regimental Combat...

CB: The 112<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team. And we headed for Lingayen Gulf and I think loaded the ship about dark.

PR: Same day.

CB: Got moved out of Lingayen Gulf towards Tokyo Bay.

PR: Do you remember a town called Baguio?

CB: Yes, sir.

PR: Did you go through there?

CB: No, I didn't. Baguio is a resort area, sort of, normally. It was up on the southern end of, I don't know, Luzon. I

can't remember. One of the ends, either end. I think Corregidor was down here and Baguio was up here. I never was there, no.

PR: That's where Hashimoto, was it, signed the surrender.

CB: I think so.

PR: The Philippines, yeah. My brother was with the embassy in Manila for a few years. We got to visit up there. Camp Swift is the military camp. In the Officers' club, there's a big room in there. They had Wainwright and Percival, I think. They took them back and let them have the honor of taking the surrender.

CB: My wife and I were back here in '87.

PR: To the Philippines?

CB: Mm-hmm, 42 years after I left. Went to Philippines and Japan. Our two daughters gave us that for a Christmas gift. (laughter)

PR: It looks a little different, doesn't it?

CB: It's surprising, let me tell you. We stayed at the Manila Hotel, which had been General MacArthur's headquarters during the war and all that. It's still a nice hotel. I don't think it's been refurbished a whole lot. Very little refurbishing. Pardon me interrupting you here. We had a driver and a car. And I said, "I want to go to Antipolo." He said, "What outfit were you in?" And I told him. And I

forgot to tell you, our RTC fought between the 48<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division and the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division. We filled in the gap in between. The purpose of an RTC was when you're no longer really needed in this spot and you had a hot spot over here where they could move us in a hurry. It takes a little longer to move a whole division.

Anyway, where was I? Yeah, we were over there. And this driver, he had a Ford sedan, four-door, which was actually a luxury automobile for the Philippines. It was five or six years old. When I told him what outfit I was with, he said, "Well, welcome back." (laughter) I don't know whether he'd been a guerilla fighter or what. But he took us right to Antipolo and took me to the very spot where I hit the line. There's not many stories like that, 42 years later. Some of the old corrugated iron sheds and buildings and stuff I recognized. There's a little church there that I recognized quite quickly. And the roads are not much better than what we had. If it had rained, I doubt if we could've made it and all that. It was an extremely interesting deal for me, having experienced the experiences I've had there. The temperature was 98 degrees every day. It was hot and muggy, as it always is in the southern Philippines.

One day, we took a barge trip, more or less -- it was a, quote, "boat trip," but it was more or less on a barge -- down to Corregidor and went on the island of Corregidor. That's one place that nothing has been repaired. All the concrete barracks and everything are still bombed out. We bombed them, the Japs bombed them, and we bombed them again. Absolutely nothing has been done to repair it. The mountains up around Antipolo in there, there's just as much poverty now as there was then. And the city of Manila is cleaned up but not rebuilt. I think there was maybe a Hilton hotel there now.

PR: When you went into Manila Harbor, were there a lot of sunken ships around? A lot of destruction?

CB: It was after the Battle of Manila Bay. You mean in 1945?

PR: Yeah.

CB: And those super-structures are still sticking out of the water. They were in '87.

PR: Where did you go out of Lingayen Gulf, then?

CB: To Tokyo Bay.

PR: You went right on the transport?

CB: Took us 12 days. I went right on the transport.

(inaudible)

PR: This the *Missouri*?

CB: No, I don't know what the name of that ship was. We went from there, though, over a 12-day period, to Tokyo Bay.

PR: When you left, obviously the war wasn't over yet.

CB: They had verbally surrendered before we went. We arrived there the night of September the 1<sup>st</sup>. And the surrender document was signed the morning of September the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

PR: When you started out, do you think you were fully prepared to invade actively with fighting if you had to?

CB: We went in to land at Japan later that day, after the surrender documents were signed, to the right, which would be the north side of Tokyo Bay, into the former Japanese Tateyama Naval Airbase. I've got some pictures I ran into earlier today, looking at these pictures of the barracks and hangars and so forth. It just shows the bomb damage.

PR: Tell me about those couple days with the surrender. The day before, had you pulled into the Tokyo Bay? Or you were getting close?

CB: We were under wartime -- what's the word?

PR: Precautions?

CB: Emergency. And when we went ashore, we had armed rifles and so forth, expecting anything. I think we posted a guard for five days and nights. By the sixth -- I'll never witness this again in my life -- the Emperor had told those people that we're surrendering, it's all over, there'll be

no more fighting. And they totally, absolutely, totally capitulated. We didn't need any more guards or anything.

PR: All of a sudden, they were pussies.

CB: Well, they were obedient people.

PR: So, your outfit landed on this airbase before the surrender.

CB: That's where I really went ashore on Japan, across the bay from Tokyo.

PR: And when you went across, the bay was basically empty. There weren't a batch of ships collecting.

CB: There were a lot of transport ships like mine was, in that timeframe.

PR: American?

CB: Yeah, absolutely. We had an official surrender. I think signing the document on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> was just ceremonial. MacArthur dictated that it be out there and that we'd furnish the transportation to get the Japanese Generals and Admirals out there, and all that.

PR: You want it done on an American ship, though.

CB: Right. The war was over, and he wanted American planes flying in the opposite direction from which the Japanese flew when they bombed Pearl Harbor.

PR: From the airbase, they put you on a transport, and you went out so you could see the signing?

CB: No, we were in camp right there, Tateyama Naval airbase.

PR: And the *Missouri* was right out front of you.

CB: The *Missouri* was sort of in the middle of the bay. And my ship was 300, 400, 500 yards maybe, off to the side of the *Missouri*. And there were other ships there.

PR: You weren't on the ship, though.

CB: I was on the transport ship. Not on the *Missouri*, no.

PR: You went to the airfield and then back down --

CB: At that time, no, I didn't go back to ship. No, we tented and camped right there that night on the shore of Japan.

PR: On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, when they signed it.

CB: On September 2, 1945.

PR: So, you were on the ship, coming...

CB: I was still in the bay, on the ship, at the time of the ceremony of the signing of the document.

PR: Could you see any of the action? The Japs coming out?

CB: Yeah. I didn't have that scope that your friend had.

PR: You saw the activity.

CB: Yeah. (laughs)

PR: Ships everywhere?

CB: Ships everywhere.

PR: Transports? Battleships? Aircraft carriers?

CB: I'm sure there were some combat ships. They weren't going to go in there without being ready for any occurrence. But



there must have been 10 or 20 transport ships like mine.

We weren't the only one. We were just part of the occupation forces.

PR: And then these airplanes started over?

CB: Yeah.

PR: Think it was the same ones, going around and around?

(laughs) Or you think it was...

CB: That could've happened. I don't know.

PR: Where'd they land all those things?

CB: I imagine they flew them back to Okinawa somewhere. The Osaka base might've been... And what was the one at Tokyo? Oneida. Onita airport at Tokyo may have been functional. Not being in the Air Force, I don't know where they landed. But the logistics of that...

PR: Was just a sight to see, though.

CB: A sight to see. And it was there to reinforce in any Japanese civilian's mind or anyone else's mind that here's what we've got if you don't stay surrendered.

PR: Did you see or hear of any incidents where there was a fanatic Jap saying, "I don't care."

CB: No.

PR: What the Emperor told them, that was it? They just laid over and rolled over?

CB: I never heard of an incident. And we'd ride the train from Tokyo around to Chiba, which was totally burned down, just ashes, and around to Tokyo when we had leave. In the Army, they call it "pass." We boarded trains and never paid for it. We just got on. When we would get on, no matter what the rank -- a Private could get on -- the trainmaster would be an elderly, grey-headed man. He bowed to the Private. He bowed to the victor. And the victor had to be a hard-hearted son of a bitch to not be nice back, because you could feel for those people. How do you feel when you're totally defeated and when your emperor, who you've been told to die for, has sort of let you down?

PR: You were in tents on this airbase? In a remote area or...?

CB: I'm trying to remember. That was in September. By Christmas, I was sleeping in a hangar that we had cleaned out. It still had a fair roof on it. Maybe we repaired the roof some; I don't know. But their winters... Same latitude as Virginia. So you can imagine what kind of winters they had in Japan. Cold weather and so forth, and snow and ice. So, we had pretty good quarters in. I remember some cold nights in the tent in the early part of the winter. But my Christmastime I think we were in fairly good quarters.

PR: Were there a lot of Japanese planes around?

CB: Some old Zeros.

PR: Shot-up, or...?

CB: Shot-up, yeah. Mm-hmm.

PR: Wonder where all the planes went to that... Maybe they all kamikazed and got rid of them.

CB: Well, your next question is going to be when did I leave there. I left there in about there in about February. My unit was deactivated. 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment was deactivated. Those with enough points, of whom there were a lot, because they'd been over there five years, went home. I had about half-enough points to be coming back. I had points for being in combat, and I points for this and points for that. But I didn't have (inaudible) a two-year service. I didn't get to come home till the following June, June of '46. I was there a year, a little over a year. Not quite a year, I guess it was, in Japanese.

But the 649<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Ammunition Company was out at Shoshi, Japan -- that was on the tip of the peninsula -- dumping US Army ammunition, mostly, and trucks and vehicles and airplanes and anything that we no longer had use for. We dumped millions of dollars' worth of usable merchandise, if you just had the time and it was close and you had mechanics and you had parts and so forth to rework them.

But the logistics of hauling them 8,000 miles home and getting it done wasn't worth it. So, they went to the bottom of Tokyo Bay.

PR: They just took them out there and pushed them off?

CB: I became First Sergeant there, of this Ordinance Ammunition Company. That's where I got my sixth stripe.

PR: What ordinance company?

CB: 649<sup>th</sup> Ordinance Ammunition Company.

PR: Was that one of the occupation Army?

CB: Yeah.

PR: Was there a number to that occupation Army?

CB: We were Eighth Army, but I don't know whether by that time... It had been Eighth Army. Maybe the occupation had been detailed to Eighth Army. Maybe that was it. But this Ordinance Ammunition Company, of course, we handled everything from .45 shells, little .45-caliber pistol shells, all the way up to 2,000 kg bombs.

PR: They just dumped that off in the bay, too?

CB: Yeah, dumped it. But they were defused. We had, I think, three Bomb Disposal Squads in the Ordinance Ammunition Company, men who knew what to do. Which little thing do you turn to... (laughter)

PR: So they don't kaboom. Did you ever have any kabooms?

CB: No, never did.

PR: They did the job well.

CB: They came out by railroad train. We'd get two trainloads in per week. Like, 100 cars per train. We had several ocean-going-type vessels. I don't think they were their torpedo boats. They were the typical shrimping boats, is what they were. Big. They were larger. We had quick-weigh cranes that would load from the railroad car to the vessels and took them out to 60 fathoms of water and dumped them. Boy, I wonder how many Americans know that today.

PR: I wonder if the Japanese know that. (laughs)

CB: Oh, yeah. We hired Japanese help.

PR: Their ecology people would have a fit if they brought that up.

CB: I don't know how much fuel was still in the tanks or anything. How much oil was in the crankcases. I don't know.

PR: They'd take whole vehicles and...

CB: Whole vehicle.

PR: Dump them right off.

CB: Six-by-sixes and everything, if they were no longer serviceable. And they had a mileage. I think if they had a vehicle, a six-by-six, maximum with 60,000 miles, it wasn't worth working on it or even working on it. And in the earlier Army days, of course, when Detroit was building

all the Army wanted and would pay for... That's what they'd say. "Gee, it got knocked out in combat." You didn't even have to make a report. Just say, "We need another jeep." And they wound up in all those Division Forces that went in, the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps and the Eighth Army and smaller outfits like mine. All of them. All of our vehicles were there when they were no longer to be serviceable practically.

PR: To the deep.

CB: Mm-hmm.

PR: Well, it was cheaper than sending them home. What are you going to do with --

CB: Even artillery pieces. Our [.105?] guns and [.155] guns. What are you going to do with the damn things? Sitting over there, (inaudible).

PR: I've heard that became a problem toward the end of the war. It was sort of obvious we were going to win, but how do you turn off this tremendous production? A thousand airplanes a month coming off the line, artillery pieces coming off the line, how do you stop it?

CB: How do you stop it?

PR: Yeah, the whole country is mobilized. "We're behind this. Let's go. We've got to support our boys."

CB: My brothers and I had a conference with a European veteran. Happened to be Infantry and happened to be my age. And I'm sure that's why he had been in the Infantry in Europe. He's an oil and gasman now. He drills and he's had some success at doing that. He made a statement I never heard before. He said, "I was in Europe from..." I think he was in the Battle of the Bulge and on through. And I said, "We didn't whip them. We overwhelmed them." If all you really need is 20 tanks for this battle, but here comes 100, who's going to win? That's the kind of country we were with.

PR: It's like those guys on Normandy, that famous scene with the guys in the bunker. There's nothing out there. And all of a sudden there's 1,000 ships. "My God." (laughter)

CB: That's right.

PR: "We've lost it."

CB: Yeah, that's right. (laughter)

PR: Two guys in a rowboat, you might be able to sink and beat off. But...

CB: These incidents, I enjoy telling you some of these stuff. I haven't told this in years. Even the young man here, I couldn't think of all this stuff. You got a way of leading it out of me. (laughter)

PR: Well, it's fascinating. In June, then, you had enough points? June of '46, did you say?

CB: I got home in September. I remember it was too late to reenroll in college. I didn't start my education, then, till the following February. It was just as well. I was a hero around town for a while.

PR: Gave you time to relax and unwind.

CB: Yeah, mm-hmm.

PR: How did you start back? From Tokyo Bay? Army transport ship?

CB: *Yokohama*, because I'd been on the coast. Tokyo isn't a port like Yokohama is. I don't think ships docked at Tokyo. We were there again in '87. I think it's more railroad than it is ships. Yokohama is their main port.

PR: And you shipped out from there on a troop transport?

CB: Yes. All of the military people moved on troop transports.

PR: Packing up to go home.

CB: Either converted cruise ships or they'd been built for troop-transport service. And being a six-striper, I had Officers' quarters coming home. There weren't many Officers left. I later received a direct commission, but I didn't have it at that point. I traveled in the Officers' quarters. And I had 300 or 400 men under me, my responsibility. I didn't have to argue with them at all. They knew where they were going. They were going home. They didn't try to jump ship or anything. (laughter) But I



had to see some of them all the way down to Texas, on the train and so forth. Again, no problem. Number one, there was no one among that group coming home that I know of who was hostile about anything. They were just glad to be coming home.

PR: Yeah, damn glad to be coming back. Did get hold of booze on the ship?

CB: No. We stole some booze in the Philippines. This isn't anything stolen without a (inaudible) (laughter). And some GIs had gotten that before we did. They had some pipes coming along here, and they were hidden behind a while. And then a spigot came out here, and a spigot came out of here. (laughs) One was labeled gin and one was labeled (inaudible) whiskey. They both came out of the same pipe. (laughter) The real crowning glory, though, was that over one of these things -- I think it was over the whiskey -- there was a sign up that some GI wrote. "Specialty aids for American boys." (laughter)

PR: That's a GI for you. If there's a way to get things done, they'll do it.

CB: There's nothing like a GI. (laughter)

PR: The time doing trade and barter and sweatshop.

CB: Yeah, it's amazing what they get done.

PR: Yeah, it really is.

CB: In fact, you got to be a livewire to stay up with them.  
What the hell are they doing now? (laughter)

PR: What's next, right? We're fighting the war here, you guys.  
Let's not forget our objective.

CB: They'd slit your can of soup from the mess hall. If they  
were truck drivers, they heated it. They'd lay it up on  
the block of the engine. (laughter) The engine got so hot  
it heated the soup for them. The GI was something else.  
You couldn't beat him.

PR: That's right.

CB: This has been recorded in the history books: the German  
military attitude is, unless you've got a Lieutenant's  
stripes, you don't give a Lieutenant's orders. If you can  
knock the Lieutenant off, you demoralized or pretty well  
inactivated the platoon. In the American Army, it doesn't  
make a damn whether he's an idiot. If the man with the  
bars gets knocked off, the Sergeant jumps up there and  
takes it. It's his duty to do it. Sergeant's off, here  
may come a Corporal. He gets knocked off, a Private will  
get there. We replaced ourselves as necessary. That's  
probably what accomplished the victory in Europe, is the  
GI's ingenuity.

Just like the Sergeant in France when the hedgerows on Normandy had stopped our tanks. The Sherman tank came up on that hedgerow, exposed its belly. Germans were just knocking them out by blowing up the metal underneath us. The belly of it was too thin. But here comes this old bulldozer driver and said, "Captain, if you'll give me a welding torch, I have a little iron. I'll put it right in front of this thing." And they saw what it did, and I think the orders went down to build 1,000 of them or something. They fortified these tanks with bulldozer blades, and they went through the doggone hedgerows. GI ingenuity.

PR: There's nothing to compare with it, I don't think.

CB: A Colorado deer hunter talked his Platoon Commander into letting him put a full power scope on his rifle. The guy saw what he could do with the scope, and I think he sent an order back for 400,000. He wanted it on them. But how come it took a GI to figure that out? (laughter) You're shooting down an open sight, and you're pretty good. But with a scope, you're a heck of a lot better. (laughs) Books are full of those kind of stories.

PR: Did your ship go straight back from Yokohama, or did you have a stop in Hawaii -- do you recall?

CB: Uh-uh. Thirteen-day trip, the Great Northern Circle. Came into San Francisco.

PR: That must've been a nice sight. You remember your emotions at that point?

CB: Yeah. (laughter)

PR: Probably still chokes you up.

CB: Sure it does.

PR: Chokes me up, thinking about it. (laughs)

CB: It sure does.

PR: Did you dock in San Francisco Bay? Another one of the camps there?

CB: Let's see... Where did we go? We spent a night or two. See, you have to be processed everywhere. So, when we went back to Fort Sam, we were processed at Fort Sam Houston. I can't remember. We weren't officially in a camp like Fort Ord or anything like that. But they didn't have to worry about us being around.

PR: They had a camp over by Oakland that some of them went to. I forget the name of it now. I'll dig that up. Maybe that's --

CB: Maybe I went there. I don't know. Really, I can't remember exactly. I remember I was there maybe two days and nights. And then the shortage of sleeping railroad cars was such that we had more or less cattle cars. One

was fixed up to fix meals. I think in my category of travel, though, I had kind of a pull-man thing. But a whole lot of them were just sitting on benches.

PR: They didn't get a nap going home. (laughter)

CB: Stopped at Flagstaff. I guess it took in coal and water. Everybody de-boarded for a little while and reloaded. Went on across the desert to Clovis, New Mexico and de-boarded again. That type of thing. But there wasn't a complaint in the world.

PR: How long were you at Fort Sam, then, getting out?

CB: Three days.

PR: And then you were total-discharged?

CB: Yeah.

PR: You remember your discharge date?

CB: No, but I got it in here. (laughs)

PR: Did you have any Reserve time after that?

CB: Yeah. Part of that three days, they were trying to get me to take a commission as a former non-commissioned Officer. And I didn't for a few days. I wanted to be sure I was out. Anyway, I did eventually. This is Headquarters 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division. Gave me my base charge in the military service in the US Army. Separated Fort Sam, Houston, Texas, 15 November 1946. Surely, I got home before November. Maybe I didn't get home till November. That

says 14 November. This must be my enlisted record and report of separation, honorable discharge.

PR: Same date?

CB: Combat Infantry badge...

PR: Oh, really? You got Combat Infantry?

CB: Oh, yeah. Of all the declarations that I have, that means more to me than the others.

PR: That's a highly prized one.

CB: What's the difference between this one and that one, I wonder?

PR: Well, this is the discharge. This is a separation record. Your serial number was... What's your serial number?

CB: 3870245A.

PR: (laughs)

CB: My Officer number was 095916. I got a separation as Second Lieutenant somewhere. I was in the Reserves until '53.

PR: You got a Field Commission, you say?

CB: A Direct Commission.

PR: At Fort Sam?

CB: That's where it started, I think.

PR: Did they separate you as a First Sergeant?

CB: First Sergeant.

PR: And then they sign you up as a Second Lieutenant?

CB: Right.

PR: Same day?

CB: No, several weeks' difference. I had to go before the Review Board. They handled it very nicely.

PR: So you were actually out of the service officially?

CB: I was officially out of the service. I was back in a suitcoat and tie. At the end of the review, there was a Colonel and five or six other Field Grade Officers (overlapping dialog; inaudible). They asked me numerous questions, sized me up, and figured I would fit okay in the Officers' ranks. That's what we want, OCS. I was going direct, direct (overlapping dialog; inaudible). I can't remember exactly when that began. But I got in medical school in '51. In 1953, I saw that if I ever had to go back -- and I really fully expected to have to serve again in Russia in the background and China in the background. I knew I'd be a direct commission medical doctor if I needed one again. And to save having to go to the training sessions every year and so forth, I just resigned that commission.

PR: Oh, I see. You went in as a Second Lieutenant in the Reserves. What were your obligations? Just to go to monthly meetings?

CB: Monthly meetings. You got paid for them. Were you in the Reserves, or have you been in the Reserves?

PR: No.

CB: You would have been Lieutenant Colonel, I think, in the Reserves.

CB: Yeah. I had my two-year basic. Then I had my training. And then I went back to payback. I had three years of residency I had to pay back in those times. So I had eight years of service. And I just got completely out.

CB: Well, I guess counting the Reserve during civilian times here, I must have been commissioned in... I didn't get out until November '46. Had to be early '47, I guess, when I got commissioned. Something like that. I must've been in the Reserves for six years, because I found where I resigned my commission in 1953 in medical school. See, I was two years into medical school.

PR: You were lucky they let you out, too, weren't you? Was that before the Korean?

CB: Probably. That's when Korea was fading downward, I think. Something like that. Probably at my age they would have been 28. Something like that. I think I had the privilege, though, of resigning my commission. Maybe I had to give some kind of reason. But whatever it was, they willingly did it.

PR: Under the rules, you were eligible to resign. You went back and finished college and then started medical school?



CB: Yeah. I went that following February of '47, having gotten out in November '46. I enrolled -- and I don't know why; I had never been around a drugstore in my entire life -- but I enrolled in the College of Pharmacy at the University of Texas. The reason for it, as I look back on it: my wife had a good job. She had graduated in the class of '45, had a good job. We planned to get married. Of course, I had the GI bill. And I really didn't need the GI bill. My folks weren't broke and her folks weren't broke, etc., etc. Anyway, with her job and with the GI bill, I didn't have to ask for any kind of help anywhere. The family had some good friends; the head of Texas State Board of Pharmacy was one of my daddy's good friends. And I got talked into going to pharmacy school.

PR: How many years was that?

CB: Three years. I transferred in when I had it over at A&M. That was the minimum because I had just finished the first.

PR: That would've been four years then.

CB: And I had to do all the more scientific aspects of pharmacy, pre-pharmacy and pharmacy. I got my pharmacy degree in August of 1949. So I did it in less than two years. Then I started filling prescriptions. And the same board president man that I mentioned, my father's good friend, told me what I needed to do was to get a job with

someone like Eli Lilly or Park-Davis. Not knowing any different, they called us detail men. We were really just salesmen, calling all your doctors, hospitals, and that's it. Doctors and hospitals. I took a job with Jones Apothecary in Houston. One day, this gentleman (inaudible) Eli Lilly and Company said Mr. Vincent --

(break in audio)

PR: Mr. Vincent won the CO?

CB: Yeah. So, I went down to the Union National Bank building, the eighth floor, to Mr. Vincent's office, a district manager at the Eli Lilly and Company. And he offered me this job as a detail mail for Eli Lilly. And I'd had enough pharmacy practice by that time to know more about what was going on. I knew who Lilly was. Before, I didn't really know who was who in the pharmaceutical business. He had to give me a few minutes and said, "I'd like for your and Mrs. Borchers to have dinner with us tonight." And of course, the trick to that is, they don't want to hire anybody that the wife didn't fit in, too. We did that, and I think he put me on in the beginning of the next month in a little territory called Victoria, Texas.

PR: Really?

CB: Yeah. (laughter) So we moved again.

PR: In your backyard.

CB: (inaudible) there weren't many place to find to live then.  
We had a friend here who knew Mrs. [Deeble?], and she owned this little house. It happened to be vacant, and she let us have it.

PR: Was Foster Field reactivated at that time?

CB: No.

PR: They were closed down again?

CB: I think it was closed down at that time, because I later came back here. After medical school, I moved here in '57. And Foster had been recently reactivated about that time. So, I think in '49 -- yeah, that was in the fall of '49 -- I must have gone with Eli Lilly November 1 or something like that. I can't remember exactly. But that was an education, also. I mentioned the country school? One of the finest things that a young person can do is call on the public and have to be nice to them. If they spit in your face, you say it's raining. That type of thing. It teaches humility, because you were gracious enough to see me. If you want to talk about the ballgames, we talked about ballgames. If you didn't, I didn't bring it up. And one of the company real strongholds was never bring up politics or religion. If they bring it up, answer their question; but don't you bring it up. And there's an end to that.

I remember, before I got to that story, I was here either six or seven months. I got this call. I was in the little town of North Hine, Texas, in my territory here on a Tuesday morning, I think it was. As I walked in, the pharmacist asked if Mr. WD Vincent in Houston has asked if you'd call him as soon -- he knew where I was all the time. They knew our routes and so forth. I had a nickname. Called me Fisherman or something. Said, "Could you and Mrs. Borchers be down here by eleven o'clock?" I said, "If you say so, we'll be there." I knew there was something brewing. He wanted to transfer me to the Galveston territory for the medical school and part of east Houston and Lake City, La Marque, Texas City, and Dickinson. Those towns down there. Doctors and hospitals and medical schools (inaudible). We were there, and that's what he offered me. If you had a large organization, if you turn them down one time, you may not get another offer. So, you don't.

So, then we moved from here to Houston. We slept in Houston, lived in Houston, and I traveled to Galveston two or three days a week, and in between the rest of the time.

All of that was good training for me, because I learned to agree with you.

PR: Get along with people.

CB: Anything that didn't involve principle, I'd agree with you.

If you liked the Mets over the Yankees, then I'd say,

"They're a good team." You don't say, "I like the

Yankees." "To hell with you." That type of thing.

Anyway, during those travels, the Korean War broke out. I

said to myself one day -- I'll never forget it; I was

between Houston and Galveston -- I said, "My God, I'm going

to go to school this time. I'm not going to wind up in the

Infantry or anything else." That's when I decided to go to

medical school. It so happened that I had gotten to know

all of the people who sat on the admissions board over at

Galveston. I was accepted. I applied Baylor and UT

Galveston. I was accepted into Galveston provided I would

get 16 more hours, 8 and 8. Qualitative chemistry I hadn't

had. And I believe physics I hadn't had. So, I had to

spend the summer session. I was accepted pending

satisfactory completion of those 16 hours. So, we bounced

back and forth between the University of Houston and

whoever offered these courses that summer. Got it done,

and I think I had an A average in them. I was

automatically in. Moved to Galveston, then, for my freshman year.

PR: When is that? The fall of what year?

CB: Must have been the fall of '51, because I graduated in '55.

PR: Did you ever dream you'd be in medical school?

CB: No (inaudible) even though I thought about it many times in my ranching days and my Army days. None of that, did I ever dream. I was an animal husbandry, agricultural economics major at A&M. I didn't have any real desire. I never thought I'd be a pharmacist or a doctor. I'll never forget, I had a surgeon at the 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry when we first arrived there. During the first week, after that first night I told you about and so forth, they brought us all down there and said, "For your information..." He was a light Colonel or something, an appropriate rank. Said, "My job is to keep you boys on the line. If you come down here -- you're welcome here anytime you're sick -- but you damn well better be sick." (laughter) In other words, "Don't be wasting my time." (laughter) "If you really got something wrong with you, I'm going to do all I can for you. But if you don't have anything wrong with you, you're going to get your ass shipped back to (inaudible)." (laughter) That was his job.

PR: Did you have good medical care?

CB: Absolutely.

PR: Wounded got evacuated back efficiently and taken care of?

CB: Yes, sir. I didn't have any wounds. I had that hepatitis episode. Later, in Japan, with the Ordnance Ammunition Company, the weather was kind of tough there on the beach. I developed an otitis media, acute, in the damnedest area. I knew how kids felt. It was a boomerang. And we had a medical technician there from medical camp. He looked at my tympanum. He later became, I think, an internist somewhere and maybe a surgeon. I've forgotten his name. But he had codeine tablets number three and what have you. And that's how I got through the night. He looked at it the next morning. By that time, I'd had some seepage and purulent matter coming out of this. But my pain was gone. The tympanum had ruptured. But he was astute. He got me on the next train going back to Tokyo, and he went with me. I was hospitalized. You'll find this interesting. I was at the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Hospital in Tokyo, which had been built by the Lutheran Church of the United States. We went back there, my wife and I did, in 1987. And it still looks like a pretty modern institution.

PR: It's still a hospital?

CB: It's still there. It's sort of the medical center of Tokyo. It's not their medical school, but I think they

kind of regard it as one of their top medical institutions. was on a course of penicillin. Was it 50,000 units every three hours, or whatever it was? That damn stuff stung like lime. And I'll never forget, the cutest little white woman I ever saw walked in, this nurse, with this syringe and immediately said, "Do you want it in the arm or in the rear?" She had to be from Tennessee. And in that stage in my life, no woman had ever seen my rear ever, (laughter) ever since I was a baby. I said, "I'll have it in the arm, please, ma'am." And my damn arm got so sore I couldn't turn from side to side. About the second day, I just rolled over and said, "Try the rear." (laughter) I was there three or four days till it got better. And then I was reassigned back to my unit. Interesting experience. Little sideline story. My wife and I happened to be there on Easter Sunday 1987 and attended Easter services in the chapel at the hospital, 42 years later.

PR: That's great. Where were you staying at that time, by the way? You said you went by train from somewhere?

CB: Choshi, C-H-O-S-H-I, Choshi, Japan.

PR: That was where your ordinance outfitted?

CB: That's where the Ordinance Ammunition Company headquartered. It was stationed to where they'd have easy access to a depth of 60 fathoms. I think a fathom is six



feet, so we were looking for 360 feet of water to knock that heavy stuff in so it wouldn't roll back in.

PR: That's great. Well, that's about your military career. And then you resigned your commission, like you said, later on.

CB: In 1953. A final story, here, if you have a few more seconds.

PR: Oh, yeah, sure.

CB: When my daughter Charlotte was national president of the CAR, Children of the American Revolution, we went to the seminar they had at Yorktown, Virginia. Every year, they have this type of ceremony. But they had a platoon or two of all the services: Navy, merchant Marine, Marines, Infantry, Army... What are the others?

PR: Navy Air Force.

CB: They had Air Force, and of course Navy. These platoons came by in top-dress and disciplinary performance. I couldn't help but stand to attention. I've always had a respectful admiration for the military forces. I hate to see the deterioration that could happen if we don't change our attitude and start rebuilding.

PR: Give them back some respect.

CB: Give them some respect and enable them to feel like, "Whatever we need, we've got it."

PR: And especially re-instill confidence in their leadership.

CB: Exactly. It's a shame to see it just whittle away.

PR: It'll come back to bite us. You know that.

CB: It's going to bite us just short of the war.

PR: Between World War I and World War II, same thing.

CB: I may not be here. I'm a walking stack of pipes. I've had a carotid endarterectomy here just five weeks ago and a triple bypass two years ago in January. But for 76 years old, I'm still pretty good. (laughs)

PR: Yeah. You're doing great. (laughs)

CB: I'm glad you are doing what you're doing. This interview that Bob Dole -- I have contributed I think four times to the World War II memorial, and he's the chairman, Senator Bob Dole. He recently, in the last appeal for another contribution -- when I say "appeal," it's a gentlemanly appeal. What's the thing going to cost? How many millions? Whatever. Anyway, it's going to be something we'll all be proud of.

PR: All private money, too, I think.

CB: Private money, absolutely. Every penny of it's private money. And I think they've got \$21 million and they need another \$11 million or something to get going with it. But he made the comment that we're dying at the rate of 1,000 a day now, this generation. And it's time to get it done if

we're going to get it done. We've had memorials, but this generation didn't ask for memorials. We were just glad to get back home.

PR: That's right. I'm going to stop the formal interview.  
It's three o'clock.

END OF AUDIO FILE