

The National Museum of the Pacific War

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview With

Marion F. Adams

April 10, 2009

Medic, Company C 43rd Construction Engineer Battalion

Australia, New Guinea, Philippines

Mr. Misenhimer

My name is Richard Misenhimer. Today is April 10, 2009. I am interviewing Mr. Marion F. Adams at his home at 179 County Rd. 336 Alice, TX 78332. His phone number is (361) 664-5917. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific Wars, Center for Pacific War Studies, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II. Mr. Adams, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today. I also want to thank you for your service for our country during World War II.

Mr. Adams

Thank you.

Mr. Misenhimer

What is your birth date?

Mr. Adams

July 3 '16.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, I had 2 brothers and 4 sisters.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were either of your brothers in World War II?

Mr. Adams

All 3 of us were, yes. One of my brothers was in India and the other one was in Alaska (he was in the hospital). He was a chef and cook for the hospital.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did both of them survive the war?

Mr. Adams

Yes, Sir. Lost one of them about 8 years ago and the other one, last November was a year ago.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were any of your sisters involved in war work?

Mr. Adams

Well their husbands were. In fact, my oldest sister lost her husband in Manila, just real close to me. I'd say he was within two and a half, three miles from me when the mortar hit him. He was taking a load of ammunition up to the front line and they just dropped one right on top of his truck.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was in 1945?

Mr. Adams

Yes, Sir. I got to come home shortly after that. Lets see, I have a picture of after I got home.

Bing Crosby and his girls came over there to entertain us.

Mr. Misenhimer

This is LIFE Magazine?

Mr. Adams

Yes. March 5, 1945. The reason I bought it, it had the prison Santo Tomas there in Manila and I carried the first truckload of medical supplies to this place, and they brought in doctors and

nurses by airlift (helicopter). This is pictures that were taken over there during the war. That's what made me get this magazine and keep it.

Mr. Misenhimer

I see Iwo Jima there so it's got quite a bit of the war.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, my oldest sister, she married a boy after service that was on Iwo Jima. You might've known him, Reynolds Foster. He used to work at the bank up there at Alice.

Mr. Misenhimer

I don't recall.

Mr. Adams

I am going to find a picture I wanted to show you here, Franklin D. Roosevelt's daughter.

Mr. Misenhimer

Getting kind of fragile, isn't it?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, there's some of the natives that came along. These two fellows were sitting out here on this log and the building was here and I drove in on the road on the street that came in right in front of it, and they were sitting out there and this man had a little boy about 7, 8 years old sitting there. And while they was unloading my truck, well I went out and visited with these people. They told me a lot about what had happened there. They had 3300 prisoners there at one time. But when we got there and freed them - there was only about 3000 left.

Mr. Misenhimer

These two men, really, you can see their ribs. They're in very bad shape.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, one of these men told me he weighed 240 pounds and he weighs 140 here. He lost 100 pounds. I'm just going on what they told me. That little boy, he was poor just like they was. He was standing there and we landed in Lingayen Gulf and it took us 31 days to make it to Manila. They'd had all the bridges blown out and Clark Field and we'd have to put in pontoon bridges several places to cross to go on. But he said that from the day that we landed at Lingayen Gulf that they got one glass of water and one spoon of rice per person in that place. And he said some days I'd give that little boy my spoon of rice. They showed it.

Mr. Misenhimer

They did. They were in bad shape. Almost like skeletons.

Mr. Adams

You know, they were happy that we was getting there to free them. They had lots of elderly people.

Mr. Misenhimer

Had he been in the Army?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, he was in the Army.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was his son? The seven year old was his son?

Mr. Adams

Yes. Well, no, I don't know whether he was in the Army or whether they were working there.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's what I'm wondering if he had his wife and family over there.

Mr. Adams

When the Japs come in, they were all the American people, they swept them in there.

Mr. Misenhimer

I think Santo Tomas had more civilians than military.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, they looked like just what I saw. It looked like mostly civilian people.

Mr. Misenhimer

I think it was...a lot of women in there.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, a lot of women. One little old lady, she was real short and we had to walk up steps kind of like a court house up to it. And she was standing at the top up there so I went up there and asked her, told her what I was doing. She told me, she said, "I knew you were coming. I knew you were coming." I asked her how she knew and she said, "Well, I just had prayed for the American soldiers." I was in the Medical Corps attached to this engineering battalion and, of course we had a field hospital set up there and that's where I carried our patients.

Mr. Misenhimer

The 94th Evac hospital was pretty large as I understand.

Mr. Adams

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me ask some more questions. You grew up during the Depression. How did the Depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Adams

Well, I could say one thing real quick, it taught me the value of the dollar. Me and my father carried eggs to town and get 7 cents in trade for them for groceries.

Mr. Misenhimer

Per dozen, right?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, per dozen. We'd pick cotton and sold it for 6 cents a pound. Experiences like that you don't forget.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's right. Was your dad working? Did he have a job at that point?

Mr. Adams

No, just farming, that's all. Me and my brother next to me, we milked a bunch of cows and we'd get through with the field work, why, they had a chain gang working down here on this, it had a bunch of little old running mesquite, and we'd go out there and we'd grub for 8 hours for 50 cents an hour. Unbelievable, isn't it? This was the CCC.

Mr. Misenhimer

Living on a farm, you had plenty of food then.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, my father raised lots of vegetables of course, a lot of it went across our table. We didn't have any money but they set a good table for the children. They really did. And we kids didn't

know what money was but we worked hard but had very little sickness then but just because they fed us real well.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Adams

Well I went through 9th here at Bentonville School and then the 10th and 11th at William Adams in Alice. 11th grade was senior year.

Mr. Misenhimer

What year did you graduate there?

Mr. Adams

'34.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do when you finished high school?

Mr. Adams

Well, I bought a truck and started out running a milk route up through Alfred, Sandia and Orange Grove, Agua Dulce area. Drove about 135 miles. And I did that until '41 when they called me for Service.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now you picked up milk in 10-gallon cans or whatever.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, 10-gallon cans and they had a cheese factory up there in Alice and I'd carry it into the cheese factory and they'd make cheese.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything you recall from that time, from '34 until you went into the Army? Anything happen along those seven years that you recall?

Mr. Adams

It was during the Depression that I was working. It was very hard. After I finished school, of course I was going to school during the Depression, and then the first year I was out I had to help my Daddy farm so that my other brother could go ahead and finish school. And from then on, he and I went to work for ourselves.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you went into the Service in 1941.

Mr. Adams

Went in July, I think it was the 7th or the 8th I was sworn in. I'm not sure if that date's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Just past your birthday.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, I had just turned 25, single. Of course I was one of the first ones that got to go.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were drafted, right?

Mr. Adams

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was before the war started, our part of it.

Mr. Adams

Did you know Leon Ash?

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, yeah.

Mr. Adams

He's the one, he wanted my milk route and tried to buy me out a time or two and so when I got that letter, well, I just called and told him, "Here's your opportunity." He bought all my trucks and routes and it was him from there on. So I had a few dollars I put in savings and that's what I had when I come back home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go in at? Where were you actually sworn in at?

Mr. Adams

Fort Sam Houston, and then from there they sent us to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and that's where I took basic training. And from there they shipped me to Little Rock, Arkansas around the first of November. Then December 7th, you know. I was washing pots and pans in the officer's mess that Sunday. (laughing) I stand there looking out the windows like that with the sink and everything and had a little radio sitting up there. And that's where I heard that they'd bombed Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Misenhimer

And how did you think that would affect you?

Mr. Adams

Oh, it was such a shock, I don't remember what I thought. (laughing) We left, that was around the first of December, and of course the engineer battalion got the job of loading all the units and all their equipment and I got a job with one of these Jackhammers driving spikes in railroad crossties in the front and rear of the tires. And we got our equipment loaded and then we put our equipment on and we left there January, I want to say January 20th. They took us from there to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania and got all our shots and our pictures and things of this nature. And then they put us back on the train and shipped us right on in, loaded us on the boat and the 23rd day of January we left the USA.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's '42, right?

Mr. Adams

'41.

Mr. Misenhimer

That would be '42. Let me go back and ask you some questions. Basic training in Fort Leonard Wood, what all did you do there?

Mr. Adams

Well, we marched and we built pontoon bridges and we had combat skirmishes and all the training that went along with that.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were engineers at that point, right?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

You started as engineers in basic training.

Mr. Adams

See, I had signed up for the medics and didn't get it until I was out on the boat going across and then of course, they switched me over and gave me some training in that and then I was First Aid Man in the field and in the First Aid station.

Mr. Misenhimer

But at Fort Leonard Wood, you were in the engineers then.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, I was in engineers and I can remember one time, they took us out on a field trip at night and they had an old field way down the mountains back there. And we went down and set up all the tents. We had these individual tents, you know.

Mr. Misenhimer

Pup tents?

Mr. Adams

Pup tents, yes. About 2 o'clock in the morning, it started raining and I mean, it come a gully-washer. That water would come off of the mountain and it would just run through our tents you know. And we got wet and it was cold. That was in September. They finally sent trucks out there and picked us up about 4 o'clock in the morning. We like to froze that night, really, really cold.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have much weapons training there?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, we had to go through rifle range and I made marksman on the firing range.

Mr. Misenhimer

What rifle did you have?

Mr. Adams

The M1. Yeah, it would kick ya down then stomped it. (laughing) But most of us put a towel inside of our shirt, you know, for cushion. There was a lot of black shoulders after they started anyway. We didn't know that gun was gonna kick so much. That second day, we saw lots of towels come out to the range.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was a semiautomatic, right?

Mr. Adams

Yeah. We did that for several days, firing on the range. And then we had to climb hills. They had one steep hill out there and I was one of the squad leaders and we started up that hill and the lieutenant said, "Take your time." And we four squad leaders was the only four men in that platoon that made it to the top and the lieutenant. Yeah, it was steep. We could roll down. We slid most of the way coming back down. It was rough.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have an infiltration course where they fired the live ammunition over you?

Mr. Adams

No, we never did have one like that. No. We were construction engineers. We built roads, hospitals, and places for the cooks to cook in and then we'd set up the tables and then put up a

tent over that to eat in. We built a lot of roads. In Australia, we went from Melbourne to Darwin and we built 3 airstrips there. And then from there, well our next invasion was to take Port Moresby. Of course, the Japs were already seeded there. They had dug in and we lost a lot of men there trying to uproot them. And then we cleared that and went on to Oro Bay and that's where we built railroads, airstrips, and they got fighter planes put them there. We had a matting that we was laying. We layed that that day and it was reported to us by the Captain that the temperature degree was 142 that day in New Guinea and we was to have that ready by 5 o'clock for the planes, bombers and fighter planes, was going out to the Bismarck Sea Battle. And they left there at 5 o'clock. We finished that strip at 4 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's what they called the Marsden Matting.

Mr. Adams

Yeah?

Mr. Misenhimer

That's quite a few there.

Mr. Adams

That was so hot out there, man. It was pathetic.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now back to your basic training, what did you live in there at Fort Leonard Wood?

Mr. Adams

We had barracks. We've been there once since then and they tore down all of them barracks and they've got much better buildings there now but we had an 'A, B, C, D, E, and F' Company there and they were all in barracks. One end to the other. (showing picture)

Mr. Misenhimer

That's the ox, I guess, pulling the cart with a couple of people in it.

Mr. Adams

Here's a picture I took of an Army Cemetery in Manila. And that's where my Brother-in-law was buried.

Mr. Misenhimer

There's a lot of white crosses there. Your brother-in-law was buried there.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, a heavy loss there. You know there had tunnels in that mountain and they'd fix doors over them. And we had to dig them out of there, you might say. They'd open up one and pull up guns and fire at us. And then we'd get zeroed in that and then they'd close that door and open up another one. And it took a good while to get them out of there but we finally did. I got to come home then in June of '45.

Mr. Misenhimer

They really did have good defensive positions over there.

Mr. Adams

They did. They really dug in. But you know, Richard, when we came to Clark Field...(I think I've got a picture of that) our landing on Lingayen Gulf.

Mr. Misenhimer

That looks like it come off an LST, huh?

Mr. Adams

Yeah. And this was boats waiting to go in. This is the way that strip after we got through with it.

Mr. Misenhimer

That Marsden Matting, right.

Mr. Adams

This is something I've always kind of cherished...a picture I got of an anthill in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer

Looks like it's about 10, 12 feet high, huh?

Mr. Adam

Yeah, and lots of them.

Mr. Misenhimer

It's 17, 18 feet here it says. Height 17 – 18 feet.

Mr. Adams

And you know before we went in they had the Navy and the Air Force to come in and they snuck in there and they caught all of them Japanese planes on the ground, and they didn't a one get off.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's at Clark Field there.

Mr. Adams

Clark Field. From there, they pushed all them things (I didn't get a picture of them) but they took bulldozers and just pushed them in big piles, them planes there.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you left here to go to Fort Leonard Wood, how did you travel? What did you go on to get to Fort Leonard Wood?

Mr. Adams

Oh, we went on a cream train, one that picks up milk at every station.

Mr. Misenhimer

Stopped everywhere, huh?

Mr. Adams

We left Alice about 10 o'clock that night and we got into San Antonio just as the sun was rising the next morning. (laughing)

Mr. Misenhimer

Then when you left Fort Sam to go to Fort Leonard Wood, what did your ride on there, train?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, we rode a train up there too.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that train trip?

Mr. Adams

Well, it was better than the one here to San Antonio. I can't remember just the time that we left but we got in there pretty early in the morning. Then they took us over there and, of course, going through that business of getting sworn in and clothing and all of that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that at Fort Sam?

Mr. Adams

At Fort Sam Houston. And then they got a trainload of us that went to Fort Leonard Wood from there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that the furthest you had been from home at that point?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, at that time, it was. Of course we stayed there for 13 weeks then we went to Little Rock.

And then we was there about 2 months and then we hit the trail.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do at Little Rock?

Mr. Adams

It was mostly doing detail work and some advanced training. Of course, like I say, we spent the last month we was there loading trains.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you in a particular unit at that point?

Mr. Adams

Yes, I was with the 43rd Engineers, Company C. I was attached to them.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you were an engineer at that point?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, at that time.

Mr. Misenhimer

And then you left there and went to....where did you say?

Mr. Adams

Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. And that's where they got us ready for loading on a boat.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there?

Mr. Adams

We was there 2 days.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then where did you load on the boat at?

Mr. Adams

New York. We loaded there, and my name was drawn to be on guard. They put me on the north side of that ship at the radio door, and I stood there four hours with that rifle. I would have to take my fingers and tear them loose from the guardrail. The Sergeant of the Guard forgot me, and I did two 2-hour hitches. (laughing)

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the date you left to go overseas?

Mr. Adams

The 23rd, January 23rd, 1942.

Mr. Misenhimer

You recall what ship you were on?

Mr. Adams

The Barry. It was an old oriental boat that they had just fixed for troops. They took and put up pipes and then they'd get four cots from the floor to the ceiling.

Mr. Misenhimer

Four bunks high.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, and then we left there and went around through the Caribbean down through the Panama Canal into the Pacific. On the way from there to Melbourne, we got in a storm that lasted 72 hours. You talk about being tossed to and fro.

Mr. Misenhimer

A lot of sea sickness?

Mr. Adams

About 95 % of them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was it crowded?

Mr. Adams

Oh, yeah, they just had us pushed in there and we had an aisle about that wide we had to push our barracks bags back down and then lay that down. That was our pillow. Hot.

Mr. Misenhimer

About how many on that ship? Have any idea?

Mr. Adams

Oh, man, it was...and then they let the meat spoil on that ship and we got sauerkraut and wieners most of that trip.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long did that trip take?

Mr. Adams

We was on the water 39 days I believe. Anyway, we left in January and it was March, I want to say 3rd of March.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you escorted or just by yourself? Was there a convoy going down there?

Mr. Adams

Oh, yeah. There was 7 ships and 8 destroyers and 1 submarine. We were attacked one time.

We had a submarine come up but they got him.

Mr. Misenhimer

They didn't sink any of your ships.

Mr. Adams

They didn't sink any of our ships. We got to see them drop that depth charge that they had on there for him. And of course, word come to us that he never did see daylight anymore.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was it like to go through the Panama Canal?

Mr. Adams

Oh, that was quite an experience, watching them drive a boat up in one of them docks and let it either go down or fill it up and raise you up.

Mr. Misenhimer

The locks there.

Mr. Adams

The locks, yeah. We spend the day there. We got there pretty early in the morning and it was, oh, we had just got into the Pacific going pretty good when dark came.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you on the deck? Could you see any of that?

Mr. Adams

Oh, yeah, that's where I stayed all day, out there on the deck where I could see what was going on. Yeah, it was quite an experience.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get off the boat at either end?

Mr. Adams

No, no, we didn't get off the boat. When we went out of the last lock, we just kept traveling.

Mr. Misenhimer

Heading for Melbourne, Australia.

Mr. Adams

Of course, we didn't go very fast, we were just kind of floating along until all the boats got through. And of course we met up with some there and we were in one big convoy from there to Australia. We landed in Melbourne, Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything on the way down you recall?

Mr. Adams

No, not that I recall. Just that storm and then that one time with that submarine. That was about all the excitement we had.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get two meals a day or three?

Mr. Adams

Two. I guess the hardest job I got on that trip, Sergeant called me and told me, he said, "I need four men." So I took 3 other guys and he said, "Report to the kitchen." Of course, that was the bottom of the ship. So I got down there and reported and I told this guy and the kitchen wasn't in the bottom but the potatoes were. He said, "Take these 12 sacks of potatoes up to the kitchen." And you know how them ladders they'd go straight up in the air? We put them on our shoulder one at a time. You talk about a job now. That sack of potatoes on your shoulder and then going straight up a ladder. (laughing) We had to make 3 trips.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did the sack weigh?

Mr. Adams

I'm sure they must've weighed 60 or 70 pounds.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was a load there.

Mr. Adams

Heavy, heavy. And it took us all morning because every floor we'd have to stop and get our breath back. That's the hardest job I ever got while I was in the Service. (laughing)

Mr. Misenhimer

You had to peel them then?

Mr. Adams

No, didn't have to peel them, just had to take them up there. And then what they wanted was go get them up there so that they could have them as the days went by. They had a crew that went in and helped the cooks every day.

Mr. Misenhimer

You said you were changed to a medic on the ship going down?

Mr. Adams

No, just after I got into Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer

Go ahead. I'm sorry then.

Mr. Adams

We got to camp out there and that's when they changed me over.

Mr. Misenhimer

Go ahead from when you got there.

Mr. Adams

They brought trucks and took us out to go on to...I don't even remember the name of that field that we went to but it was one of the Australian Army fields. Then there they oriented us on the town and what we'd be doing out there. We worked at the shipyard while we was there. I stood guard at the house that MacArthur was in after he had settled things and came back there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see him?

Mr. Adams

No, not where I could say. But we stayed busy all the time while we was there. And then they put us on a train that was going to Northern Territory Australia. Well they put us on a bunch of sheep cars and somewhere in my pictures I've got the train and them sheep cars where we got in that mess and lay the barracks bag down and sit on them. (laughing) They shipped us all the way to Adelaide like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about getting trained as a medic. What happened there?

Mr. Adams

Well they pulled me out of the engineers and of course the doctor and his men trained me in the aid station and field trips and I was with someone who had already been trained. So when I got to Northern Territory Australia, I was a full-fledged aid man.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you still with this Company C?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, stayed with them. They just took me out of that and put me in the...13 of us, medics attached to that Company.

Mr. Misenhimer

So they put you on a sheep train that took you to Adelaide.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, and then when we got there we had to get off of that and we had to change our equipment to a narrow track train to go through the desert. And we got pictures where the soldier boys would get off and you'd go up a hill, that little engine couldn't handle it and we'd end up pushing. When we'd get going, we'd jump back on. And then when we got to the end of the line in the desert, well then we had 3 days by truck from there to where we went to build airstrips at Darwin.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were going up north. Did you go through Alice Springs?

Mr. Adams

I don't recall that. I made all the major cities there except Perth on the west coast. And when we came back after we had been in New Guinea for 30 months, they brought us back to Sydney, Australia for a 60-day rest period and pick up some new equipment, bulldozers and graders and stuff because they were beginning to get pretty worn. So we went back there and then when we came back the next time, we went around and come in the north side right off the equator. And then from there, we jumped to Morotai, one of the Dutch East Indies Islands out there and built an airstrip there. And then from there to Lingayen Gulf in the Philippines.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about building the airstrips there in Australia the first time. This was near Darwin, was it?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, we were just I guess about 30, 40 miles from Darwin. It was on a Swift ranch. They had steers out there and they had a slaughter house there in Darwin and they'd butcher them

steers and bring us some meat still with the animal heat in it. Well, we all got dysentery from that animal heat in it. We lived through it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything in particular happened while you were there in Darwin building those airstrips? You just built one, or how many?

Mr. Adams

Well we didn't have a lot of equipment that we really needed and we had to build a....the old engineer that was head of C Company, Major Skaff is his name, and he built a big deal you know, that trucks could drive under and they'd take bulldozers and push the soil and then it would fall down onto the truck. They didn't have drag lines or any front end loaders and all that stuff then. We built 3 airstrips there and then we started to Townsville. The next place was Townsville. That's north of Sydney.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's way up there, yeah.

Mr. Adams

And that's where we jumped from Australia to Port Moresby. One of the things that after we had got on and landed on the island, they got it safe for us to move on in, well they got an old Dutch ship of some kind there, and I was the medic that was picked to go on it and they picked 13 other guys. And the old Colonel come on the boat after he got us on there and ready to go and he come on and he talked to us and he said, "This is an experiment. We want to see if you can get to Oro Bay." We set out and we run that day and during the night we went up on a coral reef out there, and I mean we was stuck, couldn't get off of it. Of course, the Japanese

liked to come in at noon when the sun was straight up but that day they didn't come. And finally they sent a second ship out there before they ever got us off of that. We got off late in the afternoon and we got into Oro Bay during the night sometime. The next morning, we unloaded at Oro Bay.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now you went from Townsville to Port Moresby.

Mr. Adams

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

About what date was that?

Mr. Adams

We were camped at an area called Katherine in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer

There's a Katherine Gorge in a river up there.

Mr. Adams

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

You kept a diary when you were over there, is that right?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, yeah. That was on June 26th when the first plane come in and landed on the strip that we was building.

Mr. Misenhimer

At Darwin?

Mr. Adams

Yeah. Then we started a second airdrome on Carson and also built a camp there and this was on July the 9th.

Mr. Misenhimer

This is all '42, right?

Mr. Adams

Yes, Sir. When we got ready to leave Carson Bay, we broke camp and went to Townsville. Well I got part of the way and I had an appendix attack. So they had to take me back there and I had an operation for appendix and stayed there a while and then they put me on a Quartermaster Truck Convoy and I rode that from that hospital to Townsville and caught up with...

Mr. Misenhimer

Your Outfit, huh?

Mr. Adams

Yeah. July 13th, I went to the 135th Hospital. July 14th had major operation and returned to camp. July 30 we broke camp and moved to Townsville August 12, 1942. October 28th, I was discharged from the hospital. November 5th at 5:30 a.m. we left and took a 4-day ride on the convoy. We got to Mount Isa. Then we spent the night and at 12 o'clock, middle of the night, we caught a train and went to Townsville. Got there November 10th and 11th. I rejoined the Company in Townsville, while in Townsville we built warehouses. November 15th, left Townsville for New Guinea and didn't leave until later. On Thanksgiving we had a turkey dinner.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where, in Townsville?

Mr. Adams

Yeah. For New Guinea, we sat in harbor for 2 days. On January 1, 1943 we pulled out. Then on January 4th we arrived at Port Moresay in New Guinea, disembarked and went out to camp with the engineers. Broke camp and loaded equipment on the "Adelaide" the tub we rode to Oro Bay. January 19, 1943 we mounted a ship and we sailed and we got to a port on January 21st and stayed all night and pulled out at 12 o'clock January 22nd. We arrived at Oro Bay January 23rd. We unloaded and hiked out to our camp area. The 25th we moved out of our camp area and worked at Oro Bay until February 5th, and on Feb.....

Mr. Misenhimer

You went to Dobodura you say.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, Dobodura by truck convoy taking all day to make 18 miles. On February 7th, we set up camp. On February 20th we experienced our first real air raid at night there. On March 11th, we had a bombing raid, which was pretty bad. Tore up runway, destroyed 4 P-38s, and several wounded and killed. So we stayed in Dobodura until February 26, 1944. Then we went to Buna by boat and came to Oro Bay. Spent 2 days in the harbor then sailed again. The next port was Townsville where we spent one day then sailed for Sydney. This is on the way going back for our rest period.

Mr. Misenhimer

What all did you do for that year in Dobodura?

Mr. Adams

Built airstrips and we built a hospital. We built a Red Cross building. We laid that steel matting. That's where we put that matting down for the Bismarck Sea Battle. We built lots of bridges, you know.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do? Did you work on any of that?

Mr. Adams

No, I was aid man.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were there many people that you had to treat?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, yeah. I had to carry salt pills and if it was a real hot day, I had to give them...well like that day on that strip, I gave each man one 5 gram salt tablet every hour. You know, they were just perspiring so much.

Mr. Misenhimer

They had plenty of water to drink, did they?

Mr. Adams

We had a barrel of water. But we didn't have a man that passed out that day.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about malaria? Was there much malaria there?

Mr. Adams

Yes, Siree. I had it 13 times.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did y'all take the Atabrine?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, and I had to stand with...cause some boys wouldn't take it so the medical officer told me when I reported I said, "Some of them are not taking it. They're throwing it away." He said, "Well, you get you a pan, cake pan or something, plate, you pour a bunch of them pills on it and you stand between them and the window where they get the food. If they don't swallow that pill, they don't eat." And he come down there and backed me up. All I had to do was just stand there and let them get a pill off of that. I had to do that every time we'd eat. Well it was once a day, you know, we had to take those pills. It was mostly in the evening when everybody was in.

Mr. Misenhimer

But there was a lot of malaria.

Mr. Adams

Oh, yeah, just we had people on sick call all the time with that stuff.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about dengue fever?

Mr. Adams

We didn't have any of that but we had these old sores that come up on them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Kind of ulcer like?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, it's called...

Mr. Misenhimer

Ringworm, okay.

Mr. Adams

I seen ringworms on those natives over there the size of their backs. In that damp country, it rained 300 days out of the year in New Guinea and with the perspiration and all, no telling how many men we would doctor every day at sick call with ringworms around their belt line. It was hard to keep out of there. We kept them working though. That was the thing behind us then. Nobody could have off unless he just had malaria and just down.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you treat many wounded?

Mr. Adams

Oh, yeah. I guess in Manila.

Mr. Misenhimer

No I mean there at Dobodura.

Mr. Adams

Wounded?

Mr. Misenhimer

Were they wounded there, people?

Mr. Adams

Oh, yeah. There was people but mostly it was from accidents, you know, because they worked pretty close quarters with equipment and sometimes you'd get somebody with a broken bone or get cut someway, something, or scratched.

Mr. Misenhimer

The bombing raids? Were there many people wounded in the bombing raids?

Mr. Adams

No, we had our slit trenches and when tents went up, air raid trenches went down. We dug then right beside the tents. My cot sat here and the air raid trench right here and roll right into it. But yeah, we took lots of precautions. I guess one of the worst things I saw was when we were in Manila. I had been down to take more supplies down to the prison camp and I was coming back. And it was a Filipino and his wife and a girl, I guess it was their daughter, and she was about 7 months pregnant and a mortar landed right in front of them. And it just ooh.

That was about the worst thing I ever saw while I was there, just terrible.

Mr. Misenhimer

You went back to Townsville then down to Sydney for R&R.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, and we got a two-week leave while we were there. That's the only leave I got while.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do on your leave?

Mr. Adams

We went to Melbourne then oh, boy we were running around we said, "Lets get out of this town where this Company's at." (laughing) So we caught a train and went down there and spent 14 days down in Melbourne. They had lots of museums there. They had a carnival there and we just went and had a good time. We were sitting in the Red Cross one morning and I saw an old boy sitting at the other end and he was looking at me. And every time I'd look over

there, he'd be looking at me. I got through eating, I told this boy that I was with, I said, "I believe that's a boy from home." I said, "Curiosity's got me. I've just got to go over there and see." And it was old Eric Fischer over here from Alfred. But the reason I didn't know him, he'd gained a lot of flesh, you know, since he got into the Service. So we sat there until dinner and talked and ate dinner. This was in the USO.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were people friendly there in Australia?

Mr. Adams

Oh, yeah, yeah. There weren't any men there. They were all over in the Mideast. The man that blew the bugle there for us was a one-armed man. That's about all he could do.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they invite you to their homes or anything?

Mr. Adams

Oh, yeah. You'd get two or three invites shortly after you'd get off the tram and go downtown to eat. Man, they'd be willing and ready to take you home and feed you a good meal. I know the first night me and Milton went down there and we told the tram driver, we said, "Now, we want to go to a good café. We're hungry. We want to eat." He said, "I'll let you off at the right place." So he told us when we got to the street corner where we stopped, he said, "It's just 3 or 4 doors down now." Of course, we could smell that old mutton grease, (laughing) and each time they got that steak ready for us, we couldn't eat it. It was terrible. So we ordered iced tea and they said, "What's that?" We said, "Tea with ice in it." She said, "Well, we drink hot tea and iced coffee." And I said, "Well, we drink it the opposite."

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they tip the waitresses at the restaurants in those days?

Mr. Adams

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Even now there's still no tipping in Australia.

Mr. Adams

No? We didn't then.

Mr. Misenhimer

No, they don't even now.

Mr. Adams

We had a nice place to stay there in Melbourne and they took us down. Of course, I didn't do the work but I had my aid kit and just stayed around for anybody that got hurt. Took care of them the best I could.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you had 60 days R&R in Sydney then.

Mr. Adams

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

You didn't like the town of Sydney or what?

Mr. Adams

Well, it was a lot faster town than Melbourne was. There them trains are like New York's just running and people just hanging out the doors on them. It was hard to get on one of them, especially from about 4 o'clock in the afternoon until dark, or when they was going to work in the morning. Because gasoline was 4 or 5 dollars a gallon over there and they didn't drive to work, they caught the train. It was a much faster town than Melbourne was. We enjoyed Melbourne when we was there getting things done to start our tour over the South Pacific. We liked it. They had a botanical garden there, 110 acres in it.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's in Melbourne.

Mr. Adams

In Melbourne. And they had 50 custodians in that thing, you know old people who couldn't do anything else and they'd just go out there and work, which you wouldn't find a cigarette butt on the ground or nothing. Pretty flowers, it was just a beautiful place. I spent a lot of time out there just walking and looking at flowers, you know. I run into a police officer there in Melbourne when I was on that trip and I got to asking him about places to go and some places to see. And he found out that I was from Texas and he used to be a sheep man, and he evidently it got bad or something. Anyway, he come into town and got on the police force and he asked me where I was from and I told him Texas. So he said, "I want you to go home and have tea with me. I want to talk to you tonight." So I hung around there and when he got off, well he come and got me and we got on a tram and went out to his house. And man, I never answered so many questions in my life but he knew something about Texas when we got through. He had a boy and a girl there I would guess them about 12 and 14 years, and he said,

"I want you to come back tomorrow and these kids will take you through some museums and places you would like to see here." "Okay." I think I must've spent 2 or 3 days with those kids, you know, going places. I really enjoyed it. When I was in the hospital (you'll probably like this) the old Colonel come around that morning with his nurse and I was the only American boy in the Australian hospital. And he got to me and he examined me and he said, "How you doing?" And I said, "Well I'm awful sore this morning." It was a day or two after the operation. He got talking to me and he said, "Yank, where you from?" I said, "Where would you guess me being from?" He said Iowa and Chicago and some places up north. I said, "No, I'm from waaaay down south. I'm from Texas." He looked at me and he said, "Boy, that's where they carry two guns and shoot at first sight." (laughing) And I kind of laughed, I hurt so bad, I couldn't hardly stand it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah, they've got that opinion of us.

Mr. Adams

I asked him if he'd been reading his wild west Texas stories. But boy, they treated me like I was a king in that hospital.

Mr. Misenhimer

So when you finished your 60 days in Sydney where did you go?

Mr. Adams

Back to New Guinea, and we built an airstrip there. We jumped from there to Morotai, a little island that was about a mile and a half long and about a mile wide. We put an airstrip on it.

After we got that done, then we made our next move to the Invasion of Lingayen.

Mr. Misenhimer

After New Guinea there.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, Port Moresby. There's Milne Bay. (looking at a map) Right out in here in these coral reefs is where we got hung up on that boat. And then we got loose from there and we came to Buna.

I don't see Oro Bay on here.

Mr. Misenhimer

Montie is there.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, that's where we experienced our first...oh what do you call them bombs with the hot rods in them? Phosphorous bombs. I had a lot of people I had to take to the hospital when that was over with. It just rained down through the tents and right into the beds. There was 13 that got Purple Hearts there out of that deal.

Mr. Misenhimer

The Japanese dropped the phosphorous bombs, huh?

Mr. Adams

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

They explode up in the air, right?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, and then you know the little old pieces of phosphorous pipe are about that long and they burn until they go into the flesh until someone cuts that out. I had a boy right in front of me

that as he was going in, it hit him right in the thick part of his hip. Man, you talk about a man hollering and screaming. And it burned until the flesh closed it off. As soon as they gave me the all clear, well I put him on the ambulance and headed to the hospital with him. He never did come back. I'm sure he was shipped home.

Mr. Misenhimer

That stuff is bad.

Mr. Adams

Yes, Sir. Then we went from there to Morotai.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do in Morotai?

Mr. Adams

Built and airstrip there and a hospital and some roads. Then by that time, they had things ready to go at Lingayen Gulf. So I bet you it was 200 ships the day we started unloading. Man, there was a block of ships in there. And one Jap plane came in while we was there. And of course, I was standing on that LST looking up and he released 2 bombs, one under each wing, and it just looked like they was coming right toward me so I got behind a smoke stack. But it hit the boat next to us. It hit it a gun turret and got two men over there. And then he come down and you could see all these boats firing at him and the tracer bullets. It was something. It was quite a show. And he come down and got right down and he hedge hopped the boats. Well they had to quit shooting at him then. And the last time I saw him, he had jumped the last boat and was still going. Of all them boats, they never hit him.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of boat did you go from Morotai up to Lingayen?

Mr. Adams

LST so that we could unload our equipment.

Mr. Misenhimer

I understand an LST rolls pretty bad, right?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, if you get in rough water, just everyway. You have to tie everything.

Mr. Misenhimer

It's got a flat bottom.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, flat bottom. But you'd be surprised how they can get their speed up and run right up on that beach with a load and then drop that door and unload and then raise up and back out with all ease. I guess they told them a spot to get in there and they'd fool around out there and they'd get a spot and drop their anchor and then when it come time for us well they'd pull that anchor and that Captain would get after that thing you know, run up on the shore.

Mr. Misenhimer

What all happened there in Lingayen Gulf?

Mr. Adams

We didn't get to see much of the fighting. The Infantry was on ahead of us but we started fixing the roads and making our way to Manila and they loaded my truck in Morotai to go to the prison camp.

Mr. Misenhimer

Santa Tomas.

Mr. Adams

Um, hm, Santa Tomas. Of course, I had about 2 tons or 3 tons on a ton and a half truck.

Sometimes I'd get on them pontoon bridges and I didn't know if I was gonna make it across or not. But that was the way that we had to go and it took us 31 days to get there. But the Navy and the Air Force came in and softened up Manila for us. We just marched right on in.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you drive the truck or not?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, I drove the truck. Yeah, I had a ton and a half truck that I drove all that distance. Of course I had all my aid kits and everything sitting in the other seat.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you treat anybody during that 31-day period?

Mr. Adams

Richard, I just don't remember whether I did or not. I'm sure if there's one that got skinned up I did.

Mr. Misenhimer

But you were still with the engineers.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, I was still with them. In fact, I was with them until I left to come home.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got to Manila, what happened?

Mr. Adams

When we got situated, we put...there was a Spaniard man there that had three 2-story houses on Espana Avenue (that's the name of the street in Manila), and he let us put our aid station in the bottom and we bunked upstairs. He lived in one and then he had another one rented out there. He was sure nice. Him and his wife gave us a shrimp supper one night. And these were big shrimp, you know, it was about that big around. Them things was...he put them on a platter and he put them crossways and they'd go all the way across that platter.

Mr. Misenhimer

10 inches long or so, huh?

Mr. Adams

Yeah. We had a feast that night. We tried to secure Manila and then a lot of them went on to the next place. I said it earlier. Iwo Jima, there was a lot of Army went that went there. We lost a lot of men on Iwo Jima. But to free those people in Manila I think was one of our big jobs, to get those people freed and to get some help to them, some food, some medical supplies, and what have you. And they certainly needed it. I'll tell you.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now you stayed in the Philippines the rest of the time then.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, I quit making notes on that. I don't have anything in here on Morotai.

Mr. Misenhimer

So when did you leave to come home then?

Mr. Adams

'45. They carried me down to Leyte in the Philippine Islands and we stayed there a week and then they called us, woke us up at 4 o'clock one morning and told us to get up and get ready and eat breakfast. So at 10 o'clock they come picked us up, put us on a ship and the 7th day from then at 10 o'clock in the morning, they pulled anchor. And in 7 days, we pulled into San Francisco. So I got my discharge in San Antonio on June 13, 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you came home, did your whole outfit come home?

Mr. Adams

No, they'd send us 10 men or 15 men and they'd draw names out of hats and that's who went. Would you believe I was the last name they drew? (laughing) 13 of us, and I watched 12 of them leave to go home.

Mr. Misenhimer

The fighting didn't get over until August there.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

You left before the fighting was over.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, I left there and I had those dates down somewhere but I misplaced them I guess. But anyway, we got to San Francisco and unloaded and from there they took us and briefed us, you know, for 4 hours. Then they took us and fed us a good steak and then they told us to get ready. We boarded the train late that afternoon. We traveled all night Saturday night. Sunday

morning we was in El Paso. Well, late that afternoon, they pulled into San Antonio with us. That troop train, all the other trains had to get off of the track and let them go. The smoke really flew.

Mr. Misenhimer

On April 12th of '45, President Roosevelt died. You recall hearing about that?

Mr. Adams

We heard of that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Any reaction to it from people?

Mr. Adams

Oh, yeah, there were some. All the soldiers liked our President at that time. His wife wrote a poem about the boys. I had that and I carried it with me for years, and I lost that thing. I changed billfolds and I think I had to take that out of it or something. Anyway, she went on to tell about the boys were drawing \$17 a month and they wasn't even worth that, you know. They got pretty perturbed about her, but Mr. Roosevelt, most all of the soldiers liked him. She was pretty outspoken.

Mr. Misenhimer

On May the 8th of '45, Germany surrendered. Do you know where you were when you heard about that? About the time you were leaving probably.

Mr. Adams

No, I don't guess. I didn't. I don't remember. Now August they bombed Japan.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah, August the 6th was the first one. You were out by then, you were home.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, I was out. I got my discharge on the 13th day of June 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else you recall from your time over there?

Mr. Adams

I think we pretty well covered it. Of course, if I had a little more time to think I might could come up with something. Right off hand.

Mr. Misenhimer

Well let me ask you some more questions. If you think of anything, tell me.

Mr. Adams

Alright.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned USO shows. Did you see many USO shows?

Mr. Adams

Oh, maybe half a dozen while I was over there. See, I was in the Pacific 41 months. The first one we saw was in New Guinea and then we saw, well maybe nearly all that we saw was in New Guinea because we were there so long. I was there 41 months. I spent 30 of it in New Guinea.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you say you saw Bob Hope somewhere?

Mr. Adams

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was in New Guinea.

Mr. Adams

Yeah. He had about a half a dozen movie stars with him. They'd sing. All the boys would go to see them you know, if they had a truck or something available where we could take them.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was the morale in your outfit?

Mr. Adams

It was pretty good. We had 2 or 3 boys in there that was about half comedians and they was going on with something all the time and it would get your mind off of what was happening over there a lot. There's one thing over there that kind of disturbed me when it happened. We was in the Northern Territory of New Guinea and I got a telegram from home and my father had passed away. I looked at that thing and they had it stamped there and that was the 21st day and they had finally delivered it to me 21 days after they had stamped it. and then when I went back to Sydney, Australia, my sister had written me a letter and said that old Dr. Wyche said he'd give my dad VP. He couldn't do any more for him. So I went to my Medical Officer and I said, "Is there any way I could go home and see my dad?" and he said, "Well yeah, but we're gonna have to send a telegram to Alice and let the Red Cross go and investigate it and then send it back to us." So they did and I think it was about 2 weeks before I heard from it but anyway, the Red Cross lady that was in the office here, she just turned it over and said, "There's nothing to this." And sent it back. My mother said she never came out there. Then we left there and went to North New Guinea and landed and that's where I got the telegram about he

died in August of '44. That kind of perturbed me quite a bit. So my thoughts of the American Red Cross hadn't been the best since then.

Mr. Misenhimer

Any other experiences with the Red Cross?

Mr. Adams

Well, yeah. We built a Red Cross building in Dobodura and they had one of those little ping pong sets in there and at noon hour, they fed us and we went in and got those paddles and we was playing ping pong until one o'clock and she come back in and she saw us playing with them and she jerked them out of our hand and put them up and said, "Don't you touch these things. Leave them in them boxes." And we just got through building the place. So that was two things. Mr. Goldapp, he would always ask me when that group was trying to take up some money. And I said, "Well, Mr. Goldapp, I'll give you some money but I don't want any of my money to go to the American Red Cross." He said, "Oh, sure! I'll send it wherever you want it." I said, "Anywhere else is alright, but just leave them there." And then I got to thinking, you know, that wasn't the purpose of the Red Cross to be that way, you know, the organization. It was just the people they had over there that did those things. It sure was disheartening.

Mr. Misenhimer

I've heard a lot of bad remarks on the Red Cross.

Mr. Adams

You won't talk with many soldiers that like the American Red Cross.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's right. A lot of them, no way.

Mr. Adams

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the Salvation Army? Have any experience with the Salvation Army?

Mr. Adams

No, I never did have any experience with them.

Mr. Misenhimer

I hear good remarks on them from people.

Mr. Adams

I would think, just from what I've heard about them, that they would've been much better than the Red Cross.

Mr. Misenhimer

Everybody praises them.

Mr. Adams

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

What would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. Adams

When I was sitting in that ship on that coral reef and couldn't move. (laughing)

Mr. Misenhimer

Waiting for the Japanese plane, huh?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, just...and I knew the sound of one of them things, and when they'd go into a dive, you know, releasing the bombs, you could look up and you could see it. And I knew the sound of that Zero airplane. Then if I heard them at night, I got in that air raid trench. There's a certain amount of precaution you had to take in that place over there. I had a guy say one time, "They're after you. You're after them." It's business.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever actually have to use your rifle at all over there?

Mr. Adams

No, I never did. See when I went in the medics, they took it away from me and I put a Red Cross on my arm but them Japs started picking them aid men off so mine come off and went in the bottom of that aid kit. A lot of officers took their bars off over there. I got to play with the officer's ball team over there. The Captain of the Company I was attached to, he liked me for some reason and he come over one day and I was sitting there on my bunk and he said, "Adams, would you like to play ball with us?" He said, "We're taking our bars off. They can't distinguish us from you." I had my own glove and everything. "Yeah, I'll go play with you!" I got to play with them. I was catcher for them. That's the reason they was wanting me. They didn't have a catcher on their team. But that gave me a pretty good standing with the officers, getting to play with them.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were older than most of the people, too, weren't you?

Mr. Adams

Yeah. We had a few men there, people that came as replacements of men that we had lost and they had some old men in that. They had some men that was 40 years old in some of them replacements. But most of the men that was in the outfit, they was from 25 back to 18.

Mr. Misenhimer

Engineers were a little bit older than the Infantry.

Mr. Adams

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

So were the construction people. They had more experience.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, ours was construction engineers 43rd battalion.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get home with any souvenirs?

Mr. Adams

Yeah. I have a blanket that I got from Manila.

Mr. Misenhimer

And Japanese flag there, huh?

Mr. Adams

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where'd you get that?

Mr. Adams

Manila. We took some supplies down there and after we kind of got the thing under control, there was another guy with me and he said, "Lets go in this warehouse and see what we can find." And this flag and I started out with 2 Japanese new blankets but they took one of them away from me when I got to San Antonio. But I got home with one.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's a Japanese blanket. That's nice.

Mr. Adams

Yeah, I had two of them and they took one of them away from me. You know something that kind of chapped me too was in San Antonio, they would give me a GI issue before I left over there and I got to San Antonio and they tried to take that shirt and pair of pants away from me. And I said, "You think you're gonna make me go home in these dirty clothes?" he kind of looked down his nose and he said, "Well, I guess you can have these." But he says, "I want you to bring me them dirty clothes and put these on." I left that place with a shirt and a pair of pants. I've talked to a lot of veterans who got their dress suits and everything.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah, they got most of the stuff, right.

Mr. Adams

We didn't get much cold weather equipment because we was going to the South Pacific. We knew that.

Mr. Misenhimer

I see that flag has a lot of writing on it. Have you had that writing interpreted or anything?

Mr. Adams

No, I haven't.

Mr. Misenhimer

You just found that in the warehouse there.

Mr. Adams

Just kind of a souvenir.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you crossed the equator, have any kind of a ceremony or anything?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, yeah, they ducked a few of the officers and they had a big tank on the front of the ship.

The boys who did it, they had a good time. (laughing)

Mr. Misenhimer

They do anything to you?

Mr. Adams

No, no, didn't do anything to me. They just, they worked on the officers, the commissioned officers.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they give you any kind of a certificate that you crossed the equator?

Mr. Adams

No, they didn't.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Adams

Oh, yes, Sir. The night that they brought that phosphorous bomb to Morotai, well that was on Christmas night. And she told us that day, one of the boys was telling me, he come over to the aid station. He said, "Well I heard old Tokyo Rose talking and saying she was gonna send us a Christmas package." And they did. They sent that phosphorous bomb over there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were there any other storms besides that one you mentioned?

Mr. Adams

No, that's the only one I was in. 72 hours, that was long enough.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Adams

No, not really.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you use your GI Bill for anything?

Mr. Adams

Never did. I wanted to buy me a piece of land with it but I never could get enough land to justify. I would have sure liked to.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the highest rank you got to?

Mr. Adams

I was a T-Corporal. There wasn't much room for advancement. We had just 13 men. We had a Staff Sergeant and then I was next under him and then the rest of them was just Buck Privates. They even come home Buck Privates.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you had any reunions since you've been out?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, went to several of them. The last one was in St. Paul, Minnesota. Yeah, we had one every two years until boys just got so old...well we lost some of the boys, men, that had kept the things going.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was the 43rd Engineering Battalion that had it.

Mr. Adams

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

During the war, how many people did your outfit lose, were killed? Do you have any idea?

Mr. Adams

I have no idea.

Mr. Misenhimer

Quite a few?

Mr. Adams

Yeah, it was a goodly number of them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else you can think of?

Mr. Adams

Not offhand, Richard.

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March 30, 2010

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