

Eddie Good Oral History Interview

ED METZLER: This is Ed Metzler. Today is April the 9th, 2011.

I'm doing a telephone interview with Mr. Eddie Good. He is at his home in Allen, Texas. I am in Fredericksburg, Texas, at the Nimitz Museum. This interview is in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War part of the Texas Historical Commission, and it's for the preservation of historical information related to this site so let me start out first by thanking you, Eddie for spending your time this Saturday morning to share your experiences with us. And why don't we start by having you just introduce yourself. Tell us full name, when and where you were born, a little bit about your parents and we'll take it from there.

EDDIEGOOD: My name is Eddie Paul Good, and I was born in Lavon, Texas and lived most of my life in Robert Lee, Texas, which is the county seat of Coke County, Texas. Also located about 30 miles north of San Angelo, which is important to this story because San Angelo had two Army air fields. They had their municipal airport was turned into a bombardier school and they built a Goodfellow field there which was a basic training, that is a flying training of

BT-13s. And that's the early part of my life. I went to school in Robert Lee all of my school life and during my senior year, I was very interested in aviation, and I worked and saved money and took flying lessons over at San Angelo at a civilian airport.

EM: Let me interrupt you by asking you. Give us your date of birth. I think we forgot to touch that.

EG: Oh, excuse me. Well, it's coming up pretty soon, April 14, 1927.

EM: By golly, you're going to be 84 years old.

EG: Yes, I will be.

EM: You're a baby compared to many of the guys I talk to.

EG: Yes, right. I did get in on the final end of the war. The atom bomb had not been dropped, but at any rate.

EM: Well, go back to your story anyway. I interrupted you. Sorry.

EG: No. That's all right. I meant for you to. I forgot to tell you my birthday. Well, at any rate, I wanted to -- I wanted to join the Air Force or Air Corps at that time when I got out of school because I didn't want to be drafted because if you were drafted, you didn't have a choice of which branch of service you would be in and I wanted to be in the Air Corps, so as soon as I graduated, I went over to Goodfellow Field and enlisted. The -- I failed to mention

the fact, though, that I had been taking flying lessons and I soloed in a Piper Cub. The instructor was actually a cadet or probably wasn't a cadet, he was an officer -- a flying officer from Goodfellow Field, and he let me solo before I reached 18 because it was mandatory that you didn't solo after that. But anyway, he let me do that. He kind of bent the rules a little bit. But anyway, I was very interested in flying and so I enlisted at Goodfellow and after that they told me to go home and I would be called up to active duty, but in the meantime, I was also offered to go to school. The Air Force had a training program called ASTRP, Army Specialized Training Reserve Program, and I took them up on that and they sent me to Las Cruces, New Mexico. New Mexico A & M at that time, and we were issued standard uniforms. We did not get paid, of course. Everything we needed was furnished, and our schooling was. We took the equivalent of about 27 semester hours of -- which is pretty heavy schedule.

EM: Yeah.

EG: But at any rate, we had time off on the weekends and generally we would go to El Paso to the USO there. They had an indoor swimming pool and we'd hitchhike over there.

EM: Now, how old were you at this point, Eddie?

EG: Well, I was 17.

EM: Okay.

EG: I was 17 and one interesting thing happened while I was there. There were some German PWs that they -- a base nearby and they used those prisoners of war to tidy up the campus. I was walking in the campus one day between classes and I saw some German PWs over there working, a small group of about five or six, and they were generally guarded by a soldier with a rifle. He was nowhere in sight, but they were hard at work, and I heard what sounded to me like a gunshot and all the German PWs dropped their tools and ran towards a pool -- it was on the campus there. And it turned out that the soldier had -- was shooting at a fish in the pond, and they had thought that one of their own had been shot at, I think, so I think they were very relieved about that.

EM: Yeah, it was just a fish, not a German that got shot.
Yeah. Wow.

EG: Right. Well, and I have another--

EM: I want to ask, Eddie, did you try to talk to those prisoners of war at all? Were you allowed to?

EG: No. No, we did not. I don't think we even wanted to, but we didn't. I never did talk to any of them.

EM: Okay. Okay. Well, go ahead.

EG: So, we was -- Like I said, we were free on the weekends.

We would hitchhike anywhere we wanted to go. One weekend, I wanted to go up to Ruidoso because my folks had taken me up there in my younger years and so I got on the road and hitchhiked and got a ride immediately. That's -- people would stop and pick you up immediately. I got as far as a little town called Tularosa, and it was getting dark and I saw that I couldn't make it so I decided to go back, so I was standing out on the road and -- to -- for a ride to come by, and I saw and noticed two Navajo Indians, a man and his squaw sitting over there. She had a -- and he had blankets wrapped around them. Well, he wandered over to me, and by the way, there was a bar across the street there, he wandered over to me, and I can remember this so well, he grunted, he said, "Uh, me good Indian." Well, I didn't know what to think about that, but he had some money in his hand. He shook the money toward me and says, "You buy me whiskey." I said, "No, I can't. I can't buy you any whisk I'm too young to do that myself." You know, during those years, Indians, it was a federal offense for Indians to buy whisk I guess you knew that.

EM: No, I guess I didn't, but I mean you know their weakness for firewater is well know, so --

EG: Right, so anyway, he understood and he wandered back but that was one of the things I always remembered. Course he

looked at me. I had my uniform on, he looked at me as a soldier big enough to do -- to buy whisk, but I --

EM: You couldn't.

EG: couldn't myself. It'd have been a federal offense for me as well.

EM: Well, that's not good.

EG: No, but after I went to the school, after about six -- I believe it was really about nine months, they sent us all back home. By the way, there was a contingent of about 400 young men there going to school in the ASTRP program.

There were very, very few civilians there. I believe we outnumbered the civilians going to school there. Because it was during the war years and most of the people had been drafted, the men especially, and there was very few women at that time that even went to college, but still there was just very few people there.

EM: Well, what kinds of things were you studying there? What were the courses?

EG: Mostly math, physics, that sort of thing. We had physical education too, quite a bit, but it was geared mostly for math and physics.

EM: Now, had you been to basic training yet, at this point?

EG: No, no, no. I was still 17. I wasn't officially in the Army.

EM: Okay.

EG: So, I went home and when I became 18, I received my orders and they were to report to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, I believe it is.

EM: Yep.

EG: So I went down there and in the interview, of course, I was assigned, by the way, I was assigned an Army serial number 18066678 which I remember to this day when I enlisted at Goodfellow and that kept me from being drafted by the way, so I went down there and during the interview and enlistment process, they mentioned the fact that it was voluntary, but I could -- I could sign up to buy a 25 dollar war bond each month and I decided to do that, and he said it would be sent to my home -- mailed to my home every month, so the \$25 war bond cost \$17.50, now privates got \$50 per month at that time, so -- but I didn't need any money. Everything was taken care of, my food, my clothing, my housing, so anyway, I signed up for the \$25 and gosh I kept that thing 10 or 15 years, I've had several of them for each month I was in. I kept those bonds until they matured. After --

EM: Well, it's probably good that you did that because otherwise you'd have just blown that money on candy bars and popcorn and that kind of stuff, you know.

EG: Yeah, that's what I'm doing now.

EM: Well, you're retired now. You can do that.

EG: That's right. Yeah, so we were then all loaded, this contingent of draftees and enlistees were loaded on a train one day, we didn't know where we were going so there was a lot of rumors going around, where are we going, and I think it took two days and maybe a night on the train, it stopped an awful lot, it was very slow. It just really went slow, but we ended up in Wichita Falls at Sheppard Field and it was a basic training, not a flying basic, but a basic training. That's where I took my basic at Sheppard Field and Wichita Falls. There were so many people being drafted and still being drafted and enlisting that they were overcrowded there. The war wasn't over.

EM: What was this, early '45? Late '44? What --

EG: Well, it was probably '45. Yeah, it was '45. And they had -- of course, they had huge barracks there, two story barracks, I mean, hundreds of, well not hundreds, but a lot of them, but between each of the barracks because they had so many people, they had three tents, I guess each tent held 20 men or so maybe 30, and out in the quadrangle, inside the blocks they had several tents there and they had those tents just because they didn't have room for all the men that they were trying to go through basic. They also

shortened the basic training time because they needed to get rid of the people and get them out of there because more people were coming in all the time, and I think they shortened it from eight weeks to maybe six or maybe four weeks. We spent very little time in basic training. They shortened everything we did, the hikes, eliminated the 26-mile hikes and we only took a 12-mile hike, I believe, with gas masks. But after we finished basic and before we were assigned a duty, we had to just do menial jobs around. I did some KP, waiting on my orders, but my big job that they assigned me to was the bakery, and at the bakery, they made bread for several different bases all around and several surrounding states, so it was a pretty big operation.

EM: Yeah.

EG: Now, I was assigned to a room all by myself that had a bin in one corner with a big suction pipe hanging down, and my job was to empty 50-pound sacks of flour into that bin and they'd -- I never did see the bakery operation, just that room.

EM: All you saw was the flour.

EG: And I did that for, oh, several days, and one -- early one morning, like 2:00 or 3:00 a.m., I had the night shift there, by the way, a soldier come in with my replacement.

He said, "You've been transferred." So I went with him, and low and behold, I was transferred, and I was the only one in my group that was transferred to Miami Beach, Florida. When I got to Miami Beach, or Miami, by the way, I went by train. All the travel was by train, that I knew of, or transferring men around. Some bus maybe, but it was mostly train. There were some people there, some volunteers, civilian volunteers that would take care of you and they knew where to take you, and they took me to a hotel on the beach called Traymore Hotel. It was right on --

EM: The what?

EG: the beach, and it just so happened --

EM: What was the name? What was the name of it, Eddie?

EG: Traymore. T-R-A-Y-M-O-R-E. And by the way, that hotel is still there. It's a little seedy now, what I read about it on the net, but it's still there.

EM: I'll be darned.

EG: I didn't know this, but the Air Force had taken over most of the hotels or all the hotels that were on the beach with the exception of one. The old Roney Plaza, which is gone now, but the old Roney Plaza was still a civilian hotel. All the rest of the hotels, and they weren't huge hotels, they were small hotels mostly, eight stories high, there

was a height limitation, I think for building in Miami because of the hurricanes, but they were setting up a separation center for men that had qualified to be separated. These were crewmen that had made several bombing runs in Europe and then the Pacific and they brought them back there to do a little bit of R&R before they were discharged. Well, the next morning, they called all of us down. I guess there was about a hundred of us in the hotel there, maybe less, and they -- down to the lobby and there was a desk there with, I think there was a captain and a lieutenant and a sergeant sitting behind this desk and they had all our personnel files. And they call each one of them and they had a big floor chart in front of them, and what they were doing is they were assigning people to various jobs. Clerical type or other type jobs setting up this separation center. Well, when my name was called, I went up and they looked at my personnel records and they looked at me and said, "You don't have an MOS, do you?" I -- That's Military Occupational Specialty. I said, "No, I just got out of basic." So they conferred with another and they looked at their chart and found something and they said, we're going to assign you to the final discharge station. You'll be in charge of the men that come through at the very last and they will -- you

will fingerprint their right thumb and tell them where to sign their discharge. So, I was assigned an MOS of 055, that's clerk, non-typist. Pretty low on the totem pole, I'd say.

EM: Clerk, non-typist, huh?

EG: Clerk comma non-typist. But, anyway, we only had about 40 men a day that we would discharge. They'd come in 10 at a time. Ten fairly early in the morning. Ten mid-morning. Ten afternoon and ten more. It was -- It took about two or three days to interview every -- they had to be interviewed. Their separation papers, discharge papers had to be typed up and approved and signed and you know, go through the whole thing.

EM: Now --

EG: That's where I worked in Miami Beach for a while.

EM: Now what kind of questions did you tend to ask them? I mean, did you have a standard set of questions you ask them, or --

EG: Not me, because all I did was fingerprint their right thumb and tell them where to sign.

EM: You were really a specialist, weren't you?

EG: Yeah. So, but, you know, being young, I was only 18, that's about all I could do anyway, I guess at that point in time. But they decided to shut that down and move us

over to Coral Gables. Coral Gables is a suburb of Miami. You might have heard of it.

EM: I have, yeah.

EG: They have a big hotel there called the Miami Biltmore, it's still there and it's a very luxurious five-star hotel, but the Army Air Force had taken it over, and they had converted it to a hospital. A full-fledged hospital, and they could do operations and treat the men as patients that had come back that needed treatment from the war and so I worked over there. Had a -- my master sergeant who took me under, his name was Leonard E. [Sodsvac?], he was from Wisconsin and he really was nice to me and good to me. I remember him forever. One of those people, you know, you just remember.

EM: Right.

EG: So, I worked there for a while. We had big name bands come through to entertain (inaudible) came through and gave concerts, so -- But I wasn't there very long. I don't know, maybe just a few weeks. One of the things you do when you're transferred, you're always given a physical, and before I was transferred off of Miami Beach over there, just a few miles, they had given me a physical and took an x-ray. So one day I was -- a soldier came up to me, a medic, and he said, "Come with me." Well, I didn't know

what to do. We put me in a wheelchair and put a mask on me, and it turned out that the x-ray showed a small spot on my lower left lobe, and at that time, it was unknown what - - they didn't know too much about that. At that hospital at any rate, so they put me in a room and they wanted to observe me and I felt kind of isolated because the doctors had come in, they put on a gown and they put on a mask, and they'd wash up and they'd come over and ask me some questions and they'd leave. Well, another thing that was very unusual was that every day, Red Cross ladies would come by, and they wouldn't come in the room because I was kind of isolated there, and they would throw in a package of cigarettes. This is in a hospital. I don't think that would go over to good now.

EM: I think times have changed, haven't they?

EG: Times have changed. Yes. But anyway, I got ahead of myself. There were some things that I really did want and minor things when I was transferred, let me go back a little bit.

EM: Okay.

EG: When I got over to the Coral Gables, the medical staff there, they had a medical staff, and then they had -- they were all in the Air Force too, I guess, or the Air Corps, but they were a different department from just the regular

other staff. We had, being an enlisted man, I had to wear those Brogan shoes. Well, all the medical staff had what we call low quarter shoes, and I just wanted a pair of those low quarter shoes so much, so I went to the quartermaster sergeant and I asked him, I said, "Could I get some low quarter shoes?" And he says, "No, you don't qualify for that. You're in just -- you're in the staff here, and you don't qualify for that. If you're a medic, you would, but --" So I could understand that. I didn't argue with him at all, and I went back to my work. Well, it just so happens that this sergeant came up for discharge while I was working in the discharge station, and he came to me and he said, "Say, I have to get away a little bit early. I wonder if I could sign my discharge before the rest of them." I said, "Oh, yeah, sure. Just come on in. I'll take care of you." And he turned, and he said, "Oh, thanks a lot." I said, "Oh, by the way, what about them low quarter shoes?" He said, "Go down to the low quarter mess store and get them." So that's what I did.

EM: I'll be darned.

EG: Anyway, they finally decided that they couldn't treat me adequately at this hospital in Coral Gables in the Miami Biltmore hotel, so they decided to transfer me to Fitzsimons was a large hospital at Denver. And the -- it

was customary, if not required that any time a patient was transferred that they had to send a doctor with them. Now, bear in mind, I feel just as good as I feel right now. I had never complained and I was concerned thought that they had found this and I -- but I felt good. I felt good, so the doctors, though, that had to -- had to, they looked forward to getting away from there and escorting their patients to where they had to go because most of them would go to a place where they could, you know, have a few days with their families and whatnot.

EM: Right.

EG: So, again, they sent me -- they sent someone, and we took the train from Miami to Chicago, then from Chicago, we took what I think was called the Denver Zephyr from Chicago to Denver. Now they gave us sleeping quarters on the train and it was a civilian train, of course, and you know, it was just first class as far as I was concerned, but we got to Denver Fitzsimons and the doctors there examined me and he said, "Did you grow up in New Mexico or West Texas?" I said, "Yeah, I spent all my life in West Texas." He says, "Well, probably 90 percent of the people," now this is what he said, I question him at this point, but he said, "Probably 90 percent of the people have what you have, it's from breathing in sand." And by the way, we had sand

storms in West Texas you wouldn't believe during that time.

EM: I know.

EG: He said that calcified, it was diagnosed as a calcified spot in my lower left lobe was caused by breathing in dust. He said it's non-contagious, and says, "We're just going to observe you for a while and make sure there's nothing wrong. Now, Fitzsimons had some really, really serious people in bad shape patients there. If you were really, really bad, you got a private room. These were people that were really so bad they really weren't expected to live. The hospital itself had big, huge wards in them with lots of beds and that's where they left the people that weren't all that bad, though most of them were TB patients I believe, and they were considered contagious, so you know, precautions had to be made if you wandered around there. The doctor told me, he says, "Since you're not so bad off, I'm going to let you run the mail and we'll take x-rays of your chest occasionally and we'll let you go through and run the mail." Now when he accosted me though, he says, "When you go in the ward, to be sure you wear a mask." So I was wearing a mask now to protect myself rather than before wearing a mask to protect other people. So anyway, they did. They kept me there and ran tests on me quite often. In fact, during that time, they made x-rays nearly

every day, now they wouldn't do that now at all, but finally, they decided that I could be discharged.

Now, I want to go back again, I think, you know I mentioned about the German PWs?

EM: Right.

EG: At Los Cruces. Let me go back and mention one other time when I came in contact with some German PWs and that was on Miami Beach. They had some German PWs there doing KP and menial jobs, so that meant that we didn't have to do KP, but I failed to mention that, and I just wanted to go back and tell you, because I thought was kind of a fine --

EM: Yeah, most people think that most of those prisoners of war were just stuck in work camps out in the Western part of the US, but apparently, they weren't. They were around all over the place.

EG: They were. They were integrated right in with us. Of course, they didn't live with us, but they did KP work right in the mess halls. There's another thing that happened when I was on Miami Beach, and this must have been in 1945, maybe '46. We had a hurricane blow through there. We had three days' notice that it was coming, and so we had plenty of time. Most of the hotels there, if not all of them had shutters that they stored in the basement, and we went and got the shutters and put them up around the lower

floors, and then we were instructed to stay in our rooms, stay in the hotel because it was dangerous to get out, mostly from flying coconuts, I think, from the palm trees. But the wind blew 110 miles an hour, and, boy, that was a storm, but it did very little damage. Like I mentioned before, there weren't any buildings in Miami beach or Miami area that was about eight floors. I believe that was a height limitation, but to my -- back to Fitzsimons. They decided that I was well enough that I could be discharged and sent home, so I was sent over to Lowry Field. I was actually discharged at Lowry Field, and given my discharge papers and some money and kept my uniform and I got on a road, and I hitchhiked home.

EM: I'll be darned.

EG: And it wasn't a problem at all.

EM: Now, was the war over at that point?

EG: Well, they had dropped the -- yes, yes the war was over.

They had dropped the atomic bombs. And yes, it was over.

EM: And so, were -- when VJ Day occurred, when they actually signed the armistice and it was officially over, had you gotten home by then, or were you --

EG: Oh, no. I was still in Miami. I recall that day, and I was in Miami Beach.

EM: What happened? Was there a big party?

EG: Yes.

EM: In a word.

EG: Yeah, big. Big celebration. It was. By the way, you asked me earlier too, and I failed to answer that, where I was on December the 7th 1941.

EM: Right.

EG: Of course, I was in school in Robert Lee, Texas, and I was -- it was on a Sunday, I recall I was coming home from a movie, a downtown movie in Robert Lee and then I heard it on the radio. Everything had to be on the radio then, and so that's my recollection of where I was on December the 7th 1941.

EM: What was everybody's reaction when they heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor? I mean, were people angry? What was -- How did your parents feel? What was the deal?

EG: Well, because I was pretty young then, and I don't recall too much of that. I know there was a lot of concern. What I do remember, though, during the war years there were a lot of shortages and the people accepted it. I remember that meat and sugar were in short supply. Living in West Texas, meat wasn't a bad problem, because a lot of people had their own livestock and they could butcher them and so we didn't have any shortage of meat there, but sugar was a shortage. Also, I remember that women's nylon hose was a

shortage. Yes, and gasoline. You had to have stamps to buy gasoline and it was really rationed. My dad, being in law enforcement, got all the stamps that he needed and a few more, and I recall that when I was stationed on Miami Beach one time got to come home on a three-day pass, and I was hitchhiking part of the way, and a lady from Chicago with a small baby picked me up and she was going to California to visit her soldier husband who was stationed there. Well, I had some stamps with me. My dad had given me some surplus gasoline stamps, and I gave them to her. Now she didn't want anything from me for picking me up, but she was really, really glad to get them. I've often wondered, I know she made it there, but can you imagine starting off in that day and time and driving all the way from Chicago to California with no gas stamps?

EM: And a baby.

EG: And a baby, yes.

EM: Golly. That is --

EG: Well, hitchhiking was not a problem as I said before, the first car that come by would always -- would always pick you up.

EM: Boy, times have changed.

EG: Yep. Let's see. I mentioned about the shortages and

everybody just accepted that. Patriotism was rampant.

I've never seen, even with the soldiers I served with, the enlistees and also the draftees, they were all very patriotic. I didn't notice it then so much as when I look back and see how patriotic everybody was. I didn't see anybody that I come in contact with, civilians that weren't patriotic. And you know, I -- that's quite a bit, it seems to me like, to some degree.

EM: Well, that was total war back then with complete civilian mobilization. I mean, there wasn't anybody that wasn't immediately touched by the war in one way or another.

EG: You're right. Everyone was.

EM: That's not the case, that hasn't been the case since because all the wars and skirmishes we've been in, yeah they've been serious and yeah, we've lost a lot of guys, but it's never been total war, and I think that's the real difference, you know?

EG: Ed, and I may call you Ed, I hope?

EM: Oh, certainly.

EG: There was one other thing that I failed to mention. The government was also real good about good or bad, and I think it was good at that time, about suppressing news that was detrimental to the war effort. For instance, after several years after the war, I had gotten married to my

wife and we've been married for 54 years now or more.

EM: Congratulations.

EG: About 10 or 15 years after we married, I wanted to go to Miami and go to my old haunts down there, and we did. We drove down there and we didn't stay at the Traymore, but I went the Traymore and looked at it and it was a fairly nice, still nice small hotel there. But we were walking up and down the beach and there was a lot of tar balls on the beach. You'd step on them and they had -- I don't know if it was the city or who had put them there, but you had small cans of kerosene on the sea wall to wash your feet off because if you stepped in them, you just got a black stain on you. Well, I didn't know where those tar balls came from. Well, it so happened, I found out later that there were a number of tankers that were coming from Texas oilfields around Florida, and there were a number of them were sunk by U-boats off the coast of Florida, from Houston to Florida there. We didn't know it. I was there, and I didn't know it. I found out about it later.

EM: It was a well-kept secret.

EG: A well-kept secret, and I think it should have been well kept.

EM: Yeah, cause that's --

EG: Things have changed. I don't think you could keep secrets

like that anymore.

EM: No, I don't think so.

EG: Good or bad. Some of it's good. Some of it's, you know, bad. But a lot of ships were sunk there off the coast and they're still leaking oil, and that's been 20 years ago or 25, maybe longer than that, that we were down there, so I don't know if that's still happening or not. There was one other thing I failed to mention about the hurricane that occurred when I was down there. I said there was very little damage done in Miami and on Miami Beach, but there was some damage done at Ocala. That's a little town north of Miami that had some huge hangers that that house blimps that patrol the sea coast for submarines. The -- All the Army planes in that area were flown out of Florida up into the other states away from the hurricane, but the civilian planes, and there were a number of them, there weren't a lot of a number, but they couldn't be flown out because of the distance, shortage of gasoline, whatever petrol, so they allowed all the civilian planes to come to Ocala and be stored in those hangers. While, unfortunately, lightning struck the hanger and burned it down and burned all the, at that time, all the civilian planes, private light planes in the area, burned them up, and so I'm sure that caused a hardship for some time to come.

EM: Probably burned some Piper Cubs just like you first soloed in.

EG: Probably did, but overall, everybody was so patriotic during that period of time, that I still think about it, how it was at that time. Now, I was never, you know, in harm's way, but I am proud of my service to the country, even though I didn't get to go overseas, I didn't fulfill my dreams of being a pilot or even getting in an air crew as a gunner or a bombardier or whatever, but that wasn't of my choosing I tried to, and there just wasn't any possibility. They had too many at that time.

EM: Right, right. Well you know, the way I look at it, somebody had to do the job you did too. And cause for everybody that was in combat, there was I don't know four five people backing them up somewhere else in the world, so --

EG: Yeah, there was a lot of people that had it so much worse than I do. Even today, I look at some of the hardships our soldiers are confronted with as well, but that just about ends my, what I remember about my part of it, and if there's any questions, I'd be glad to answer them.

EM: Yeah, I have a question.

EG: Yes, Sir.

EM: When you were in the separation center, you got to see a

lot of guys, even though all you did was fingerprint them and show them where to sign, you got to be with a lot of guys who had been in deep, heavy combat, so heavy that they were now being separated from service, so did you detect, you know, post combat stress syndrome or, you know, battle fatigue, any of these kind of --

EG: No, no not at all. Everybody was happy, happy to get home. Everybody was happy. They served and they were patriotic, but they were happy to be discharged. Everybody came through my section were so happy to be leaving and going back home. No there was none of that, Ed.

EM: But you didn't see any of the guys that seemed like maybe they weren't right -- quite right after going through all that?

EG: Not at all.

EM: That's interesting. Well, that's good. Well, now.

EG: Yeah, it is good.

EM: Now, did you stay in pretty close contact with your family while you were over there, you know on the east coast and up to Denver? I mean, did you write letters? Did you hear from them? They knew where you were, they knew you're okay?

EG: Yes. Yes, and one thing I remember about that. I'm glad you mentioned that. We got free postage. All you had to

was write a letter and print up in the upper right hand corner "free." Put your address over here, your military address, and we did not pay -- we did not have to mess with stamps or anything like that. All of our mail was free.

EM: I never heard that before.

EG: Yeah, you haven't? I've still got some letters that I wrote my folks and they got "free" on them. "Free."

EM: And it worked.

EG: Yeah.

EM: I'll be darned.

EG: I'm sure everybody knew that, they just maybe haven't mentioned that in the interviews. It just some things that I remember that impressed me would not be impressible at all with anyone else maybe.

EM: It just never came up, that's all.

EG: Yeah.

EM: So how do you feel about the Japanese and the Germans?

While you weren't in direct combat with them, they were the enemy during that time and everybody was very patriotic.

How did you feel about the enemy then and how do you feel about our ex-enemies today after all these years?

EG: Oh, I didn't -- I hated the Germans. I hated the Japanese. Really, really lots my attitude is completely reversed now. I admire the Germans and I certainly admire the Japanese.

And by the way, I have some Asian friends. They are real friendly and I don't know, I may have some German heritage about me. I don't know, but I've always wanted to learn German and I feel good about the Germans and the Japanese now. Whereas it was completely different during the war.

EM: Right. And what about your health condition? Your calcification in your lung. Did that ever develop or bother you after it was over?

EG: No, not at all. It was just. It's still the same size. I tell you now, he advised me, the doctor advised me to have periodic x-rays and I had one about once a year, not for that, but for some other reason maybe, and I'll tell the doctors, now I've got a small spot about the size of a dime in my lower left lobe and they'll find it, and don't say anything about it, and I've had no problems with it whatsoever.

EM: Well, when you and I were talking and you were describing that situation to me, I'll tell you what I was expecting you to say. I was expecting you to say that because you had breathed all that flour dust when you were in the flour room, that you had had basically they call it silicosis of the lungs, where you've breathed a lot of dust and you know airborne materials --

EG: Well, I wasn't there but less than two weeks in that job.

I can't remember, but it was a very short time. No that thing was mostly caused with sandstorms I believe blowing in from New Mexico and West Texas.

EM: We still get those things so, yeah, that's probably the explanation Well, let me ask you if there's anything else, Eddie, that you'd like to describe about your war experience? I think you've shared some really interesting stuff. I don't know if I've ever met anybody that fought the Battle of Miami Beach.

EG: Well, I really had it -- I was fortunate. I was very fortunate. Now, I realized that. I would have preferred something else. I really would have. I would have liked to have spent more effort towards the war effort, but it turned out this way and I'm real happy with it. I'm proud of my service.

EM: You should be. And I want to thank you for what you did for our country. You know, we still, I think despite all the years and the all the fanfare about World War II, we still don't thank you guys enough.

EG: Oh, no thanks necessary on my part.

EM: Well, no, you were part of --

EG: I hate to say this, but I kind of enjoyed it. Looking back on it, I was young. I was 18, unmarried. I enjoyed what I was doing. I really enjoyed. I met some friends. I met a

lot of people that are friends and I kept with them for a while, but I've lost constant with most if not all of them.

EM: Yeah, well, that's understandable. But still, yeah, you were footloose and fancy free.

EG: Yes. Maybe I didn't take advantage of it as much as I should have looking back on it.

EM: Well, you know. We always look back on those years and say, "Oh, if I had just done this and if I'd just done that" but, you know you can't go forward in life doing that, so well look, I'm going to end the recording here. I want to again thank you for the time you spent with us. I appreciate getting home front stories down. We have a special section in our archives for people who were on the home front either in the military or not in the military, so it's an aspect of World War II that we're glad we get down and I appreciate your contribution.

EG: Well, no appreciation, listen, I appreciate you and what the Nimitz Museum is doing as well, and I thank you for that.

EM: Okay, I'm going to end it here.

END OF AUDIO FILE