

**THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR**

**Nimitz Education and Research Center**

**Fredericksburg, Texas**

**An Interview with**

**Edward H. "Ed" Vaughan  
Ft. Worth, Texas  
December 19, 2011**

**574<sup>TH</sup> Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion  
New Guinea, Philippines**

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is December 19, 2011. I am interviewing Mr. Edward H. “Ed” Vaughan by telephone. His telephone number is 817-738-5008. His address is: 3274 Tex Blvd., Ft. Worth, Texas 76116. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific War, Nimitz Education and Research Center, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II

Mr. Misenhimer

Ed, I want to thank you for taking the time to do this interview today and I want to thank you for your service to our country during World War II.

Mr. Vaughan

Thank you.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the next thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the Museum. “Agreement read.”

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes, that is fine.

Mr. Misenhimer

The next I would like to do is to get an alternative contact. We have found out that sometimes several years down the road we try to get back in contact with a veteran and he has moved or something. Do you have a son or daughter or someone we could contact if we needed to find you?

Mr. Vaughan

I have two daughters that live here in Fort Worth.

Mr. Misenhimer

Give me either one; which one?

Mr. Vaughan

I will give you the name of the youngest one. Her name is Suzanne Ansley and her work number is 817-249-2131, ext 2227. She is at 113 Royal Oak Drive, Aledo, Texas 76008. Her home phone number is 817-441-7833.

Mr. Misenhimer

First question, what is your birth date?

Mr. Vaughan

February 15, 1923.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you born?

Mr. Vaughan

Arlington, Texas.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Mr. Vaughan

No brothers or sisters. I am an only child.

Now you grew up during the Depression. How did the Depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Vaughan

It was pretty tough. My dad worked for the telephone company in Mineral Wells, Texas and at some period in there the telephone company cut the employees back to about three days a week. My dad was a supervisor and they didn't cut him back but they closed the banks. He came home one day and said, "I don't know what we are going to do. They closed the bank and I don't have any money." We had lived there long enough and we knew everybody so we could get anything we wanted anytime we wanted. So it really wasn't a big hardship. He didn't miss too much money.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you live in town or in the country?

Mr. Vaughan

We lived in town.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you able to have a garden?

Mr. Vaughan

No garden.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Vaughan

Mineral Wells.

Mr. Misenhimer

What year did you finish there?

Mr. Vaughan

1940.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do when you finished high school?

Mr. Vaughan

It seems to me that I worked for my dad doing contract type work that summer and then I went to John Tarleton Agriculture College down in Stephenville, Texas.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there?

Mr. Vaughan

I was there 2 ½ years but I didn't graduate. I was a little bit slow in my studies and I had too much fun.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now on December 7, 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes I remember the day that it happened. I was living in the dormitory there at the college. Me and a couple of my buddies were around the corner at a Mom and Pop hamburger joint having a hamburger. We went back to the dormitory and somebody said, "The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor and we are at war."

Mr. Misenhimer

When you heard that, how did you think that would affect you?

Mr. Vaughan

I knew that it was going to turn the world upside down.

Mr. Misenhimer

Had you already registered for the draft?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes, I had.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you go into the service?

Mr. Vaughan

It was January 3, 1943.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you volunteer or were you drafted?

Mr. Vaughan

I was drafted. The reason was, in 1942 when school was out my dad said, "I have an opening and if you will come to work for me with the telephone company and work at least six months, when you get out of the Army, you will have a job." So I went to work for him and I worked from June until January of 1943 and sure enough when I got out of the Army they had me a job.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was good. You went into the Army, is that right?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any choice of the branch?

Mr. Vaughan

No I didn't.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go for your basic training?

Mr. Vaughan

I was inducted at Camp Wolters and they sent us out to a place in California. I think it was close to Fresno; Camp Stoneman, I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you travel out there?

Mr. Vaughan

We went by train.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that train trip?

Mr. Vaughan

(laugh) It was a little rough. We went through the desert where the armored forces were training. Everywhere you looked, everything was dirt covered; the people, their uniforms, their tanks, equipment; everything was dirt covered.

Mr. Misenhimer

About how long did that trip take?

Mr. Vaughan

Two or three days.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have a place to sleep on the train?

Mr. Vaughan

I don't remember.

Mr. Misenhimer

Had you been that far from home before?

Mr. Vaughan

Never had.

Mr. Misenhimer

So that was quite a trip for you then.

Mr. Vaughan

Yes it was.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about basic training. What all happened in basic training?

Mr. Vaughan

The school down there in Stephenville was an ROTC type thing so everything they taught us in basic was second hand to me because I had already had map reading and first aid and marksmanship training and all that stuff. I had a breeze going through that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were your drill instructors pretty rough on you?

Mr. Vaughan

No, not really. They weren't anything like the Marines.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have a lot of physical training and that sort of thing?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes. We pulled guard duty two or three times. KP a couple of times.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of weapon's training did you have?

Mr. Vaughan

We had an old Enfield rifle. It was a 30.06 but it was an Enfield instead of a Springfield. We went to the range two or three times. I got to work in the pits. Since I had had a rifle ever since I was a teenager, the marksmanship part of it was easy. Incidentally, I was on the rifle team down at John Tarleton College. The rifle part of it was just a blast to me.

Mr. Misenhimer

In the pits did you have Maggie's drawers?

Mr. Vaughan

I'm not sure.

Mr. Misenhimer

We had a red flag and if they missed the target completely, we waved a red flag and they called it Maggie's drawers.

Mr. Vaughan

Yes. If you missed the target entirely, you got Maggie's drawers. (laugh)

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have the infiltration course where you crawled under the live ammunition being shot over you?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes we had that.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that?

Mr. Vaughan

It was a little spooky but I asked one of the people and he said, "We haven't lost any people in two or three weeks."

Mr. Misenhimer

(Laugh.)

Mr. Vaughan

That made me feel pretty good.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have bayonet training?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any kind of machine gun training or anything like that?



Mr. Vaughan

We didn't have any of that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is there anything in particular that you recall from your time in basic?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes. It seems to me like that we had a Master Sergeant transferred in and he was a big shot. He went to town one night and got all drunked up and we took his bunk down. I take it back; actually this took place later on.

Mr. Misenhimer

Go ahead and tell me about it.

Mr. Vaughan

He was transferred in and took somebody's place. He didn't make any friends. He went to town one night and somebody suggested that we take his bed down and that we put it up in the rafters. He came in about 3:00 in this morning all drunked up and we had all the butt cans put out in the middle of the aisle and he kicked all of them over on the way to his bunk and when he couldn't find his bunk he turned on the lights. He said, "Okay you guys get up. We are going to have a barracks party." Nobody moved. We had all agreed that we weren't going to do anything at all. He finally pulled his mattress down and fell down on it and went to sleep. The next morning he went to the company commander. The company commander said, "You got off light Buddy. When we left Hattiesburg, Mississippi they tore up the mess hall. You will be alright."

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did that happen at?

Mr. Vaughan

That was somewhere in California. I don't remember but I have it written down somewhere.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then when you finished basic training what did you do?

Mr. Vaughan

I went to Athens, Georgia to a radio operator's school. We were in a radio operator's school in Athens, Georgia. We lived in an old hotel downtown and we ate meals at the University of Georgia mess hall. They paid us separate rations but we could eat anywhere we wanted to. The man in charge found out that I had some ROTC training so he made me the Company Sergeant. There were at least 60 to 70 guys in the class. We had to fall in and do exercises and calisthenics and close order drill every day. I had to march them down to the University of Georgia to eat every day. So I got a lot of practice doing stuff like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long was that radio school?

Mr. Vaughan

That radio school lasted five months.

Mr. Misenhimer

What all did you learn in that school?

Mr. Vaughan

I learned to operate the radio. We had radio theory. And we learned to take code. I think I finally passed 26 words a minute. I was supposed to be a high speed radio operator. I don't remember the MOS; it was 766 or something like that. We used a typewriter for that. We did a lot of transfer paperwork because not every unit that a radio operator went to had a typewriter available. One of the funny things that happened there – this hotel had steam heat. If you have ever lived in a building that has steam heat, those old steam radiators get to popping and cracking. I woke up one night and I was trying to read the radiator because it was making all kinds of popping and clicking noises (laugh). So I was trying to read that; I was trying to read the code off the radiator.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were getting messages from beyond, huh? (laugh)

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you learn radio repair in that class?

Mr. Vaughan

We had some radio theory but the repair job was somebody else's job.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of radio was this?

Mr. Vaughan

I don't remember. I operated several different radios when I got out into the field. This was just classroom work and the headphones and the keys were all set up on tables and desks; so we didn't actually operate a radio.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you finished that school then what happened?

Mr. Vaughan

When I finished that I got a two week leave at home. When I went back, I went back to Tampa, Florida to some sort of gathering place down there. I stayed down there for about four or five days. Then they sent me back to Hattiesburg, Mississippi. That is where I joined the 574<sup>th</sup> Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion. Hattiesburg had a little Army Airfield out there. I don't remember how many people. It probably went to a couple thousand people on there. That is where they formed this battalion. We attended a radio class almost every day and did a lot of stuff. I was on a ground observer team. The radar folks could detect airplanes about out to 50 to 70 miles away. There were places in the mountains and around where they radar couldn't cover. So they had three-man ground observer teams. We would set up out there in the woods to where every airplane that went by, we would report it. We had a little radio that some guy sat on a little stool and he operated a hand cranked generator that ran the radio.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you sent it was it by Morse code or was it by voice?

Mr. Vaughan

It wasn't voice it was all constant wave or CW. Voice transmission takes too much frequency and it doesn't go near as far, so all of our work was in code.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Mr. Vaughan

After we had a certain amount of training there they put us on a train and sent us to California somewhere. I don't remember where it was. We underwent some more training out there. This is where that Master Sergeant got in trouble. We spent some more training out there. We went down on the coast and did some observation work down there.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of work did you do down there?

Mr. Vaughan

We had a field problem of some kind. The battalion had what they called reporting platoons. They went out and set up the radars and reported all their contacts. We handled the contacts to a central collecting point.

Mr. Misenhimer

And then what?

Mr. Vaughan

From there we went to; I don't remember where this was, but it was what they called a POR, a processing for overseas replacement. That is where they gave us more physicals and caught up on all of our paperwork. One morning they told us to have everything packed. We got up and got our duffel bags on our shoulders and marched down to the Sacramento River. We got on a ferry boat and went down the Sacramento Road to San Francisco Bay. We pulled up to the pier and we walked across the pier and got on the ship the *USS Cape Newenham*. It was a cargo ship that had been modified to carry troops and cargo at the same time. They had metal frame bunks in a couple of the holds. They

were four high and there was about two feet between them. So when you got in there you couldn't do much except sleep.

Mr. Misenhimer

About when did you leave then?

Mr. Vaughan

I don't remember but it was sometime in February I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

February of 1944?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes. A friend of mine was from Brooklyn and he had been to sea. He was on the seasick crew. Somehow or other he enticed me out to the front of the ship and it didn't take long before I was as seasick as all get out. It just so happened that when we boarded the ship and got our personal gear stowed, they fed us chow. The meal was sauerkraut and wieners. Douglas Smith was my friend's name. When Doug got me up there and I began to get green around the gills I said, "I have to go below." When I eventually decided that I was going to have to throw up all that stuff, I went to the latrine and the urinals were full and the commodes were full and the floor was running over with sauerkraut and wieners. It was an awful mess.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you left San Francisco, did you go under the Golden Gate Bridge?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes, we sure did. That is where we ran into those groundswells and they were as rough as a cob.

Mr. Misenhimer

I understand that there are some really bad swells when you leave through there.

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

There is normally an awful lot of seasickness.

Mr. Vaughan

Yes. I think it took us 21 days or so to cross. The only land that we saw was San Francisco looking back. We almost got to Australia when we ran into a bunch of those groundswells again. The ship was bobbing up and down and finally one wave broke over the bow and there was a guy up there and it washed him back into some machinery. It banged him up pretty bad so the ship made an unscheduled stop at Milne Bay. They took him ashore and put him in the hospital. We eventually got up the coast to a place called Finschhafen. They unloaded us landing craft. I don't remember how we got down. I don't think we used those nets. I think they had a gangplank or something they lowered down. They got us ashore and put us in a bunch of buildings. They told us that this was going to be our quarters for a few days and so we set up our cots and what-not in these buildings. Three or four days later they moved us into a bunch of tents up on the hillside. Since we didn't have a mission at the time, they used us for what I would call a corps battalion. Every morning they would call out the company and they would designate certain people. You would get on a certain truck and you would go to a rations dump or an ammo dump or a Signal Corps dump or some kind of facility where they were storing and moving things. It was just a labor detachment is all that it was. That lasted for about three or four weeks. After that they put us on another ship called the *Tarakan*. That was a Dutch vessel registered to the Dutch and we went up to right off the coast near a place called Hollandia. I don't think they call it that anymore. We joined a whole group of ships anchored out there and we swung at anchor out there for at least 30 days. Of course they didn't have fresh water showers but it rained almost every day. I had a jungle hammock.

Mr. Misenhimer

What is that?

Mr. Vaughan

It is a hammock with a cover over the top of it; kind of a little tent over the hammock. I strung my hammock up on deck because they didn't have any place down below to sleep. After we found out that we couldn't shower except in salt water, every time it came up a rain we would all strip down and soap up. One day we all got soaped up and it quit raining. (laugh) We got to looking around and

a bunch of the trucks and trailers had collected water on the top, so we managed to get some steel pots and rinse ourselves off.

One of the things I remember about that ship is the sanitary facility. They took some 2 X 12's, 18 to 20 feet long and made a u-shaped trough. They mounted it alongside the rail on the side of the ship. Down at one end they made an L so that the water would dump over the side. They put a hose on it with saltwater at the other end so that the water would run down this trough and dump over the side and they had little slats nailed across this periodically to serve as commode seats. Some guy got the idea of wadding up a piece of paper and setting it on fire and putting it on top of the water and watching people jump up when that fire hit them.

There was a bunch of field rations stored up somewhere on the deck. They had a guard on them. We found out that if we could divert the guard's attention, we could steal a box of those rations. A lot of times we would steal a box of those rations and on the back end there we would figure out some way to warm up some of that stuff and we would skip the mess hall and eat out of the rations.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was better food than the mess hall, huh?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

This was Dutch ship?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes, it was. One thing I remember about that ship, since I was a radio code man and there were a bunch of ships sitting around there, every one of them had a light mounted on the masthead. At night the radio operators would get to chatting among themselves by using these lights. I found out one night that I could take my flashlight and blink it at the ship closest to me and the guy would talk to me. That went on for several nights. Finally some officer from the front of the ship came down there one night and said, "Hey, buddy." I said, "Yes sir." He said, "The Captain wanted me to tell you that

we don't send messages off this ship without his approval." So I said okay. From then on I would go around behind something so that nobody could see me. (laugh) I still talked to that guy. We talked about all kinds of stuff; women problems, how long we had been there, all that kind of stuff. It was a lot of fun.

Some of these ships would turn their signal lights up to the sky if it was cloudy and they would transmit coded personal messages by bouncing the light off the clouds.

Mr. Misenhimer

You weren't concerned about Japanese submarines or Japanese planes or anything?

Mr. Vaughan

No we never did have any of that.

Mr. Misenhimer

And this was at Hollandia?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

The landing at Hollandia was in April of 1944.

Mr. Vaughan

I think it was pretty settled down over there by then. We didn't get in on that.

Mr. Misenhimer

About when did you get there?

Mr. Vaughan

Gosh, I don't know. It breaks my heart. I had an aluminum mess kit and every place that I went I took my knife and I would etch on the bottom of that kit, the date, time and place when I got there. When I came home and they mustered me out, I should have kept that mess kit but I didn't. I have kicked myself a thousand times for not stealing that mess kit.

Mr. Misenhimer

So it would have been after April?



Mr. Vaughan

Yes, I'm sure it was. Otherwise we wouldn't have been all gathered up out there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Mr. Vaughan

When we left there we went up to an island called Biak. We went ashore on Biak and this time the battalion assumed its mission. We sent out various companies and reporting platoons to various locations around. I think I was in the headquarters company. We operated out a building called the Fighter Control Center. The people in the reporting platoons, of course they had the radar; every time they would contact an aircraft they would plot the location of the direction and the altitude and they would put that into some kind of coded message. They would send it to us. We had 12 to 14 operators down there. They would send that information to us and we would pass it to the guy running the map out in the middle. They would make a little thing like you see on the movies about the Battle of Britain. They would make a little thing and move it out there and put that aircraft's position on the map. They could track these airplanes, and the way the radar was they could probably get a locations every minute or so. They would track that and the airplanes, all the friendly airplanes, had a little device called IFF (identification friend or foe). If it was a Jap you didn't any kind of an IFF but if it was a friendly airplane it had this IFF and you could identify it. If they got one they couldn't identify, they would send up a night fighter and try to find it.

One night we had an air raid and one of the first things the officer said, "If we have an air raid you guys stay right at your post. We can't run to the shelter." The Japs still had the capability of raiding. This was a place that was 100% limestone and all the roads and airfields and everything that we did uncovered that white limestone. They could fly over on a bright moonlit night and they could see everything they wanted to see. The first night we had an air raid the first guy under the table was the Lieutenant. (laugh) I thought it was kind of funny. He had said, "You guys stay right at your post." It's not like the table would have had any stopping power.

They had taken control of the airfield; there might have been two airfields on there, but we had taken control of the airfield and we had bypassed a bunch of troops up in the mountains. It was pretty hilly in that part of the island. They were all starving to death. Some of them would slip down and try to steal something to eat. If you killed one, you had to bury him. So if you killed one, you dragged him down the road and left him in front of somebody else's area. Also on this island was a big cave. At one time or other, the Japanese had taken shelter in this cave. I guess they were trying to get away from the artillery or something. Some of our guys discovered these guys down in that cave. They poured a bunch of gasoline in there and set it on fire. It killed them all and we had a bunch of folks from our outfit and another outfit that went down there and poked around those bodies trying to find some gold teeth and jewelry or something like that. I never did have the guts to do that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Mr. Vaughan

Eventually the place was secured and one day they told us we were moving to the Philippines. Headquarters Company had already gone up there. They went in to Leyte. Early one morning they struck camp and they took every tent down except mine. I was running the radio in communication with our headquarters. So mine was the last tent to come down. The Army got me all loaded up on a truck and we went down and got on an LST. We had a bunch of LSTs pulled up down there and they backed away from the bank and we started northwest. An LST doesn't go very fast; maybe 10 or 12 knots. It took us a couple of weeks to get through the Philippine islands and down to the island of Palawan. That is a long skinny island north of Borneo. They unloaded us there at Palawan. We got off and took all our trucks and everything. They took us to a camp site in a coconut grove. We set up camp and they had a lot of timber on this place. Everybody had a floor. We had tents with floors in them. It didn't take long for some of those Filipino guys to come around. He said, "Do you need a houseboy?" So for \$15 a month he made our beds, scrubbed the floor and eventually we got some chickens. If you wanted to eat fresh chicken you said, "Richard, kill us a chicken." He would kill and clean that chicken and we would cook it and eat it. One amusing story. The tent that I was in, we

always had the same group of people. There was a fellow named Sisson and a fellow named Bradley from Arkansas. Another guy named Potter; he was from New York somewhere. And a little old fellow, he was 32; we called him Granddad, Albert J. Coyne. He was from New Boston, across from Boston, Massachusetts. Old Moe, we called him Moe after that comic strip character. He was a dandy dresser. He would get drunk and stay drunk for three or four days and then he would stay sober for a couple of weeks. Bradley, being from Arkansas, he knew how to set up a still. Everywhere we stopped Bradley would set up a still and we would make home-brew. This fellow Albert Coyne, one day he went down to the docks and he got up on this ship and went down into the hold and it was full of beer. A crewman came along and he asked the crewman, "Do you mind if I have a beer?" The crewman said, "Hell, you can have it all for all I care." He went down there into the hold and picked up a case of beer and managed to get it back up on deck and off the ship with it. He was walking up the dock and a guy came along and said, "Where did you get that beer?" He said, "That ship there is full of it and they said that I could have all that I wanted." The other guy said, "Wait a minute. I can get a truck." He went off and came back with a truck. They worked for an hour or so. They must have had 15 to 20 cases of beer stashed away in that truck. My friend said the other guy said, "Why don't you go back and get one more case and we will call it a day." While Moe was down in the ship's hold getting another case, his buddy – supposed to be his buddy –took advantage of it and drove off with a truck load of beer. They had worked all day long and when he finally got back to camp he had one case of beer and he was as mad as hell. He was hot. "If I ever see that guy, I will kill him." (laugh)

Mr. Misenhimer

And that was on Palawan?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes that was on Palawan. We had a reporting platoon. The main port on Palawan was named Puerto Princessa. We had a reporting platoon way off down on the south end of Palawan at a little place called Brook Point. One day the company commander said, "Ed, I am going to send you down there. They need some extra operators in that platoon. I am going to put you on a PT boat. You are going to

take a ride on the PT boat and go down there.” Well about dark they put me on this PT boat and we started south. The sea wasn’t exactly smooth, it was a little rough and that boat was bouncing around. They were going about 40 mph. I was holding on to everything I could hold on to. I looked at the back end of the boat and there were a couple sailors back there taking a bath. They were dipping water out of the wake and pouring it on themselves. They weren’t holding on at all. They were just standing back there. I never did understand how in the world they could do that. They practiced that and could stand there. Eventually we got down to where they were supposed to let me off. There was a big fire burning on the shore. They had some kind of little rubber dinghy. They put me in that rubber dinghy and rowed me ashore and there were two or three natives and a couple of our guys sitting around that fire and there was big log there. I guess it was mahogany. They had set fire to that log and it was a hell of a fire. Eventually, I said, “Let’s go back. I’m tired; I’d like to go to bed.” They said, “Get that weapon’s carrier over there and we will go home.” So we went up the side of this mountain to this radar site. They had hired a bunch of indigenous labor and they had built barracks and a mess hall and a radio shack. So I got in there and got me a bunk and took to bed. That was pretty easy duty. The radar operator contacted the radio shack by telephone. When he got a contact he would call me on the phone and would give me the contact. I would get on the radio and send it in to the fighter control center. At that point we got to report two or three Japanese planes. When they spotted these enemy airplanes the radar man would call me on the phone and give me the spot, the location. I would call up the folks at the main base and give them that information. One night the Japanese went up there and dropped two or three bombs and on the way back they weren’t too far from where we were. A night fighter caught up with him and shot him down. So we got to see that. The Japanese hit the drink out there.

This was pretty easy duty because we had our own baker and every two or three nights they would bake rolls. They guy going on at midnight, or during the evening shift, they had the privilege of going into the mess hall and getting fresh bread with butter and jelly and have a little snack. I kind of enjoyed that. I had lots of time and I bet I wrote two or three letters a day. I wrote everybody I knew.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Mr. Vaughan

Eventually they called me back to the main base. They sent a couple Piper cubs down there one day. We had cleared the tall grass off of a flat space at the bottom of the mountain and that was our landing strip. That is where they dropped the mail. They would bring a box of meat down and they would fly down there and they would kick it out. Of course, we would have to wash it off before we could eat it. I went down there with my duffel bag and I got into this little airplane and we flew 100 miles or so back up to Puerto Princessa. I went to work out at the radio shack at the administrative net. They had the supply net, the locating net radar, for the airplanes and we had the administrative net which was our administrative contact to our battalion headquarters. The thing I remember most about that is when the net control station headquarters called me up. They started off, "Pursuant to order so and so, Headquarters Fifth Air Force.....the following individual is relieved of duty" and they started spelling out my name and serial number. About that time I got the shakes so bad that I broke in on him. I said, "Wait a minute." When I recovered by senses a little bit, I told him to go ahead. Unbeknownst to me, my mother had contacted the Red Cross. The war was over by then. She had contacted the Red Cross about my dad having a bad heart attack and the Red Cross had talked to the Army and they had agreed to turn me loose a little early. So I got the order to go home. They put me on an airplane and sent me somewhere up in the Philippines to a gathering point. After two or three days there, sitting around wondering when I was going to leave, they put us on a Liberty ship. This Liberty ship was rigged up kind of like that first ship I was on. They had temporary bunks. You had a mess hall out on deck and you ate out on deck. It must have taken nearly four weeks to go from the Philippines to San Francisco. Eventually we got to San Francisco but during this trip one morning somebody noticed a speck back on the western horizon. Somebody said, "What's that?" In about ten minutes it was right up there by us and it was a little aircraft carrier. That dude was moving on. Inside of 20 minutes he was out of sight, going east. Boy those dudes could move.

Eventually we got to San Francisco and they put us all on buses. The woman driving that bus scared the fool out of me. I just knew she was going to have a wreck and kill all of us. We wound up at a place called Angel Island. They ran us through the mess hall. I ate a piece of steak and some ice cream and I think about four glasses of fresh milk. I sure did miss that milk. We stayed around there for two or three days. Then they put me on a train headed for Ft. Sam Houston. I got to talking to the conductor one day and I said, "How do we get from here to where we are going?" He said, "We go through Lubbock and we go through Ft. Worth and then we wind up down in San Antonio." At one stop where they stopped to get water, I got off and got me a rock. I found me a piece of paper and a pencil. I had an uncle that lived in Lubbock. When we went through Lubbock I was standing there at the window and there was a guy standing there on the station platform and I tossed that rock to him and said, "Call my uncle and tell him to call my dad and tell him that I am going to be in Ft. Worth at a certain time." When that train pulled into Ft. Worth, my mother and dad were there at the station waiting for me. We had a couple of hours in Ft. Worth and I got to see them. Then they put us back on the train and we went to San Antonio. They didn't waste a hell of a lot of time with you in San Antonio. They gave you another physical and went through all your stuff and told you what you were supposed to take home with you and told you goodbye. They paid you off and gave you all of your discharge papers. I caught a bus and went home to Mineral Wells.

Mr. Misenhimer

What date did you get discharged?

Mr. Vaughan

It was the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> of January, 1946. All the way home on that trip I had malaria but I didn't know it. They gave us Atabrine in the Southwest Pacific. It didn't cure malaria but it repressed it. All the way home I had this funny feeling that I wasn't feeling right. I got home on a Saturday and on Sunday we went to see my grandparents in Weatherford, Texas and Monday morning when I woke up I was eat up with fever and then I would have a chill and then I would have some more fever. I knew what was wrong with me. I told my dad to go to the drugstore and get some quinine. He went downtown and got some quinine and I took the quinine and the next day I felt like a million bucks. I went to my old

family doctor up there and said, "I've got malaria." He took a blood sample and in a few minutes he came back and said, "I can't find any malaria in your bloodstream." But for several years every once in a while I would have a spell of malaria. I went back to work for the telephone company and sometime in 1947 I had a spell of malaria in Amarillo, Texas. I went to the doctor and said, "I've got malaria." He said, "I can cure that." He got me some quinine capsules and said, "You take these. You go home and you take five the first day. You can't work for about four days. I am going to load you up on this stuff and it is going to mess you up. You won't taste anything. You can't hear anything. But I guarantee you will probably never have malaria again." After about three or four days he was right. I had a bad taste in my mouth. I couldn't see anything or hear anything but I've never had malaria since.

Mr. Misenhimer

What are some other things that happened?

Mr. Vaughan

That is about it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me go back and ask you some questions. When you left San Francisco and went down to Milne Bay, were you in a convoy of ships?

Mr. Vaughan

No, we were all by ourselves. No escort. The ship would zigzag once in a while. Generally we ran straight and that ship made about 17 knots. One night I was in my bunk down there in the hold and everything got to shaking and shaking. I got up and went up topside. Boy that ship was moving on. I asked one of the crewmembers, "What was all that shaking around going on last night?" He said, "Somebody saw a light and we went to top speed to get out of that neighborhood."

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that the only scare that you had on the way down?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever get into any combat yourself?

Mr. Vaughan

No, I didn't get into any combat but I did see several dead Japs.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you see them?

Mr. Vaughan

There were two or three of them up on the hillside behind my camp on Biak. One of them was a machine gunner because their machine gun used ammo in clips. The gun itself was not there but his carcass was lying there and there were two or three or four of those clips lying around, so I knew he was a machine gunner.

Mr. Misenhimer

On Palawan about how many people were there at that camp?

Mr. Vaughan

It was a main operating base. It would be hard to estimate because they had Navy and Air Force and lots of people there. There must have been several thousand.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the small base at the end of Palawan?

Mr. Vaughan

There were probably 60 to 70 people in this platoon.

Mr. Misenhimer

And that is all that was down there?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes. All they had to do was to set up and operate this radar. We had a guard that kind of kept an eye on things. And we had hired a bunch of local natives to do various things around the camp. They kept it clean and they kept the grass cut back. It was pretty easy duty.



Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there?

Mr. Vaughan

I would say probably a couple of months. The beach was a couple of miles down the road. I had all the ammo I wanted to shoot in the carbine and I would take a pocketful of ammo and go down to the beach and I would shoot coconuts. If you hit a coconut with a carbine it would just explode. I had a lot of fun shooting coconuts.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you pretend they were Japanese?

Mr. Vaughan

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then you left there and went back up to Puerto Princessa, right?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long did you stay up there?

Mr. Vaughan

It must have been at least a month or two months before I got my orders to come home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then when you got home, you got discharged shortly after that, right?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

The war got over in August and now it was January and that was about four or five months.

Mr. Vaughan

It took all that time to get everything organized and to get home.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was the morale in your outfit?

Mr. Vaughan

It was high. And after the war was over we all got to griping because the war was over and we wanted to go home. But there were so many people and so much equipment to gather up that it didn't make sense that they could just jump up and take us all home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Sure. Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Vaughan

I don't recall ever listening to her. The radio station where I worked had a couple of transmitters and two or three receivers but we were generally too busy doing what we were doing to fool around and listen to other stations, so I never did hear her.

Mr. Misenhimer

What would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. Vaughan

I guess it was the time on Biak that we had a bombing raid and the little Japanese airplane was caught in the spotlight up there. He dropped two or three bombs and it sounded like they were getting closer. The ground was solid and rocky, we didn't have foxholes. One of the cooks was out there digging a foxhole and he finally got his foxhole to where he could get into it and I fell in on top of him. I said, "Move over." I was a little bit spooked that night. We had one guy in the outfit, his name was Jenkins. I don't remember his first name, but his last name was Jenkins. I remember him well. Every time he stood guard out on the edge of camp back up towards the jungle he would see things moving and he would shoot. Any time we saw his name on the guard roster, we knew that we were going to be woke up during the night. As far as I know he never shot or saw anything up there that was harmful.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you bombed several times by the Japanese?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes. They weren't aiming at us. They were aiming at the airstrip which was a mile or so down the road. We used to go down there and watch the airplanes all the time. They had a bunch of P-38s and P-61s (that was the night fighter) and a whole bunch of B-25s and B-24s. They did a lot of flying.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was where?

Mr. Vaughan

This was on Biak.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you in any typhoons down there at any time?

Mr. Vaughan

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you crossed the equator going down, did you all have any kind of a ceremony or anything?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes we did. We stripped down the company officers of the company and top NCOs and initiated them. They had a ceremony. It was all in fun and they understood and they didn't get all uptight. I have a certificate here somewhere that I am a shellback.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get initiated?

Mr. Vaughan

I didn't get initiated. I got mine due to the initiation of the big shots

Mr. Misenhimer

On April 12, 1945, President Roosevelt died. Did you all hear about that?

Mr. Vaughan

We did.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the reaction?

Mr. Vaughan

I'm not sure there was much reaction because we knew he was in bad health. The system in place in the United States was such that when somebody up top died, there was a process for succession. We knew that somebody would take over and run the thing just like it was supposed to be run. I do remember the day the Japanese announced they were going to quit. My bootlegger friend had two or three jars of white lightning sitting around. We got to sipping on that stuff and eating peanuts. I got so drunk that pretty soon the peanuts were being vomited up and coming out my nose. I was drunk. Everybody was drunk.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you hear about Japan surrendering?

Mr. Vaughan

It came over the radio.

Mr. Misenhimer

On May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered. Did you all hear about that?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes, we got all the world news. There was a little broadcast station there on this base that picked up the news. There wasn't any question about things happening; we learned about them pretty quickly.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you when you heard that?

Mr. Vaughan

I think I was on Palawan.

On the small place at the south end?

Mr. Vaughan

I don't remember.

Mr. Misenhimer

When they dropped the first atomic bomb did you hear about that?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What reaction did people have to that?

Mr. Vaughan

I think we all thought, "Serves you right." If it ends the war, it's worth it.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you think of the officers you had over you?

Mr. Vaughan

Most of them were draftees just like I was. Fact is, the company commander in Hattiesburg, Mississippi told me one day. I was goofing off I guess and he caught me in my tent in the middle of the day and he found out that I was from Mineral Wells. He said, "I took basic over there" and he called in Venereal Wells. He didn't say anything about me being in the tent.

Mr. Misenhimer

What medals and ribbons did you get?

Mr. Vaughan

I got the marksmanship medals. I got the American Defense ribbon and two or three others. The South Pacific ribbon with two or three stars on it because we were in two or three different areas.

Mr. Misenhimer

Those were battle stars?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get three battle stars?

Mr. Vaughan

I think so.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the Philippine Liberation?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes, I got that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else?

Mr. Vaughan

I think that pretty well winds it up.

Mr. Misenhimer

I mean ribbons and medals.

Mr. Vaughan

When I was discharged at Ft. Sam Houston they gave us an opportunity to join the Army Reserve. I had enough military background that the military didn't scare me so I signed up for Army Reserve. After I got out of that, I joined the National Guard here in Texas. So I have several ribbons from the National Guard.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you in the service total then?

Mr. Vaughan

I think it was somewhere around 35 years.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you retire from it then?

Mr. Vaughan

I retired from the National Guard as a Division Sergeant Major. I get about \$1,000 a month pension.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's not bad.

Mr. Vaughan

No, it's not bad.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Vaughan

No because after a couple of weeks my dad said, "Are you ready to go to work now?" I said yes and we went to see his big boss. His big boss said, "I have a job for you in Pampa, Texas." I said, "I will take it." I went to work for the telephone company as a cable splicer's helper.

Mr. Misenhimer

During World War II what was the highest rank you got to?

Mr. Vaughan

I was a Sergeant, a three striper.

Mr. Misenhimer

A Buck Sergeant.

Mr. Vaughan

When I passed 26 words a minute at radio school, they promoted me to T-5 which was two stripes with a T under it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you use your GI Bill for anything?

Mr. Vaughan

No I never did. I was tempted to follow through but the telephone company had me unlocated so I couldn't stay in one place long enough to really sign up for anything.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you had any reunions?

Mr. Vaughan

No I haven't.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get home with any souvenirs from World War II?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes. I brought home two or three bolo knives and some old GI blankets. They were big GI blankets. I managed to steal a couple and I still use them once in a while. Those were the only souvenirs that I brought home besides these Filipino bolo knives.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see any USO shows anywhere?

Mr. Vaughan

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you see and where?

Mr. Vaughan

I think this was on Biak. Bob Hope came along with his group one time. I was sitting about 400 yards from it. They had the volume on the speakers turned way up. I couldn't see much but I could hear it pretty good. That was very entertaining. We had a movie projector and movies all the time in the company area at night.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Vaughan

No not really except for the time that I walked across the pier at Oakland and got on that ship. The Red Cross was there handing out coffee and donuts. I had both hands full and I didn't have time to stop and wait. That was my only experience with the Red Cross until the Red Cross got me an early release in the Philippines.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were overseas could you get your mail pretty regularly?



Mr. Vaughan

Yes. We had mail call every day. My mother used to write me two to three times every week. We had V-Mail and that worked pretty good.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is there anything else that you recall from your time in World War II?

Mr. Vaughan

No, I think that pretty well covers it. Incidentally, several years ago I got a book for Christmas called The Story of Your Life, or Story of a Lifetime, or something like that. It is a big book and it is cut up into little sections where you talk about your parents and your grandparents and where you went to school and military career. I got started writing in that thing and I found out that when I got to World War II I didn't have near enough room. So I got two red binders that I have almost completely filled full with writing. I'm going to type this out one of these days and it has all this stuff in it.

Mr. Misenhimer

How much stuff is in there that we didn't cover here today?

Mr. Vaughan

I think I pretty well covered everything. I started off thinking I would read it to you, but I think I have pretty well hit the high points. On Biak there was a Japanese flying around up there and all of a sudden these loud explosions started going off next to us, 100 yards or so away. There was an antiaircraft battery that was set up down there that we didn't know about. That was kind of spooky. At first we thought they were bombs but we found out pretty quick that it was antiaircraft artillery.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you know what kind of guns they were?

Mr. Vaughan

I believe they were big ones.

Mr. Misenhimer

Probably 90mm then.

Mr. Vaughan

Probably.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they hit the plane?

Mr. Vaughan

No they never did hit it. They got pretty close but they never did hit him. He was shot down by a P-61.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is there anything else that you have thought of?

Mr. Vaughan

I think I have just about milked my memory dry.

Mr. Misenhimer

Thanks again for your time today and thank you for your service to our country.

Mr. Vaughan

I appreciate those thoughts.

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