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Interview With

FRED VOGEL

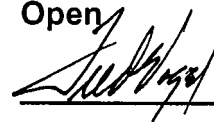
August 8, 2001

Place of Interview: Kerrville, Texas

Interviewer: William J. Alexander

Terms of Use: Open

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Date: June 13, 2001

National Museum of the Pacific War
and
University of North Texas Oral History Collection
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Mr. Alexander: This is Bill Alexander interviewing Fred Vogel for the University of North Texas and the National Museum of the Pacific War. I'm interviewing Mr. Vogel in order to get his experiences as a member of the 136th Infantry Regiment, 33rd Infantry Division, in the Southwest Pacific Theater during World War II.

I'd like to ask you to start with where you were born and when, and you're parents' names.

Mr. Vogel: I was born in Lynxville, in Crawford County, Wisconsin.

Mr. Alexander: Where is that near?

Vogel: It's on the [Mississippi] River. It's about forty-five miles north of Prairie du Chien. My dad's name was Albert G. Vogel. My mother's name was Cora E. Vogel.

Alexander: What did they do? Were they farmers?

Vogel: At that time my mother's father ran a general store in a little town of about 200 people. My dad and his dad were running a horse-drawn livery barn at that time.

Alexander: In what year were you born?

Vogel: I was born on December 11, 1912.

Alexander: So, they worked together?

Vogel: My father and his father worked together in that livery stable. They'd come into town from the farms out in Crawford County. They started the livery stable, and from that, a few years later, they went into the hotel business there in the same town.

Alexander: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Vogel: I had three brothers and one sister.

Alexander: What were their names?

Vogel: Florence, Arthur, Perry, and Lewis. I was the oldest.

Alexander: Just as an aside, did your brothers also go

into the military during the war?

Vogel: Arthur had a heart problem, so he didn't go in; but Perry and Lewis did. All three of us went in the Army. Lewis was killed in the latter part of March, 1945.

Alexander: What theater was he in?

Vogel: He was in the European Theater. I think he was in the armored infantry at that time as a squad leader. Lewis was a PFC [private first class] when he was killed. Perry was a corporal in charge of an ammunition-hauling squad.

Alexander: How did you hear about losing your brother?

Vogel: From my mother.

Alexander: In a letter?

Vogel: Yes, by letter, when I was with the infantry in the South Pacific.

Alexander: Can you remember what you did? Were you in a combat situation when that letter came?

Vogel: Yes, I think we were.

Alexander: Can you remember what you did after you got that letter?

Vogel: No, I have no recollection.

Alexander: Okay, we'll go on. Did you have your

schooling in that town in Wisconsin?

Vogel: No. My folks moved to La Crosse, Wisconsin, about forty-five miles up the river. We were right on the Mississippi River. I went through probably the first four grades in La Crosse elementary schools. Then Dad went to work in a mill. He was the foreman of the mill at the time the mill went out of business. Then he moved west of La Crosse, into Minnesota, to be a foreman at a milling operation in Austin, Minnesota.

Alexander: Do you remember about when that was?

Vogel: It was probably about 1923, because I think we moved from La Crosse to Austin in 1924. I finished elementary school and high school at Austin.

Alexander: In what year did you finish high school?

Vogel: In 1930.

Alexander: Right in the middle or, in fact, some of the very worst part of it [the Great Depression].

Vogel: Well, it was in the Depression.

Alexander: What did you do when you got out of school?

Vogel: I went to work for the Hormel packing company. I went to work there as a common

laborer. I think we received eighteen-and-a-half cents an hour to start with.

Alexander: Any overtime?

Vogel: We had plenty of overtime, at the same figure (chuckle). For ten- or twelve-hour days, we received the same amount of money. It was Monday through Friday. Later, I went into the plant and had lots of various jobs. I was working coolers, and the pay "miraculously" [facetious comment] went up to twenty-four-and-a-half cents an hour; then it steadily went up to twenty-eight. When I finally started boning beef, and I jumped up to thirty-two-and-a-half cents an hour. Years later, we were up around thirty-seven-and-a-half cents an hour (chuckle).

Alexander: There were not too much in the way of unions in the meatpacking industry.

Vogel: There weren't any unions at that time, no. The unions came later. About 1933 they started organizing. In 1934 they were still organizing and trying to get set up. I worked there at the plant until about 1932. I think we were getting either twenty-eight-

and-a-half or thirty-two-and-a-half cents an hour at that time. I decided that there was a better way of making a living.

We came out of the cooler for a recess in the middle of the morning one morning. As I sat there outside in the sun, I spat, and I spat up blood. That's when I decided that there was an easier way of making a living than coming in and out of coolers.

When I went in the Army, they gave me an X-ray. The doctor said I had seven healed TB [tuberculosis] lesions on my lungs. I said, "What are you talking about?" He showed me the X-ray, and he said, "See these seven little 'pencil-dot' spots? Those are healed TB lesions." That's what that was.

So, a friend of mine was going to college at Drake in Des Moines, Iowa. When the fall came, I went down there with just \$10 in my pocket to go to school. That was in 1932.

Alexander: That was a lot of money in those days (chuckle).

Vogel: Well, it didn't last too long. Rent went up,

and eating meals out, it went pretty fast.

Alexander: Were you working for your tuition?

Vogel: I played football for my tuition.

Alexander: What position did you play; or were there several positions in those days?

Vogel: They had me all over, from backfield to line work. In high school I had played left tackle and left end. In our 1929 football season, we had an undefeated season. It was the only undefeated season of any football team since that school began, or since. About ten years later, my younger brother, Lewis, was playing for the high school. They had what they called an undefeated season, but they had one game where they tied (chuckle).

Anyway, with that I went to college and played football for tuition for three or four years. When I was playing football, I weighed 155 pounds (chuckle). Everybody else was bigger than I was, except for about three or four backs. I played end, and then I started playing in the backfield. I had to find a spot where I could play with my

weight. I had speed, but I didn't have the weight. I went to college there in 1932, 1933, and 1934.

In 1934 I dropped out for a year. I went back to Hormel. I got in there again and worked there for another year.

Alexander: Was that to save money? Is that why you dropped out?

Vogel: I had to pick up enough money so I could go back.

Alexander: Had your scholarship run out at that time?

Vogel: No, not that I know of. If you were playing football, as long as you could play ball, they gave you tuition.

Alexander: But then for some reason you weren't playing football. Is that right?

Vogel: No. I played football in 1935 and 1936. I just took a year off to get some money, and then I went back to school. I finished up in 1936. I think that was the last year I was there. I got enough credits to go into law school, so I transferred over to the law school. I finished up law school in 1940.

Alexander: You passed the bar?

Vogel: I passed the Iowa bar and the federal bar.

Alexander: In those days, that was something else.

Vogel: Yes, for a country kid who didn't know what he was going to do.

Alexander: How did you happen to choose law?

Vogel: I had the job of sweeping out the law school library. I was sweeping out the library, and I got along with some of those guys very well. The other students would say: "Hey! Come here! Read [this and that]." Eventually, I got interested in it, and I transferred over.

Alexander: Were they asking you to read something to them?

Vogel: They were law cases that they were briefing.

Alexander: So, they'd ask you to help by reading some of them?

Vogel: Well, they just showed it to me and told me to read it. They'd say, "Well, what do you think of [this]?" We'd argue back and forth. So, I went over there and went to law school. I graduated in the spring of 1940.

In 1938, the dean called me in and told me I was having too much fun, and I'd have to

get better grades, or I was out at the end of the year. It was a "kick in the pants," and I was having fun. I wasn't doing much studying. So, I had to change my ways and go back to studying. I think I ended up with just over a "B" average. I was down flirting with about a "D+" when he told me I had to catch up.

Anyway, I finished law school and took the Iowa bar. There were 125 of us who started in the freshman law class. That was in 1936. I think there were around half of us--sixty of us--who finished up. The other half either dropped out or were kicked out for various reasons--scholarly, personal. Most kids have problems, and we had lots of problems.

Anyway, when we took the bar, when we finished taking the bar, I received a report that I was number fourteen from the top. I thought, "Well, at least I have a chance of getting a job now." I married in the last year there. My wife was working and getting me through my last semester so I could pass

the bar. All that time I had been working back and forth at different jobs [here and there]. I tried to find a job, and the only guys who got jobs out of there were those who already had jobs with insurance companies while they were going to school and finishing up their degrees.

I hit all the insurance companies down there, trying to get a job as an automobile insurance adjuster to tide us over. I was 1-A [fit for active duty] in the draft. None of them would hire me. They gave me lots of different reasons, but it all added up to: "You're 1-A. You're too close. We'll get you started, and then you'll leave us. We don't want to do that." That "ticked me off" [angered me]. I was pretty well "ticked off" at them, so I went up to Dumont, Iowa, and opened up my own private practice.

Alexander: I assume that there was another lawyer in town.

Vogel: There was none.

Alexander: How did you make money, just being the only lawyer in town?

Vogel: You sit on your butt and wait for them to come on in. I ran into a State of Iowa taxman who was out in the country checking farmers and getting them to make tax reports, because nobody was making tax reports in those times. He talked to me and said, "I'll show you how to do this stuff and show you how to work it. When I run into a problem, I'll bring them in here to you. You can tell me whatever you want to tell me. You can cuss me up and down, tell me to go to hell or anything, and I won't get mad." He showed me the "ins and outs" of the state and federal income taxes at that time. We hadn't had any tax work in college at all. They didn't have any fare for people who didn't have any money, and I didn't have any money.

Alexander: And most of your clients wouldn't have any money.

Vogel: Those people out in the farm area didn't have any. So, he showed me that and brought them in. We'd go through it and argue. He'd show me who was coming in before he went out to see them, so I had an idea of where he was

coming from and what he had to do. So, I did the work for the people, and we got their tax work done.

Alexander: And you were making a decent living.

Vogel: I was making a little bit there. I started in fall of 1940. I think through March 15, 1941, I made about \$500. That was quite a bit of money in those days. The next year, I had quite a clientele coming in. The next year, in April, 1942, I finished up. On April 1, I had made the grand sum of \$5,000. That was for the whole year, you see. That was a lot of money. At that time, that was pretty good for a beginner (chuckle). I didn't know what it was until I added it up. April 1 surprised me.

Then, about ten days later, I reported into Omaha [Nebraska] for enlistment.

Alexander: Had you gotten your "greetings" from the President?

Vogel: Oh, no! I was just enlisting. In the winter--around January, I think--of 1942, a classmate came through. I had met one or two of them, and they were all talking about

going in and enlisting in the Army at Omaha, Nebraska, for the CID [Criminal Investigation Department]. So, when I went over, I was number 104 on the list. When they eventually figured out who they wanted, they took ninety-eight. I think it was on April 10, 1942, when I went into the Army. I enlisted for that CID deal. That was not through the draft, so I had an enlisted volunteer number, which stood me in pretty good stead down the line instead of having a draftee number.

Alexander: Let's go back to Pearl Harbor. Obviously, we were not in the war until that time. Can you tell me where you were and what you were doing when you found out?

Vogel: My wife and I were sitting on the floor in front of the radio listening to a Sunday program. They interrupted the program to give the news. I thought, "Well, by the time I close up and get going..."

Alexander: You stayed up and worked through your tax time, didn't you?

Vogel: Yes, I worked through the tax time. I think I went over sometime before that, in March,

to enlist. I told them that I wanted to come in in April, and they set the date for April 10, so I went. I went to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. It was quite a place!

Alexander: Did you get basic training there?

Vogel: No. I sat there and sat there in a status of flux. I was just waiting around. Sometime after April 10, they determined that they were only going to take eighty-nine of us on that CID deal, so that blew that out the window.

During that time--I think it must have been two or three weeks later, or maybe a month; I don't remember the exact time--I got all my uniforms and all that stuff. I got my civilian stuff packed up and shipped back home. About the second day, I was put on KP [kitchen police]. I went in in the morning one day, and I went around-the-clock until the next morning. I had twenty-four hours in KP.

Alexander: Doing what?

Vogel: Everything I was told to do--washing dishes. I got there at 8:00 a.m., and at 11:00 p.m. I

was suddenly a fry cook. So, I went through the rest of the night there doing secondary cooking and whatever was necessary. In the morning they got a new sergeant and crew in there. He looked up and said, "[You and you] go [here]! [You and you] go [there]!" He looked at me and said, "You go [there]!" I said, "Wait a minute! I came on here at 8:00 a.m. yesterday. It's a little after 8:00 a.m. now. I've been on for twenty-four hours." He said, "You get out of here!" I never got called for KP again after that (chuckle).

A few weeks later, they shipped a lot of us to Camp Robinson, Arkansas, for basic training. We went to get on the train, and they told me: "You're in charge of this car."

Alexander: Why do you think they would do that?

Vogel: I suppose because I had a law degree, and I was older than the rest of them. I had a little age on them. They said, "You're in charge of this carload going down. There's thirty people. You have six convicts in here from Leavenworth who decided to join the Army

to get out of the 'pokey.' If anybody gives you any trouble, let us know."

So, we got on the car, and I picked out the biggest guy in there and asked him, "Do you want to help me? You're the first sergeant in here. You keep these guys in line. There's five other convicts in here besides you. You keep them in line and keep everybody on the car, and I'll put in a good word for you when we get down there to whoever we report to." He said, "All right." So, I did that, and we had no problems whatsoever. We all got down to Camp Robinson.

Alexander: What gave you the idea to do that?

Vogel: I had been in three weeks in the Army. I saw that the biggest guy in there physically could frighten the rest of them into doing what he wanted them to do, so I used him.

Alexander: How long were you in basic training? Thirteen weeks? Ten weeks?

Vogel: We were in there for thirteen weeks, I guess. We got into basic training down in Camp Robinson. There were eight of us to a tent.

They had big, square pyramidal tents.

Alexander: Did you have cots?

Vogel: Yes, we had cots. We got out there and lined up. They were making squads. I ended up in the lineup and all that. After a couple of weeks down there, they made me an acting squad leader.

Alexander: Again, why would they do that?

Vogel: I have no idea. They picked me; that's all I know. I said, "Well, that's fine."

At that time we got a new lieutenant in there. He was a great, big guy. He was about 6' 2", a great, big Polish fellow. He had been a staff sergeant, and he had just been given a commission. Congress gave him a commission because they needed new officers. They were taking a bunch of sergeants and commissioning them. He came in there, and he was moving people around to get them to do what we had to do. He finally picked me as his acting squad leader, and he and I got along fine.

During basic training, the second lieutenants kept changing all the time. We

were holding our own ranks as acting squad leaders. Here came a brand-new second lieutenant in. The platoon leader was an older sergeant, and he got everybody squared up and turned around. We were waiting, and the officers would come in, line up in front, and take the platoon report. The sergeant was going to report, and suddenly a second lieutenant came in from between the tents and made a right turn to place himself in front of the sergeant. At that time, we were wearing the old leggings that had metal cups that you ran the laces behind. They were really old leggings. He made his right turn and took about two steps when he plopped flat on his face in the dust. Everybody laughed, and the sergeants finally calmed us down, went over to help him. They had two older sergeants with each platoon. The one sergeant went over and got him up. They sat there, and the sergeant had to take the lieutenant's leggings off so he could get them unhooked and up on his feet (chuckle).

Alexander: Oh, I see. He had hooked them together.

Vogel: Yes! He reversed them. Instead of having the hooks on the outside, he had them on the insides of his legs. When they clamped, it was like putting your hands like [this], finger-to-finger and curling them. That sergeant got him up, got the leggings off of him, and helped him back between the tents. The other sergeant was having a time with us laughing. We never saw that guy again. I think they took him out of that training squad and put him in another one. I never heard from him or saw him again. We didn't know who the heck he was.

So, we finished up basic training. There were only two guys in there whom I can even remember. One was a guy from Missouri who had been through about six or seven grades of schooling--"Peaches." His last name was Peach. The other fellow was a little guy about in his early thirties. He was a bronco rider from western South Dakota and eastern Montana. All he had ever done was break horses for riding in cow-punching. He was a tough little guy. He was all right.

We finished up our training, and they decided to put me into the basic training group. The other guys all got shipped out, and I never heard of or saw any of them after that. I was retained as a basic training instructor.

[Tape 1, Side 2]

Vogel: I was a basic training instructor. The same lieutenant, the big Polish fellow, was in charge of that platoon, and I was one of his squad leaders. He retained me to help him. We went through thirteen weeks there.

I continued as an instructor until October, 1942, when they transferred me over to Fort Benning, Georgia, for OCS [Officer Candidate School]. While I was an instructor there, one afternoon the first sergeant came over and said, "An officer wants to see you there between the barracks." I said, "Where?" He said, "See that shadow up there? That's him." He was standing there with a big campaign hat with a flat brim. The first sergeant said, "What did you do? Where did you screw up?" I said, "I don't know. What

does that guy want?" He said, "I don't know. Go up and report to him."

So, I went up and reported to him. He was in the shadow of the tents and the trees. When I got to where I could recognize the man's face, I thought, "Jeez! He looks familiar." He asked me if I was Fred Vogel and if I had gone to Drake University. I said, "Yes." He then introduced himself. He was a fellow who had been a year behind me in law school whom I had helped show how to brief his cases. I showed him how to get his studies done, and he remembered that. He said, "I've just been assigned here as the executive officer for this training battalion. I was going over the roster and saw that name. I wondered if that name was you."

We talked for a while, and he said, "I think you ought to go to OCS. If you want to go, I'll get the paperwork done and get you moving. I said, "Well, it can't be any worse than being down here. I'll go." He said, "I'll get it started." It was about four

years later until I saw him again. That was after the war was over.

But he did the paperwork, and when I went back to company headquarters, the first sergeant said, "What's going on?" I told him what he wanted. He said, "Oh, you can't do that! We're ready to make you a staff sergeant!" I said, "Well, okay. That's fine. As a staff sergeant, I'll be set up in this training camp, and that'll be fine." He started the paperwork on that, and I went from corporal to staff sergeant. By that time they had made me a corporal, with a couple of stripes so I could show a little authority to these guys as squad leader.

He started the promotion papers to staff sergeant, which went up to Battalion, but they didn't get any farther. My friend, the executive officer, was sitting on that stuff. He had other plans for me. Eventually, they set up an OCS class at Fort Robinson that was taught by two West Point captains.

Alexander: They were looking for officer material, weren't they?

Vogel: Oh, yes! Definitely! They were looking for officer material all the way through there, and anybody who had a college degree was automatically in if they so desired. I didn't know that until many months later. So, they started that OCS school, and I was relieved from the training outfit. I transferred over to the OCS training group, and I stayed there.

Another laughable point was that, as we were selected, we all had to go before a board. The night I was called, I was the corporal of the guard, so I showed up with my hat on and a sidearm. I saluted and stood at ease to answer their questions. After a bunch of questions, they finally said, "You have three choices. Which school do you want to go to?" I said, "What are they?" They said, "Infantry, infantry, or infantry." (chuckle) I said, "Infantry, sir!" He said, "All right. That's all." I gave him a high salute and turned around and walked out. The three of them were laughing because here was this young "pup" in there.

Everybody else came in with their caps in their hands, and they were all nervous. I just kept my cap on and my sidearm because I was on guard duty at that point. They asked me why I was in there like that, and I said that I was the corporal of the guard. That answered their question. Shortly after that we went to the OCS at Camp Robinson.

Alexander: What did they do in that period of time, primarily?

Vogel: They started to teach us to think and "do" as an officer. They took you out of the enlisted status and into where you were thinking of how you were going to do [this job], how you were going to do [that job], and who you were going to use. We went up there and did that.

Alexander: Did they teach you anything about being a gentleman?

Vogel: They tried. We had plenty of that before we got out of college.

These two officers hated the guts of the National Guard officers who were coming in. The Reserve officers didn't seem to bother

them too much, but they had it in, for whatever reason, for the National Guard. They figured that the National Guard thought that they were better than anybody else, I guess. There must have been about thirty of us in this OCS class that they had picked out. The guy in charge was a lieutenant colonel out of the National Guard. He was in charge of the whole training battalion, and these two captains were underneath him. He had jurisdiction, but they were working the troops. We'd stand there and listen to them, and when he came up and asked for a report, they would talk to him: "Yes, sir!" That "sir" would come out as much as to say: "Go to hell, you son-of-a-bitch!" (chuckle) Everytime they talked to that man, it was the same thing. Any questions that they were asked was that same thing, but yet so polite. There were no voice inflections. The voice inflection was there, but try to prove a voice inflection to a group. He'd come down, get his report, and leave because he knew they didn't like him. There wasn't a heck of

a lot that he could do about it.

Everything was grinding forward. There wasn't time to stop and fall back. We learned quite a bit from those guys. On Saturday night when we were through, we'd all go into town. We were getting \$21 a month. We all ended up with about \$4.00 for our own after they took out our PX [post exchange] chits and sent money home. But we had \$4.00 to get haircuts and any PX supplies we wanted. When we were in basic training, one guy was a barber, and he was cutting hair. I did the clipping for him, and he did the scissor work. We got a little extra money that way--ten cents a haircut, or a quarter or whatever we could get.

We went through the OCS school, and in October we were shipped to Fort Benning, Georgia, to go through regular OCS. They had given us this pre-schooling for about two or three months. We had a pretty good, basic background of what we were going to get into.

Alexander: How long did that course last?

Vogel: We were "ninety-day wonders." [Editor's

note: A "ninety-day wonder" refers to a newly-commissioned second lieutenant who gained his commission after an accelerated three-month period at OCS.] We'd already had either sixty or ninety days. It seems like it was about three months. We did the same things at OCS. Those guys had already taught us, so that wasn't too bad. We were there through October, November, and December, 1942.

We had barracks that had stoves in them. You always had to have a night guard on. Somebody had to stay awake and keep the fire going to keep us warm in the barracks. We were burning pine cones. We didn't have any lumber, and those pine cones burned pretty hot. The stoves would get red-hot--even the chimneys.

We got out of there around January 3, 1943. We graduated out of there then.

Alexander: What was your assignment when you got out of there?

Vogel: We were given a delay en route for seven days so we could go home. Then I reported to Camp

Roberts, at San Luis Obispo, California. We were there doing drills and other things. They were drilling the recruits, and we were sent out as back-up officers to go along and check the training and get used to that. I don't remember how long we were there. It might have been a month.

I was shipped up to Fort Lewis, Washington, to be with the 44th Infantry Division. I did training with them for about a year. In that time I was put in a heavy weapons company. I was assigned to machine guns.

Alexander: Was it machine guns and anything else, like, the tubes...what am I thinking of?

Vogel: We had 81-millimeter mortars and the heavy, water-cooled machine guns.

Alexander: Were those .50-caliber or .30-caliber?

Vogel: They were .30-calibers. If they were .50-calibers, you'd have a hard time carrying them in the field. They were too heavy. The .30s were heavy enough. When you put the ammunition box on the gun and the tripod, you had a lot of weight. You could break down

the tripod, the gun, and the ammo with different people. We did a lot of training with that. We were firing weapons and teaching guys how to pitch tents.

One day the company commander said he wanted me to teach these fellows how to roll a pack. I don't know what I did or how I got it, but the battalion commander said he wanted this done, and the company commander said, "Okay, you're it. You have to teach this whole battalion how to roll a pack in fifty minutes." I said, "Yes, sir!" We went out there on the drill field. I was up on a stand, and they were all down below me. I told them what we were going to do, and I said, "We're going to do it in fifty minutes. Follow, and if you get lost, talk to one of the sergeants down there, and they'll help you straighten it out." So, I talked them through it, and pretty soon we had them rolling pup tents, blankets, clothes, and everything else.

We got them packed, and we had about five minutes left. I said, "We have five

minutes left on instruction. If you haven't completed your field pack, get it done and get your pack lined up so you can march back in."

That alerted the sergeants, so they started moving everybody. Finally, we got them all packed up and moving. After fifty minutes, we broke that off, and they were marching with full packs on their backs. I said, "If you don't like the way it's packed, you're going to have to learn it in the barracks."

I think they marched them from the training field for about a mile. Some of them were really grouching when they got back because that pack on their backs was heavy. They all brought a shovel on their belts. We made them put the shovel on the pack. There were no kudos, but they all smiled and said, "You did a good job," so I said, "Okay, that's fine. Shut up and don't grouse." Other than that, we just did firing problems and platoon problems.

Alexander: Was that with live ammunition?

Vogel: Yes. We had to do live ammunition on a problem that the division had set up. Then they would run through the heavy weapons people of each battalion. One battalion would go through, and then the next battalion would follow behind, so it was an all-day proposition.

Alexander: Was this a maneuver of some kind?

Vogel: It was to teach us to get the guns in place. Then shells started coming in, and we had to dismount and get them over to a new position. If we didn't get blown up on the first time, we had to get to a new position so we wouldn't get blown up. They said, "As soon as the machine guns open up, the mortars will start coming in on your position, so you have to learn to be prepared to move in a hurry with as much of your equipment as you can get out of there with."

Alexander: That was with live ammunition and all that?

Vogel: No. We were delivering live ammunition fire at targets. They had targets out there in the brush and the field.

Alexander: But when they started shooting back at

you...?

Vogel: No, they didn't shoot back at us. We just had to get moving. The simulated mortars were little quarter-pounds of dynamite that they'd blow up. They'd blow them up whenever they wanted one. So, we got our guns in position. We started firing, and, all of a sudden, this stuff started going off: "Okay, let's go! Get out of here and find a new position!" We started running for the next one. I knew where it was, and I heard a crash behind me. I looked back, and the lead man, a machine-gunner, was running with the machine gun. He stumbled. It had the box of ammo on it, the tripod, and the whole thing. When you had mortars coming at you, theoretically you didn't have time to dismantle the gun. You just picked the whole damned thing up and went on. You just had to get out of there with it as quickly as you could.

He was running, and I saw him fall. The rest of them were streaming by on each side. I swung around behind him and picked up the

gun. He was still trying to get his breath. He was all knocked out because he'd fallen flat on his face. I don't know what the poundage was on that, but I know it was heavy. I grabbed the machine gun by one leg and swung it around and over my shoulder. Another guy slammed the ammo in the box, and we ran and took off for the next position.

I found it, put the gun on the ground, and got it in action. We spotted the target and were shooting. Pretty soon, the guys came up. They took over the guns, and I dropped back. I was directing fire then.

At the end of the problem, we got out of there, and then they had a review. I had failed every schooled solution to the problem from the time we started until we got down to the shooting. I looked up there and thought, "Oh, brother!" They said, "The saving grace in what you were doing is that you got 83 percent hits with the machine gun." They were all smiling: "That's the best that anybody in all the battalions had done today." I had more hits than any of the rest

of them, and they couldn't figure it out. Normally, it was sporadic firing. Then we went back to camp.

They had this machine gun firing over the heads of people crawling on the ground under barbed wire. Lo and behold, I got the job of firing that thing all day with my crew, firing with live ammunition over the heads of infantry and rifle company people while they were crawling under barbed wire. That taught them that they could crawl under the fire without getting hit. It gave them a little confidence and taught them to keep their heels down on the ground. You kept your feet flat, or otherwise your heels were up in the air. The rifle people could do that, and the machine guns could do it. You got your feet down, got your ankles on the ground, and crawled that way.

I told the sergeant to keep the trajectory of the bullets about thirty-six inches off the ground. He said, "I can take care of that." We went and got some 2x4s. We pounded them into the ground. We set the

water-cooled barrel right on top of the 2x4 and put a little "V" in it to hold it. He said, "That'll keep it up there at that height." We had that set up, and they wondered why we were doing that.

The reason we were doing it was because the nozzle at the forward end of the gun that held the barrel into the water-cooled cylinder was brass. After the gun fired [so many] rounds, the barrel would begin jumping up and down. It would round out a keyhole-like shape in that brass fitting. When it got to that point, the bullets went in all directions. You didn't know where they were going. They would spread out like a fan.

The other one action was funny, but it was actually serious. All of a sudden, some guy was stopped out there about ten or thirty feet from the end of the gun muzzles. We were watching to see that nobody stopped and that they kept crawling. If anybody stopped, why, you had to watch to see what happened out there. This guy stopped. We waited a few seconds, and then we saw a dark spot

coming out from underneath him. We thought, "Oh, God!" We ceased fire and blocked all the guns. By "blocking," you get the breech open and stick a block of wood into the breech so they couldn't be fired.

The sergeant and I went like high-hurdlers over the barbed wire to the guy. We got out there and turned the fellow over and thought, "What the hell?" He got so scared that he puked. All the fluid coming out of him was that puke. Each one of us got an arm under him and hauled him out, and then we went back to firing again. There were no casualties. I think that brings us into the next stage.

[Tape 2, Side 1]

Alexander: You were picked for that position because of what you had done before.

Vogel: Evidently, but I don't know. That's the only thing that I can assume.

In January, 1944, they sent a lot of first and second lieutenants down to Camp Stoneman, in [Pittsburg,] California, as replacements. They pulled in all the

lieutenants that they could down there. We had a thousand of them in our group. A major was running it. He looked things over and called me. He said, "I'm making you the adjutant of this group of a thousand lieutenants." I said, "What do I have to do?" He said, "You're going to have to keep track of them. You can have 800 of them on leave, and you have to have 200 back here for camp duties or whatever comes up." So, I was a very popular man.

Alexander: Not really.

Vogel: I was very popular! Telephone calls kept coming in: "I need another two days. I've met a bimbo down here. I want another two days!" "Okay, but you be back here in two days' time and report in to me." "All right!" I just kept rotating them. They'd take on about four days, and then I'd rotate 200 every five days. Everybody got their shot at it. That went on for January and up to about February 10, 1944. Then we got orders to ship out.

Alexander: Was this still the 144th Regiment?

Vogel: No. When we left Fort Lewis, we were replacements. During this time, the major liked the job I was doing. He said, "How'd you like to work for the Transportation Corps?" I said, "That's fine with me." So, he put me in for a branch transfer from infantry to transportation. He came in and said, "Well, you didn't make it. We got it as far as Washington, DC, and a three-star general said no." (chuckle) I said, "What?" He said, "He said, 'He's infantry, and he's gonna stay infantry!'"

About four days later, on Valentine's Day, 1944, we shipped out. When we left the camp, we heard this guy come alongside of us. He said, "You're in charge of these thousand officers going overseas to Hawaii. Here are your orders." Here I go again! We got on the ship, and the damned thing was listing about forty-five degrees to the left side.

Alexander: What kind of a ship was it?

Vogel: Oh, hell, I don't know. It was a big transport. They probably put some heavy trucks or something on one side and hadn't

loaded it properly, so it listed.

I got so sick in there that I couldn't sit up. Everybody on the ship was working on the latrines to keep them washed up. The Pacific is rough in February. I sat down in that room, and that ol' clock on the wall was going around and around and around in circles, and I said, "To hell with this!" and I went up on deck. I found a rope and tied it around me and laid on the hatch for the rest of the night.

We got into Hawaii in whatever time it took us--four or five days, I guess. We got off, and I lined them all up. One guy was just a hell-raiser. I said, "Okay! You fall them in and get them in line. You get 'em lined up. We're going to march up to this camp. We're not going to go straggling up there." He did it. He got them in line. He went up there at the head of column, leading them up there, and I marched over to the side (chuckle).

When we got up there, I saw this great, big, tall form again. I said, "I know that

guy!" While I was standing there and waiting until we were dismissed...they were breaking us up into barracks and places where they were going to house us. We were broken up as a group.

Alexander: This is in Hawaii. What were the barracks there?

Vogel: Fort Shafter? Schofield Barracks? I don't know whether that was it or not. I don't know where we were. They broke us all up. When they got done, I walked up and gave the big guy a big salute and told him, "I know you from somewhere." He said, "Yeah, I know you, too," and we got to talking. He was my former platoon leader back at Camp Robinson. He said, "Would you like to stay here?" I said, "Yeah!" We had gotten along very nicely and worked together.

Alexander: What was his rank?

Vogel: He was a captain at that time. I can't remember what his name was. He tried to get me transferred to the camp, and that didn't work, either (chuckle). I got transferred out to the 136th Infantry Regiment.

Alexander: Where was it located?

Vogel: I don't know--somewhere in Hawaii. We were on Maui.

Alexander: Doing practicing?

Vogel: Yes, just regular drilling--learning how to shoot the BAR [Browning automatic rifle] from the hip and the carbine from the hip; how to shoot a light machine gun from the hip without using a stand; all kinds of good things like that.

I was put in a rifle company then-- Company B, 1st Battalion. The company commander was from Kentucky. He was a captain. He had a first lieutenant there, who was from Georgia, and he was just a good ol' Southern boy. He thought I imperiled his rights to be the "exec" [executive officer] of the company because I was senior in rank to him. He looked up my date of rank and found out that I was very senior to him. Six months after I went to Fort Lewis, I was a first lieutenant. We went there in January, and, I think, by June I was a first lieutenant.

Alexander: So, you outranked him.

Vogel: Yes, I outranked him by...oh, I don't know.

I never did go and look it up. He was about 6' 2" or 6' 3"--a big, tall, lanky guy. He was always figuring out some dirty detail to put me on. I was down in his book.

Alexander: What was his rank?

Vogel: He was a first lieutenant. He was trying to upstage me. I had him outdated by rank, and I also had him outdated in education. He just had two years of college, and I had over six. But he said that he had more education than I did, and he thought that he was a better man than I was. I said, "Well, physically you might be." When he talked, spit would just come right out of his mouth. He was obnoxious to me. I just let it go right over my head.

He finally said, "I got an assignment for you! You gotta go dig a sump pit. Get your platoon and get over there!" I said, "Where do you want it?" He showed me, and it was right down in the coral. We had gotten to New Guinea by this time. We got shipped

out of there in...I don't remember the date.
[Editor's note: The 136th Infantry Regiment
departed from Hawaii on April 30, 1944, and
arrived at Finschhafen, New Guinea, on May
11.] We were on a big transport going south.
We went from Hawaii down to New Guinea.

Alexander: When did you get there?

Vogel: Oh, gosh--summertime. It took us a couple
weeks, I guess--a week or ten days, maybe.
Jap subs were operating out there, but we
didn't see any. We saw a lot of flotsam from
freighters they had shot up.

Alexander: You had an escort up there?

Vogel: No, there was no escort. I asked why we
didn't have a destroyer out there. They
said, "This ship can outrun any sub, as far
as speed is concerned," and it could, I
suppose. That was usually the criteria
there.

We got down there. We made a big circle
down past Christmas Island and got across the
Equator. All the Equator stuff went on--all
that good stuff. [Editor's note: It is a
maritime and aviation tradition to submit

"pollywogs," those who have never crossed the Equator, to a humiliating initiation ceremony to become a "shellback."]

We got into Finschhafen, New Guinea. That's where this joker pulled that coral stunt on me. There was a lot of coral there. We got to digging. The guys got down about two feet down. He wanted it four feet or deeper. I could see that the guys were all worn out, and it was hot. New Guinea is hotter than hell, and there wasn't any breeze.

I said, "You guys take a rest. I'm going to go get some dynamite and fix this hole." They sat there. Somebody came up and asked them, and the sergeant said, "The lieutenant told us to take a break until he came back." I came back and got down in the hole. I said, "I want you to dig a forty-five-degree tunnel back about a foot. I want that in all four corners."

When I came back, they had done it, and I had the dynamite. I put a quarter-pound of dynamite down in each hole and packed it in.

I got back and yelled, "Fire in the hole!" Everybody got down, and, "KABOOM!" Coral flew up in the air! All of a sudden, a great, big piece of coral came out, about the size of the hole, which I'd figured on. About eighteen or twenty inches in depth came up out of that hole, went over to one side, and sat on the side of the hole. It was down six feet then.

About that time, here came people running from all over: "What the hell are you doing?" The captain was there, and the first lieutenant was there, both giving me hell at the same time. The first lieutenant didn't know enough to keep his mouth shut and let the captain take care of it. I said, "Well, you told me to dig a sump pit. It's six feet deep. We'll probably have to dig a little more down there, but that's where it is." He said, "Jesus Christ Almighty! Stone came out, and you've blown holes in all the tents over here!" They were telling me about all the damage I'd done. I said, "Well, I'll put the people back to work." He said, "No! Get

out of here! You're off of it!" They accepted what was there. I got back to the tent, and I was in complete disgrace with company headquarters (chuckle). But I got their sump pit dug for them. That's what they asked for.

Alexander: They didn't tell you how to do it.

Vogel: No. I went back about a week later. I was sitting down there, not getting any assignments whatsoever. I was just a "dead duck." I sat there enjoying it. We were "Bsing" ["bullshitting," or engaging in idle conversation] with various fellows.

They took one of my squads out. The sergeant was supposed to be a pretty good, experienced man. They went out and did a patrol because we were down in Japanese territory. At least they said we were. They didn't find anything.

When they came back, all of a sudden, back in one of the tents, we heard, "KABOOM!" I went back to find what was going on. The sergeant had picked up a Jap grenade, and he was trying to take it apart when it exploded.

They took him out of there and several of the other guys with him. The medics said that they picked about 367 pieces of shrapnel out of him. He was still alive, but he still had a bunch of it in him. They all came out of it living. Of course, that made me all the higher on the list. I didn't get any more assignments.

One day a fellow came in and said, "The battalion colonel told me to have you report to take over C Company." I said, "What?" He said, "That's all I know. You're supposed to report to take over C Company." The C Company commander had taken sick and went to the hospital.

Alexander: Isn't that a captain's position?

Vogel: Yes, but he wasn't coming back. I left B Company and went over there. I introduced myself to the first sergeant and told him that I had been told to come over there and that I was taking over. I guess that they had probably sent word down. I said, "Who's on the supply end?" He told me, and I said, "Well, you tell that supply sergeant that I

know that you people have lost a lot of equipment in the field in the last month. I'm not going to sign for that equipment. He'd better have it all laid out so I can count it. When I get through counting it, then I'll sign. I'll give you a couple of hours."

That was done, and then, all of a sudden, I got another call. It said, "You're supposed to report up to regimental headquarters."

Alexander: How far away was that from where you were?

Vogel: I don't know--probably a half-mile or something. It was maybe a mile. I said, "All right." I went back. The battalion commander told me to take his Jeep.

I got up there and reported in to the regimental adjutant. He said, "Okay! Did you sign for the company material down there?" I said, "No. I told them to get it ready for my inspection." He said, "You are now a regimental liaison officer." Whoa! He said, "The colonel wants you as the liaison officer." It was a full colonel in charge of

the regiment. Lieutenant colonels were in charge of the battalions. There were about 1,200 to 1,500 men in a battalion, and the regimental commander commanded all of the troops--three battalions plus the headquarters unit.

So, he said, "Go back, get your stuff, and come back up here," so I did that. Then I was in regimental headquarters, and that was better than being in a rifle company (chuckle). I stayed there, and they put me in as assistant personnel officer. I went down to the personnel officer, another first lieutenant. He and I got along fine. He was from Louisiana, and he was a good fellow. I stayed with him for probably about three months, learning how to do the personnel records.

Alexander: What was going on there at that time? Were you just kind of bivouacked?

Vogel: We were just bivouacked out there in the jungle. We were doing regular rifle company training.

Alexander: But there was no interdiction with the

Japanese?

Vogel: No, not at that point. We were at Finschhafen, and [General Douglas A.] MacArthur was up at Hollandia, which is up the coast a couple hundred miles. They were a hundred miles ahead of us, doing the combat stuff up there.

About that time, I got called from the service company back to the headquarters. I was doing liaison work. I was sent up to division headquarters. [Editor's note: The 136th Regiment was part of the 33rd Infantry Division from 1942 to 1946.] I had to go up and find out what was circulating and going on and come back and report to the colonel what was going on. I reported the status for each day.

Then we started moving north. I was just an "errand boy." Somebody had to do it. I did it. I was happy. We got on a boat up there. They sent us to Biak, on the northern end of New Guinea. The 34th Infantry Division had come over the mountains from Buna. There were three or four regiments there just

leapfrogging, one after another, up the coast. We didn't have any specific orders. We'd have to go in [here], and the colonel would send up some people to do it. All I know is that that's what was happening. We were just hopscotching up the coast, mopping up as we went.

We got up there, and finally they gave us an assignment. We had to go into Morotai [Moluccas Islands]. That was our first invasion.

Alexander: Morotai is...?

Vogel: It's south of the Philippines. It's south of Mindanao, across the bay. By that time, they had moved me into intelligence. I was the S-2 then for the regiment (chuckle). I was the S-2, but there wasn't a heck of a lot I could do. We got up there, and I was trying to do what the S-3 was telling me to do. We were trying to find out if there was anybody out there, and who was there.

Alexander: You're talking about the Japanese?

Vogel: Yes. We had to go down to all the regiments and see if they'd seen any or if they had

captured any. We'd take that stuff back and make out a report.

Alexander: Had they done that? Had they made any contact with the Japanese?

Vogel: Not at that time. Well, they put platoons and patrols out, and they were making contact. One of them went in north of Hollandia, and they went back four mountain ranges on that patrol. They didn't find any Japs, but they did find some natives back there who were living in the Stone Age. That's what they reported back to us. Anyway, that was their report for that patrol.

We had all kinds of Australian officers with us. There'd be one Australian officer who'd go with each patrol who could talk with the natives and knew the lingo. If they ran into anything, they stayed back, and our people went ahead.

Alexander: Those "Aussies," I think, were called coastwatchers.

Vogel: They were farther up in the islands. On New Guinea, they were just regular infantry

officers. They were talking the languages, and they could get spies. They could talk to the natives and find things out. They could tell the patrol leaders where things were. Usually, what happened was that a native would come back and say, "Nip!" and put his hand out. They'd hand him a machete, and he'd disappear. Pretty soon, he'd come back with a head, and they'd find a dead Jap soldier down the road.

There was a general melee going on around there. Then we got ordered to go over to Morotai.

Alexander: Was this an invasion?

Vogel: It was a regimental invasion on the island.

Alexander: You were coming off the water?

Vogel: Yes. We were coming off the water onto a thirty-eight-mile area island. I think the whole island was thirty-eight miles big.

Alexander: Did you surround the whole thing?

Vogel: No. We came in from the west side.

Alexander: Did you have naval cover?

Vogel: [This] is the island, roughly [gesture]. The Japs had mortars way back [here]. I think

that's where they had their camp--on the northwest corner. We came in down on the east side.

About that time, I was working as the S-2. We were supposed to have twenty-four PT [patrol torpedo] boats, but we ended up with twelve. As the S-2, they gave me a radio and said, "You get the PT boats." I said, "What do I do with them?" They said, "Take them in and strafe the shores just before the landing craft get in there."

Alexander: Was there any part of the Navy besides the PT boats or not?

Vogel: I don't know.

Alexander: You would have known.

Vogel: I don't think so.

Alexander: They would have laid a pretty good barrage.

Vogel: Well, they had artillery back on another island. We were laying our own barrage. We didn't need the Navy there. We just had the PT boats there.

I was the only Army officer on board. I took the lead one. I talked to the lieutenant in charge and told him what was

going on. He said, "Okay! Just get in the middle of the boat and hang on! If I holler, 'Hang on!,' you hang on!" I said, "All right!"

We were riding around out there, waiting for the shelling to finish. We had two landing spots. I told him, "Divide the boats, and we'll put six on each side, ahead of each landing. We'll strafe from ground to treetop with everything you have. What do you have?" They had guns that fired grapeshot. We did that, and that cleared the treetops.

When we got offshore, he said, "All you guys, get ready!" They were standing there, shooting with pistols, light machine guns, and any kind of a gun they had. They were shooting at the shore (chuckle), softening it up.

We went in, and I said, "How close can you get in?" He said, "I don't know-- probably about ten or twelve feet offshore. I'll have enough depth to be okay." He studied his charts, and I said, "After we get

to the end and just before your last boat passes, I'm calling the aircraft in." That was my job--to get the air cover in. After we had taken the PT boats by strafing the ground, then we had air cover coming in, and I had to direct that. Just as we got through, I called the air cover in, and there was a splash on our right side! Mortars! There was a splash on the left side, and he said, "Hang on!" We shot ahead, and the third one landed just where we'd left. I hung on.

Alexander: That was fire from the island?

Vogel: Yes.

Alexander: Where were the planes located?

Vogel: I don't know. They were in the sky when I had them. All I know is they got called in on a regular call signal. When I told them to go, in they came, and my end of it was over.

Alexander: You did what you did. Then what about the troops?

Vogel: They went in, jumped off, and onto the island. Then they went on through and

cleaned it up.

Alexander: How long of a time was it for them to clean it up?

Vogel: I really don't know, because when we were through, we went up to the island's north end and strafed another Jap position there. We had the PT boats strafe it. Then we sat offshore there, and whenever the regiment wanted something, we'd go in, do it, and get it out again.

Alexander: That was kind of exciting, wasn't it?

Vogel: Oh, yes! That was on Christmas Day, 1944.

Alexander: But you hadn't been to Leyte [Philippines] yet?

Vogel: No, we hadn't been to Leyte yet.

Alexander: Then it wasn't Christmas

Vogel: It was Christmas Day when we made that landing. The boat commander said, "What would you like for Christmas dinner?" I said, "What do you have?" He said, "We haven't anything." I said, "Well, what are you going to do about it?" He said, "There's a big ship up the line. We'll go up there." I asked the regiment to release the naval

people. They did some radioing back and forth, and we went up there. They dropped supplies over the side, and off we went again.

Then he said, "Let's go strafe the Mindanao shores." We had passed Morotai. We had the troops in there, and they were cleaning up the island. We ended up with that, and I was cleared to leave the area. We made a big sweep and stayed offshore Mindanao. We strafed the Mindanao shoreline, and we received fire back.

Alexander: Do you know where Leyte is?

Vogel: Yes. It was way north of us. The Japs had outposts over on Mindanao. Our boat commander knew where they were because he'd been patrolling that area. Mindanao is east of Morotai. It's a great, big sea. There's a hell of a lot of water there.

Alexander: And you were still in the PT boat?

Vogel: Yes.

Alexander: You weren't attached to any group at all then, were you?

Vogel: No. I was assigned to the regiment, and I

was out there to take the PT boats in and direct the air cover in. That was my job.

When I was released, I was on the boat, and I couldn't get off unless I wanted to swim (chuckle).

Alexander: Let's continue with that. How long were you on that PT boat?

Vogel: We came back on that same day and reported in. I was off the boat then. I had a sea ride for one day--an exciting one! Then I was back at regiment.

Alexander: What did they make you do then?

Vogel: After that I was sent up as a liaison officer. I was sent back as part of the regimental staff to go behind with another company on Morotai. They sent more troops in to back up the first ones when we approached the shore.

That's where the sea water and the fresh water met. We arrived there, and we stepped off the boat. As we stepped off the boat, quite a few damned alligators were jumping up, snapping at our heels. They came out of the water, and they were coming! They were

hungry. They wanted everybody to go in quietly, and they didn't want any shooting; otherwise, we probably would have shot the alligators, or crocodiles or whatever they were. We just stepped off the boats and stepped on the land and made sure we didn't slip in the mud and down to where they could get at us. There was more than one there.

Alexander: How many of you were there?

Vogel: We had a whole company. I think we had over 200 men in the company coming in.

Alexander: Was there any kind of problem with the Japanese as you were coming ashore?

Vogel: None that I know of, because I wasn't ashore. I was still at sea. I was a Navy man by this time, without any water wings (chuckle). When I got through there, I was gone. They went in, and I think I went in the next day with a second company. They went ahead and did their patrol work and whatever they were going to do. All my job was to see that they got in there, and then I had to come back and report that they had started. From there they took over, and I didn't have any

part of it.

Alexander: Where was the regimental command post? I would think that that's where you would go back to report.

Vogel: I didn't have to go there. We were at the south end of some island down there. I know that on the night before Christmas or Christmas night, a Jap plane came over around 10:00 p.m. We were all on the beach, and we heard the motor coming. I dove into a bunker. They were after an "ack-ack" [antiaircraft] gun, and they got it. They got lucky. They dropped a bomb right in the middle of it and put the gun out of commission, and a whole bunch of men with it. I was probably about 200 feet away from there at the time it went off.

After that, how long we stayed there, I don't remember, but we stayed there until they figured that we had it cleaned up. Then we embarked and went to the Lingayen Gulf [Philippines]. We came into Lingayen Gulf. We set up a camp.

[Tape 2, Side 2]

Vogel: After Morotai, we got on the ships and went north into Lingayen Gulf. We set up camp. There was another outfit there. They'd had a tank battle down there. We weren't involved in it, but we got the job of chasing Yamashita up the Kennon Road, back in the mountains. [Editor's note: General Tomoyuki Yamashita commanded the Japanese 14th Army in the Philippines.] That was an eye-opener. That road was as wide as this trailer...

Alexander: At least eighteen feet.

Vogel: Yes, eighteen or twenty feet, but not over that, and it went up and down the hills, steep and climbing.

We arrived there, and our adjutant was purloined into going to the division G-1. That left the regimental S-1 open, so they appointed me as the regimental S-1. At that time, I was clear out of the fighting.

We had these people going up the Kennon Road. L Company, 3rd Battalion, was leading going up this mountain road. They got up to a crest in the road and couldn't get any farther because across the valley were a

couple of big caves. The Japs had machine guns and cannons in them. On the right side, that road dropped off 3,000 feet. That was a hell of a big ravine. On the other side, it went up to about a 7,000-foot elevation. You couldn't crawl up the hill because the terrain was such that their machine guns could cover it. They had a cannon, and that cannon was disastrous. They'd roll it out around 8:00 a.m. or 9:00 a.m., and, "KABOOM!" The staff of the 2nd Battalion was way back [here]. They rolled that cannon out and shot them down. They must have had a good observer there, because there was a big rock [here], and on [this side] there was a big opening so you could go out and up to the ravine; and [over here] there was another one; and [back here] was another big rock.

This battalion staff huddled down there, and they were doing their headwork. They didn't do a hell of a lot of headwork on it. The Jap observer, I guess, saw them go in there, and he shot a shell up there and hit this rock hill behind them, and he wiped out

the whole battalion headquarters. The colonel got in there and got another staff going.

By that time, I was cutting orders, and that was fine with me. We put another staff in there, and they pulled the same damned stunt. The Jap observer wiped out the second one. That was ten officers and probably six enlisted men in there.

By that time, things were getting pretty serious. L Company was up front, and the colonel said, "Get over that hill and get that cannon!" L Company commander came back and said, "Colonel, I'm laying on my belly here, with my head behind a rock! They're shooting the rubbers off the heels of our shoes if we raise our toes up." That's what they were doing with those machine guns up above. They had just enough depression where you could get your body out of the way. The colonel said, "Get going! I want that taken!" The reply came back over the wire: "Colonel, if you want to lead the charge, come on up!"

So, he went up to see what was there, and then he could see the situation. Where he had been, he had his hands full trying to keep everything moving. He got up there and looked at that, and he sent back for the cannon company commander. We had those 105-millimeter guns on a tank chassis. Captain Augie went up there and bore-sighted that 105 in just before dusk.

Alexander: "Bore-sighted" means that you could see right through the barrel.

Vogel: Yes. He bore-sighted it in, backed the machine down out of sight, and the next morning...they usually brought the cannon out around 9:00 a.m. and did their shooting. Our cannon got its nose stuck out just over the hilltop, and Captain Augie fired and, "KABOOM!" There was a hole blasted on the other side of the ravine, and the cannon was gone. He had one shot--that's all he had. He was a college mathematics teacher, so he knew what his figures were.

Well, that got us around the corner, and from there we started moving. We had to send

some people up the other side to clean out the rest of them. But we lost quite a few people.

Alexander: It sounds like it. Let's continue on beyond that. What happened after that?

Vogel: Then we continued on up the Kennon Road. We were chasing Yamashita back into the mountains. They sent some other regiments in there to help. Maybe a month or two months later, we finally got enough people in there to surround him. We got up the road, and the Japs were back in caves. You'd throw a grenade in there, and it'd go off. What was happening was that they'd go in, and there would be a lot of fire. The Japs at the back of the cave had dug down below the floor level of the cave. Of course, when they threw those grenades in there, they were throwing them blind. You never knew how far back they went. So, they'd go off, and the Japs would get up all black and grimy and covered with powder and start shooting back. They didn't care too much for the grenading (chuckle). Eventually, it was just getting

in there. We had those bazookas for shoulder-firing.

Alexander: Did you have any flamethrowers?

Vogel: We had flamethrowers up there. We had this one Indian lieutenant from New Mexico. He was a pretty good tracker. He'd get up there and use a flamethrower. He'd have the flamethrower squads go up and do that, or he'd go up and do it, and he'd have his other people back there watching for smoke to come out of the holes. That was the way they cleaned them out, finally. They knew where to throw the grenades. That was the battle all the way up Kennon Road--just digging people out.

Alexander: How long did that take?

Vogel: A couple of months, I think. I was sitting back at the regimental command post. Everybody else was up front, and I was the only staff officer back there to call up to division or to take division orders and get them up front.

Alexander: You had quite a lot of casualties.

Vogel: We had a few--quite a few, in fact.

Alexander: Where did you go after that? What happened after that?

Vogel: After we got Yamashita surrounded back there, everything just quieted down. After that, everybody was getting ready to invade Japan. On V-E Day [Victory in Europe Day, May 7/8, 1945], we were out in the South China Sea. We were practicing unloading personnel from ships and landing craft.

Alexander: That was on V-E Day. Of course, that was in April.

Vogel: The waters were rough out there. We came into the Philippines in January, and in May we were still there. We were there for five months. We secured it in April or May.

Alexander: So, by that time, as far as our advancing was concerned, we started on Iwo Jima earlier. On Easter day, 1945, we invaded Okinawa. By the time you secured there, that's interesting, because toward...well, I think that Leyte was secured sometime later.

Vogel: We had no access to the "big picture."

Alexander: That was going on while you were doing the rest of this.

Vogel: While we were doing this stuff, all this other stuff was going on.

Alexander: So, we're up to May. Did you stay there?

Vogel: We stayed there on Luzon until we shipped out to Japan.

Alexander: If you were going to go.

Vogel: We did go.

Alexander: In the occupation?

Vogel: Yes. That's what we ended up as--occupation troops.

Alexander: Where were you and what did you hear about the atomic bombs?

Vogel: We were very happy, and we were happier after we got to Japan. On V-E Day we were out in the South China Sea. We were practicing unloading in choppy water to get into landing boats and landing craft, getting ready to make that invasion. Then they capitulated after that.

Alexander: That was in August.

Vogel: I guess that's right. Then we got loaded, embarked, and went up there. We went up there the same as if we were going to make an invasion.

Alexander: You came out of the Philippines in May or June--something like that?

Vogel: I don't know. The time element is gone. We got ready and went on up there. When we got there, the colonel said, "You go in on the sixth wave." I said, "I'd rather go in on the third." He said, "You're going on the sixth. That's where I want you." I said, "I'd rather go on the third, Colonel." He said, "Why?" I said, "Well, the third wave usually gets in, but the sixth one doesn't." (chuckle) He looked at me and laughed and said, "You're going on the sixth." When we got up there, we went in, and there was a big cliff there.

Alexander: Where were you?

Vogel: This was in Japan. We went into Honshu. There was a great, big cliff there. I don't know how tall it was--forty or fifty feet high or something off the sea. That thing was honeycombed with caves. They had a "reception committee" [defensive position] on each end. If that had been a landing, we would have lost over 10,000 or 20,000 people

trying to make that landing with the Japanese firepower in that one spot. We made the landing, and our assignment was to go to Kyoto. We were assigned to the Kyoto area. We went up there.

Alexander: The Japanese, by this time...

Vogel: They had capitulated and everything. They had to turn in all their weapons--swords, rifles, and all that stuff. I think we had two or three warehouses that we had filled with swords, rifles, and everything you could imagine.

Alexander: How long did you stay there? Well, let's put it this way. When you left, you probably left to come back to the States.

Vogel: When I came back, I flew back to the States. I was there until November, 1945. We went to Hiroshima, and they quartered us in an old fairgrounds building, and old horse stable.

Alexander: There couldn't have been much left of it.

Vogel: There was enough to get shelter out of the misty rain, but there wasn't anything in there for heat. I don't know how long I was there--three or four days--and then I got my

orders to come home. I flew out of there to Johnston Island, Hawaii, and all the way to San Francisco.

Alexander: Do you remember what the date was when you got to San Francisco?

Vogel: No. I think it was some time in December. It was cold. All we had were khakis (chuckle). I don't remember whether I was home for Christmas that year or not.

Alexander: Your home was back in Austin, was it not?

Vogel: Yes. When I got ready to leave, I had some little souvenirs I'd picked up. I put them in a footlocker. The sergeant said, "I'll get it home for you. At least I'll get it to 'Frisco.'" He did. He got it on board, and he said he saw it at "Frisco" on the dock, but after that they couldn't find it. Somebody purloined it. They stole a lot of it coming off there. So, I got home with what I had in my duffel bag.

Alexander: When you got home, did you have children by that time?

Vogel: One.

Alexander: What did you do when you were mustered out?

Vogel: When I got back, I went to Minnesota. It was in December.

Alexander: Did you get discharged, or did you stay in the Army?

Vogel: I stayed in. They didn't discharge us right away. I took Reserve duty. I got promoted to captain when I made S-1.

Alexander: So, you went out as a captain?

Vogel: Yes.

Alexander: When were you discharged?

Vogel: I've never been discharged.

Alexander: You were in the Army for how long?

Vogel: Indefinitely. This is an old, green ID card.

Alexander: It says "Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army Reserve."

Vogel: I stayed in the Reserve until I had thirty years in. So, I was retired in 1972 as a lieutenant colonel on an indefinite appointment. I'm still subject to call. During that time I went back to practicing law. I'm still on retired Reserve.

Alexander: Well, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to do this interview on behalf of the University of North Texas.

Vogel: You're welcome.