

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. William James “Bill” McConaughy

Date of Interview: June 21, 2015

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Interview in progress.

Ed Metzler: This is Ed Metzler. Today is the 21st of June, 2015. I am interviewing Mr. Bill McConnaughy at his home in Rockford, Illinois. This interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

So, Bill, thank you for spending the time with me today; I appreciate it, and let's get started by having you give us your full name and date and place of birth.

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, the full name is William James McConnaughy. I was born in Bloomington, Illinois, uh ...

Ed Metzler: Bloomington?

Mr. McConnaughy: Bloomington, Illinois.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... uh, February 8th, 1920.

Ed Metzler: And what did your father do for a living?

Mr. McConnaughy: My father was a manufacturing jeweler. Now, in those days, if you wanted a piece of jewelry, he would make it for you. So, when he got married, for example, he made himself a wedding ring. And he had big knuckles like I do.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: So, he made the ring so ... had a hinge on it, and he could pop it open and take it off and put it on. And after, well, he ... he passed. I was born January, uh, February 8th, and he ... he died, uh, I think the 15th of December the following ... of that same year. So, I ...

Ed Metzler: You never really knew your father then.

Mr. McConnaughy: I didn't know him at all, huh uh, no, and my mother was a widow for, uh, twenty years, for twenty years. And uh, it was a ... it was a tough go in those days with the ... with the ... uhm ... whether or the ... the ...

Ed Metzler: Depression.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... the ... yeah, employment was probably none. And ...

Ed Metzler: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. McConnaughy: I have a brother at ... he was born in December of 1918, and my sister was born uh, in the same year or the same month in December of 1913. And they're both passed away. And uhm, well, my sister had one son; we never ... never hear from him at all. My brother had two sons, and we hear from them a lot.

Ed Metzler: Hum!

Mr. McConnaughy: And then I had just the one daughter.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And ...

Ed Metzler: Now, where did you go to high school; where did you go to school in ... ?

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, I went to school in Low's (sp?) Park, Illinois which is a suburb of Rockford.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: I went to school there to ... to grade school. I never went to high school. I was, after I got through ... well, put it this way, my mother was a widow and she, uh, rubbed floors and clothes and do laundry for everything that she could do. She was working to get money to take care of us three children.

Ed Metzler: Right!

Mr. McConnaughy: And so, it was ... it was quite a problem for her. So, when I got out of eighth grade, I went to work. My brother was out of eighth grade a year before I was, and he'd gone to work, so I went to work.

Ed Metzler: What did you do?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, I had a neighbor two doors away that owned a furniture factory, Atlas Furniture was the name of it. And the (chuckle) man's name was (pause) hum ... uh, well, I can't think of it; don't matter. But I worked ... I worked there for a couple of years or so, and in 19 ... May of 1940, this right now? Yeah, May of 1940 my mother met a man. And my mother was a very wonderful religious person and not that she was, you know, cross-eyed or bad cros ... bad ... feelings at all, none, no. But she did ... she did stick close to what the Lord had put out for her and she managed it and so forth, and ... and kept things going for us. But in 19, uh well, try ... prior to 1940, my mother used to send little donations in to Mocknomus (sp?) School of the Bible, is that right in Chicago? Maybe it was ... was it Maltstone (sp?)? No, no, Maltstone was a ... is a school in Portland, Oregon. Uhm, I can't just think of what the name of this ... the ...

Ed Metzler: It's alright.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... the company was in Bloomington ... in ... in Chicago, but it was a big, big concern. And my brother took some courses from them, paperwork, you know? Not the ... he didn't go in there to go to school; it was done by mail. But in the process of this, there was a man named McCord (sp?) that came to our house to call on my brother since he was a member of the Moody Bible ... doesn't Moody Bible Institute ... might have been Moody Bible, but uhm, he came to talk to my brother and he met my mother. Well, his wife had just passed away shortly before that, and Dad McCord, we called him, uh, when ... when he saw Mother, I guess he kind of fell in love with her, and ...

Ed Metzler: Hum!

Mr. McConnaughy: ... about a month later they were married, and took off for Portland, Oregon because he was ... he took a job there as the financial manager of something like that. And so, that ... that separated the family. And Mother was out in California, I was still in Rockford, and Velma (sp?), the sister, she was in Rockford, and Coyle (sp?) he was out in ... in

Portland, Oregon. And he ... uh, attended school out there; I don't know what school it was, but he attended a school out there. And ...

Ed Metzler: And did you continue to work in the furniture factory?

Mr. McConnaughy: No, we're both out of the furniture factory years before that.

Ed Metzler: And what did you do then?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, I went in the service. No, I guess before then, yeah, before then, I got into the machine business.

Ed Metzler: Oh?!

Mr. McConnaughy: And that was coin operated machines.

Ed Metzler: Right!

Mr. McConnaughy: Now, my brother in law had the pinball machines and had slot machines and a lot of them had candy machines and this sort of thing, and I got to where I was pretty knowledgeable as far as fixing them if they broke and so forth.

Ed Metzler: So, you were repairing them then?

Mr. McConnaughy: I was, yeah, on the job. I mean, I didn't do it in a ... in a shop or anything, but on the job as you're out checking them out and (unintelligible)

Ed Metzler: In the field, so to speak.

Mr. McConnaughy: Pardon?

Ed Metzler: In the field.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. McConnaughy: So, to speak yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: In the field. And it was funny, too, because I ... I learned quite a little bit about slot machines and some ... from some of the ... some of the people I ran into in that. Now, this was back before the war, and there was people already then that were in the different types of ... of business, so to speak ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... that were pretty ... pretty rough, rough people. And I'm thinking of one definitely that was up at South Belloite and he was ... he was an Italian man, and one thing he always told me when I first went in there, he says, "Kid, get you a racket!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Kid, get you a racket!

Mr. McConnaughy: It was his advice. He ...

Ed Metzler: And he didn't mean a tennis racket either, did he? (laughter)

Mr. McConnaughy: "Kid," ... no (chuckles), "Kid, get you a racket!" But ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. McConnaughy: ... he and I got along real well. And anytime he had problem with his machines, he'd give me a call and I'd go up there and fix them, and so forth. And then there was Ray Duffy (sp?) is a man that I worked for in the ... in the coin machines, and Ray had a few machines of, gambling machines, but most of his were cigarettes and candy. And he had to have an operation on his back because he was just ... he was in bad, bad shape with it, so he hired me to take care of all of his cigarettes and we went north and south and east and west, and Rockford. I ...

Ed Metzler: And is that ... is that what you were doing when the war started?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh no, it wasn't. Uh, let me think now. No, I was working with my brother-in-law.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. McConnaughy: But in the ... in the coin machine ...

Ed Metzler: In same area ... same ...

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, and the pinball machines that they ... the ball's rolling around and then the slot machines and ... and Al had quite a few of them. He had pretty good luck.

Ed Metzler: So, do you remember the famous Pearl Harbor day?

Mr. McConnaughy: Oh sure!

Ed Metzler: Tell me what happened then.

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, I was in ... in the Army Air Corps then, Army Air Corps.

Ed Metzler: Oh, you had gone into the military before the war started?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, yes, I did.

Ed Metzler: Didn't know that!

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah. I was ... I was ...

Ed Metzler: I will back up then and find out when you went into the military.

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, uhm, let's see, I think it was ... I was just ... I was just of age, and I think it was in the fall of the year that I went to ... I don't know if I've got anything on that or not, but I might have something on that, but ...

Ed Metzler: But it was before the war?

Mr. McConnaughy: ... it was before the war (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, it was either '40 or '41 probably.

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, right. And when I went in, I went into the field in Chicago, and we were only there overnight, I suppose, and ...

Ed Metzler: Did you volunteer?

Mr. McConnaughy: Yes, uh huh.

Ed Metzler: Why?

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, I ... I did to this extent; I was drafted, and if I'd of let me draft me, I could have got the Army or whatever, but I could then join the Army for the ... for the division I wanted; it would be for a four-year period. And so that's what I did, and I went in the Air Corps. And that was ... that was not the walking Army, and that's ... I didn't (chuckles) ...

Ed Metzler: That was support (unintelligible).

Mr. McConnaughy: ... I didn't care to think about it.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: But it was ... it was the ... the Army Air Corps, and it was a great outfit, too. We had some ... had some great guys, I mean, I had a couple of Captains that were ... when we went from ... well, uh, I went down to some town in Texas for my in ... in ... my induction work, my induction, whatever it was ... boot camp.

Ed Metzler: Boot camp, yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: And uh, and then I was transferred to ... to an outfit in ... in Texas. I don't know ... can't remember where it was at.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you told me you were at Randolph Field.

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, that was after this.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so this was before Randolph.

Mr. McConnaughy: I was with them ... then I was transferred to Randolph Field (chuckle) we had a barracks that was the, uh, air ... air ... the ... the airplane's thing ... where they set the airplanes at night or when they were working on them or something.

Ed Metzler: The hangars and stuff, yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: And they had that thing packed full of two, double cots ... of ... of double cots, the cot and the cot, and you had somebody sleeping down here, somebody sleeping (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, two layers? Two of them?

Mr. McConnaughy: I would say there was probably right on the four hundred guys.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: And ...

Ed Metzler: That's a big bedroom!

Mr. McConnaughy: ... and when the war broke out then, uh, I was at Big Springs [s/b Big Spring], uh, no! I was at Randolph Field, and Randolph Field was, you know, that was the ... Cadillac of the Air Corps. And we had airplanes and all, fighter planes all kinds of this. They were ... they were single-motored planes, but it was their (pause) their ... what they were learning is how to fly, and that's what these things were.

Ed Metzler: Now, where did you ... uh, tell me again where you did your basic training, boot camp.

Mr. McConnaughy: Pardon?

Ed Metzler: Where did you go ... where did you do boot camp? Boot camp, when you went to boot camp before you went to Randolph, where did you go?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh ...

Ed Metzler: Was that in Texas also?

Mr. McConnaughy: I think it was.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. McConnaughy: Otherwise it was ... it was ... I'm not ... I don't know what the name of the ... I can't remember what it was.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. McConnaughy: I might be able to look it up and find out, but ...

Ed Metzler: Nah, that's alright.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... it was, oh, it was a tough ... that's all they had was raw recruits, and they just treated you like the old Army. And when they ... when they could, they would let you know that they were the boss; you wasn't the boss! And so, they ... and of course, they ... they told us when we were lined up now, "You will all get KP!" Kitchen work, and he said, "We need some men now," and he said, "if you agree to come for this one, one night, then you won't have to worry about it the rest of your time you're hear because we wouldn't give it to you anymore." Well, that sounded like a pretty deal, so I did it. Well, that was the biggest farse in the world!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: (Chuckle), I got up that one first morning by, I don't know, three, four o'clock in the morning, and went on my KP and I, along with another guy, we had a ... a some ... potatoes in a thing like that big, and were peeling potatoes. And ...

Ed Metzler: So, you had a real pile of potatoes!

Mr. McConnaughy: ... then did that all day, peeled those darned potatoes. Well, the worst part of that was the next morning I'm not supposed to do anything. I'm awaked at the same time as I was the ... other morning, and I said, "Whoa, wait a minute!" I said, "I ... I agreed to do this for one day!" He says, "Yeah, that don't amount anymore," he says, "this is what mounts." Says, "Get down to the K ... kitchen," he said, "and be there in a hurry because," he says, "you're already late!" (Chuckles), so that ... that was my first experience with them. And so ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: ... uh, I finished my ... I finished boot camp then at (pause) out there, and I used to know ... too, but I don't ... can't tell you what it is now. If I can find it, I will. But then, uh, I'm trying to think if we left there and it was a ... it was a mud hole; it was a new post and it was, yeah, I think it was in ... in (slapping sound), oh, can't think it ... what the ... what ... in ... in the State just south and ... and west of Illinois.

Ed Metzler: Iowa?

Mr. McConnaughy: No, it's ... lower than ... lower than Iowa.

Ed Metzler: Missouri?

Mr. McConnaughy: Missouri, what would be another one?

Ed Metzler: Arkansas.

Mr. McConnaughy: Arkansas, there you are!

Ed Metzler: Alright! So, you're down in the south?

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, we were down there, and it was a brand-new post, and it rained every day, and we were in mud up to our ears. But it didn't last long, about two or three days, and I left and (pause) had all my stuff and then we didn't know where we were going, and a lot of guys were ... were (unintelligible) and talking about the overseas ... over the seas. And ... but it wasn't true. We ... we were shipped down to Randolph Field. And after being in that mud hole up in Arkansas, that truck pulled in and we were looking out through the back, and here we see this beautiful road and the grass and the sidewalks and curbs and beautiful, big buildings, and we thought we had died and gone to heaven!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: And ... but ... then I was stationed there, uh, well, when the war broke out, of course, I was there. And we were all sent out on guard duty. I had a machine gun, didn't have any bullets in it, and I wouldn't have known how to shoot it if I had to 'cause I didn't, but that's what I carried. And they took the airplanes which were all sitting in rows, and they were moved ... all here, one there and one here and one there and

one there, moved out so they were, oh, probably a hundred feet a feet, uh, a piece, apart (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, there wouldn't ... so, they wouldn't be ...

Mr. McConnaughy: It spread all over.

Ed Metzler: ... easy target, yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: Pardon?

Ed Metzler: So they wouldn't be an easy target.

Mr. McConnaughy: That's right. Yeah, if they'd bring one plane in and drop a bomb, it'd probably take out a whole row of ...

Ed Metzler: Right!

Mr. McConnaughy: ... but that ... that's where ... that's what we were for. And I walked on four and off eight. And did that for, oh, a few days until they got things squared away a little bit. And not too long after that then I was shipped to Midland, Texas. Midland/Odessa is ...

Ed Metzler: Well, before we go to Midland, let me ask you about San Antonio.

Mr. McConnaughy: About what?

Ed Metzler: Did you ... did you get any leave or liberty so that you could go into San Antonio and see the town and see what San Antonio looked like?

Mr. McConnaughy: Oh yes.

Ed Metzler: Well, what did ... what did you think about San Antonio from that era?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uhm, I thought it was a Honky Tonk (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: It's about what it looked like, and you'd go around to some of them and ... and they would pack ... be packed full with ... with soldiers. And walked down the street, there was this ... there ... every other person was a soldier walking down the street. And I didn't have any particular trouble. I ... I had a ... I forget what you called him, but he was ourkind of a C.O.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: But he was just a ... he was a Buck Sergeant, and he was in charge of about ... about twelve guys maybe.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, seeing that they'd get up ... and see that they get over here for what they're supposed to do and so forth. And I can't remember his name, but he and I got to be friendly. And the only reason for that was that I had a few bucks and he didn't and he liked to go to town. So, he would get me a pass, and we could go to town. Well, that was a whole new story for that, I tell you, and I don't (chuckle) I don't care to record it.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. McConnaughy: But we were there until ... we opened then Big Spring, Texas, and that was a brand new ... brand new ...

Ed Metzler: Well, now wait, I thought you went to Midland.

Mr. McConnaughy: That was, that was at Midland, Texas; that ... that's what was Midland where I was before I went to ... before I went to Big Spring.

Ed Metzler: Well, what did you do in Midland?

Mr. McConnaughy: I was in the supply room; I worked in the supply room, slept in the supply room so then I was ... I was not a Sergeant, but I would have been Supply Sergeant. And what they ... what they were doing was training us to move and that's just exactly what they did.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And I can't just remember when ... what they ... the month was, but we went as a crew over to Big Spring, we were the first bunch to be in this new, this brand-new field. And so, I had a Captain that name ... is by that ... at that time is ... his name was Springer, Captain Springer, and he was an older man, you know? I was what twenty years old maybe.

Ed Metzler: Right, twenty-one.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah. And Captain Springer was probably maybe thirty-five, something like that.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: But ... and he was ... he was going to be the C.O. over on our 817th School Squadron which is what we would be under at Big Spring, and he would be the Captain in the ... in that, and I would be the Supply

Sergeant. Well, when it come time to go over there, uh, Captain Springer said, "You get your stuff," and he said, "get it in my car." He says, "You and I'll go over there by car. So," he said, "we'll get things started before the troops all get there." So, that's what we did, and we went down and ran the trucks and got a whole load of stuff that had to go to the supply room and the door ... the daily room or their day room, and one thing and another. And we ... I was at Big Spring then for ... until, well, I was there after November 1st of (pause) my mind isn't working very good, uh, I ... I ... I'm thinking it was, geez, I can't ... I can't get it. Uh, what ... what happened in this ... at Big Spring, Texas, of course, is my wife was ... my friend ... my ... my girlfriend then up at Rockford, and she came down to Big Spring November 1st, and I think it was 19 ... uh ...

Ed Metzler:

Was the war ...

Mr. McConnaughy:

... I think in 1941. No, no, the war broke out ...

Ed Metzler:

Well, that would be (unintelligible).

Mr. McConnaughy:

... while I was at Big ... uh, while I was at Randolph Field.

Ed Metzler:

Randolph, so it was ... must ... may of been '42.

Mr. McConnaughy:

Uh, and ... in ... well, probably was then. I know that Sunday morning, we had been up that night before and I was in my bed, and a speaker came out over all of these guys in the ... in the airplane hangar.

Ed Metzler:

Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy:

Uh, this ... it was President Roosevelt telling about the ... what ... went over at ... over at Honolulu, Hawaii and we're ... declared war, and he said, "We are at war," and he said, "I don't war; my wife, Eleanor, she don't want war," I can remember hearing him saying this.

Ed Metzler:

Uh huh.

Mr. McConnaughy:

And he talked (unintelligible), but he ... he ... we ... we thought a lot of him. But [at] any rate, uh, (pause) at Big Spring then we ... we ... I was the first ... first person to draw anything from the Quartermaster at that new post. And uh ...

Ed Metzler: So, this was ... this was an air base that they had just (unintelligible) this Big Spring?

Mr. McConnaughy: Bomb ... this is Bombardier School.

Ed Metzler: Bombardier School?

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, they were ... they were training for Bombardier and they had, what was that AT-11s or something? I can't remember the numbers on them, but they had ... they had targets set up out in ... in the country.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: And ... and I don't know how many bomb ... how many, yeah, well, these things were bombs, but they weren't bombs. They were filled with one little puff so they could take a picture of it and then (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: See if you hit it or not, yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: Was sand, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: But ... and ... and out ... out around Big Spring ... now, Big Spring is more west Texas; it's pretty near just about halfway between (pause) Fort Worth and El Paso. And it was ... it was wide open, and ... and ...

Ed Metzler: Middle of nowhere!

Mr. McConnaughy: Huh?

Ed Metzler: It's the middle of nowhere.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah. But I liked it. I ... and then Doe (sp?) came down ... down to Big Spring, oh, maybe about the ... the 1st of October or September.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: Something like that. And ... and we were married on November 1st of 1941. And ...

Ed Metzler: Well, that must have been '42 because November of '41 was ...

Mr. McConnaughy: '42, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... before the war.

Mr. McConnaughy: It was '42. Mind don't ... thank you.

Ed Metzler: Well, it's a long time ago (laughter)!

Mr. McConnaughy: (Chuckle), yeah, it was a few years. But ...

Ed Metzler: Now, when you say ...

Mr. McConnaughy: (Unintelligible) my (unintelligible) my daughter was born down there; she ... she was ... (chuckle) ... she was second in line, I guess, because my first was the Army and then Billy Jean (sp?)

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. McConnaughy: And ...

Ed Metzler: Now, when you say Supply Sergeant, what kind of supplies are you ...

Mr. McConnaughy: Everything except uh, (pause) stuff ... this was all stuff for the soldier. It was at ... at our 817th School Squadron; we had all that stuff in the ware ... uh, in our little warehouse for that. And then, of course, I didn't stay in the squadron's supply the whole time. They had another Supply Sergeant or the supply ... that covered everything in the ... from the ... in the post from the screw to the ... a barracks, everything. And I had a Captain, a real nice guy, I liked him real well. Uh, that Captain, can't think of his name right now, but he ... he was the Captain of ... of ... in charge of this inventory bunch ... branch, whatever it is, but that was our ... that was our deal. We had to inventory every little screw while it was on that post. Now, we had records on everything that was in that post from one little screw up to barracks and airplanes and all this. And our ... our records came through with so much of these things; it was maybe seven hundred, not that much, maybe seventy barracks and how many airplanes, but we had to ... we had to have that amount. If this called for a hundred and fifty of these airplanes, we had a physical inventory of those airplanes and if we had some that were in repair or something or in ... in storage or something, who knows what, but what you counted and what they had in storage better add up to what we was supposed to have. And that's what we did. And Cap Springer, no, it wasn't Captain Springer there. I can't think of his name either; I liked him real well. He and I worked together for, oh, probably three or four months on that darned inventory. And if we had one ... one ... okay, I was a Sergeant and we inventoried my ... my uh, what I was responsible for in ... in the

... for the squadron, that was the 817th School Squadron, and in that inventory, I was short one bunk tag. Now, a bunk tag was a little metal thing that hooked on the end of your bunk and you slipped your carb down in there. I was short one. I signed a statement of charges and that is on my discharge. I signed a statement of charges for uh, one bunk tag, and I think it was ... I can't remember how much it was. It was just a few dollars if it was anything, but oh ...

Ed Metzler: And that ... that went on your record?

Mr. McConnaughy: If they're on ... they're ... all of the stuff – the airplanes, the buildings, the beds, the spoons, knives, forks, everything was listed on that thing.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. McConnaughy: And we were supposed to ... we were supposed to have it, and if we didn't have it, we had to find out what was this, and if it was something that was gone and I was the Supply Sergeant in that 817th, and we were short one bunk tag, so I ... I had to sign this statement of charges for ...

Ed Metzler: So, they wrote you up?!

Mr. McConnaughy: Oh yeah, what?

Ed Metzler: They wrote you up as ...

Mr. McConnaughy: Oh, they ... sure ... I ... I was ...

Ed Metzler: ... being responsible for that.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... I was written up, and my discharge it reads that I paid a statement of charges of whatever it was, I don't remember.

Ed Metzler: So, but life went on anyhow, right? I mean, you ... they didn't do anything to you?

Mr. McConnaughy: Oh no, it didn't make a bunch of difference either way. And, of course, if I had a ... what we did, we listed ... we had big, big sheets of this stuff that you'd fold these sheets back and ... and these were all full of items. Then you had a column here that the records called for you ... nine hundred of these particular things, and then you have to, uh, physically inventory those to whatever it says you're supposed to have, well, that's what you're supposed to have. And if you didn't have it, why, then

somebody's going to pay a statement of charges or something, something's got to give up.

Ed Metzler: So, what do you got a big warehouse that's got all of these items in it that ... where your inventory is?

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Like ... they're on the ... on the base?

Mr. McConnaughy: It ... if you, it's ... you're still ... you still better show what you've got and ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... what your ... what your charged with, and ...

Ed Metzler: Well, what kind of housing did they give you when you were there? Did you ...

Mr. McConnaughy: Houses?

Ed Metzler: ... did you live on base?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, we didn't, when we got married, we did, and you ... no, you picked out ... you find your own place to live. And we had a ... we had a ... an apartment. And the ... the lady ... the lady, hum, and I used to know her name real well, too, owned a house, and in back of it was a two story building about the size of a two-car garage, two stories high.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And we first rented the upstairs when we ... when we went there, and it was alright, but it wasn't as nice as the downstairs. Downstairs had a living room and a bedroom and a bath ... and a ... kitchen and a bath, where the one upstairs had one room, and that was bedroom, living room, kitchen, the whole business.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. McConnaughy: And then one little bath over here on the corner. But (pause) we ... we liked it there and Mrs. Kress (sp?), uh, Kress were their name, and when we got married, why, Mrs. Kress had a nice big bouquet of flowers and a cake made for us, and oh, she was a great person. And she ... her family owned the big ole barn that was right out in back of there, and she had

old furniture in there, and it would be antiques today, but they were just old furniture in those days.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. McConnaughy: And maybe they had a leg busted on them or something ... why, she would get them fixed or fix them and ... and then she would sell them. Well, since I had worked in the furniture factory, and that was furniture, I had a knowledge of ... of gluing things together, and chairs and whatever, and so, she asked me if I knew anything about that. And I said, "I know a little bit, yeah." And she told me, said ... took me out in the barn, she showed me what she had. Well, in part of the barn was a mattress factory, and this guy, I can't remember his name of course, but he made mattresses for beds. And he would ... had a machine that blew the ... the stuffings into these bags. He would make a bag according to a certain size and certain weight, and then he would hook this nozzle into that bag and turn it on, and it would blow that one up and then blow all ... all full of this cotton stuff that he was putting in there from ... from ... it was just cotton, I guess, is what he was putting in there. And I can't remember his name, but he was ... he was a jolly, old guy. And Doe used to get a big kick out of him. She'd ... she'd go out in ... out in the barn where he worked and ... and give him a bad time, and ... but ... well, that was just one of the experiences. And ... and I repaired an awful lot of furniture stuff for her that ... then she later sold it ... something or other. And she had a daughter, Mildred Kress, and she was a school teacher, and she was ... she was a big joker. She (chuckles), we liked her, too, she was a nice gal. But we had a lot of ... lot of acquaintances outside of the Army. Frank Farmagis (sp?) and (pause) and ... what was his ... they were ... they were Sicilians from down in southern part of Texas, and Frank Farmagis was one, and Fred ... Fred was our ... our Supply Sergeant at Midland, and Fred got married and we got well acquainted with him. And then when we got married, that was over at Big Spring, November 1st, uh, so he and his wife and ... and this other

guy, I can't think of his name, they came down to the wedding. And we all went down to the hotel after that; nobody had any money to spend on anything, but we went down there anyway, and ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: ... but that was ... that was my ... our life there at Big Spring, and we liked Big Spring.

Ed Metzler: So, what was it like, you're from up here and Big Spring gets hotter than the devil during the summer, so how did you put up with the heat down there?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uhm, we had those ... those water vapor things.

Ed Metzler: Evaporative coolers.

Mr. McConnaughy: That was the cooling, yeah, and it worked, it worked pretty good. Now, I can think of one ... after Billy Jean was born, we got into a better, well, then by the way, too, her folks bought us a '36 Plymouth, four-door sedan from somebody here, and we got a ... that was another big story, got it down at Big Spring, so we had the car and then Doe could drive around in that thing. But on that apartment that we had, there was two families plus one bedroom that one of the ladies stayed in that, and ... but we had ... both apartments had this little trough that went across the window sill up here, and it had straw in it of some kind or other, and then that thing hung down, and over the inside, yeah, well, it hung down in the window. And you could put the window down and ... and close that off, but with it then you'd turn it on and it just sucked ... air in through that thing, and it would ... it would work, it would cool, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Hum! Now, food was rationed.

Mr. McConnaughy: Pardon?

Ed Metzler: I said food was rationed, and gasoline was rationed.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, it was.

Ed Metzler: And tires were rationed.

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, I tell you another ...

Ed Metzler: Tell me about that.

Mr. McConnaughy: I'll tell you another funny story about that. Uh, they had a park in Big Spring, uh, I'm sorry I can't remember the name of it, but it was a ... a park where you could drive your car through and ... and it was up in this mountain thing, area thing ... was up ... and it was a great place to take your girlfriend and drive around up there. But after ... after Doe came down and we got married ... on the road that goes up to this ... this drive through thing up there, uh, there was a ... next door to us was a ... a ranch that rented horses out ... people were driving it, but this building was an abandoned gas station at one time, and the building was about half as big as this room, and the sidewalk was just about as long as that wall is there, and we had ... like a window in that section that we could open up and we decided that we probably could make some money on ... on a little hotdog stand out there. And so, we ... we began this (unintelligible), and I would ... on my time I'd get off ... I'd get off, uh, from what I was doing, and I'd go out there and I remember one thing we did. We didn't have any water or electricity in this building and which I needed both because we were going to have root beer. And I had a guy that's got a ... had a root beer machine and ... or ... (unintelligible) that you put it in and rock it back and forth and it makes root beer, and so I got that root beer thing, and we were going to have root beer and hotdogs, that was going to be the menu. And so, we got it ... we got it ... going; I had to ... we remodeled that barn a little bit, and I had a ... a carpenter helping me, and he put a counter at ... the window was in the center and there was this counter on both sides, and people'd come up to that counter to get their hotdogs or ... or root beer and ... and though I'd have ... I'd have officers pulling up there and getting out and (chuckles) get ... buying root beer or hotdogs. And ... well, did a pretty good business, and we ... we only really had it for a short time 'cause I was married at that time, and I can't remember too many of the details, but I know I ... I sold that thing to the man that I was getting my water and electric from. I sold it to him, and he continued to run it like I was

running it with ... with the ... root beer and hotdogs. And ... and they also had a riding stable there, and there was a little boy; he was about maybe fourteen, fifteen years old, lived right across the street from where our hotdog stand was, and he would come over there quite a bit and ... and if I needed any work done, why, he'd do it, and maybe get a root beer for it.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. McConnaughy: But (slapping sound) he was a ... he was a nice boy, and he was born on a horse, and he could ride a horse upside down or backwards or any way you wanted to ride one. But he would ride one all the time, so he got me to where I was riding them, and he'd go over to the stables and get a horse for himself and one for me and bring it over to the ... to the drive-in and I'd get on mine and he and I'd take a ride off into the hills and around, down and back again. And it was ... that was fun! That was real, real interesting.

Ed Metzler: Now, did you hear much about how the war was going? What ... how did you get your information about how the wars overseas were going?

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, any time there was anything of importance, we had a ... a radio in our day room, and the day room had a couple of ping pong tables and a couple of pool tables, and that ... that ... any news like that would come into that ... to that ... uh, day room ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... on ... on that ... on that receiver there on that, just a radio. But our supply room was hooked to the back end of the day room. The C.O. was up here, the day room was here, and the supply room was here.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And so, anything that was ... well, of course, I wasn't there part of it; when the war broke out, I was at Randolph Field.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. McConnaughy: And when ... when Randolph Field ... Sunday morning ...

Ed Metzler: That's when you got the announcement from the President.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, came right over the ... right over the big speaker for the entire place.

Ed Metzler: What did people think about Roosevelt?

Mr. McConnaughy: I don't know; I don't remember.

Ed Metzler: What was your opinion?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh ...

Ed Metzler: Good President, your leader?

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, I ... I don't know. I had, uh, I had an opinion of him (chuckles). Uh, I guess it was ... I didn't have any bad opinion on him, of course.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: But I can't say I ... I had any ... any pros or cons.

Ed Metzler: One way or the other.

Mr. McConnaughy: Neither way, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, I approved ... I approved of him in my own mind. He wasn't a well man; he was ... he was sick the whole time he was in there. And he (chuckle), and he was good friends with the man from London.

Ed Metzler: Winston Churchill.

Mr. McConnaughy: Huh?

Ed Metzler: Winston Churchill.

Mr. McConnaughy: Was that his name?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: He was the ...

Ed Metzler: They were good buddies.

Mr. McConnaughy: Huh?

Ed Metzler: They were good buddies. He ... he and Winston Churchill.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah. Okay, they ... they, uh, and he was in ... he ... he liked ... he liked Winston Churchill. And so, he and ... he and (chuckles), you can't print this ... are you recording this? Well, we'd better leave this one out then.

Ed Metzler: It's up to you!

Mr. McConnaughy: Huh?

Ed Metzler: It's up to you.

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, it's an old ... it's an old tale ... story they tell about President Roosevelt and uh, what was his name?

Ed Metzler: Winston ...

Mr. McConnaughy: Winston Churchill. And Winston was invited to go to their summer place, so President Roosevelt and Eleanor took Winston Churchill up to their summer house. And one-night President Roosevelt happened to be up, and who's coming out of the owner's room but Winston Churchill, and President Roosevelt said, "Now, Winston, I'll have no more of that," Win ... Winston says, "Me, too!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), well, that was ... that was at Eleanor's expense, (unintelligible), I think.

Mr. McConnaughy: (Laughter), yeah.

Ed Metzler: Now, you had an automobile when you were in Big Spring.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, I did.

Ed Metzler: And how did you get gasoline for it because you had to have "A" tickets or whatever they called them.

Mr. McConnaughy: Okay well, we got them with ... down ... just ... oh well, you'd go down to ... well, let's go on that just a minute.

Ed Metzler: Alright.

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, there was a ... there was an office you'd go to and tell them what you were doing and what you needed and ... and that you needed so many stamps and this sort of thing for meat maybe or gasoline or ...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... whatever, but you'd tell them what you were going to do, and then they would register you and give you so much stuff. Well, when they registered my coupons for ... for hotdogs, I got ... I can't remember how many points it was, but it was up in the thousands. I had ... I had points that I could never in the world use up. And I gave a lot of them away. And as far as the car was concerned, I ... I never ... I never squinched anything on gas or that sort of thing in the car.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, (pause) I don't know. I ... I ... well, I ... I did have (unintelligible) into the post ... uh, garage for something one time and ...

Ed Metzler: Now, did ... I've heard about things called victory gardens where people raised vegetables during the war because they couldn't get vegetables; did you guys have a ...

Mr. McConnaughy: I didn't.

Ed Metzler: ... or were there any around?

Mr. McConnaughy: No. I didn't encounter any of them; there probably was some, but I didn't ... I didn't know anything about them.

Ed Metzler: Uhm. Did you have any interaction with the ... with the ... the people who were coming through and training to be bombardiers? I mean, the guys who were in training there, did you, I guess, they'd come up for supplies or did you have any interaction with them?

Mr. McConnaughy: No, no. Whatever they ... whatever they had coming ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... was on paper, and they could get ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... whatever they had to have. No, one thing, there was a lot of soldiers there that had wives and kids, and everything was done with stamps. And a lot of times there would be a lot of soldiers that were just being ... serious trouble because they couldn't do this or do that, they didn't have stamps to do it with. Well, I had enormous amount of stamps (chuckle); I ... I had at ... our ... our business was so good out there that long about Friday and Saturday we'd ... Friday and Saturday we'd be busy out there. Long about Friday we would start buying up hotdogs, and was a bakery right down where this ... at the exit of this place, there was a bakery right down there and they ... they made buns, and they had a crew at night that didn't do anything but make buns. And I would buy all the hotdogs in Big Spring. Now, that sounds crazy, but there was only about three or four stores where we could get those things and ... and

have the stamps to get them. I mean, they ... maybe have them, a lot of people, but the people didn't have stamps to get them. Well, I had more than enough stamps, but the funny part of that is, too, that when you're doing that with the government on these stamp things, for example, you get a check for so many ... I can't really remember what it was, but I used to have it 'cause it was like two thousand, seven hundred and some such thing ... points for meat, and these guys sell them and be hard up for points; well, I'd give them some points (chuckles), and go buy something to eat.

Ed Metzler: And why did you get so many points?

Mr. McConnaughy: I don't know. I have never been able to think even why they would do it, but they did, and I didn't argue with them.

Ed Metzler: No, no (laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: (Laughter), that's ... I took it 'cause I could buy ... well, they thought with ... with the drive-in, "Well, you're going to ... you're going to need a lot of hotdogs and you're going to need syrup and sugar and so forth for root beer," and there's where all ... I, you know, items that were rationed, and ... but I never had any trouble with it. And anybody that I knew always had a ... my ... my sister and my brother in law, uh, both smoked cigarettes. Well, after I had gone to Texas, my brother in law and sister sold their house and their son went ... and they went to California. So, then after Doe had married and Doe's folks had bought this car for us and, hey, we had it down in ... down in Big Spring, oh, we had a furlough coming so we decided to take our furlough, furlough and we drove the car to California. Well, (chuckle) we had to use second-hand tires on that thing and ... and oh, it wasn't ... it wasn't ... you shouldn't ever have made it out of the house ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. McConnaughy: ... without them. But we made it! And the ... the ... finally, these two tires that we got at a place in the desert were jeep ties off of a jeep, and they were those big, hard lumps.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, the knob, big knobby, military tires, yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: Right. And so he had ... he had two of them, and he said, "I can fit you with two of those." And I think they were like about, I don't know, I think I got them for stamps. But of course, I had a pocket full of stamps, and I had more stamps coming. Matter of fact, they ... uh, for a while they didn't know that I had gotten rid of that thing, and I got a couple of more checks in (chuckle). Well, it's a wonder they didn't catch me. But I gave people ... I paid a lot of that stuff off with stamps for my tires.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: Swap one for another. But we drove ... we drove out to California and visited my sister and my brother in law and my ... my nephew. And ... but we made it out there. Well, my mother and my step-dad was out there then, too. The ... the lake that's full of salt ... uh ...

Ed Metzler: The Great Salt Lake!

Mr. McConnaughy: Huh?

Ed Metzler: The Great Salt Lake.

Mr. McConnaughy: Is that ... that ... in that town ... whatever town that was there.

Ed Metzler: Salt Lake City, I think.

Mr. McConnaughy: Was it? Well, I was ... I was there waiting to go on ... 'cause I was going to go overseas.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And that's where I was when the war broke out, and ... or when the war was ... was done, and of course, everybody had time out to go to town or whatever they wanted to do. And I've always told this story. They had a ... in ... in that town they had a hospital for people that have had limbs shot off or didn't have them.

Ed Metzler: Amputees.

Mr. McConnaughy: Amputees and ... and those guys, well, these that we were looking at both all had one leg, and crutches. And the war was over and everybody was hooping and hollering and running like crazy and everybody was drinking and ... and uh, I saw and I think it was around six of these guys

with their crutches and one leg *running* down the sidewalk. Now, I'm not kidding you, Ed, they'd take one step up to this room, and you know, if they'd of ever slipped and fell, they (chuckle) roll for a week and they'd kill themselves!

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. McConnaughy: (Unintelligible) they were just running just as hard as they could run with one leg and a crutch and head over that and the next one, uh, it was ... and when the ... when the war broke out and we were in ... in ... uh, I was in a ... in a picture. Somehow or another where we were a sailor and I swapped hats; he took my hat and I had his sailor's cap. And in the news, the ... whatever that news was called, and I can't remember for sure, it was the Air Corps ... Air Corps news, uh, it showed a picture of this (unintelligible) of this soldier that had such a good time he didn't remember who he was, and that was ... that was me with my ... with my white cap on, and where the guy was that had my cap, I have no idea. But I ... I may still have that cap some place.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: (Chuckles), I'm not sure.

Ed Metzler: So, you went from Big Spring to Great Salt, Salt Lake City.

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, yes, I ... yes.

Ed Metzler: So, you got transferred then?

Mr. McConnaughy: And ... and that ... we had ... we had ... we had to go through that to have our health and all checked ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... before we went overseas. And I had a bad tooth, and he said, "You got to have that taken care of before you go." He says, "You be down here in the morning at seven o'clock," and I tell him, "I'm supposed to be over such and such a place." And he said, "You go after you get through there." And he said, "We're going to take that tooth out." I said, "Okay." So, I went over there next morning and he put three or four shots ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... of Novocain in and around that tooth.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And he said ... gave me a cigarette, and he says, "Go out in the deck out there, and when that feels like you got a tent post in your mouth, come back here and see me."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: And (chuckle) so, I went out there and in a little while, (unintelligible) I didn't know if I had my finger in mouth or a cigarette. So, I went in and I says ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: "I don't know it ... ," he says, "Good, sit down here." And he ... I opened my mouth, he got in there and he had a pair of pliers of some kind there; he (unintelligible) like that and out come that tooth.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. McConnaughy: And I didn't ... hurt, I didn't feel a thing 'cause it was dead, the whole thing was dead. And he says, "Well, that's ... you're all set!" He said, "You supposed to be over at this other place," and it was plum across the field; uh, he says, "You're suppose to be there at eight o'clock," and he says, "you can make it." And so, I did. And I ... I was ... a little later on in the day (chuckles), I was sore and bleeding and so forth, but I never had any trouble with it, you know? Well, finally after I got home, I had a ... a bridge, and that's this one here, and it's still ... still good; I still (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Still good after all these years!

Mr. McConnaughy: Still using it, yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: Doctor Bitman (sp?) was the Dentist.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And he was in Rockford Memorial Hospital doing rebuildings then, and uh ... he ...

Ed Metzler: So, is that ... so, it was after that that you went out to Salt Lake City?

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, it was after I left Big Spring I was in Salt Lake City, and then from Salt Lake City, I went to Portland, Oregon.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. McConnaughy: And they had, I can't tell you what outfit that was there. It was ... it was a ... a ... had a name (unintelligible) that ... we're there for ... for putting you with the crew and ... and sending them out; well, I don't know what they called them, I don't remember what it was.

Ed Metzler: But you were ... you thought you were getting ready to go overseas, huh?

Mr. McConnaughy: I was ready to go overseas, and I was in Supply, I was Supply Sergeant for somebody.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And so, when they kept ... what ... when they put the thing altogether, uh, then I was the Supply Sergeant with the rest of it, and ... and we loaded aboard a ... a boat, and we left ... we left after dark. They ... they ... they had that boat down in Willamette, was it Willamette?

Ed Metzler: Willamette, yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: And I think that ... that joined with the road, uh, what's the river that comes into ...

Ed Metzler: Columbia River.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... okay. This thing joined the Columbia then, and we went out overseas out through the Columbia River.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. McConnaughy: And ...

Ed Metzler: Now, what year was that, Bill?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, the war ended when ... 19 ...

Ed Metzler: In 1945.

Mr. McConnaughy: 1945, was it?

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, then that was in 1945.

Ed Metzler: So, the war wasn't over yet though when you went out?

Mr. McConnaughy: No, no, now, the war was ... the war *was* over.

Ed Metzler: It *was* over.

Mr. McConnaughy: Over ... before I went overseas. A matter of fact, the ... uh, it's big, or uh, where were we; what's the name of the little lake we were ... the ... ?

Ed Metzler: Salt Lake City.

Mr. McConnaughy: No, no.

Ed Metzler: Portland?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, the island we were on over by Japan. Uh ...

Ed Metzler: Okinawa?

Mr. McConnaughy: Okinawa.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: Uhm, and well, we were ... we were originally uh, in a B-29 base. We were ... we were assigned to a B-29 base.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And that was ... that was the one we were in ... on and that must have been, oh, Okinawa.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And the big ole ... the big ole tubs (chuckles), those ... I guess the planes weren't all they were talked to be; they were ... they were a lot of trouble. And one of them, well, Okinawa and Tinian are islands just close enough that you can look at and see them over there.

Ed Metzler: So, we're talking Saipan then. Saipan and Tinian are twin islands.

Mr. McConnaughy: Saipan.

Ed Metzler: So, it's Saipan you went to?

Mr. McConnaughy: Saipan, I ... I wouldn't guarantee it.

Ed Metzler: But that's okay, you ... but you know Tinian was right there.

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, that was a little island that was next over there, and there was ... there was water between the two. Our planes took off at the end of the runway and then all over Tinian when they were ... and uhm, we had a plane that didn't make it, something went haywire. And the planes were

bad, bad, bad for (pause) shocks, so what do they call that stuff? Uh, it's got a name where ... where electricians ... electrical will spark something else, and that's what happened to this plane. Just as it was taking off, why, this thing backfired some how or other, and that big plane went right into the water.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. McConnaughy: And I ... that was ... that was before we got there. And I talked to some other guy and he said, "Oh," he said, "the ... the fuselage ... fuselage of the plane floated around in the water there for quite a while there," he said.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. McConnaughy: He never did say whether it was, uh, salvaged or whether it went down or what ... was it. But we used to hunt sea shells down there; it was one of our big jobs. And you'd go down onshore and we had an officer in ... in there, and well when it came time to assign people duty on the island ... when we was checked in in this ... this place then ... and we were to have been another squadron, a (unintelligible) B-29 squadron, but when it ... when it came to the ... whatever we had to do, we ... we would ... I'm trying to think of something else and I missed it. Uh, hum! Some of our ... some of our duties and I ...

Ed Metzler: So, you were still a Supply Sergeant though, correct?

Mr. McConnaughy: No, I wasn't. Uhm, we had a choice when we landed on this island. I had a choice of Supply Sergeant or the ... the uh, Sergeant of the Mess Hall or Room Orderly, so I said, "Well, I'll take Room Orderly." So, that's what I did when I was the whole time I (chuckles) on ... on ... on Big Springs, uh, not Big Springs, but that island. I was ... I was a Room Orderly. After all the guys got up and got out of there, I would go eat and I'd come back and I'd clean the barracks all out and ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... and (unintelligible), and then I'd go do whatever I wanted to. Well, we used to hunt a lot of sea shells, and the one Captain ... he had about as much to do as I did.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. McConnaughy: And he'd say, "Want are you going to do?" And I said, "I suppose look for sea shells." He says, "Good!" He said, "I'll meet you down there." And we had glass boxes, glass bottom boxes that we could look through, you know?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And I had a ... an air belt that I brought off of the boat with me, and it was one of those that the guys used if they had to jump in the water from the boat, and you'd just squeeze this thing, and it had the CO₂, you know, was in it and blow it up right now.

Ed Metzler: It'd fill up, yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: And ... but I didn't have the CO₂ (unintelligible), I'd just get the thing and blow it up by my mouth, and it would be great, and it would float me around all over. And I'm looking down at the box and the ... at the sea shells and ... and ... but that ... that's about all I did. And then they transferred me to the bigger island south of it. And I can't ... I can't remember what that was. It wasn't ... it was a much bigger island. They had, I think, two or three outfits on that island.

Ed Metzler: Hum!

Mr. McConnaughy: And I know I had written a letter to Sergeant ... what the heck was his name? I think it was ... I don't remember what his name was, darn it! Uh, you should have done this last year; I was much better.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: (Chuckles), uh but (pause) at any rate, I worked at the ... well, didn't have much to do except over at ... when we got over to that other island, it's a bigger island, they had a Quartermaster outfit there, so since I was in Supply, why, I knew Quartermaster stuff. Well, I did except when they get into some of the air ... airplane parts and all this stuff, and what

to do with it, and what'd they do with it. I was no good at it, and ... but that was ... that was my job until there was a boat that I was going to take and ... look at that birdie (seeing a bird through a window), now it's a ... it's a cardinal. Now, maybe he'll come back.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I know cardinals.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah. Did you see that ... see that bird house there? It has a glass back that windows on the back of that thing.

Ed Metzler: I see that.

Mr. McConnaughy: And ... but it's made for, uh, oh, little birds. What are we doing ... watch that ... that ...

Ed Metzler: So, when did you leave the Army Air Corps then? It was after the war was over.

Mr. McConnaughy: Oh yeah. And it was the last ... about the last day of (pause) 19 ... was that '44?

Ed Metzler: Well, war was over in '45, and you ...

Mr. McConnaughy: '45.

Ed Metzler: ... and you went into the South Pacific ...

Mr. McConnaughy: Okay.

Ed Metzler: ... after the war was over, so it must have been '46.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, it ... it was '45 then because we were ... we were discharged uhm, on the 30th or 31st. We're ... the last day of the month of '45 then maybe it is. I'd have to look it up (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, right at the end of the year then?

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, oh yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. So, how did you get back to the States? On a ship?

Mr. McConnaughy: Came back. Oh, that was something else, too. We left ... we left that island, and I can't remember for sure just exactly what you call that island, but we left that island on a ... uhm, (pause) let's see. How did they call them anyway? Uh, landing craft.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, something or other.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, it might have been a LS ...

Mr. McConnaughy: An AT ...

Ed Metzler: ... LST or something like that.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: And that's what we ... that's what we were on, an LST. And you know what they are?

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah, big, long thing ...

Mr. McConnaughy: With flaps.

Ed Metzler: ... with a big flap in front, yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: That's right. Do ... were you on one?

Ed Metzler: No.

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, we rode on one. Well, they had sent other troops on those all the way from where we were into the States. And they came in from that trip and that must have been two weeks to get there 'cause that thing only do eight or nine miles an hour or something ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm (chuckles).

Mr. McConnaughy: ... I forget. And uh, so they ... they cut it out. Just after we got on our boat, they got a ... reports come in and they had to ... they take our boat to Hawaii, so they took us to Hawaii and put us off in Hawaii, and at the camp there and we were about two weeks. And then they put us on uh, a ship of some kind or another that took us ...

Ed Metzler: Took you on to the States.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... into the States, yeah. And ...

Ed Metzler: So, what'd you do, come into San Francisco or ...

Mr. McConnaughy: We came in, no, we came into along down south of L.A.

Ed Metzler: San Diego probably.

Mr. McConnaughy: Probably where it was.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: And we came in and we marched from where we got in ... not for (unintelligible) we had to walk a ways to our transportation, and that was

a ... it was a train car. And they were going to take us to our camp or post wherever ... where it was, and it was east of there (throat clearing). And it was quite a haul. I forget how long it took us, but it was ... it was ... it was late at ... late at night when we did get in. And everybody that had that came in from the Army from overseas, they had a big dinner of steak and all this stuff.

Ed Metzler: Oh really?!

Mr. McConnaughy: And so, that's what we had, steaks and milk, a ... a gallon or a quart bottle of milk sitting in front of every one of us.

Ed Metzler: Is that right (laughter)?!

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah. And ...

Ed Metzler: Well, I guess you didn't get that when you were out in the Pacific, huh?

Mr. McConnaughy: No, not very much. Uh, and then the orange deal, uh, (chuckle) this ... this train we were on stopped to let cars go past. And on some the expressways there'd be three ... uh, four ... four lanes full of cars. So, we'd stop and not ... let these cars go back and forth until they got certain amount done, then they would cut them off and then we could go again on the train. But this one time they stopped and we were right in the middle of an orange grove, so a bunch of us, and I was one of them, jumped off and run over and got oranges. Well, I had on a pair of flight coveralls and it had a strap around the bottom. Well, I got over there in the oranges and I just stuffed oranges in my ... in my uniform and I had ... well, I had too many. I should have stopped before I got so many.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. McConnaughy: But I ... I managed to get back with the, a lot of them anyway. I didn't maybe make all of them, but we had a lot of good oranges and we ate them. But ... then we went in and like I say, we had a bottle of milk and a steak and ... and our food, and when we got all through then they took us over to a barracks and we all went to bed. And my brother was coming in from England, and he came in the same day I did, but we couldn't begin to find one another, didn't even try. But he came through

from England or from the east ... eastern United States over to one of the outlets where he was ... he was discharged from there. Well, I had to go back to Rockford to get discharged, so they put us on a train then and we ... we came back to Rockford and ...

Ed Metzler: So, I guess your wife met you when you came ashore on the west coast?

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, she ... she, there's that cardinal again. That's a crazy thing. You don't need to look. You probably wouldn't see it unless you'd just be happen to be looking that way. But for years now, well, I'll say for the last two years, these cardinals have been going like this on our (unintelligible) up and down, up and down, up and down. Well, we ... somebody bought that thing and gave it to me, and so we took it down in the winter, but we put it up ...

Ed Metzler: I think we'll ... we'll end it, so I'm going to start this thing up again.

Mr. McConnaughy: Alright, good.

Ed Metzler: There, she's going again. So, your wife met you when you came back from overseas?

Mr. McConnaughy: She was living with her folks.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And their folks just had a (unintelligible) house and it was, you know, living room and ... and well, the dining room, and living room and kitchen ...

Ed Metzler: And where was this, up here?

Mr. McConnaughy: ... and bedroom. Yeah, in Rockford.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. McConnaughy: And over here on Long Drive. And (pause) so Dad had ... her dad had remodeled the upstairs, the attic. Had two windows, well three windows; one on each side and one over on ... and one on the back or the front, and it wasn't bad at all. And then Dad had a ... a big fan up in that one window blowing out, so at night the night air was being sucked in ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... these windows, and it was nice. And then Billy Jean had her bed up there and we ... we ... we were up there and ... and we were there for, oh, maybe ... maybe a month. I don't know how long, not very long.

Ed Metzler: Okay. But you ... but this after you had mustered out of the ...

Mr. McConnaughy: Pardon?

Ed Metzler: This is after you left the military, right?

Mr. McConnaughy: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. McConnaughy: I was discharged.

Ed Metzler: Okay, well good! Uh, any other things about World War II that you'd like to talk about while I got you on camera, so to speak?

Mr. McConnaughy: Uh, (pause) oh, I don't know, when I ... when we ...

Ed Metzler: You really moved around a lot, didn't you, during those three or four years?

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, yeah. I started out in Chicago, that's where I was inducted into ... yeah, in Chicago.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. McConnaughy: And then we went ... uh ...

Ed Metzler: To Arkansas.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, but I think we went to some place up here and had an issue of clothes.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. McConnaughy: And stopped because they had a barracks base by then.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: And ...

Ed Metzler: So, then you were in Randolph, and then you were in Midland and you were in Big Springs, then you were in Salt Lake City, then Portland ...

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... then overseas.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah. Now, see, when we were at Portland, that was ... we were in the post we were at as out there by uh, Willamette River someplace; I don't know where it was.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. McConnaughy: But (pause) we ... we didn't, well we ... we didn't have anything to ... to do there; we had all been processed and ... and we were in ... like my ... had one bad tooth and that was yanked out.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. McConnaughy: So, there wasn't anything for us to do but just ... just goof off, and that's just about all we did. And then the war ... the war ended, and well, the war was ended when we got over there.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, did you have a big celebration when the war ended? Did you guys?

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, and ... and let's see, I was down in ... in Randolph Field ...

Ed Metzler: That's when the war started.

Mr. McConnaughy: When the war started; yeah, it was and where ... when the war ended, yeah, I was up in that ... I was up in that field at ... up at ...

Ed Metzler: In ... in Salt Lake City or Portland?

Mr. McConnaughy: Salt Lake City.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: But I was there long enough that it was, you know, they ... they were having these big, big parades and stuff. And then in Big, uh, Portland, I'm sure that was it that I think ... where they had this ... these amputees with one leg and ... and crutches.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. McConnaughy: And man, those guys would run down the street with that thing; they had to be going ten feet with a step.

Ed Metzler: Uhm. Okay, well I'm ... I'm going to end it now. I ... you took me on a real tour of ... of the United States and into the South Pacific for that four years you were in.

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, I'm sorry it wasn't a year or so ago 'cause I was ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. McConnaughy: ... far more alert than, you know, I ... I've had this thing going now ... this ... ninety-five.

Ed Metzler: I know!

Mr. McConnaughy: And that's ... that's a lot of years.

Ed Metzler: That sure is! I'm impressed. I know that.

Mr. McConnaughy: Yeah, and I'm not ... I'm not a third of the ... the man I used to be.

Ed Metzler: Well, that's alright. Well, thank you for spending the time with me, Bill.

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, Ed, it was awful nice for you to do this for me.

Ed Metzler: And I'll ...

Mr. McConnaughy: You going to see Mike yet today?

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah! I'm headed right back there; I'll be seeing him in about thirty minutes.

Mr. McConnaughy: Did ... did you go my route?

Ed Metzler: I ... I took the route that ... that Patty Werkel (sp?) told me to take.

Mr. McConnaughy: Oh, did you?

Ed Metzler: So ...

Mr. McConnaughy: Well, when you leave here, you go here and ...

Ed Metzler: So, I'm going to go ahead and end this.

Mr. William James "Bill" McConnaughy

Transcribed by: K. Matras

Houston, TX

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