

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

**Nimitz Education and Research Center
Fredericksburg, Texas**

An Interview With

LeRoy P. Brunner

Richardson, Texas

June 16, 2016

Meteorologist

Retired 1977

Colonel

Mr. Misenhimer:

My name is Richard Misenhimer, today is June 16, 2016. I am interviewing Mr. LeRoy P. Brunner by telephone. His phone number is 972-783-7867. His address is 4152 Binley Drive, Richardson, Texas, 75082. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Nimitz Education and Research Center, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

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

Mr. Brunner:

Okay, well like I said I spent very little time in World War II. Just you know like dipping your big toe in it, but that's a....

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well actually I should say thank you for your service to our country for all your military service. Not just World War II but all of it.

Mr. Brunner:

Okay.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now the first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the museum to make sure this is okay with you.

"Agreement Read"

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, it's fine.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now the next thing I'd like to do is get an alternative contact. We find out that sometimes several years down the road try to get back in contact with a veteran he's moved. So do you

have a son or a daughter or someone that we could contact if we needed to, to find you?

Mr. Brunner:

I can give you my son. He's LeRoy Brunner, Jr. and his number is 214-691-2812, 6620 Hialeah and that's in Dallas. And let me look up his zip code. 75214.

Mr. Misenhimer:

6620 Hialeah. Hopefully we'll never need it, but you never know.

Mr. Brunner:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What is your birthdate?

Mr. Brunner:

The 7th, October, '26.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where were you born?

Mr. Brunner:

LaGrange, Texas.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Brunner:

I had one brother who was a Catholic priest, he's deceased now. And then I had one sister who lives in, she still lives in Brazoria, Texas which is right on the coast there. (Editor's note: She died July 12, 2016 at the age of 83 in Brazoria, Texas.)

Mr. Misenhimer:

Is she younger or older than you?

Mr. Brunner:

They're both younger.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what were your mother's and father's first names?

Mr. Brunner:

Paul Henry and Amelia Molly.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you grew up during the depression, how did the depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, I don't remember the depression that much. We were poor to begin with and I guess we ended up poor so it didn't make a hell of a lot of difference (*laughter*). But my father was in the retail grocery, he owned, eventually we moved to a little town of Weimar, Texas which is like twenty miles away. And he opened up a retail grocery store, which he kept until he died. And that would have been in 1930. I guess the bad depression really didn't hit till '36, '37, that's when you know the '30s is the one that you read, or the one in '29 is the one that you read about. But what really hurt I guess was the one in '36, '37 when the commodity market went to hell.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did y'all have a garden or anything like that?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, oh yeah, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any chickens or anything like that?

Mr. Brunner:

We had chickens, we had a garden, chickens, normally you know small town, everybody had a dog and had chickens, had a garden, some people had horses. We didn't have a horse.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you had plenty to eat then?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, so it's a typical small town.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now on December 7, '41 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, I was in school in San Antonio. I was in, let's see I graduated in '39 from elementary school. We only had eleven years at that time. So the seventh grade, so it'd have been '39, so '41 I guess I was a sophomore in high school. And I was in San Antonio living there then.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did you hear about it?

Mr. Brunner:

Actually we were listening to the radio in the afternoon in San Antonio. And we were listening to the New York Symphony Orchestra and they broke in and told us about the attack.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And when you heard it how did you think that would affect you?

Mr. Brunner:

Well, really you know it's a..., what was I, fifteen at the time. You know it's an earth shaking event, but you know I don't recall any a....

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, you'd have been fifteen at the time.

Mr. Brunner:

I don't recall any big, you know any big problems with it or anything, so. After the event we discussed it, it was terrible and we didn't have kind words for the Japanese. But other than that, you know the next day Roosevelt came on the air and said we're going to war and that, you know and so. I don't think we realized then you know what was going on, especially I don't think most people realized it and especially fourteen, fifteen year old kids didn't.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now where did you go to high school?

Mr. Brunner:

I went to St. John's High School in San Antonio.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Is that a Catholic school, what kind is that?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah a Catholic school, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you graduate from there?

Mr. Brunner:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what year did you graduate?

Mr. Brunner:

So let's see, that would have been (*counting aloud*), so I would have graduated from there in '43.

Mr. Misenhimer:

'43, okay.

Mr. Brunner:

Let's see, no (*counting aloud*). So I would have graduated in the spring of '43.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what did you do when you graduated from high school?

Mr. Brunner:

Then I went to college. So I spent a, I went to St. Mary's, there at St. Mary's University in San Antonio.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you study there?

Mr. Brunner:

Well I studied accounting and you know general college subjects to get ready. But I had an interest in accounting. So I studied accounting and then I was there three years before I got into the service.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So when did you actually enter the service, what day and month?

Mr. Brunner:

It would have been September, I think September 9th, '45.

Mr. Misenhimer:

After the war was over?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, the fighting was over but the, I think World War II for some reason it extended I think until all the treaties were signed which was sometime in January '46. I don't know when the war ended.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well the fighting ended in Europe on May the 8th of '45.

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah and then it ended in Japan in August.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, August the 15th of '45 was when the fighting stopped.

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah and then the hostilities were over but the war still continued or designation of the war continued I think until January or....

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well September 2nd of '45 they had the signing on the *Missouri*, which is the actual surrender of the Japanese. But they did not actually call the war over until around 1950 or '51.

Mr. Brunner:

Oh, is it that late?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah.

Mr. Brunner:

Oh wow. Well anyway, all I know is the day we got to Fort Sam they gave us actually two medals, which one was the World War II....

Mr. Misenhimer:

Victory Medal?

Mr. Brunner:

Victory Medal and the other one was the, what do you call it, National Defense? National Defense Medal. Yeah, so National Defense Service Medal. And I thought it was a hell of a deal, seems golly just all you do is walk in and get medals, great outfit.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you went in on September the 9th and where did you go for your basic training?

Mr. Brunner:

Basic training was at Lackland at ..., Fort Sam was I guess a staging area, we stayed there for a while. And they moved us to Lackland and from Lackland, I stayed in Lackland and had some administrative job down on the flight line. And then I went from there to OCS, which was also at Lackland. And I got out of OCS in '47. This would have been, well December 20, '47. And from there I went to, they sent me to radar school at Biloxi. And I completed radar school and then they sent me to, I guess weather people were in shortage so they sent me to weather school in Illinois at Chanute. And the only thing I remember about that experience is I'd never seen a barn made out of bricks before (*laughter*). That really (*laughter*) impressed me, it really did coming from Texas.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Let me back up a bit here. Now you were in the Army Air Corps, right?

Mr. Brunner:

Right, right. So I started with the Army, then the Army Air Corps, they came into existence, I forget what year.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well the Air Corps came into existence back in the '30s.

Mr. Brunner:

Not the Air Corps, but the Air Force.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well in 1947 is when they actually....

Mr. Brunner:

Okay, so that would have been it, yeah. So I think we changed uniforms then from uh..., we had to buy blue uniforms.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I think it's July of '47, I'm not sure when it was, summer of '47 is when they passed the law that became the United States Air Force rather than the Army Air Corps.

Mr. Brunner:

Ah okay. Yeah I remember it changed, oh I know what it was, our uniforms, we got in December so we still had the old Army pink and green type uniforms. And then we had to throw those away and change of course to the blue uniforms.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now let me back up and ask you some questions. You went to basic training in Lackland, what all did you do in basic training?

Mr. Brunner:

I don't know, learned to march and shoot a gun and we went camping. And you know just whatever you do in basic training, you just you know they take somebody off the farm and they teach him to walk straight and that's about it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About how long was your basic training?

Mr. Brunner:

I'm thinking four months. It seemed like a long time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That sounds about right.

Mr. Brunner:

Seems like we were there forever.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were your drill instructors pretty tough on you?

Mr. Brunner:

Not really. I didn't particularly think that they were. I know one of the instructors said they ended up with, he was trying to qualify for college so I spent a lot of time tutoring for a..., he had trouble with math and what not, so we spent a lot of time tutoring him. Seems I never have had any bad instructors I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

After basic training is that when you went to OCS?

Mr. Brunner:

From basic training I went to an administrative job on the flight line and then from there I applied and got into OCS. And OCS was like six months I guess. And I got out of there, well in December.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You said December '47 earlier, is that correct?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, December '47, that would have been, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And you were commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant?

Mr. Brunner:

2nd Lieutenant. And then from that, my assignment was school in Biloxi. That's where the radar school was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Tell me about that radar school.

Mr. Brunner:

Electronic school I guess in Biloxi.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Electronics? Okay.

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, a course in electronics and I guess, well basic electronics and I spent a year there doing that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

One year, okay.

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was that school?

Mr. Brunner:

Good, good. It was challenging because I never had physics or chemistry. And the math was okay but it took a lot of work to get through there, it was really, really an effort. And then I guess they recruited, I left there, graduated from there and then waiting for an assignment so they sent me to weather school up in Illinois. That was another year.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what did you do in the weather school, what all did you study there?

Mr. Brunner:

Well, just studied synoptic meteorology, dynamic meteorology, and just uh.... You have to remember this is right after the war and meteorology is a science. This is say '50, meteorology as a science is like thirty years old. So that we're really right on the cutting edge of you know support the aircraft and that type of thing, we're highly dependent on meteorologist because aircraft then didn't have the capability, weather wise as they have today. So that there was a lot of effort for meteorologist, not only forecasting the weather, but insuring that you know that pilots could only, well clearing aircraft and making sure that they get back safely, that type of

thing. Cause in those early years we lost a lot of people to weather factors. And I don't know if meteorology helped or we just were able to technologically eliminate all of the weather factors that affected aircraft. But it's a different environment today than it was then. So they sent us there for a year and then finally I went on active duty doing work for the Air Force, after all these years. And they sent me up to Nome, Alaska. And that's a good place to get experience in weather.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About when did you go to Alaska, about what date?

Mr. Brunner:

Nome, Alaska I spent a year in Alaska so this would have been, let's see I should backtrack (*counting years aloud*). So that would have been like in '49 I guess, yeah end of the year, December '49 up to Nome. And then a year there. They finally closed the base at Nome. And the individual, we had two weather officers, I and Ike Israel. And Ike wanted to go home but he had to have a replacement so he wrote a real glowing report and said I could easily replace him. So Ike was able to get home and so then I took over the weather station. So then we closed that or gave it to the city in the process of getting out of there. So then I left there, went back to Anchorage and about this time the Korean War was starting to flare up. And the only way we could get troops into Korea was to fly, like you could fly to Hawaii and then across or you could take the great northern route out of Seattle into Anchorage. But they couldn't make it from Anchorage to Tokyo. They had to refuel in between. So they sent us out to Shemya which is say second last island on the Aleutian chain. And at one time there had been forty thousand troops on Shemya during World War II, because the Japanese were on the island of Attu. Attu is the last island in the chain. So we cleared aircraft, you know bringing them into Shemya out of Anchorage and forwarding and pushing them on into Tokyo. And they're loaded and we had, Canadians flew aircraft out of Seattle, we had commercial airlines with Air Force lines, you know it was just a.... The island is what, five miles long and a mile wide. And I guess we had an operation every twenty minutes going through there. I was there for I guess eight months

before I came back to the States.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long were you in Alaska total?

Mr. Brunner:

Alaska total, I was just under two years. So then coming back to the States, I was sent to what was Gary Air Force Base, which was, there we taught Army pilots to fly these light aircraft. The Air Force was teaching the Army at that time and so we ran the weather support down at Gary Air Force Base. And we stayed there until we went to London in '52. So we came back, let's see, I mean I'm sorry went to London in '54. So we came back, I came back in '51 and then in '54 I went to London, went to Sculthorpe which is in England, later on we went to London. Went to Sculthorpe and in between '51 and '54 went to officer ..., gee I don't even know what they call it. They have an officer, oh what do they call it? Squadron Officers School.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What kind?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, it's the initial I guess Air Force education one. Which was squadron officers, then they had, God there's another one that, and then finally the Air War College. So they had three altogether. I went to Squadron Officer's School which broke up. So went '51 to San Marcos, Squadron Officer School and '54 to Sculthorpe. And at Sculthorpe we had a Bomb Wing there plus a weather center. At that time there was, you know Russia had just I think was developing it's a, was doing testing of its atomic and hydrogen bombs. And we were at that time flying reconnaissance routes up along the Bering Sea or northern Russia in order to and taking air samples. Both out of Alaska and out of England of air samples of atomic debris and in order to determine you know what the Russians were up to. So that move from Sculthorpe down to London, down to Middlesex County and which is a..., I can't think what the air base is now. It wasn't an air base, it was just a bunch of warehouses that the Air Force took over, Ruislip, South Ruislip. And then, so our job there was to clear and provide weather for our flights,

reconnaissance flights over international waters over northern Russia. And I stayed there till '58. And from '58 I was transferred to Georgia into, let's see, Marietta, Dobbins Air Force Base where Lockheed builds aircraft. It's one of the, like a co-resident of Dobbins Air Force Base, with Lockheed. And at that time we were worried about attacks on to the continental United States. So each, particularly outfits down the East Coast, there were divisions, Air Defense Defense Divisions. And I think we had the 32nd Air Defense Division down at Marietta at Dobbins. So our job there was to provide, you know standby support in case it was ever needed. In case anyone wanted to sneak attack into the United States we had fighters on alert. And ready to pounce on anyone coming in. So I left there to go to Florida State University and I got a master's degree in meteorology from Florida State. From Florida State I was transferred out to Sandia in New Mexico. And Sandia was the atomic, well Sandia Corporation was there, Sandia Base in Kirtland. So we also did reconnaissance out of Kirtland going up into Alaska. And they would take the northern route then fly back to Kirtland. And the beauty of that was that when they came back on, they would leave Monday and come back Friday, and on Friday they'd be loaded down with King Crab legs, which is always a treat. Anyway that's another aside. So we went to, in Sandia in meteorology our office was responsible for the Kirtland Complex which was an atomic, I guess oriented research facility for the Air Force. And then Sandia which was the operational research facility. And they conducted tests out at Tonopah in Nevada. So our job was to provide support, compute such things as trajectories of any escape of atomic, you know from the blast. Most of the blasts were underground but there were you know cracks in the underground so we had to determine safe zones or is it safe to shoot without lighting up everybody in Las Vegas and that type of thing. So we stayed there for awhile and from there went up, well one of the interesting things, we went back to Alaska. At that time there was a, you remember there was a program to be able to detect, could you detect an underground or a nuclear blast anywhere in the world if it occurred? And we had signed I think an atomic treaty with Russia and we wanted to make sure that we would be able to not only hope they abide by the treaty but verify that they did. So we ran a world-wide test, Sandia was responsible for that.

So they needed complete, we went to the island of Amchitka and before going to Shemya, I didn't tell you this but I spent three months on the island of Amchitka, had to set up a radar balloon tracking facility there before I went to Shemya. So I ended up as the weather support for what they called Operation Longshot. And the problem with Operation Longshot is that we had to have a calm day in order for the blast to go off and the blast could only go off at noon, Amchitka time. So we had listening sites all over the world who were going to, you know determine whether or not they detected the blast. So to me those were two insurmountable (*laughter*) things to happen. I thought we'd be there forever. Anyway the blast had to go off at noon on a calm wind and a clear day. And if that ever occurred on Shemya, which has an average wind like thirty miles an hour from all directions, I thought would never occur. But lo and behold the situation, I guess four days later we were going to get a..., and sure enough we got a clear day and the um..., we had to evacuate everyone off the island except a few people. And so they all evacuated and noon came about and we had a two mile an hour wind from the north. And the bomb was to the north of us so we couldn't shoot and I was never so frustrated in all my life. And I said well this is it, it'll never happen again. And guess what? Three days later we had another situation and we're going to have, right at noon and this time it went off perfectly. It was an interesting experience. We were like, I guess we were, Amchitka is real long, Amchitka must be like thirty, forty miles long. And the bomb was five miles away and we were just south of the bomb. And it was buried five miles and they'd been digging that for a year I guess. And I've never seen, you know how a wave rolls in to the, you know off the ocean onto the beach, that's the way the ground went up. In fact you went up about four inches and then went down. And this was a one kiloton bomb buried five miles underground. And they heard it around the world, so everybody was happy and we went back to, at the time went back to Albuquerque, so really enjoyed it. And from Albuquerque then I went to the War College in Alabama. And ended up at the, and from the War College, course the Vietnam War was going strong now. And from the War College ended up at the, went from there to Saigon. And in Saigon we ran a weather center down there. And the weather center worked with the...,

primarily with the CIA I guess and their operations in South Vietnam and then also with Westmoreland. Westmoreland was the, was the uh

Mr. Misenhimer:

General commander, he was in command, right.

Mr. Brunner:

Well he was responsible for the whole theater I guess. And then Momeyer was responsible for the Air Force part. So we had a big problem there they could only have clear days. I mean it had to be absolutely clear to be able to bomb Hanoi. So we would go, you know for days at a time and then you know the clearing periods then would come up like just, you know big old clearing then it would be gone. So we had to catch those clearings to be able to get bombs, get our fighters up into Hanoi. And I guess the policy at that time was not to inflict any damage on non-military targets. And also precaution for, against being able to see, they were flying into a zone and it's almost as if you're going down the highway and telephone poles are coming at you. That's what they were shooting, they were shooting missiles at these fighters and they were about the size of telephone poles. And you had to be able to see them to evade them. And that helps a lot, they didn't evade all of them, so. It was very, very difficult to, you know the difficult period there for trying to get the right kind of weather so that we could go and bomb Hanoi. But that was the year everybody went home. And from there then I ended up back in San Antonio, by then I'd made Colonel and ended up with the 24th Weather Squadron. And from the 24th Weather Squadron I was transferred up to Omaha. And there's still fingernail marks on 35 all the way from San Antonio to Omaha with my family, you know. They really didn't really want to go to Omaha, they fought it all the way. But we enjoyed it you know and Nebraska was nice, very nice, very nice people, very nice country. So we stayed there for five years. In Omaha I had two jobs, I was with the 3rd Wing which was responsible for all of the, I forgot what do you call it, the weather support for SAC world-wide. And at that time we had Looking Glass which was in the air 24 hours a day, we had what three shifts of aircraft manned by a General who took over and this became the command post in case the underground command post was dislodged.

So had Looking Glass, then we had services provided for all of SAC, we also ran reconnaissance out of Omaha, so mostly reconnaissance and Looking Glass there. So I stayed in that job, weather, well I guess I was there for, in Omaha for what, five years, forever. And then an opportunity came up, SAC was going to create a command, or what they called a directorate, they broke all of their people, the Director of Operation, Director of Personnel, Director of Materiel, and on and on and on. And they created a directorate that did automation. So I went over and took over the data automation which was responsible for all of the programmers and others, you know provided commun... , well not communication support because they were still part of the Air Force communication system, but provided data automation services to the Strategic Air Command. There was a vacancy then and we talked, so I stayed there till '76. And in '76 there was, well even '75, in '75 there was a vacancy at Gunter Air Force Base. Gunter Air Force Base was responsible for the data automation center. And they're responsible for all of the support to Air Force personnel, Air Force hospitals, all the big automation that went in to support hospitals and commissaries and paying the troops and whatever materiel, were all generated down and out of the Air Force Design Center. So I stayed there until I retired in '77. And then well we moved down to, somebody offered me a job at Rockwell International in the big automation business so I came down to Dallas. I was going to stay here for maybe a couple of years and work my way down to south Texas but we've been here ever since. And that's about it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what was your rank when you retired?

Mr. Brunner:

Colonel.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Fullbird?

Mr. Brunner:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when did you get married?

Mr. Brunner:

I got married in 1951 when I came back from Alaska. I'd met my wife when I graduated from OCS, she was from San Antonio. And I'd met her before because I'd worked with her sister at the flight operations at Lackland. So I asked her for a date and she said she was engaged to one of the pilots there who happened to be from New York. And she married him and moved up to New York. So then I said well do you have any others at home? And she said, "Yeah, I've got a sister." So then I met her sister and so we got married. And we married in '51 and we have four children. Two live in Austin, one is married to a pediatrician. One is married to a Frenchman who worked for Bechtel and Company, she met him in Houston and they are retired now. And then I have a son here in Dallas who is in the mortgage and real estate business. Then I have a daughter who lives in Reston, Virginia which is just out of Washington. And she works for, well both she and her husband worked for, I guess they're contractors to USAID but in the medical field. And she went to Texas and when she left Texas she knew French cause she took a trip to France and ended up teaching school in Africa in Rabat. And of course Rabat is either Arab or French, so she became quite proficient in French. So her job now, she's in charge of the medical, US medical support to the Anglo Franco countries, all of the former French colonies, which generally go across Central Africa, Senegal, what Rwanda, which was Belgian but really French now. So she handles that part of the world. And that's it I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you were being transferred to all these places over the years, could your family go with you?

Mr. Brunner:

They did not go to Vietnam, but they transferred with me everywhere else. My son was born in England and my daughter was born at Ruislip. When we lived at Sculthorpe, Paul was born and then when we moved down from London, Mary Anna was born. And then I had another

daughter who was born in Marietta, Georgia.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now let me go back and ask you some questions about early on. Now you went in the service in September of '45, right.

Mr. Brunner:

Huh-huh.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Let's see, entered service, yes September 9th of '45, the war was actually over. Actually you didn't go into the service till after the surrender of Japan in August.

Mr. Brunner:

Exactly, right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now over the years what did you think of the medics around you?

Mr. Brunner:

The medics?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes sir.

Mr. Brunner:

Fine, I was very fortunate, I never needed one. But I had no problem, my wife had several operations, one in Omaha and then she had one in San Antonio. Then I've been with the VA since. And I have no problem with the medics, I think they did a great job.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now of all your assignments which was your favorite?

Mr. Brunner:

I think England. England we were just there at such a great time. It was after the war, I don't know, I just enjoyed England. For example we went, we toured the continent. I had an old Dodge and we put it on a ferry boat and went over to Holland and then went on down, drove to

Naples. And the feelings, for example, you're familiar with the Vatican aren't you?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes sir.

Mr. Brunner:

And you know the steps, there's a big courtyard in the Vatican and there's a big fountain in the middle and then you come up to the steps that lead up to St. Peter's. Well I was going through a slide the other day and I've got a picture of me parked on the steps, you know in front of St. Peter's. And walking up in and going into the church, nobody else around.

(Ending of side 1 of tape.)

(Beginning side 2 of tape.)

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, so go ahead.

Mr. Brunner:

So if you've ever been to the Spanish steps, there's hundreds of people there sitting all the time, mostly tourists. And so I've got a picture of just my daughter sitting there by herself *(laughter)*, so. And that's what, you know you go into London and well we also had a Morris Minor so you'd go into London and there was a stage show you wanted to see. And at the time *My Fair Lady* was out and *Oklahoma*, and so they'd hit London and you'd want to go see them. So we'd drive down to the west end and I remember one time we parked in front of the theater. So it was just a different environment than what it, today you can't even drive in that area, so I mean it's *(laughter)*. So I really enjoyed it and the people were great, I just enjoyed the people. I was in the country, Sculthorpe is very rural out in the country and they loved us and we loved them, so. I don't know, I think England was the best part. I spent some time in Tokyo, these were on TDYs. And Tokyo is nice but it was always crowded and I never did care for it that much. But London and Sculthorpe I thought were just great places to be.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was your least favorite place?

Mr. Brunner:

Least favorite place? Well I can't even say Saigon, I can't even..., I don't know, I just don't have a good feeling for Alaska. I would have to classify that as one. And I don't know why, I enjoyed Alaska and if I had any sense I would have, at that time it was a territory and you could go down to the courthouse and they gave you 160 acres of land. And I wouldn't even do that, I mean it's, I just saw no future in Alaska for some reason, I don't know why. It would probably be, probably ranked near the bottom. And another one that would, I didn't care for the town of Montgomery, we spent a lot of time at Maxwell Air Force Base which is in Montgomery. But I didn't care for, just the town of Montgomery I just didn't care for.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever get into any combat?

Mr. Brunner:

In Saigon?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Or anywhere or anytime at all? Did you ever have any combat?

Mr. Brunner:

Well we were there for uh, you mean pick up a rifle and go and shoot people?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well or anything, an airplane or anyway combat.

Mr. Brunner:

Well I know we were, I don't know how you define combat. It's a, we were there during TET, I was working the night of Chinese New Year's eve, which is when they attacked. I guess the closest I ever came to combat, we had a bakery, we lived downtown, there wasn't enough housing at Tan Son Nuit for everybody. So we lived downtown and of course we were being bombed every night with missiles coming from somewhere. The missile would go up and shoot somebody and then the helicopter would go and shoot them, you know and whatnot. And sometimes you could sit there and watch that then. But we had a bakery across the street from

where we lived and a bomb hit the bakery one night. I guess that's the closest I've ever come to being in combat. And then of course then we got to, well I guess we had to get to Tan Son Nuit to get to work and so we had to fight our way out there. But that's a euphemism we, you know we just drove very carefully out to the base. But anyway, no, I guess I didn't get into any and I wasn't looking for any.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what various outfits were you with?

Mr. Brunner:

One was the MAC, which was the, it was the Air Weather Service which was part of the, part of MAC and I forget what MAC is. It was responsible for transport of a, it handled a big transport air group. Part of Air Weather Service, up until I moved over to the Strategic Air Command, until I moved over to the Design Center (Data Systems Design Center). So essentially except for schooling, I was assigned to three different commands.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get out of the service with any souvenirs?

Mr. Brunner:

Such as?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything, any kind of a weapon or anything else?

Mr. Brunner:

No, uh-uh.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Any kind of souvenir of any kind?

Mr. Brunner:

Uh-uh. Nah, I just uh, no I didn't take anything out.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Brunner:

No, uh-uh. USO yeah, but not Red Cross?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever cross the equator?

Mr. Brunner:

Yes, I went down to Sydney and crossed the equator then.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now this was as part of your military or just as a vacation?

Mr. Brunner:

Actually it was part of a, when we were in Vietnam you had a choice, you had a week off. And a lot of people went to Hawaii but we couldn't connect, we had four children at the time and it was a problem. So you couldn't go to Hawaii so you had a choice, you couldn't go home so you'd go to Hawaii but that was out. So you could go to Australia in what they called R & R, so I went down to Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you crossed the equator did they have any kind of a ceremony?

Mr. Brunner:

Not really, no. We just, said you just crossed the equator and that was it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you use your G.I. Bill for anything?

Mr. Brunner:

Uh, yes. I went and completed additional graduate courses, with the G.I. Bill I got a management degree from the University of Nebraska.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Brunner:

No, not particularly. Soon becomes apparent that there's nobody in charge, but other than that

uh..... You know it's a, didn't have any particular problem. I joined a couple of organizations here, what used to be TROA, which used to be Retired Officers Association. And they changed it now to Military Officers Association I guess. So they have chapters in all the states, then they have state council, so I ran a chapter and then I ran the state of Texas council. And I worked for Rockwell in the system's design business, computer oriented. So other than that, no I didn't have any problem, no. Air Force did not have access to steaks like the Army did. And we had, sunrise/sunset tables are very important for Army operations because they would begin their, you know, what first flight. They begin their whatever maneuvers they were on, their beginning. There's a first flight which is like before sunrise and then there's a first first light before even that one. I think one is an hour before sunrise and one is like thirty minutes before sunrise. So I had a Sergeant that was able to exchange sunrise/sunset tables which are you know available anywhere for steaks from the Army. So you have to look at that guy and wonder you know, geez what a great guy, what a salesman to be able to sell sunrise/sunset tables for steaks (*laughter*).

Mr. Misenhimer:

That was in Vietnam you say?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, that was in Saigon.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well is there anything else you've thought of about your time in the service?

Mr. Brunner:

During the service I met a lot of people and excellent people, good people, not so good people, and people that grumbled a lot and people that, you know didn't want to be in the service and complained bitterly and what not. And I realized over the years that you know I'd have a couple of them in my outfit and then they'd get out and then you'd see them later and they were still grumbling, they you know they were going to get out of the service and make something of themselves. And they never did. And I found out that the people that came in the service you know did, services got all kind of jobs, menial, exotic, you know. You know it's just all sorts of

jobs. And the ones that came in and did them well, you know left the service and went out and did well in the world. And that's my impression over the years.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Have you had any reunions of any of your outfits you were with?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah, we had one that, we have one every two years, the Air Weather Service. The Air Weather Service was kind of a unique organization. We had a fixed number of people and after awhile you knew everyone, you know they transferred you to different places. But there was always one or two people that you knew from previous organizations. So, the ones that we still meet with the ones, people that we met in London. And we just had a reunion in San Antonio just what, a couple of months ago. And they're getting older and each reunion is refreshing. Each individual won the war on his own merit, I mean he was the one that contributed most to the winning of the war (*laughter*). And the stories get better every two years. You know you listen to that, you say, "Well I don't quite remember it that way, but it sure is an interesting story."

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what ribbons and medals did you get?

Mr. Brunner:

Let's see I got the Air Force Commendation Medal, and then I have a Meritorious Service Medal, and I have a Bronze Service Medal and then I had, well I guess the highest one I got was the Air Force Commendation.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well Roy, that's all the questions I have unless you've thought of anything else.

Mr. Brunner:

Well thank you very much. Like I said World War II I just got in by virtue of, I guess administrative (*laughter*), you know the war, you're not really contributing anything to it, I contributed nothing to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well you spent 32 years in the service then, right?

Mr. Brunner:

Yeah and so I spent 32 years after it all. I wasn't going to go back to picking cotton.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Right, alright.

(End of Interview)

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