

**ADMIRAL NIMITZ NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF THE PACIFIC WAR
Fredericksburg, Texas**

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

1st LT. THOMAS H. BORUFF

U. S. AIR FORCE

Oral Interview

September 2002

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Mr. Bryk: This is Clarence Bryk. Today is September 28, 2002. I am interviewing Mr. Thomas Boruff. He will give us some good information about his experiences in the Pacific War.

Welcome Mr. Boruff. First of all tell us when and where you were born?

Mr. Boruff: My name is Thomas H. Boruff. Most people call me "Jack". This is a nickname that has stuck with me all my life. I was born in Fort Worth, Texas on April 22, 1918. My father was Tom Boruff and my mother was Helen Small Boruff. When I was about four years old, my Dad left, taking me with him. I stayed with my Dad until I was approximately 12 years old. My mother had received custody of me and she found me and took me with her. After a few months, however, she let me go back to my Dad.

I graduated from Chico High School in Wise County Texas, in 1935. I tried to continue with my education at various colleges but had no money. Little by little, I worked and continued school. After about four years I returned home and stayed with my Dad for a few months because he was ill.

I decided I wanted to learn to be a pilot. I didn't have the necessary two years college required to get into the Air Force Training, but I thought I could pass the equivalency tests. On October 30, I volunteered and joined the Air Force. I was a private yard bird. I was sent to Kelly Field and arrived there on November 1, 1940. I stayed there a short period of time, as I filled out applications to take the equivalency tests. It never materialized and I was shipped out to Chanute Field, Rantol, Illinois, where I took a course in Aircraft Mechanics. I was then transferred to New Orleans Army Air Base. I was at this airbase on December 7th, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

An interesting thing to me was that there was a group of us playing poker the night before the air raid. It was 6 a.m. in the morning and someone came running in saying "the Japs are bombing Pearl Harbor." We thought he was making this up. And we said "get lost, get lost." He left and a few minutes later he came back and said "no, I am not kidding, the Japs are bombing Pearl Harbor."

So we had some treatments for people who started rumors, but after his treatment was completed, we turn on the radio and found that what he had said was true. At that time, I knew that if I didn't get off the base immediately, I would never make it, so I jumped into my best clothes and caught the bus to downtown New Orleans. About 10 p.m., the MP's found me and took me back to the base.

Before coming into the service, I had worked as a carpenter, so after about two weeks, they put me in charge of a bunch of men and ordered to box up all equipment of the 30th Heavy Bomb Group, which was the group I was attached to all of the time. We finished getting all the materials together and on the trains. We left but we did not know where we were going. We wound up at Muroc Lake, California. Muroc Lake is now Edwards Air Force Base. Back then it was a big dry lake, 7 miles across and just as flat as the top of a desk. There was only one barracks there and it was supposed to be used as the control tower. There was no place to bathe, shave or anything else. We put up tents and were issued 5-gallon cans to get water in.

I stayed there for a couple of months before being transferred to March Field. March Field was opposite to Muroc at that time. Muroc was very primitive. March Field was probably the best equipped base in the United States.

While I was at March Field, I was approved for cadet training. They had changed the rules and I did not have to take the equivalency test. The requirements for cadet training had been lowered and we were making planes faster than we were training pilots. Training requirements were reduced to nine months, instead of two years and to high school graduate instead two years college....so I went into training as an aviation cadet. It took about three months for an opening.

I completed my cadet training and received my wings as a pilot upon graduating from Roswell Air Force Base in Roswell, New Mexico. I was in the Class of '43-E. I was immediately sent to Randolph Field in San Antonio. There I entered Instructor's School. They didn't have an Instructor's School at Roswell, when I completed by training at Randolph, they did not re-assign me to Roswell. Instead they sent me to Marfa Army Air Base, which was close to Alpine. I spent several years at that base. For a long time I did not know why my name was removed from all the transfer missions I volunteered for, but eventually I discovered the reason. There were certain requirements for control tower duty and I have forgotten most of them. One was a minimum of 1,000 hours flying time. There were only three of us on the base that had enough hours to take control tower duty in teaching the kids to fly safely. Every time we volunteered for duty

somewhere else, our names would be removed from the list. Eventually I was transferred to Bergstrom Field in Austin, Texas. There I trained in twin engine advanced transport planes and glider piloting.

After Bergstrom, I went to a half dozen different places in the United States. I was no longer attached to the 30th Heavy Bomb Group. Eventually, I was attached to the 10th Air Force. I had some bad knees and I accidentally injured one of my knees. So I spent some time in the hospital and while I was there, my outfit went overseas. When I got out and was able to travel, I was ordered to rejoin my outfit in the 10th Air Force. No one seemed to know exactly where they were and eventually I was ordered to join them in Karachi, India. We were sent to Fort Totten in New York, and we stayed there two or three days before boarding a plane for Karachi. We landed in Bermuda and were supposed to land at Marrakech in Africa, but because of a severe sandstorm at Marrakech, we were sent to Casablanca. We spent one night in Casablanca and from there flew to Cairo, Egypt, where we spent the night and the following morning we flew to Abadan, Iran, re-fueled and took off for Karachi, India. When we arrived, we found that the 10th Air Force was in Kunming, China. Kunming was a quiet city, but it was strictly Chinese and we still didn't find the 10th Air Force.

Mr. Bryk: What kind of airplane were you flying in?

Mr. Boruff: I have forgotten what it was. It was a bigger ship than I was used to. It may have been a C-118, a four-engine plane, but I have forgotten. I did get to handle the controls briefly because the pilot let me take over the controls as I had never flown that plane before. I have always piloted C 46's and C 47's.

Mr. Bryk: What kind of conditions were you living in?

Mr. Boruff: We were quartered in some sort of barracks. The Japanese had been there before us. The war was over by this time. I went all the way around the world during World War II and never heard a shot fired in anger. I spent six years in the service and traveled around the world. I was one of those fortunate ones who didn't see actual combat, but it was not meant to be that way because, like every other patriotic young man, I wanted to go where the action was. .

Because of the deal we had at Marfa Air Field, I didn't get overseas, since VE Day occurred when I was still in the states VJ Day occurred shortly after we left the states. While I was at Kunming, the war was over. The U.S. forces were giving all their supplies to the Chinese at that time.

That made it easy to check out a vehicle. While there, we discovered a soldier could check out a vehicle by signing any name and the Chinese would let you have the vehicle. I went in and checked out a weapons carrier by signing a fictitious name. I didn't sign my name. I put another name on the form. One of my friends found out and did the same thing. I don't remember how we got gas. I just know it wasn't a problem. I think a person could just drive in and fill up as long as he was driving the vehicle. We could also check out arms and weapons at the military supply base there. Sometimes, we would checkout weapons and practice with them.

Mr. Bryk: What was the idea of having you there at this time? Do you think they just lost you?

Mr. Boruff: I guess they lost a few of us. Several times after my training at Bergstrom Field, I was transferred to other bases and they did not know why I was sent there. One of the bases I was ordered to was at Alliance, Nebraska. When we arrived there the base was closed. There were only two guys there. They were supposed to baby sit the base temporarily. Five of us were sent there and we stayed probably a couple of weeks until we received orders to proceed to another base.

Mr. Bryk: Was the war over then?

Mr. Boruff: Oh, no.

Mr. Bryk: Where did these orders come from?

Mr. Boruff: I have no idea. I would simply be stationed on a base and orders would come to whoever was in charge there for me to be shipped to another base. I went to two bases where they didn't know what to do with me. One was at Topeka, Kansas. Only pilots who had been overseas were supposed to be shipped to that base for training in B29's. B29's were relatively new and I didn't know anything about a B29, much less fly one of them. I stayed at that base about three weeks. The only requirement we had was to check the bulletin board daily. During that period of time there was never a notice posted on the bulletin board. A friend of mine from Texas and I actually went back to Texas and visited his family. We simply left a phone number where we could be reached immediately if a message for us was posted.

Mr. Bryk: Nobody knew where you were?

Mr. Boruff: Right, right.

Mr. Bryk: You had no orderly room or squadron...

Mr. Boruff: We simply had to check the bulletin board every day. We were told they would get hold of us when we were needed. We could move around all we wanted to. We went home and

came back. No one knew about it. Then we finally got orders. A guy came down to our quarters, located us and shipped us off to another base. Any how, I finally ended up at Alliance, Nebraska. From Alliance, I was shipped back to Kansas and then to New York City. We stayed at an old fort on Long Island called Fort Totten. I went into New York City one day and one night. I bought some material for my wife at Saks Fifth Avenue and shipped it to her. We stayed there for two days and then we were notified we were leaving. They put us on these big transport planes and away we went. We landed in Bermuda and stayed there one night. We proceeded on to Marrakech where they were having a big sandstorm and we were advised to proceed to Casablanca. I did get to go into town in Casablanca that night. We went to the office of the commanding officer to ask for a pass into town. Permission was granted but for only one night. He warned us that conditions were not good in town and that we would have someone assigned to stay with us at all times. They had these big Sengalese black men that were over six feet tall and we had to have one assigned to each of us. He told us our guard would go with us and watch anything we did.

Mr. Bryk: What were your impressions of Casablanca? What did it look like and smell like?

Mr. Boruff: Well, to tell the truth, I don't remember that much about it. There were these little cells that sold things and several brothels and the girls would holler at you as we went by. We just sort of visited and there were two of the black men that were with us and they followed us where ever we went.

We thought we would be there two or three days, but the next morning at 9 a.m., we were given orders to get back on the airplanes. We went on toward Cairo. I had trouble for a long time recognizing where Tripolitania was. I'm not all that positive yet. Actually there was another Tripoli off the coast of Israel. Tripolitania, I believe, was a city now in Lybia. We stopped there, then we flew on to Cairo. We spent the night in Cairo. I wanted to see the pyramids, but the closest I go to them was when we were flying in and out of Cairo

Mr. Bryk: Could you recognize the Sphinx and all that?

Mr. Boruff: We weren't that close but we could see the big pyramids from the air.

We left there the next day after we landed and flew to Abadan, Iran. We didn't know how long we would stay there, but we stayed three or four hours. It was very hot there. It must have been 120 degrees there. We flew out of Abadan and continued on to Karachi, India. Of course, when we arrived in Karachi, we were assigned to a base. I spent at least a good month in Karachi.

Mr. Bryk: The war was over at that time?

Mr. Boruff: It was still on.

Mr. Bryk: What kind of maintenance facilities did they have in these remote areas? Could you actually fix a plane there?

Mr. Boruff: Most of the places we stopped were equipped. We didn't see enough of the equipment because we didn't stay there long enough to get a pass to go into town. We didn't go anywhere. Most places, we stayed right while we were waiting for the plane to take off again. At Abadan, Iran, there was this little villa. We stayed there. I don't think there were over thirty or forty of us on that plane. We all stayed in that little villa at the airport until time to take off.

Mr. Bryk: What did you eat?

Mr. Boruff: I don't know. Whatever they had, I guess. . Then we flew to Karachi. As far as Karachi is concerned, it was pretty well divided. The British had been in control of Karachi for a long time. Whenever the American soldiers got there, the British didn't want the Americans dating their daughters and wives.

Mr. Bryk: They had families there.

Mr. Boruff: Yes.

There was a big boulevard that runs right down through the middle of Karachi and the British only let the American soldiers go on one side of the boulevard. The American soldiers were not allowed in the British area.

From Karachi we eventually went on to Calcutta. I don't remember when, but somewhere about that time the Japanese surrendered and the war was over. We were only in Calcutta for a very short time. From there we flew on to Kunming, China.

Mr. Bryk: What were your impressions of Calcutta when you were there?

Mr. Boruff: It looked like a city. We were only there a few days and I don't remember actually going into town but one time. We went to a bar in a large hotel. At some time we talked about the actions of soldiers from other countries and some of the undesirable things they did. We had a few of those individuals in our service too. I remember in Calcutta, when we went into a bar one of the guys in the group hit an Indian who was holding the door, knocking him down and for no apparent reason. There were a few isolated instances like this.

Anyhow, I stayed at Kunming a little while (several weeks). Some things I remember better than others there. In Kunming, most of the city had very narrow streets. When walking

down the streets at night with no lights, you could feel the walls of the buildings on either side and sense the presence of people you could not see.

Mr. Bryk: Was there any danger to you? How did they feel about Americans?

Mr. Boruff: I never knew of anyone getting hurt. They had a black market there that thrived. They sold cigarettes and things like that.

Mr. Bryk: Did they seem to be starving? Or were they getting along all right?

Mr. Boruff: China was very cruel. There was hunger in China but the Americans did not come very close to it. We had basic rations. We ate. Most of the guys did not like Spam. Personally, I liked Spam and I ate the dried eggs pretty good. From Kunming we flew on to Shanghai.

Shanghai was a large city. We were among the first Americans to get there. We knew we were welcome when we reached Shanghai.

You could walk into a bar there and you could not pay for a drink. They were so glad to see us that they were like that for about two weeks. After a couple of weeks, the fleet hit. They had been at sea several months, and had their pockets full of money and were ready to go. You could get on an elevator with a sailor and it was not unusual for the sailor to tip the elevator operator five or ten dollars to take him to his floor. I stayed there quite a long time. I met some very nice people in Shanghai.

Mr. Bryk: Did you have a job of any kind?

Mr. Boruff: I was still flying.

Mr. Bryk: What were you flying in?

Mr. Boruff: C-46's. I only made about four flights the whole time. I flew over the hump one time and I made two flights flying Chinese soldiers out of Chichiyang. They were behind what had been the Communist lines. They were getting them out before they were lost.

Mr. Bryk: Was that really going on at that time? Could you see the difference between the Communists? Were they fighting each other?

Mr. Boruff: Not where we were. When we moved out the Commies were moving in. There were many Chinese Nationalist soldiers for us to fly out. Several of our planes were sent there to fly these soldiers out. A friend of mine crash landed there at Chichiyang.

At the end of the runway was a little hill. It wasn't really all that much. This guy, who had played sax for Benny Goodman, was taking off. There were about 30 or 40 Chinese soldiers and 3 crew members onboard plus considerable ammunition. Before taking off, the pilot always

ran his engines up to determine if they were at full power. I believe at 1500 rpm's they were supposed to pull so many inches of mercury while sitting at the end of the runway waiting to take off. They really should not have attempted takeoff, but it was said that they had dates in Shanghai and they decided to risk it. When they went over the top of the small hill at the end of the runway, they almost made it. They hit the top of the hill and just glanced off and crashed on the other side of the hill. All personnel were killed except the pilot. I visited with him after the crash and he said that when he recovered consciousness he was still buckled in his seat and gasoline was pouring out of the ruptured tanks. Then his hands and legs were seriously burned. He tried to crawl out and finally realized his seat belt was still fastened. He released it and crawled out of the plane and started running. He got about 30 to 40 yards away and fell into a deep ravine. He said he thought he had killed himself when he hit the bottom of the ravine.

Such was not the case. Then he heard the mortar shells that were being carried in the plane exploding from the heat. He decided to go back and see if he could get anybody out. The shells were exploding so furiously that he turned and ran back and again fell into the ravine. He was seriously burned and hurt, but he survived. I visited him in the hospital in Shanghai just before boarding the baby flattop that brought a lot of us back to the states. I never got in touch with him again.

Mr. Bryk: Were C-47's pretty reliable?

Mr. Boruff: Oh, C-47's were great. The earlier C-46's were not. They had two major faults. If something went wrong with the electrical system there was a problem with the controls and props. Then when they got the hydromatic controls, everything was all right.

They also had trouble with the gas tanks leaking. They had seams in the gas tanks perpendicular to the wings. so when the wing would flex, it would break those seams and allow them to leak. For a long time when you flew a C-46, you would check the bottom of the wings for drops of gasoline. I never personally found a leak but I was told it did occur several times. Principally, we flew C-46's and C-47's. Those C-47's were the gems of the transport planes at that time even though they did not have the capacity of the C-46's. I think the B-17 engines were larger than the ones on our planes. I am pretty sure they were Pratt and Whitney but I can't remember what horsepower they were.

I came in from one of those flights and landed about 3 a.m. in the morning. My name was on the bulletin board to report to them immediately. I thought it was a family emergency so I

woke up the CO and found that I had well over 100 points and you were supposed to be sent back to the states when you accumulated 100 points. Actually, I had over 100 points when I was sent overseas.

Mr. Bryk: That was not bad news to get to go home, was it?

Mr. Boruff: Well, in a way it was to me. I was being moved around so much, my paychecks had never caught up with me and I was three or four months behind in my pay. Therefore I didn't have much money to spend while I was in Shanghai and there were a few things I wanted to buy. When I was told I was being sent home, they sent me to the harbor and I was placed aboard the USS Kadashan Bay, which was a small aircraft carrier. I thought we were leaving right away but we just sat there for a week. I had a little money, and if I had been allowed to leave the ship, I would have gone back to buy a few things that I had seen. As it was, I was not allowed to go ashore again.

We left China and about 18 days later we arrived in Hawaii. We were given freedom to go into Honolulu that night. The part we went to was full of bars and soldiers and everyone was partying and having a good time. The next morning we left Hawaii and proceeded to Long Beach, California.

Mr. Bryk: What kind of sleeping quarters did you have?

Mr. Boruff: There were cots and they were three deep. The guy on top had very little room from the ceiling. We had over 1200 people on the ship. There was a basketball court on the deck for recreation.

This was my first experience with Navy beans for breakfast. We had lots of Navy beans on the way back from China.

Mr. Bryk: That must have been pretty bad later on in the day with all those beans.

Mr. Boruff: Well, it was something to eat and we didn't object too much. I had often heard that the Navy served beans for breakfast. Most of us on the boat were pilots and co-pilots. We arrived in Los Angeles New Year's Eve Night.

I had previously written to some friends who had returned to the states and they had mentioned that there were bands to greet them. Not so with us. There were only some buses and instead of taking us to the barracks, they took us to a large theater in Los Angeles. We went in saw a show and were notified we had 30 minutes to decide if we wanted to go back to Japan for two years occupation duty or get out. Under those circumstances, I knew I would not stay in the

service and most of the men aboard felt the same way. We were not even allowed to call home before making that decision. I chose to get out and so did 1,199 others.

Mr. Bryk: Were you married at the time?

Mr. Boruff: Yes. I was not allowed to call home before making that decision. One guy chose to stay in and the following day he called his wife and discovered she was in the hospital. He went back and talked them into tearing up his papers as he had no other source of income. He stayed in.

Mr. Bryk: You came home back to....

Mr. Boruff: They sent us back to Kelly Field. I was actually discharged from Kelly Field . I got my final papers about three months later.

Mr. Bryk: And where did you live after that?

Mr. Boruff: We moved to Dallas. My wife's family lived in Jacksboro and that is where she was. I went there and stayed a few weeks. Then we moved to Dallas. My Dad lived in the little town of Chico. He was in very bad health. After I arrived in Dallas, I worked as a carpenter.

Mr. Bryk: You had a lot of work then.

Mr. Boruff: The problem wasn't the work, it was getting the materials. I actually started to do contract work, but unless you had some sort of in with the lumber yards, you could not get the materials to work with.

Mr. Bryk: When you think back on that five years in the service, what do you think of first?

Mr. Boruff: I think the service is what you make it when you go in. If you go in and thinking this is a hell of a place and I won't have anything to do with it, it is a hell of a place. But if you go in with the intention of doing your job and obeying regulations, it is a pretty good place to be.

Mr. Bryk: What rank did you get up to?

Mr. Boruff: I was up for Captain when I came back from overseas. I had gone from yardbird to first Lieutenant at that time and was up for captain. I figured if I stayed in, I would probably make Colonel or Lt. Colonel by the time I retired. Actually, the last bars I wore were the 1st Lieutenant bars. .

Mr. Bryk: I entered the service in 1961. Your era of people were just starting to retire at that time. I met a lot of people in their last couple of years. I had some good friends were C-47 pilots.

Mr. Boruff: When I was in Shanghai and I went into town it was usually with one of my good friends at that time. One was a very large man. He was a pilot even though he was 6'6" tall. One night we went out to a bar. It was the night the fleet hit town. We were sitting in a large booth in

this bar when the sailors arrived. They evidently did not like Air Force men very much and they would make remarks like "Sorry SOB's as they passed our booth. Finally, my big friend remarked "Jack, I think the next time one of these bandy legged little so and so's come by, I'll just find out what makes him tick." About that time one of the sailors was passing and he heard what was said. He stepped up to our booth and said, "I heard that remark, Lieutenant, now get up". My friend started to get up. Most of him had been hidden under the booth and when he finally got up he was about a head taller than the sailor. The sailor took a good look and said "and I bet you could do it too." We couldn't buy a drink the rest of the evening. The sailors kept us well supplied. I think they got a kick out of their buddy challenging such a big man. These are things that happened to me or that I observed, most of which had nothing to do with military operations.

Mr. Bryk: Did you lose some friends who went into combat?

Mr. Boruff: When I first got into cadet training and had my pre-flight instructions, I wanted to go into training to become a fighter pilot. There was a school for fighter pilots somewhere in Arizona at that time. I was assigned to twin-engine advanced and ordered Roswell, New Mexico for training.

This was about the time the Battle of Britain was going on and we were really needing pilots and planes. Of a bunch of guys from my pre-flight fighter school that were assigned to fighter pilot school, we heard that less than 10% made it. At that time we were just beginning to get some really good fighter planes. Before that we were flying anything we could get. The P-40's were about the best we had and of course, we heard about Tex Hill and Chennault, and their Flying Tigers.

I had heard about them long before this, of course. I always thought Chennault and his Flying Tigers were about the greatest heroes we had. I never met him and had no idea who he was. It was hard not to be aware of his success with the Flying Tigers. Those guys were flying the old P-40 aircraft which probably originated sometime in the 20's or 30's. They were all out of date and weren't that good to begin with but they whipped the hell out of the Japanese.

Mr. Bryk: I know Boyington was with them. They must have been the original Barn stormers.

Mr. Boruff: One of the things that made them so successful was the story they took advantage of every situation. If the Japanese had attacked these Chinese people and actually won the battle, they would return to their own base and find the Flying Tigers waiting for them. Then needed fuel

and would be coming home to land and Chennault's Tigers would attack and almost always accomplish decisive victories.

Mr. Bryk: They were having sort of a victory celebration.

Mr. Boruff: At times it was true. I never met General Stilwell, but I heard several stories about Vinegar Joe. That was his nickname. At one time, it was said they called him and said one of our pilots had been shot down near a Japanese camp, several miles into the jungle. He was ordered to rescue the pilot before the Japs found him. It was said that Stilwell's men went through 20 miles of jungle and rescued the pilot.

Mr. Bryk: Did you read the Yank paper?

Mr. Boruff: Back when I was in the service, yes.

Mr. Bryk: Were you frightened a lot, or were you just a young guy full of vinegar yourself. What did you think about your safety?

Mr. Boruff: That didn't bother me then and that doesn't bother me now. I am pretty much of a realist and if something happens, I try to take care of it.

Mr. Bryk: You look great! What do you do to look so good?

Mr. Boruff: When I was in the service, I was probably one of the strongest young men for my size. I worked hard all my life and had a few things that I believed in. My Dad was only 5'7" and he had some principles that a lot of people would not agree with now. He told me to always be courteous and considerate of other people, to respect their rights and expect them to respect mine. If they didn't, knock the hell out of them till they do.

Mr. Bryk: Did you find that most of the people you dealt with in the military had the same principles and you had a lot in common?

Mr. Boruff: Oh, most of the time. Some of the commanding officers did not spend enough time finding out what was happening to their men. I know that things happened that should have never happened.

Our food at the New Orleans Air Base was terrible. I know when I was there, one of the GI's, one time scooped up a handful of stuff and took it into the CO's office and dumped it on his desk and told him "that is what your men are eating out there." He didn't get into trouble. If it had been me, I probably would have been executed. Actually the food improved. Nevertheless, this is what I meant by sometimes. The CO was probably a very good man but he was just so

busy with other things he was not aware of the circumstances. Since the officers had a separate mess, it could easily have happened that way.

Mr. Bryk: Was there a big difference between the living conditions of the officers and the enlisted?

Mr. Boruff: Quite a bit of difference. When I went through basic training at Bakersfield, California, we were ordered off the terrain but were not escorted to our barracks. They marched us down to the barber shops and all of us received a haircut before we went anywhere. They trimmed it down very short. After the haircut, they took us to a big beautiful mess hall. When we entered, there was this big fat man in a white cook's uniform in charge. He welcomed us and told us that he received a dollar a day with which to feed us. He said that he couldn't find enough good food to buy to spend all that money. He also said that anytime we went on a flight line at night, we need not steal anything to eat. Food was kept out all night for the benefit of those who were night flying. When your flying was completed, a trip to the mess hall would furnish you with cold milk and sandwiches. He also said that if any of us had a favorite recipe from our mother or girl friend we should write for a copy of the recipe and he would guarantee we would have it while we were there. He was not even Army. His name was Pop Cavanaugh and everyone loved him.

Mr. Bryk: Pretty good food.

Mr. Boruff: While there we had the best food in the country. And, hard to believe, he saved enough money from our rations to build that new mess hall.

Mr. Bryk: That was more than he needed.

Mr. Boruff: Right. Privates received 21 cents a day at that time. I don't know what the officers' food ration was, but it was more than ours. We had absolutely good food. At night, there were big refrigerated carts loaded with lunch meats and cold milk and you could go there, even at midnight or after and serve yourself. Nowhere else in the service did we find this to be true.

The first time that we went through the chow line there, they had frozen strawberries. You helped your own plate and one of the kids just ahead of me didn't take anything but strawberries. Old Pop Cavanaugh, who was standing at the end of the line said, "Son, go back and get a meal. You can have all the strawberries you want."

Mr. Bryk: How did they treat you in town?

Mr. Boruff: Most places, good. There were a few that were bad, sometimes with signs that read “soldiers and dogs stay off the grass.” Those were scarce. Probably, in most cases, the soldiers had done things to create animosity.

I know in New Orleans, we were playing poker one night. The next morning, quite early, the game was still going on and a guy came downstairs and told us the Japanese were bombing Pearl Harbor. As told before, we did discover that this was true. I decided to try to get into town before passes were canceled and visits into town prohibited. I did catch the bus and spent all day in town before the MP’s returned me to the base. That was the end of any kind of leave.

Mr. Bryk: What would you like to say to someone who reads this Oral History 50 years from now?

Mr. Boruff: The thing that impressed me more than anything else about the time was the tremendous Affirmative Action given by the American people with reference to the war. There were men, women and kids volunteering and going off to war, but even more impressive was the effort made by the citizens to do more than their share in working and manufacturing arms and supplies to support our country. I am an American and I have never been more proud to be an American than I was during those times. President Roosevelt remarked in one of his speeches, that we had to produce at least ten P-38’s each month. Actually, within a very short time our elderly, our wives and our kids were completing hundreds of planes each month. In Los Angeles at that time the law stated that all bars must be closed by 2:00 a.m. They soon added another law that allowed some bars to open at 2:00 a.m. so that some recreational facilities would be available for those who worked the night and early morning shifts. The tremendous increase in production by the efforts of the average American really had a tremendous influence on our winning the war.

Mr. Bryk: Thank you so much for giving us your recollections and advice. People will read this someday and will remember you. We all thank you for what you did because you are part of the “greatest generation” as Tom Brokaw says, we thank you.

Transcribed by
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January 2004