

U. S. ARMY AIR CORPS

VETERAN: OMIE KINDON CALLAWAY
HIGHEST RANK/GRADE: TECH SERGEANT
INTERVIEWED BY: TODD COX

Omie Callaway was driving a truck when he heard that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. His reaction was one of astonishment. Callaway was drafted into the service in 1942 and trained as a recruit in Wichita Falls, Las Vegas, Amarillo, and Murock, California.

Mr. Callaway served in the 14th Air Force commanded by C. L. Shenall. He served in the Burma-China-India campaign.

His opinion of the equipment, clothing, rations, etc. was OK, but they left something to be desired. While he was in China, most of the rations were things such as black chickens, bamboo roots, and rice bread.

Callaway felt the quality of leadership in the service was good. The discipline was strict, but it needed to be.

He didn't learn his real destination until he was in the air. Callaway described his first "baptism of fire" as one of 'scared panic' that didn't get better each time he came under fire. He went on several voluntary missions, including the bombing of the "Yellow Bridge." This is something he didn't like to talk about, because his plane was shot down and he saw his co-pilot decapitated by a fifty millimeter cannon on one of the aircraft. This was a traumatic experience for him, and it was obvious that it was very difficult for him to talk about.

The off-duty recreation they participated in was mostly shooting dice in the recreation halls. There was no problem with drinking, racial discrimination or drugs in his unit. The morale of his unit was good, even though they did experience homesickness. The stress of combat did affect the men at times.

Callaway believed civilians were treated well by American soldiers.

I enjoyed interviewing Mr. Callaway. He wasn't very talkative at first, but started to open up as we went on. I got to see some of his medals, including the Silver Star with clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with clusters, and several other various ribbons.