

Fort Hunt Oral History  
P.O. Box 1142  
George Washington Memorial Parkway  
Interview with Robert Gallup (by telephone)  
by Vincent Santucci and David Lassman  
September 27, 2010

INTERVIEWER: In researching activities at P.O. Box 1142 for just a little over five years, and a lot of this information was basically not recorded elsewhere, and so we began to work with the U.S. Army Intelligence G2 [00:19] at the Pentagon [00:20], and they very much encouraged us and the veterans that we had located to try to do interviews so we can capture what otherwise is largely unrecorded information. As you're probably aware, a lot of the information at the end of the war was destroyed.

ROBERT GALLUP: Yeah, well, I know everything that was in our files in the Southwest Pacific [00:43] was destroyed.

INT: Yes, and so we -- we're basically trying to capture a story that was otherwise going to go extinct, and so to date we have interviewed 72 [01:00] different people that have been involved in some way with this project, either as a veteran in one of the programs, the Military Intelligence Service [01:10] Programs that was -- that was hosted at 1142 [01:13]. And we even actually spoke to a couple of German prisoners who were there. We spoke to a couple of German scientists that worked with Wernher von Braun [01:22] as part of Operation Paperclip [01:24]. And so as we continue to find veterans, we hope to be able to increase our knowledge about the various programs. And every interview we've done, we've learned new aspects that we had not heard previously.

RG: Well, it's a long, long time ago, and I've forgotten, of course, an awful lot of it, so I hope I can be of some help, but I doubt it.

INT: Okay, well, very good.

RG: There any questions you have; I'd be glad to try to answer.

INT: Okay. Well, basically, to begin with, David, did you have something [02:00]?

INT: [inaudible]

INT: Okay, you're all right?

INT: [inaudible]

INT: Okay. I'm going to put you on speaker so David can hear you. Is that okay?

RG: Sure.

INT: All right. Can you hear us?

RG: I sure can.

INT: Excellent. Thanks again for your time. What I'm going to do is just give a very brief introduction and then I have a series of just general questions that we ask all of the veterans. And so just to begin, today is Monday, the 27th of September 2010, and we are interviewing Mr. Robert Gallup, who lives in Bellevue, Washington, over the telephone. And my name is Vincent Santucci. I'm the Chief Ranger at the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and with me is Ranger David Lassman of the Parkway as well.

INT: Good day.

INT: Okay, Mr. Gallup, are you ready?

RG: Sure [03:00].

INT: Okay. The first question that I have for you is this, a very simple one, and that is, when and where were you born?

RG: I was born in Seattle, Washington.

INT: Okay. And your date of birth?

RG: October 27th, 1919.

INT: Okay. Great. And did you grow up in Washington?

RG: Yes, I grew up in Seattle, attended Garfield High School and the University of Washington [03:33].

INT: Okay. And did you have an area of major study at the university?

RG: Yes, I was an electrical engineering major.

INT: And did you graduate from that program?

RG: Yes.

INT: Do you know what year?

RG: 1941.

INT: And upon graduation then, did you -- did you find employment, or did [04:00] you go into the military?

RG: I went to work for a Rural Electrification Administration [04:06] in Washington, D.C.

INT: Oh, so you came east.

RG: That's correct.

INT: Okay. Do you recall learning about the raid on Pearl Harbor [04:18]?

RG: Oh, yes, I sure do.

INT: Were you in Washington at the time?

RG: I was, we were driving around in a car when the news came on the -- over the air, drove by -- I can still remember this -- driving by the Japanese embassy and people out in the area there in the -- where the embassy was, burning things in the -- a big barrel that they had out there.

INT: These were [05:00] Americans out front -- in front of the embassy?

RG: This was the embassy -- people within the embassy grounds.

INT: Oh, wow. That's very interesting. And so after the bombing on Pearl Harbor [05:17],

then, did you -- did you enlist in the Army, or were you drafted?

RG: I enlisted.

INT: Okay. Do you remember about what date you enlisted?

RG: Oh, when was it? This was in the -- probably June of 1942.

INT: Okay. And did you go to basic training?

RG: No, I came to the University of Washington [05:48]. They had a special radar program.

INT: So you didn't have to do any sort of basic military [06:00] training?

RG: Not at that time. After the training here, moved back to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey [06:11], for basic training -- basic officer course.

INT: Okay. Was it OCS [06:20]?

RG: No, it was -- I was -- I was -- entered the Army as a second lieutenant, directly.

INT: Okay. So the training that you had for radar school, did you know how long that training was?

RG: Oh, it's about three months here at the University of Washington [06:32] and then think about three months in Schenectady, New York [07:00].

INT: And can you just briefly describe that training, what it covered?

RG: Just basic radar at the time, which of course was very, very simple. And I just don't have -- I can't remember much about it.

INT: Okay, all right. And so, after leaving the university, you came to a camp where you did some basic officer training.

RG: Yes, Fort Monmouth [07:42].

INT: Fort Monmouth. What state is that in?

RG: New Jersey.

INT: New Jersey. Okay, I'm sorry. And then when you completed there, did you have any additional training or did you have an assignment?

RG: Well, we went to -- we then had an additional training up in Schenectady, New York [08:00].

INT: Was that related to radars or anything else?

RG: Related to radar at the General Electric Company [08:09] there. They had a basic training for radar officers at that fort.

INT: Okay. And did you have some idea what you would be doing after that training?

RG: I understood we would then be in charge of radar teams in the European area.

INT: Okay. So when you completed the training, that last training, did you go off to an assignment at that point?

RG: No, what they did then was, they figured they didn't need to send any more for radar use because they had originally thought that they would need more radar officers [09:00] than they had -- evidently, than they had available. But they did end up with a surplus, so we no longer worked on radar.

INT: Okay. What did you do at that point?

RG: Then I was stationed to -- down at -- what was it -- just south of Fort Monmouth [09:26] - - Sea Girt New Jersey at Camp Cole [09:31], was it? I forget the name of the camp now.

INT: Okay. And what was your assignment there?

RG: The assignment there was to work with and develop a team of people involved in long-range transmission radar -- not radar [10:00] -- radio transmissions between the stations some 80 miles apart with repeater stations in between.

INT: So it was communication with other Americans.

RG: Communication with other Americans, yes.

INT: Okay. Were you aware of any monitoring of communications between Germans, for example, communications between German U-boats?

RG: No, I was not involved in anything like that.

INT: Okay. When you arrived at this Camp Cole [10:39], do you know approximately time of year or date?

RG: Let's see. That would have to be -- oh, I would guess around [11:00] early -- getting my dates mixed up here -- early '43.

INT: Okay. And how long were you at this location?

RG: About a year.

INT: About a year. Was there anything of interest that occurred during that time period related to your work?

RG: No, it was just trying to establish how the communications worked and to go on field trips to make sure that that type of communication worked properly.

INT: Okay. Was it mostly for defense purposes?

RG: No, I think this was for communications between basically teletype repeater stations between [12:00], I would guess, headquarters.

INT: Okay. And so you were there for a year. Did you receive orders to go elsewhere?

RG: Yes. At that time, I met a former member of that [unintelligible] the friend that I had been with in Schenectady, known in Schenectady [12:32], and he was involved with MIS-X [12:36], and he seemed to have an interesting situation and asked if I was interested, and I said, "Yes." And so he arranged for my orders to move to MIS-X [12:56] at that time.

INT: Very good -- do you remember [13:00] the name of the individual?

RG: Yeah, Al Borman [13:03].

INT: Al Borman. Do you know how to spell that?

RG: B-O-R-M-A-N.

INT: Okay. And you met him in Schenectady, New York [13:12], earlier in training?

RG: Yeah.

INT: And how did he contact you? Did he see you in person, or did he call you, or write to you?

RG: We happened to meet in New York.

INT: Okay.

RG: Just -- I don't know -- in a bar there somewhere.

INT: And he explained to you what he was involved with and was trying to recruit you?

RG: I'm not sure just what the details of that were.

INT: Okay. Do you know what his rank was, approximately? Was he an officer?

RG: He was a second lieutenant.

INT: Second lieutenant, okay. And so you had this conversation. Presumably, he went back to MIS [13:57] and you went back to Cole [13:59], and eventually you [14:00] received orders to go elsewhere?

RG: Yes, to go down to P.O. Box 1142 [14:08].

INT: Very good. You didn't go to any sort of military intelligence training?

RG: No.

INT: You never went to Camp Ritchie [14:16], Maryland?

RG: No.

INT: Okay. So can you tell me about the orders you received and how you wound up in 1142 [14:22]?

RG: Gee whiz. No, just to report there, as far as I can remember.

INT: Did you know anything about what you would be doing?

RG: I think it was involved somehow with equipment.

INT: Okay. And did you take a train or a bus -- if you recall?

RG: Oh, let's see. Oh [15:00], we probably took a train into there [phonetic]. Did I, or did I have a car? I had a car. I drove.

INT: Were you alone, or was anybody with you?

RG: I was alone.

INT: And do you recall, did you drive directly to the fort, or did you meet with somebody before?

RG: No, I imagine I drove directly to it.

INT: Did you go to the Pentagon [15:30] at all?

RG: No.

INT: Okay. Do you -- can you recall your first impressions of coming into the camp?

RG: Not really.

INT: Do you recall anything about what the camp looked like? Were there fences? Was there a gate? What kind of buildings were there?

RG: It didn't seem like there was much area that I [16:00] was involved with that was involved heavily with security, for some reason. It seems to me they had fences around it, sure.

INT: Okay.



RG: Must have been a gate, but I don't specifically remember it.

INT: Was it close to a community of homes, or was it set aside?

RG: Well, it was just Fort Hunt [16:26], or P.O. Box 1142, which is just that area. It was close to homes. In fact, I remember getting exercise just by walking around the neighborhood. It seemed that there was very little -- it was -- it seemed that they were not trying to -- or they were trying not to point out that this was anything major [17:00]. So I would guess that the security of the area was mostly involved with internal security rather than external security.

INT: Okay, that makes sense.

RG: I was able to walk out and walk through the neighborhood without going through gates or anything like that.

INT: Do you remember who you initially met with? Was there an officer who briefed you?

RG: Let's see. I think it was Colonel [Robley] Winfrey [17:39].

INT: Oh, you remember Colonel Winfrey.

RG: Yes.

INT: Very good. Can you tell me anything about your initial briefing?

RG: Not at all. That's too far in the -- in the past, I guess.

INT: Certainly, I understand [18:00]. Do you remember anything about Colonel Winfrey [18:02]?

RG: No, except he was a very intelligent man, and as I remember he was a professor, had written some basic electrical engineering material. He was an electrical engineer from a university. Robley E. Winfrey [18:30].

INT: Yeah, he passed away, I guess, a little more than a decade ago. He lived in the

Washington, D.C. area for the remainder of his life.

RG: Oh.

INT: We have a war period picture of him we'd be happy to make a copy of and mail that to you.

RG: That would be very nice

INT: Thanks. David, if you can remember to do that. All right. Do you remember any other individuals who you worked with [19:00]?

RG: I'm trying to remember now. I get confused now on names between those that I've met there and those that I met in the Southwest Pacific [19:25], so I'm trying to remember. Well, of course, Al Borman [19:42] and -- the name will come to me in a minute, but it's just off the radar screen right now. It's down in the -- my hard -- deep in my hard drive and it's hard to bring it back.

INT: [laughs] That happens to me all [20:00] day long. Can you tell us anything about Mr. Borman?

RG: Real nice guy, but basically I think he came from the New England area.

INT: Did you maintain contact with him after the war?

RG: No.

INT: Any knowledge about his background? Was he an engineer?

RG: Yes, he was an electrical engineer.

INT: Okay. And any idea what he did when he was at 1142 [20:39]?

RG: I really don't. I think he was involved in procurement of material to be used by the 1142 [20:58] people.

INT: Okay. So he was an officer like you were?

RG: Yes.

INT: You were both second lieutenants?

RG: I believe, yes, at that time.

INT: In addition to Winfrey [21:12], was there any other officers, higher ranking officers, a first lieutenant, a captain? Or did you report directly to Winfrey?

RG: I reported directly to Winfrey, but there was -- what was it Catesby Jones [21:38], or something like that.

INT: Catesby ap Jones, yes, very good.

RG: Yeah.

INT: And you met him?

RG: I probably did at the officer's club.

INT: Okay. Was he on the base at 1142 [21:50], or was he at the Pentagon [21:52]?

RG: I think -- I think he was in charge of the base at 1142 [21:59].

INT: Okay [22:00].

RG: I'm not positive on that, but it's -- this I remember.

INT: Okay. Do you remember the name Colonel John Walker [22:07]?

RG: No.

INT: Okay. Do you remember the name Silvio Bedini [22:14]?

RG: No.

INT: Do you remember the name George Meidlein [22:18]?

RG: No.

INT: Okay. Oh, did you know the name Lloyd Shoemaker [22:27]?

RG: Yes.

INT: You did.

RG: Yes.

INT: What did you know about Lloyd?

RG: Well, I -- he was involved in obtaining information -- material, basically, at the time that I met him, to -- that was used in -- what was it -- by the people at 1142 [22:54] to arrange for [23:00] material to be sent to downed servicemen in the European area.

INT: So exclusively to the European theater [23:14]?

RG: Well, not exclusively, but -- well, I would say yes, come to think of it.

INT: Okay.

RG: At that time, well, we were also involved in equipment for the Southwest Pacific [23:44] area as well, and also, as I remember it, there were a number of people there that I didn't know very well that were briefers, that would brief airmen on escape and evasion techniques [24:00] both in Europe and in the Southwest Pacific [24:04] area.

INT: Were you involved in that at all?

RG: I wasn't involved in the briefings, no.

INT: Okay. What do you know about the briefings?

RG: Not an awful lot. The -- for example, the -- they had training films; they had ways -- they had stories telling how people from in the European areas that I remember were able to get -- escape or evade capture once they were downed. There was [25:00] just an awful lot of airmen that were sent into the European area and were shot down but were able to parachute and able to get around in the European area through the help of certain organizations within -- resistance organizations throughout Europe.

INT: Did any of those briefings occur at 1142 [25:38]?

RG: I would -- I don't know. I have to admit, I don't remember whether that was -- whether -  
- I would guess the briefers from 1142 would go out to the air bases and brief the people  
at air [26:00] bases rather than vice versa.

INT: Okay.

RG: At least that's what they did in the Southwest Pacific [26:07], so I would assume that  
they did that at 1142 [26:11]. And -- but I don't remember that specifically. I was there,  
as I remember it now, from February to August of '44.

INT: Okay. All right. Did you remember anything else about Lloyd Shoemaker [26:33]?

RG: Not really. He was an enlisted man, as I remember it. And we drove up -- I went with  
him one time on an expedition up to Baltimore [26:46] to pick up some equipment and so  
on that was to be used for packages that would be sent to the European area [27:00], to  
the prisoners of war [27:02] there.

INT: Can you tell me anything more about that trip to Baltimore [27:08]?

RG: No, just that we went.

INT: Okay. Did you drive a truck or a car?

RG: Well, it was a truck, and it was a van of some sort, just a regular black van, no  
identification that it was government-issued or anything like that. It was -- we went just  
to pick up regular equipment that could be used to insert compasses or maps, things like  
that by the people at 1142 [27:51] that were making up packages to send to servicemen  
overseas.

INT: I see. We'll come back to that in a little while [28:00]. But so Lloyd [28:04] didn't drop  
anything off. He just picked things up. Is that correct?

RG: That's as far as I know. I don't know all of his activities. Of course, you've read the

book so you probably know most about what his activities were.

INT: Sure. And have you had a chance to read his book?

RG: Yes.

INT: What's your opinion? Do you think it was pretty accurate? Pretty well written?

RG: It sounds to me very -- pretty accurate, from what I knew.

INT: Okay.

RG: Remember the name -- another name, Jim McTighe [28:40].

INT: I was just going to ask you about him. What can you tell us about Sergeant McTighe?

RG: Not an awful lot.

INT: Do you know what his job was?

RG: No [29:00].

INT: Was he a radio man in any way?

RG: I just don't remember that either.

INT: Okay.

RG: He was a friend of mine, but I don't remember the details of it at the time.

INT: Anything else you can remember about him, even as a person?

RG: He was a nice guy.

INT: Okay.

RG: That's about all I can remember.

INT: All right. Did you remember the name Carl Peterson [29:30]?

RG: No.

INT: Captain John Starr [29:37]?

RG: Nope.

INT: Okay. When you stayed at 1142 [29:45], did you stay there -- did you live in the barracks or did you live off of base?

RG: Lived in a barracks.

INT: Okay, and presumably there were other men in the same barracks?

RG: That's correct [30:00].

INT: Were the men in your barracks all part of the MIS-X [30:04] program, or were they from other programs, as best as you can remember?

RG: I would guess we were mixed up.

INT: Okay

RG: I'm not sure, though. I don't remember, one way or the other.

INT: Okay. You don't recall the name Silvio Bedini [30:26]?

RG: No.

INT: Okay. So if I ask you this question -- in fact, maybe I'll wait for this because the tape's almost out and I need to turn it over.

RG: [laughs]

INT: I'll go ahead and maybe take a break and I'll go ahead and turn the tape over right now.

RG: Okay.

INT: Just stand by for a second.

RG: Yeah.

INT: Thanks.

(End of Tape 1A)

(Beginning of Tape 1B)

RG: Dry this year.

INT: Oh, yeah. It's been a very dry summer over all.

INT: Okay. So wanted to go back to the interview. If I ask you to describe to me what the MIS-X [00:17] program was is that something you could do?

RG: Oh boy. Yeah. Just a minute. I think my battery is running down. I've got a -- I don't have a land line. It's on a -- one of these other machines. Let me change to another telephone. Just a minute.

INT: Oh take your time.

RG: I just changed over to another phone.

INT: Great. So the question was in your words can you describe what the MIS-X [00:57] program was?

RG: Basically it was [01:00] to assist airmen in their problems associated with escape and evasion of downed airmen. Escaping and evading the enemy. Both in the Southwest Pacific and in the European area.

INT: Okay. Can you give me -- elaborate on that a little bit more?

RG: Well it -- the -- it involved mostly with briefings. On -- in the Southwest Pacific [01:52] it was briefings for people that were -- would be shot [02:00] down trying to evade capture until they could get back to our lines. Get back to help. In the European area as I remember it was basically to brief the pilots and to attempt to communicate with prisoners of war [02:31] in the European area and give them material with which they could escape -- or information from which they would use to escape the enemy prison camps in Europe. And then to evade capture on their way to allied lines. Basically.

INT: Okay [03:00]. And you say this was largely done through briefings?

RG: Well the briefings were the -- by a group of men but the other items were, for example,



maps would be sent to a -- disguised and the various different things like a cribbage board would be separated by people that work at 1142 [03:44]. They would be able to separate a cribbage board and hollow it out and then insert a map or compasses or [04:00] identifications. Things of that sort. That would identify them in the German languages. One case that I remember -- so the -- if they did -- if they were, there were means to communicate to the prisoners of war [04:25] to be able to notify the prisoners of war in certain camps that the -- these items were coming. And they would be able then to -- once they got them to get the information out of the hollowed out material.

INT: And how would [05:00] the staff at 1142 [05:02] notify the prisoners, the American prisoners, that something was going to be sent to them?

RG: There was a communication arrangement set up that was pretty much a very secretive way of communicating though use of written letters and so on. Mail.

INT: Did they use some sort of code?

RG: Yes.

INT: Okay. Were you ever trained in that?

RG: Very briefly.

INT: Okay. Was that ever successful? Was it successful in being able to -- allowing Americans at 1142 [05:59] to communicate with American [06:00] prisoners being held in Germany?

RG: It was highly successful. I thought.

INT: And when you say highly successful can you explain that a little further?

RG: Well they were able to -- for example every once in a while instead of putting this material in a secretive way as I've described in that cribbage board. They would have

what they called a “super duper package [06:30].” But they were able to notify the people in the prison that were supervised -- or were, I guess prisoners were doing their own mail distribution. And they would be able to identify [07:00] what was coming as a “super duper package [07:05]” and so they could put a lot of information not hidden in a “super duper package [07:14]” and then notify the people in Europe that they were able to send it to them.

INT: And you say that you feel that that was successful.

RG: Yeah.

INT: And was this same technique used at all in the Pacific theater [07:31]?

RG: No.

INT: And is there a reason why not?

RG: Yes. As we understood it the Japanese had a policy that when people were imprisoned they had a group of -- I think it was 10 and if one person escaped they'd kill the other nine.

INT: I see. Okay.

RG: It was -- the idea was there was no point [08:00] in trying to escape as such from Japanese prisons.

INT: Okay. So do you think that some of the items sent from 1142 [08:17] assisted any Americans escaping from a German prisoner of war [08:21] camp?

RG: Oh yes.

INT: Really? Do you know of any examples or have any information regarding that?

RG: I really don't have any specific information. Only rumors that I heard. One guy was able to escape and he got a cow and drove it all across Germany. But the cow finally died so

they recaptured him.

INT: Okay!

RG: Another one that -- oh what is it? One fellow was having so much fun in Paris [09:00] through the people that he was able to contact that he didn't want to come back. They had to order him to leave Paris to come back to the Allied lines. But those are just rumors.

INT: There is a term that we've heard used called a homerun [09:25]. Have you ever heard that term?

RG: No.

INT: Heard it used in the context that if someone was a prisoner of war [09:33] received escape devices or communications that aided them to escape successfully to return all the way to the United States they called that a "homerun [09:43]."

RG: Now I could imagine that would be a good way to describe it.

INT: Okay [laughs]. Did you ever see any of these escape devices [10:00]?

RG: Oh you mean --

INT: Cribbage boards or other items?

RG: Oh. I used to have a bunch of those things. Compasses. They had compasses that were actually whole buttons. They had buttons that were arranged as compasses. Things of that sort.

INT: Yeah those are nice. We've seen them.

RG: You have?

INT: Yeah.

RG: Are you familiar with the work -- there was a group about, oh I'd say 12 to 15 years ago

that did all of this. That I was interviewed -- in fact they came all the way [11:00] out to Seattle to interview me on that. Quite extensively. And were involved in this matter as well.

INT: Was it a military group interviewing you?

RG: It was a civilian group that was working for the military.

INT: I see. Okay.

RG: There were two of them out with me.

INT: They flew out there and they spent part of a day with you?

RG: They were traveling around getting information here, there, and yonder.

INT: Okay.

RG: So they were in Seattle. I had lunch with them.

INT: Very good. We know that there was a group of film people -- producers that were under contract from the military [12:00] to do some footage and interviews of some of the veterans who worked in the Military Intelligence Service [12:06] and it was probably about 15 plus years ago.

RG: I doubt if that was what these people were about.

INT: I see. Okay.

RG: They specifically were working on the MIS [12:20] situation.

INT: Yeah they -- I think they were focusing on the MIS-X [12:30] program.

RG: Yeah.

INT: So they interviewed Carl Peterson [12:34] and George Meidlein [12:36] and Silvio Bedini [12:37] during that time period.

RG: Yeah. I just don't remember that they came out that day or --

INT: Did they film you or record you in anyway?

RG: Not that I know of. No.

INT: Okay. All right. Do you know [13:00] anything else about the coded letters? Or the use of code?

INT: No.

INT: Okay. Why do you think that you were sent to P.O. Box 1142 [13:17]?

RG: I don't have a clue. I was just lucky.

INT: Okay. And do you recall what your job was at 1142?

RG: I was involved with basically the -- I guess you'd call it the equipment officer. Or one of them.

INT: Can you explain more of what you did?

RG: I have to admit I just don't remember much. Specifically, of the -- at 1142 [13:52]. It was such a short time. I didn't get deeply involved [14:00] in any of those things.

INT: Since you had an engineering background I was wondering if they utilized that knowledge and skills in any way to help to develop various kinds of escape devices.

RG: No.

INT: So they didn't use you to develop any radio parts or anything like that?

RG: No they -- those were being developed by the -- like General Electric [14:28] or other equipment manufactures were doing that.

INT: Okay. Did you know of any other devices they used besides the cribbage board and the buttons with the compasses in them? Were you familiar with using smoking pipes or baseballs?

RG: Could have been. Sure.

INT: Monopoly games?

RG: Things like that. Yes. I'm sure they were [15:00]. I'm not specifically familiar with any of those but I knew that they were involved. All of those things were -- many of them. That type of thing was involved.

INT: Okay.

RG: I don't remember specifically.

INT: Were you aware that there were any German prisoners of war [15:18] being held at 1142 [15:20]?

RG: I was just aware of it but that's all.

INT: You never saw any?

RG: No.

INT: Okay. David did you have a question?

INT: Did you ever actually package -- sure, did you ever actually package any of these, like "super duper [15:36]," those air packages to prisoners of war [15:39]? Was that one of your duties?

RG: No.

INT: And when these were being sent to the prisoners who were they being addressed from? Do you know?

RG: What was that? Service man's something or other? There were two organizations [16:00] that theoretically were used as organizations that would send a packages to prisoners of war [16:17].

INT: So these were fictitious organizations?

RG: Yes.

INT: Okay. Do you have any other recollection of 1142 [16:26] that you could share?

RG: Well I remember they had some horses there. And I remember I rode one of those horses for the first time in my life and almost got killed [laughs] but that's about it as far as that's concerned. That's -- it was a congenial outfit at the time.

INT: And so why did they have horses there? Any ideas?

RG: No [17:00] I think the horses were there just for -- they were old cavalry horses.

INT: Okay.

RG: There was a barn there that I guess Fort Hunt [17:10] was originally a -- before the war probably had some horses there as part of the establishment. I didn't know for sure.

INT: Okay. You probably don't remember this but presumably there may have been MPs at the camp? Guards or MPs?

RG: I'm sure they were around. Yes.

INT: Okay. You don't remember if there were any dogs, guard dogs?

RG: Don't remember that.

INT: Okay. Do you remember anything about the officers' club?

RG: Not specifically. Very nice officers club [18:00]. As I remember it, very pleasant.

INT: Okay. Did you ever here the name "The Warehouse [18:06]" or "The Creamery [18:11]?"

RG: Both of those names bring back something. I do remember both names.

INT: Okay. The Creamery [18:18] was one of the MIS-X [18:25] facilities at 1142 [18:27].  
Were there any women on the base?

RG: I don't remember there being any.

INT: Okay. Were there any civilians?

RG: I don't remember any of those either.

INT: Any British Military [19:00]?

RG: It rings a bell but I couldn't be sure.

INT: Do you recall if there were any VIPs that came there? Or high-ranking officers?

RG: No. Not that I remember.

INT: Did they have people come there for training?

RG: I can't remember that.

INT: Okay. Any association with the OSS [19:31]?

RG: Not that I know of.

INT: Okay. Did you have anything to do with the Pacific Theater [19:37] while you were at 1142 [19:42]?

RG: No.

INT: Did you ever here the name Oliver Aymar [19:48]?

INT: No.

INT: Okay. All right. So during your stay at 1142 [19:54] then you said you stayed there between February and [20:00] August.

RG: Yes.

INT: What happened in August?

RG: I was sent to the Southwest Pacific [20:08].

INT: Okay. Did you have orders that you were given?

RG: Sure.

INT: And did it say what you'd be doing or was it basically kept secret until you arrived?

RG: It was kept secret until I arrived.



INT: Okay. And I assume you took a flight or did you take a boat?

RG: A flight.

INT: Okay. And you flew from Washington?

RG: Flew from Washington to San Francisco.

INT: Okay.

RG: And then from San Francisco to Brisbane [20:36].

INT: To where?

RG: Brisbane [20:42].

INT: Brisbane okay. And then when you arrived there can you explain what happened next?

RG: Yeah. See I've got to take a two minute or a minute break. Just hang on a second.

INT: Absolutely.

RG: Okay. I'll be right back.

INT: Okay. Take your time [21:00].

[audio break]

RG: Okay. Sorry.

INT: Hey, David wanted me to ask you a question before we go into your Pacific Theater [21:08] work. You know the name Robert Kloss [21:12] from 1142 [21:13]?

RG: No.

INT: No? Okay. All right so you say you arrived in Brisbane [21:20] and then can you tell us what happened then?

RG: Well we established -- we were in an office -- oh, Kraus, I think, was Major [Paul] Kraus [21:34] was the head of the office. And basically I again there I was involved in -- as a supply officer. Organizing kits and materials for airmen to have on their person [22:00]

when they flew. So that they would have certain things available in case they were shot down. Help them escape or evade -- not escape but evade capture. That was the primary purpose of the work that I was involved with in the Southwest Pacific [22:31].

INT: Okay. And so when you arrived in Brisbane [22:37] who did you meet with? Were they Military Intelligence Service [22:41] personnel?

RG: Yeah.

INT: Okay. And did you stay in Brisbane? Or did you go through any additional training or what happened next?

RG: We stayed in Brisbane [22:53].

INT: Okay. For about how long? Do you remember [23:00]?

RG: Oh boy.

INT: Weeks? Months? Longer?

RG: Several months as I remember it. I'm trying to remember. I went from Brisbane [23:13] to Hollandia for I would guess I was in Hollandia for several months. And then in Leyte for a couple of months and then in Manila [23:27] for several months before the war ended then in '45.

INT: Okay. So do you remember learning about the victory in Europe?

RG: Not specifically. I remember through -- I don't even remember it specifically.

INT: Okay. Just wondering. Were you in Leyte or were you in Manila [23:24] when you learned of that [24:00]?

RG: Well, let's see that was in. '44? Wait a minute. When was that?

INT: 1945.

RG: '45. That was in May of '45, right?

INT: Yes.

RG: I don't remember where I was. I could have been probably in Hollandia perhaps --

INT: Okay.

RG: Probably -- no, I don't know.

INT: Okay. So when you went from Brisbane [24:37] to Hollandia to Leyte and to Manila [24:55], was your job essentially the same throughout that entire journey or was it different?

RG: The same. Yes.

INT: And can you basically describe that job?

RG: Basically organizing and arranging for packing of small [25:00] kits that airmen could carry. Also knives, machetes that could be used by airmen to -- if they were shot down in jungle areas to hack through the jungles and so on.

INT: And then you said you put together packages?

RG: Little kits. Yes.

INT: Could you describe those?

RG: Well this other outfit that interviewed me I gave them a couple that I had left of the kits. They were, I would say, an inch thick [26:00] by four inches wide by six inches tall. Somewhere in that range. They included certain things like Addaprin for malaria, penicillin was it, or something of that antibiotics, medical supplies, that sort of thing, compasses, real compasses not the tricky kind. And that was basically it. Plus, the machetes. But the machetes were separate from the kits.

INT: Okay. And you say you don't have any of these kits anymore?

RG: No.

INT: Okay.

RG: I gave them all to this other outfit [27:00].

INT: Okay and was there any sort of money in the kits?

RG: Oh, well, wait a minute. There were packets of money. They had a finance officer stationed with us. Lieutenant Paugrin [27:29] [phonetic], his name, involved with the money. There were maps -- not in the kits -- well maps in the kits were the -- there were packets with money and maps and things that people could sew on their [28:00] outerwear to -- if they were shot down over China to show that they were a friend of the Chinese and so on and so forth. That type of thing. And they had patches as well in those kits.

INT: What kind of patches?

RG: I think Army patches. There was this one that had the flags, American flags.

INT: Were there any maps?

RG: Yes. Lots of maps. For the maps of the Southwest Pacific [28:51]. The first maps that came were silk, prepared by [29:00] the Australians that were used later on the acrylic. Not the acrylic but the maps that came from the U.S. were sent over. They were all destroyed unfortunately when the war was over. The order came to destroy everything that was involved with MIS-X [29:28].

INT: So there was an order to destroy all this information?

RG: Yes.

INT: Okay. You know what the AGAS [29:38] section is? The Air Ground Aid Section?

RG: I don't remember that name. No.

INT: Okay. And do you know what chits were?

RG: I don't remember that [30:00] term.

INT: Blood chits?

RG: Pardon?

INT: It's called a blood chit. C-H-I-T.

RG: No. I don't remember that.

INT: Okay. All right. So you went from Brisbane [30:16] to Hollandia to Leyte to Manila [30:16].

RG: Right.

INT: Do you remember anything specifically about each of those stops?

RG: No. Well in Hollandia we were up on top of the hill with headquarters. And we gone up -- it was quite away from the top of the hill. We were not down, no, on the airstrip or down in the waterfront. But that's about all I remember.

INT: Did you have a chance to [31:00] talk to any airmen?

RG: No.

INT: Okay. David, do you have any questions? So it sounds like you were in Manila [31:18] when the war ended?

RG: That's correct.

INT: Can you tell us what you recall about learning about the end of the war and what followed that?

RG: Oh I'll never forget that one. Yes. I was -- and some of my friends were out at the -- watching a movie and all of a sudden we -- the ships and everywhere around began shooting up. Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Celebrating because they'd just gotten the word that the Japanese had surrendered [32:00]. And then the announcement

came on over the loudspeaker system at the outdoor theater there telling us that the Japanese had just surrendered.

INT: Okay. I'm going to go ahead and --

(End of Tape 1B)

(Beginning of Tape 2A)

RG: So I -- we're all down in a basement and the water got in and ruined it all.

INT: Oh that's a shame. So you don't have anything left like that any longer?

RG: Not anything about it.

INT: Not even photographs?

RG: Just a few photographs but nothing of substantial interest.

INT: Okay, I just wanted to do a quick introduction because of the new tape.

RG: Yeah.

INT: Okay. Let's see. Okay. I wanted to just begin by saying today is Monday September 27, 2010 and we're conducting an interview as part of a Fort Hunt Oral History Project with P.O. Box 1142 [01:00] veteran Robert Gallup who is participating the interview by telephone from Belleview, Washington. I am Vince Santucci, the Chief Ranger at George Washington Memorial Parkway, and I'm accompanied by David Lassman of the Parkway. This is the second tape in a series of interview tapes. So you had heard over the intercom that Japan had surrendered. Anything else to add to that recollection?

RG: No. I'm sure that everybody was happy.

INT: Did it change what you were doing on a day to day basis at your job?

RG: Basically yeah. Just from then on we were getting ready to go home.

INT: Okay, when you were in the Pacific [01:59] did you see any [02:00] Japanese prisoners at

any time?

RG: No.

INT: Did you talk to anybody about escape and evasion techniques that had worked?

RG: No. I wasn't involved with that sort of thing. That was another group of officers that were doing all of that.

INT: Okay were there any techniques that you were aware of that were used for escape and evasion?

RG: No techniques. No.

INT: Okay. In the European Theater [02:40] there were resistance folks. There were French and Dutch and others that helped with resistance and helped for allied individuals to escape and evade. Were there any sort of resistance fighters in the Pacific theater [03:00]?

RG: I don't remember that.

INT: Okay. Do you recall if you were working under the Military Intelligence Research Section [03:15] in the Pacific?

RG: Not that I know of.

INT: Okay. You were still in the MIS-X [03:27] Program.

RG: Yes.

INT: As far as you knew.

RG: Yes.

INT: Okay. And so in terms of wrapping things up and going home, do you know approximately when you flew from the Pacific home?

RG: Yes. We were fortunate to fly but this was probably November [04:00] of '45.

INT: Okay.

RG: During that period after the war was over the -- many of the American prisoners of war [04:24] were brought to Manila [04:32] and I was part of the -- an interview team that interviewed these prisoners of war. Former prisoners of war.

INT: Can you tell us more about that?

RG: Not really. I don't remember an awful lot about it and we just made notes for [05:00] whoever was going to handle the materials in Washington. We were just brought in because there was such a mass of people coming through Manila [05:16] that I think anybody that could write was put on that interview team. Especially the MIS-X [05:27] people.

INT: And were these records being developed specifically for that prisoner of war [05:37]? For when they went back to the United States and needed treatment or needed other kind of care once they returned back? Or were these notes being compiled for other reasons?

RG: I just don't know what purpose of the notes were.

INT: Okay. Did they disclose information about their care and treatment as prisoners [06:00]?

RG: Yes.

INT: Did they talk at all about war crimes?

RG: Yeah. They -- a lot of them were involved with -- I don't remember anything specific but all of them were -- wanted to get back at some of the guards that were particularly mean to the prisoners.

INT: Did they share with you any atrocities that they had observed?

RG: Not specifically.

INT: Okay. Did they provide you with information where any other prisoners might be being



held?

RG: No.

INT: Okay.

RG: Not specifically. Again the -- I'm sure that what they did with all this information and put it together back [07:00] somewhere where somebody who knew what he was doing would be able to sort it out.

INT: Okay. And so you returned back to the United States in November did you go through Hawaii or straight to California?

RG: We -- I don't -- yeah we came back through Hawaii, of course.

INT: Okay. And then were you immediately discharged or were you in the military for any period of time after the war?

RG: No. Let's see. I came back -- flew back to Washington, D.C. Evidently at that time they had planned to have some sort of an information associated with the MIS [07:56] program but they evidentially decided to [08:00] cancel that. And so as I had several months of annual leave coming I took my annual leave and then went on reserve duty I think around April of '46.

INT: So you stayed in the Reserves for a while?

RG: I stayed in the Reserves till '51.

INT: Oh. Okay, quite a while. And did you have other employment during this time?

RG: Yes.

INT: As an engineer?

RG: As an engineer with our Rural Electrification Administration [08:50] again.

INT: Very good. And then did you stay with that company through your career [09:00]?

RG: No. Then I left REA [09:05] in '51, came to Seattle. Joined the firm of R. W. Beck & Associates [09:12], became a partner in that firm in '54. Remained a partner in that firm until age 65; at which time I continued to work there until I finally retired at age 73.

INT: Very good. It sounds like you've done well for yourself.

RG: Well I'm knocking on wood.

INT: Well, you've got a very sharp mind, pretty good recall of things given that it was so long ago. And you probably haven't spoken much about it since that time.

RG: That's very true. Yeah. Yes. It's been a [10:00] -- it's been a long time. I was just thinking that when I was a kid, the Civil War was so far behind me that it was just a -- something in the history. And yet, today when you look back at the 1940s, it's only 70 years. And it was only 90 years -- the Civil War was only 90 year when I was a kid in school learning about it.

INT: Yeah. That's an interesting perspective.

RG: I imagine kids today are thinking the same thing, that that's old hat.

INT: Yeah. Might as well be the Middle Ages or something.

RG: That's right. That's right. It's hard to get perspective on those things until you really look at it.

INT: Certainly. Do you recall if you had to sign any sort of secrecy agreement or anything related to your work [11:00]?

RG: Probably did. But that's long since expired.

INT: Yeah. Is there anything that you want to share that we have not yet asked you?

RG: You've been very thorough. I can't think of anything really specific.

INT: Would it be possible for you to send us just some modern pictures of yourself for our

records?

INT: Yes. David will probably call you. What we're going to do is go ahead and make a copy of this and we'll send you a copy of it so you have it for yourself and your family.

RG: That would be helpful.

INT: And we'll send you a copy of Winfrey [11:49], a photo of Winfrey.

RG: Okay you can do that if you wanted to. Just send it to my email.

INT: Oh. What is your email address [12:00]?

RG: It's --.

INT: Very good. David will do that today.

RG: And then I'll be able to send you one of the pictures.

INT: Either a picture of you in uniform from World War II or even a recent photo.

RG: Yeah, I can send you a recent photo. Let's see. I don't know. I must have a picture around somewhere.

INT: If it happens. We'd like to have a picture of you in general.

RG: Yeah. Okay. I can do that. And a recent one. I'll just send it to you by email so you can --

INT: Very good. We greatly appreciate your time and sharing this information. Again, remarkable how much you remember from so long ago and this is interview [13:00] number 73, helping us to preserve a piece of history that otherwise was going to go extinct. So on behalf of the National Parks Service and myself, thanks again for everything and thanks for your service.

RG: Well thank you for bringing all this stuff up. It's interesting to go back to it.

INT: I don't know if you travel still but if you ever get back to Washington we'd love to host

you and take you back to 1142 [13:28] and show you what's there.

RG: Oh. That might be interesting. Well I get back there to Virginia every once in a while where my relatives live in Lynchburg.

INT: Well, let's definitely get together then. We'd love to meet you in person and be happy to show you around.

RG: Well, I won't promise anything on that one.

INT: Okay. I understand.

RG: But if you send me the information by email, then I can get your email from that I guess.

INT: Great.

RG: Or [14:00] if you put it in the email then I can send the picture back that way.

INT: Great.

[end of transcript]

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