RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH GERARD RAU

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

CARMEN GODWIN
and
TARA KRAENZLIN
and
STEVE BOIKESS
and
LOU VITANO

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TRANSCRIPT BY

G. DOROTHY SABATINI

Carmen Godwin: This begins an interview with Gerard Rau, in Pennington, New Jersey, on December 4, 1998 with:

TK: Tara Kraenzlin.

CG: Carmen Godwin.

LV: Lou Vitano.

SB: Steve Boikess.

CG: The first thing I would like to do is ask a little bit about your family. What did your father do for a living?

GR: Originally he had a business known as (?) Embroidery … Before printed materials, a lot of embroidery was used … We had this large machine, which was used by other people in this industry, and we had one of our own. In one moment we could do a strip of cloth, embroider it that is, that might have been twenty feet long or so, and maybe three feet wide. He would follow a pattern on a chart, and when he moved … it moved all the needles that would go through that material, and pull them through. The needles had a point at both ends, so there were a bunch of prongs that pushed them through the material, and then there would be another set coming that would pick them up from the back, and pull them through, and sewed them. Well, this was in the '20s … I was born in 1921 … in the '20s, before the Great Depression hit in 1929 and '30, the discovery was made of how to print material. So, that kind of knocked out things for a while.

TK: It was a real blow to your father's business.

GR: Then came the Depression on top of that, so, he had no work. The government had the economic programs like the WPA.

CG: Was he involved in any of those?

GR: Yeah, but he also did paper hanging, painting …

TK: Which particular WPA program did he work for?

GR: I think they worked on the (?) … I was an only child. There's nothing really exciting about my growing-up years. I loved my parents, they loved me. I had gone to the 4-H Club. That's where I got interested in something about agriculture. I decided then, if I could get to college, I would probably … I ended up being at the College of Agriculture, because a friend of mine was also in the 4-H Club … his father was a florist.

CG: What did you mother do?

GR: She helped my father with his embroidery operation. There were other machines that threaded the needles, that needed to be handled … she never went out for a job.

CG: She just helped out with the family.

TK: Which aspect of agriculture were you involved in?

GR: My father … only had about three quarters of an acre of land at our house, but he raised some chickens in the backyard. He displayed them at a county fair every year, and he'd receive best in show, and honorable mention, and so on for these chickens, even though he only had about thirty or forty chickens. So, I got interested in poultry. My grandfather had three greenhouses … which were about a quarter mile from where we lived, and he raised flowers wholesale, shipped them to New York City on the train … several times a week. After he died, my grandmother sat out there with a shovel and a hoe, and planted azaleas, and things like that. They didn't get shipped to New York, they were sold to local florists. So, I got interested in flowers, too, although I didn't study them at Rutgers.

TK: Can you tell us about growing up in Chatham?

GR: Well, living out on the township, I wasn't as familiar with it as the townspeople in the borough. We were in the country. We had to walk about a mile-and-a-half everyday to the old red-brick schoolhouse. The whole school had eight classes, but there were just two rooms and two teachers. One teacher taught the first four grades, and the other teacher taught the other four, but each group of four were in the same room, so you heard the other classes and their lessons. Then they built a new school on Southern Boulevard, in Chatham Township, and then you got to go by school bus, and everything seems like normal these days. High school was, however, in Chatham Borough. Chatham Township has no separate high school. As far as money for college, my parents had very little available. I simonized cars, and raised flowers on my grandmother's land. I got about three or four dollars a car. It took all day to do it, and if I do say so, I think I always did a very good job, because I got references from people I did. I was very busy.

TK: It was a great way to earn money.

GR: It was the way to earn money.

CG: Were you involved in any other activities in school?

GR: Not really.

TK: Did you always know that you wanted to go on to college?

GR: I wanted to, but it didn't seem too realistic, because of the financial problems. My father had gotten, after he did things like wall papering, painting, and so on, a job on the road department, just as a laborer. After a few years he worked up and became a superintendent of the road department, so he got a much better salary, but it still wasn't enough to pay off my

expenses. So, I applied for financial aid at Rutgers. One thing was … students would live on the Ag campus and be given a room for doing work. So, I was given that opportunity. Professor Helyar was a big help there.

TK: So, that is what made Rutgers a possibility for you.

GR: That financial aid made it possible.

TK: That paid for your room and board.

GR: I got the room. We had to make our own food, but we could do it there. There was always a facility to do it with. So in my freshman year I spent out in the greenhouse over the boiler room with one other fellow, Julius Small. The second year I got a real break. You know the house that was originally the Dean's home, by the pond on the Ag campus? That was the extension service for the Home Economics Department, and they had offices on the first and second floors, but they had a third floor with a couple of rooms on it, and they had two students there. Each of us had one of the rooms. In exchange for the rooms, we would empty the waste baskets every evening of the people who had offices there, tend the furnace, bundle up the garbage on garbage day, and things like that. It really didn't take a lot of time. Since in the evening, all the ladies that worked in the offices were gone, we could use the kitchen. So, my roommate and I made our own meals. That lasted until I, actually, went into the service. On Sundays, we had the use of the whole house. Downstairs they had one room that was a nice living room, nice furniture and everything. On Sunday afternoon, there was, I think it was called the "Firestone Hour," of classical music, being played on the radio, and I'd go down there and do my studying. They interrupted the program, this was the afternoon of December 7th, they interrupted the program to say that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Well, you could hardly believe this to be possible. Here we are, the United States, the biggest country in the world, with the strongest army. So, we just thought, well, I guess, in a week or so we'll solve that problem.

TK: Did you know immediately what that would mean for you?

GR: No. Neither of us even expected we'd be caught up in it before it was over.

TK: What was your immediate reaction?

GR: I can't remember.

CG: You figured it would be solved in a week.

GR: Yeah, that kind of reaction. So, things started to wind up as far as the country was concerned. Am I getting ahead of your question?

CG: We should talk a little about life at Rutgers. Were all of the Ag School students up by NJC?

GR: No. Most students, except those who had the financial aid, lived in dormitories or fraternity houses on the main campus, and most of my classes that first year were on the main campus. Just the agricultural ones were on the Ag campus.

TK: All the general education classes were on College Ave.

CG: They didn't have the buses then.

GR: A mile-and-a-half walk. Well, I guess it kept me physical. I had a car, incidentally, a '31, used, Chevy coupe, but it wasn't convenient. It wasn't convenient to use to go back and forth to class, because you had to have a place to park it on both campuses, so often, I just walked. We had our regular courses, English, Chemistry, on the main campus. The cafeteria was over there. The gymnasium was on that side, of course.

CG: What was it like being surrounded by so many women at NJC?

GR: Interesting. [laughter]

TK: Would you care to elaborate on that?

GR: Well, I was basically bashful. So, I didn't aggressively …

Virginia Rau: His ambition was to date everybody. When he got to me he stopped.

CG: The two of you met at Rutgers, can you tell us about that?

GR: Yes. It was a blind date.

CG: For a dance ?

VR: I was trying to get a date for the Christmas dance, because the boyfriend that I had couldn't make it. Everybody said, "You have to go to the Christmas dance,
you have to go."

CG: This was your steady boyfriend at the time?

VR: Yes. I had been going with him for a year. So, I had to have a date, and everybody said so. The week before, I got a date. I guess, I got two dates, but he was busy. He already had a date. So, I had to get somebody else, but the next day he called me up. I mean, I did get a date with him before, but not for the dance. That was a big dance.

GR: They probably still have one at Douglass, don't they?

TK: Yes, a formal.

CG: So, what happened after your first date?

VR: He called me after the Christmas dance, I guess a week after the Christmas dance. Then my boyfriend came down, and proposed to me, and he called, and I got all excited, because he had called … in front of my boyfriend. That was the end of the boyfriend …

CG: I hope so.

VR: … And we just went ever since.

CG: Did you know she had a boyfriend?

GR: Yeah. I knew there was some competition. Now … we're ahead of when I got involved with the military.

SB: What was it like in your freshman year? Did you ever see any freshman hazing?

CG: Did you have to wear a beanie?

GR: Yeah. In the freshman year there was a beanie, and everybody feels a little timid, at least I did. I'd never been away from home before.

VR: How long did you have to wear it?

GR: I forget, a month or something like that. I forgot, maybe it was the first semester. What is it now-a-days? How long do they have to wear it?

SB: They don't to that anymore.

GR: No more beanies?

VR: At NJC we had to wear it two weeks.

CG: We could look it up for you but I don't know it off the top of my head.

GR: It's not a big part of history.

CG: Oh, but it's interesting. What did you think about mandatory chapel?

GR: I had no problems with mandatory chapel.

CG: Tell us a little bit about it. They used to invite many interesting speakers. Were they a big part of your life at that time?

GR: I don't remember much about it. It was bigger then than it is sixty years or so later. Yeah, well, they had good speakers, but at the same time there was the opportunity to make announcements on other things.

TK: Right, a general assembly.

GR: Yeah, so they killed two birds with one stone when they had that.

CG: You mentioned Professor Helyar, he was a big influence on you, a mentor. Tell us more about your relationship with him, or any other professor that you have in mind.

GR: Professor Frank G. Helyar, I remember his initials and everything particularly well, because he was in important part. He was the director of resident instruction at the College of Agriculture, and he was very student oriented and he was concerned about all of us very much, and encouraged us to participate in campus organizations. There was an agriculture club, a poultry science club, the dairy science club and things like that. He would help with the need for financial help.

CG: Was he also a professor in classes, but you also worked for him?

GR: He taught some classes. I forget which classes they were anymore. He taught some classes and he also had this overall responsibility of director of the students.

VR: Got you a couple of jobs.

GR: Yeah, for the summertime. I guess he sort of like me, I don't know why. He got me a job with his son's in-laws, daughter-in-law's parents, at Point Pleasant in the summertime, which was nice to be near the shore … and my job was to take care of their yard, and their dogs, they had thoroughbred French bulldogs. They had about six of them in the yard, a special chain dog yard, and I would care for them. [I would] drive the man to the railroad station at Point Pleasant once or twice a week. I guess he was an investor, and he went up to New York City once or twice a week to do his trading. It was a very nice summertime job, and I even got it the second summer, between my sophomore and junior years, too.

TK: So, you spent your summers down there.

GR: I spent my summers there, with a monthly salary. I forget how much I earned.

CG: With the car, were you able to go home to Chatham much from Rutgers?

GR: I was, but I didn't go much.

VR: Gas rationing.

CG: So, it wasn't really an option all that often.

SB: I'm actually from that area, near Point Pleasant. What was the Jersey Shore like in those days?

GR: We haven't gone to the Shore recently, so I don't know how it is now, but it was certainly nice then, very nice.

SB: Was it as built up, with hotels?

VR: We haven't been there in a long time.

GR: This was inland a-ways. I don't know if I could find the house anymore. Maybe only five or ten miles in from the beach.

VR: Is it Jenkinsons.

CG: Jenkinsons.

VR: That was there, that was the big thing.

CG: It still is in Point Pleasant.

VR: There wasn't anything else. There were houses all up and down to the inlet.

CG: But the boardwalk wasn't built up.

GR: On my day off I found it interesting just to go down and sit on the bench and watch the people go by. It was just a pleasant day of relaxation there.

VR: He got you another job, with the eggs. He got you a job with eggs … inoculating them.

GR: I think that was Vince Durago.

VR: Yeah, but he got you the job with Vince, didn't he?

GR: He may have been directly involved. Anyway Professor Hellier was a big help.

CG: What were you doing with the eggs?

GR: Well, I worked for this … the fellow managing the farmer's poultry farm also had a business on the side where he would incubate eggs, and sell them to Squibb, which was just adjacent to the campus and still is. These fertile eggs would be used to make vaccines by Squibb. They would grow the vaccine on the eggs.

CG: That's interesting.

GR: So, I just worked at his establishment, which at time was about where Livingston Avenue and US1 Park there, right in that corner. That was just another job. I had an awful lot of jobs.

VR: Then you worked for Pepsi Cola?

GR: That's after the war started. See, the first year, there wasn't any war yet.

CG: Did you go to ROTC?

GR: We all had to be part of ROTC.

TK: What did you think of ROTC?

GR: It was a nuisance, that's all.

CG: Hard to wake up on Fridays.

GR: It was on Fridays? I don't remember what day it was.

TK: Actually, the one thing that I've heard from this is that the reason that the Rutgers Thursday night party tradition started, was because there was ROTC on Friday. That's an unconfirmed rumor.

GR: I didn't go to any parties.

CG: That started after the ROTC was gone.

GR: I was too busy on the telephone calling NJC.

CG: One of the things that was very big at the time was the whole fraternity scene. What was your impression of that, or were you involved at all?

GR: I really didn't think too favorably of fraternities because of their exclusiveness from the rest of the student body.

CG: Did you find it was hard if you were not part of one of the fraternities?

GR: Yeah, to some extent. You're not part of the elite.

CG: The "in" crowd.

VR: You were a part of NJC. What more could you want?

TK: A lot of commuters will tell us stories that it was sometimes harder for those who could not belong to a fraternity at that time.

GR: Did the commuters wish they had, instead of commuting?

TK: They just missed the dorm experience. Whereas you had the dorm experience.

GR: Well, no. Two of us in a room in the shed over a greenhouse, was not a dorm.

TK: I should say that you weren't living with your parents anymore.

GR: No. No.

TK: When were you actually married?

GR: Oh, this was during the war. The war was going on for … it started in December of '41, by the Spring of '42, the various armed forces were wanting to recruit college graduates if they could get them, but certainly college students. So, the Navy would come to the Rutgers campus, and the Air Force, and so on, and tried to … they had a program, in other words from their viewpoint, if we can pin down these students to be part of our service, which in my case was the Air Force, then they've got us committed and you wouldn't get drafted into some other branch. So, I always liked the idea of flying, anyway, as a teenager but never thought that I'd do anything like that … But this appeal they made sounded very appealing, so, I signed up. Then they said that you could continue, because they weren't ready for us, you could continue staying at Rutgers as a student, that applied until you graduated. Then you could go into the Air Force for their training program. However, that was in the spring of '42, by midwinter of the '42 '43 season, they were beginning to absorb and need people in the Air Force, so, I got notice to report for active duty February 28, 1943. Ginny and I had met December 12th of '42. So, we only got to see each other for about two and a half, or so, months before I had to go in the service. We saw each other all the time possible, at the sacrifice of studies, I'm sure, until then. So, that's starts the whole new phase there.

CG: Can I ask one more question about school before I move on? Did you have any dealings with Dean Metzger? A lot of other students have mentioned him as a personality at the school.

GR: He was at the main campus, wasn't he? The name is so familiar, but I can't remember any details.

CG: I was just curious, other people that have been interviewed have mentioned him.

VR: They were on the other campus.

CG: That's true.

GR: The management of Rutgers was very sympathetic with the war effort, of course. So, they graciously gave us, who left by February 28th, like I did, credit for that semester, if we had a passing grade up to that time. So, in effect, I finished my junior year in February, to be put on the back burner until the war was over and I would come back as a student again.

TK: In that time though, after Pearl Harbor, what changes did you see on campus with the war effort? Did you see people leaving already?

GR: Some were leaving already. Either they got into something they wanted to do right away, or they were drafted. The classes were getting smaller and smaller. It had a steady effect there.

TK: How did it change the attitudes there?

GR: I think we were starting to mature. In a way, college was up until then, compared to high school, was a step up in maturity, but not as a big step as it was … let's say, when we came back from the service, came back as students, we were much more mature in all our attitudes and approaches, and so on, then the students who were there just starting.

TK: We've also heard that a number of times.

VR: In my freshman year, one girl came in, she was already a widow.

CG: Oh, wow.

GR: Yeah, that happened a lot.

CG: You had been talking about finishing your last term.

GR: Well, I didn't finish the last one. Which one do you mean?

CG: Before you went to …

GR: Before I went on active duty?

CG: Exactly.

GR: I still had to report for active duty on February 28th, but the college gave us completion credits for whatever courses we were taking in that spring semester. Now, we didn't learn as much that way because we didn't have classes through March, April, and well into May.

TK: But it was considered more important to get you for the war effort.

GR: I guess the powers that be felt patriotic about it, too … and decided this is a nice thing to do for the students.

TK: Had you already seen a lot of your friends leave?

GR: Yeah, yeah. Some were. Well, then there was another, I guess it's tied in with the ROTC … some were recruited to stay there as part of the ROTC, and this is where my roommate got involved. That was the Army, the regular Army, and they did their training at the same time that they were students with the ROTC. I don't know all the details of what they went through, but they were getting military training as residents at Rutgers.

VR: Usually in uniform.

GR: Yeah, they were in uniform as students on the campus. I don't know how much they were allowed to take their regular academics subjects. I don't know that.

VR: He came over at NJC and took a math course and he was a rare man on campus.

GR: Not, me. This was my roommate now, who was in the service. Apparently, you had a professor at NJC that was very effective.

VR: Had something that Jim wanted.

TK: We've also heard similar stories from women who took like an engineering class, or something similar where the tables are turned.

VR: Oh, yeah.

CG: So, before you left for basic training did the two of you confirm between each other that you were to be married?

VR: Oh, no.

GR: It was just a strong understanding, that we were love, not doubt about it … but, no, we made no plans for the future … well, when you go into war there's always that feeling in the back of your mind, " Well, what if I don't come back?"

VR: You overcame that.

GR: Well, that's a matter of circumstances that worked out to our favor, but, you know, you don't want to make someone a widow … It's a mixed feeling of wanting to get married, but at the same time knowing maybe getting married isn't the right time to be done now.

CG: So, you left and went off to basic training.

VR: Atlantic City.

GR: I went to Atlantic City, all that distance. That was the first place I reported, was Atlantic City. Now that has changed.

CG: [Laughter] You can tell us about Atlantic City.

GR: We were all housed in the hotels that are on the boardwalk. The military took over all the hotels, all those that suited their needs. One of them, I forget the name now, I thought I would remember … was the hospital. Are you familiar somewhat with Atlantic City as well as Asbury Park?

SB: Not really. I've been to Atlantic City only a few times.

CG: North Shore.

SB: I'm more of a Point Pleasant, Manasquan area.

GR: It's very different now, because there were no casinos in those days. There was the Pier, the Steel Pier, which was an entertainment place, the boardwalk, which people loved to walk up and down. This is March 1st that we were sent there, and, believe me, that's still winter when you're right there on the ocean. At five o'clock in the morning is when they reveille call and everybody has to run right out onto the beach and be counted to make sure you're all present, and that is very, very cold on a March morning.

TK: So, you had a very different shore experience.

GR: [Laughter] It was not the usual tourist one.

TK: Was there any time for just walking around and enjoying?

GR: Yeah, a little bit, if you find time to have off. We didn't have a lot of time off. We did a lot of marching. I guess that was to give us foot exercise. We went out to Brigantine for a march several times a week, I guess. A lot of orientation stuff, and as we walked off the train and walked into the area where we were going to have to report, all these guys on the side of us there, as we were walking by said, "You'll be sorry. You'll be sorry." I thought they were kidding, you know, because I was looking forward to it …

VR: … And you were.

GR: Yeah, going into the service at that time was not exactly fun. So, then from there, since we were going to become aviation cadets, we still needed college training. We needed to take more courses in mathematics, and weather, and I can't remember all the courses. So we were then sent, after this basic training, from Atlantic City. In my case, I went to the Massachusetts State College in Amherst. I was there, maybe, two or three months, with courses in mathematics and military courses, and weather observation and …

VR: Flying.

GR: Okay, this was our chance to fly and they had Piper Cub airplanes, which I don't even think they have anymore … single engine, little planes … and we all got ten hours of dual instruction. You had an instructor with you. You didn't fly alone by yourself. You didn't solo. Ten hours each to learn the basics of flying. Well, that was nice, but that was the end of flying for a while, because it was many more months before I got back to anything like that. I stayed there until May, I think it was May. No maybe into June probably, and got sent to Nashville, Tennessee, where they tested everybody to see what you were best qualified for, your aptitude. I did qualify to be either a pilot, navigator, or bombardier. At that time, I still wanted to fly, but I started to think, "Maybe I can still fly and not exactly be doing the part where you were killing people." Still do my part in the war, but not be doing that. So, navigator sounded great for that. It was

my job to determine where the airplane was to go, and where it was, and how to get it back to where it was taking off from, on a mission, or whatever. So, I did go to navigation school in Monroe, Louisiana, and that lasted until May 20, 1944.

VR: That where we were engaged.

GR: Oh, yeah, she went, visited me. Ginny went to visit me in Monroe when we had the … we were supposed to fly that weekend, a training mission. It spoiled everything, because here she was sitting on the ground while I was up there flying … but the weather did a crazy thing, it didn't do … The weather didn't turn out like the forecasters forecasted. It turned out to be a beautiful day and they already cancelled the plans to have us fly, so, we were able to see each other that weekend, and I had gotten a ring. Didn't cost much, but I got a ring.

VR: A month's salary, compare what that is in those days.

CG: But, you knew?

VR: No, I didn't know he was going to give me a ring.

GR: No. So, this nice sunny day made the … I thought the ring really looked, but the reflections of the rays must have not bounced off it. You said it didn't …

VR: It looked like a piece of lead. He said, "It was just gleaming."

GR: … And here I'm getting all scared … I'm getting scared that she's going to refuse it, but it worked out.

CG: What was your impression of the South? That was the first time you went to South?

GR: Yeah. What I really found a bit surprising, and shocking, was the relationship of white people with black people. I got on the bus once, and I like to sit near the back and, my gosh, everybody got excited that I was doing this.

CG: Really?

GR: Yeah, and I hadn't realized that something like that would be the case. So, that was one surprising part about the South, I suppose.

CG: Was that the only strange experience you had?

GR: Well, then, I guess, I began to pay attention to what the differences were. I don't remember anything dramatic, other than that.

VR: I went to get on the bus one day, and this little old black lady was there and I let her in. I was young, I let her in …

CG: Did you notice any other things like that at water fountains or restrooms?

GR: I'm sure I noticed it after that, but I didn't … if I saw a sign I probably didn't realize what it was.

VR: When I came home from Monroe, I got on the train, and it was divided … it was a wooden train, wooden floor, and it was divided, black at one end, white on the other … and it was scariest night I ever had, not because of the black and white, but because the girl in the next seat wanted to be an undertaker. [Laughter]

TK: What other impressions did you have? Did you get to know a lot of people in the time that you were there?

GR: I got to know other service people … oh, my gosh. Well, okay.

CG: I can't wait for this one. [Laughter]

GR: One of the training experiences that we were supposed to have, as servicemen, what if, when in combat, we were forced down somewhere out in the wilderness, and we had to get along all by ourselves, until we could get back to where we came from … survival training, I think it was called. So, they took an Army truck with about eight, or so, of us, drove us out in the countryside somewhere, and left us off there, in the middle of nowhere on a dirt road …

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TK: You were supposed to fend for yourselves out there.

GR: Yeah, we were supposed to learn how to survive by ourselves, with only our heads to think about how to get along with local conditions that we might find. Well, there was nobody there. We were just out in the countryside, and along came a rickety truck, but it was as big as the Army truck that let us off. So, there would have been room for us to get on that truck and hitchhike. So, we put our thumbs up, and what would you do, anyway, if you wanted to survive? You're going to hitchhike. So, he picked us up, and he was going to help us get in the general direction of getting us back to civilization. Well, he took us to his own home, which was a dog-trot house … if you've ever heard of it … at the time, I don't know. It's like two houses next to each other, but with a porch between them … and you still find some of these houses in the South. We found one in Florida, a few years ago, near Kissimmee. So, I guess … well, anyway, he had some sons and they were in the service, but he also had … I can only remember one, one daughter … and we all, the fellas, were to sleep out on this couch, or whatever.

VR: Porch.

GR: Porch. Why did I say couch? They had a couch there, yeah. Well, anyway, I did sleep out there. For I don't know what reason, this one sixteen year old, maybe sixteen, or seventeen … wanted to be friendly. Well, I'm … I've got my own interest here, so I didn't want to be. She

wrote to me after this was all over, and I finally turned her over to another fella, who really wanted a girlfriend. I don't know to this day whatever happened.

CG: They married someone.

VR: It's interesting, because her name was Fern.

GR: Yes, Fern. Fern Smith … and she said she had the dimensions of Betty Grable.

VR: Big competition for you. [Laughter]

GR: You did notice I forgot that story. [Laughter]

CG: How convenient. Any other interesting people you met? [Laughter]

GR: Lots of civilians, I don't remember any of them.

VR: He had asked me to come down to Panama City. He was going down to Panama City for a very short time.

GR: That was aerial gunnery school that we had there.

VR: … And when he got down there, he said, "No," he didn't want me down there. It was too dangerous.

GR: To walk the streets, and so on, it was not …

CG: In Panama City?

GR: At that time. This was 1944

CG: Having been to Panama City myself, what were your impressions of Panama City?

GR: I guess, it's a nice place now.

VR: Except for the tornadoes and the hurricanes.

CG: Was it a high crime area?

GR: It was just the general morals and everything of the place was not …

VR: At the time, the girls from NJC weren't allowed to go into town unless we had four. We couldn't go across, from one campus to the other, without three. I mean, if we wanted to go to the movies, we had to have four girls. This was all … Camp Kilmer was right there and all these soldiers were there, and they're on their way to ship out and they don't give a darn.

CG: So, was that the next place that you went from, Louisiana, was Panama City?

GR: I'm still based at Monroe, at Selman Field, which was a navigation school, but for about two or three weeks, or whatever it was, we went to Panama City for aerial gunnery training, and that's where you shoot machines guns out of a plane at another plane. We didn't shoot at a real plane, but we … at least, I hope we didn't aim at that … but we shot at a target thing that they were pulling. Down the Shore, you'd see these things they pulled, this was a target. That would give us some …

SB: Were there any accidents associated with such training?

GR: Never heard of it, but that was pretty hard sometimes, to see that banner, and if somebody made a mistake and instead aimed at the plane, unless he aimed poorly, he might have hit the plane. None that I've heard of.

LV: Overall, how dangerous was training in World War II for fliers?

GR: I never heard of any those little Piper Cub experiences resulting in any accidents, but you had the instructors with you.

VR: You had your troubles …

GR: Yeah, this … I'm thinking on several levels here. One is that ten hour basic training in a Piper Cub. The next time we were in a plane, is at Selman Field, which is the navigation school in Monroe … and the next time, sort of in the middle of that, is the Panama City one. Well, anytime you're flying in a plane, something can go wrong with the engines, and so on, and force a landing. That had happened a few times … not with me, there, but with somebody.

VR: Amherst, you blew a gasket.

GR: I don't remember that. See, I needed you along. Well, anyway, there was an instructor to take care of that.

CG: After Louisiana, what was next?

GR: That's the end of Louisiana. Navigation school is when I was commissioned, as Second Lieutenant, and declared to be a navigator. That was May 20th. Where was I to go then? Nebraska, wasn't it? When I got sick? Okay. Everybody in the graduating class was sent to Nebraska for the …

VR: Your assignments.

GR: Well, assignments, but to get all briefed and to get your supplies and oriented, and everything, for your overseas hop to the war area. One of the things for that was to get our medical shots for the different diseases that you might get in a combat zone. Well, one of those

that I got was Yellow Fever, and I don't know how many hours later … it was the next day … I know you came to see me in the hospital, but I hadn't been in the hospital yet.

VR: My sister graduated from college in Iowa, and he invited me to come out and visit them. My father was very open-minded. He let me go with about ten dollars in my pocket and a bus ticket … and I get out there D-Day. We spent the day together, and the next day, I went to base and we went to church. We came back, and he came up to my room, and we forgot the paper. So, he went downstairs and got the paper … and I had the papers spread out on the bed and he was in the chair, and he said, "Would you change places with me?" and he lay down on the bed and he was sick. He was sick. He was out of it. He was delirious.

GR: Yellow Fever. That's what it was.

CG: By the reaction, you actually got it. It happens in a small percentage.

VR: He was AWOL when I finally got him downstairs to the bus that night. He came out of it enough that night. I got him downstairs to the bus. He was supposed to be in at ten. This was eleven o'clock. Fortunately, the bus was right around the corner from the hotel entrance … and he was throwing up on the bus. So he said, "I'll have somebody call you if I can't get to you." So, somebody called me. So, I spent a week with ten dollars. Going out with no clothes, going out to see him in the hospital every day. He was fine, but his fever went up every night. During the daytime he …

GR: You had to be free of the fever for forty-eight hours before they would release me. Well, it would go down and then just before the forty-eight hours expired it would be up again.

CG: How long were you in the hospital?

GR: At least a week.

VR: I left after a week and he was still there.

GR: Probably ten days. So, in the meantime, this outfit that I'm with has gone overseas. They didn't wait for me.

CG: These were all the people you had been training with?

GR: All these people, my classmates in navigation school had all, now, shipped out during this week. So I'm a single … I'm unattached entirely … Well, that's when all this change in my life happened … because they all, I'm sure, and now that I'm getting into this, I'd like to look up some old names and see if I can find any phone numbers, and call and see where did they finally go when they went out. So, after I got out of the hospital, then I'm a freelancer, you might say … and I had to be assigned by the authorities to the outfit that had gone ahead, or anywhere else that they found a slot for me. Well, it turned out that I had never even heard of these B-29s before. Because everyone else was probably going to fly on a B-17 Flying Fortress, or a B-24 Liberator Bomber, and possibly other kinds of bombers that were smaller, B-25s, A-26s, most

likely, the two popular planes of that time. Well, the navigator on this crew in training here in the States, in Kansas, I understand he broke his leg playing softball, or something very unmilitary-like. So, he had to be replaced. So, this crew had already been training for two or three months with these new planes, and they were in Pratt, Kansas, and, so, I was added to replace this one feller, as sort of an after thought. I'm the new kid on the block here, with this crew. They already had a lot of training, and I'd just come from navigation school. This is the crew. [displaying a photograph] This is taken overseas, that why it's with our plane.

CG: Which one is you?

VR: The good-looking one.

GR: I had hair then.

VR: He had a hat on there.

GR: These planes had a crew of eleven crewmen, which is two or three more than the B-17s had, or B-24s, because we had some extra jobs that were being done on these that were not done on the others. We had a radar operator, because these planes were equipped with radar. We had a flight engineer, who was our … there were five officers, one of which was an engineer. The aircraft commander … I'll just mention the officers first ... aircraft commander, pilot, which is the same as the co-pilot, the bombardier, the engineer, the navigator, the radar operator, a radio operator, a tail gunner, a right gunner, a left gunner, and the central fire control gunner. I don't know if you want to know anything about those, but I can tell you what they do.

CG: Just tell us whatever you think.

GR: The B-29 had a remote … they were getting electronic back in those days. The gun turret on the top, unlike in the B-17, where the gunner actually held the machine gun and aimed it out the side of the plane, this was remotely controlled, electronically, by the central fire control gunner. Now, he could also take over the shootings of the left gunner, in case something happened to one of them, or the right gunner, or he could give over the controls to one of them. So, that's a new person to have, that's not on the other planes. The radar operator operated the radar system, which had a screen. There were two screens, one which he operated himself, and one was at my desk, which was used to help navigate. I could also act as the bombardier with this radar if the bombardier could not see the target because of clouds and smoke, or anything else that was down there. So, I could do it, but I couldn't see a specific factory, let's say, like the bombardier could see, but I could see the exact coastline, or maybe even piers sticking out into the harbor and things like that. So, I could pretty closely search where a target should be if I indeed did see a target, but usually it was the bombardier's task to do that. The radio operator, that's the same as on another plane. We had a tail gunner, who was all by himself all the way in the back of the plane. I'll see if we have a better picture of the plane here. Oh, maybe this is a good example. It does show … he's way back there at the tail all by himself. I should back up and say something else. A B-29 was pressurized, like modern day aircraft, whereas the B-24, 25s and 17s were not. So, when we're up at 30,000 feet it could be pressurized as if we were at only 8,000 feet. So, you didn't even have to have oxygen masks, or anything. So, the tail

gunner, he's in the separate little compartment back there, pressurized as well, and then there's a long tunnel to connect him to the center part here, where the right and left gunners are. So, we had to depressurize and let him walk through there and then he could be there, that's on the trip home from a mission … and then up front we are pressurized also with a tunnel to walk through. It's about this big and you just crawl through this tunnel the length of the airplane. Our plane was called Thumper, there's a picture here, named after the Walt Disney rabbit … and, well, we didn't fly all our missions in the same plane, but most of the early days we did. Ginny got to go in that same plane, and she didn't have to go to Saipan to do it. When it had finished its first bunch of missions, the commanding officer of the outfit flew it back home to the States to use it for a Bond Drive. So, it came first to Newark airport, and near Newark is the factory that built the engines. It was open to the public, people could come and see this … 'cause we were in the news, the news headlines, about two or three times a week, I guess.

CG: I'm not sure if you said this, but did you do the training for the B-29 in Nebraska?

GR: No, that's where the hospital was.

VR: He went to Pratt.

GR: Pratt, Kansas. A big, flat, open country there, great for air fields.

TK: So, you specifically trained on this plane that you hadn't been trained on before.

GR: Not this one, that was Thumper.

CG: No, on the B-29.

GR: Yeah, the B-29s were …

VR: We were married, that's how he got to Pratt.

CG: Oh, when did that happen? We missed the marriage.

GR: We have to back up, again.

TK: That's okay, it'll come full circle.

GR: Fate is working out here. So, out in the … well, I guess you've done enough interviews to know that the first half of the war the war wasn't going too well for the United States. Japan had taken over almost all the islands. Luckily, they didn't take over the Hawaiian Islands. They almost could have, if they had followed through with landing, or something. I think they could have captured the Hawaiian Islands, and then we would really be in bad shape, because we wouldn't have a base a couple thousand miles out into the ocean. We'd only have San Francisco, or Los Angeles, or something, as our most forward base. So, those first couple of years were going quite badly for us, but there got to be a point where the US was able to build many, many ships, battle ships, cruisers, and destroyers, and freighters, and everything else, and

airplanes of all kinds. We really had a great industrial machine going on here, so … and getting the men trained, and so on. So, finally it began to turn a little bit and we began capturing, and I say we, I mean the United States, began capturing some of these islands back, and that was the tough battle … But in order to use … the B-29's advantage is that it has a long range. We could go at least fifteen hundred miles in one direction and come back again without having to stop for fuel. So, we needed something like that, as a country, to be able to reach the Japanese homeland and bomb its factories, and so on, there. So, we had to have a base within that distance, which happens to be the Mariana Islands, made up of Saipan, Tinian, and you might even say Guam, although Guam is at the bottom of this group of islands … and it's those three islands that the US started to try to capture so that they could build B-29 bases there. Well, capturing Saipan was one of the toughest battles they ever had, and we lost a lot of casualties to capture these islands. Two of the worst islands to capture were Saipan and Iwo Jima, and both of those were involved with B-29s. Well, anyway, this campaign of capturing Saipan was just taking much longer than they had planned it. So, this involves me now, because the island wasn't secured, we can't go over there yet. They had a calendar where all this was going to work out nicely, I guess, on such and such a date the Japs would be conquered, and then they would start to build the runways, and then we could send the planes over. Well, this got quite a bit behind schedule, and here, in the States, we're training these crews, and so on, and dumping them out ready to be sent overseas, but there's no chance to go overseas. So, what are they going to do with us? So, they gave us a furlough.

VR: First of all, we decided we'd get married.

GR: Oh, oh, yeah.

VR: I was wondering when you were going to get to it. We would get married the next time you came home. When I was out in Lincoln, while he was in the hospital, and he was on his way overseas.

GR: The obvious thing then was, in Lincoln, was the next thing that was going to happen I'd go overseas. We did agree to get married, but we'll wait until the next time I came home. We're both, were sure it was after my tour of duty. Most of the dangers and all that will be past us by that time. Well, along came this furlough to go home, suddenly in the middle of that summer of 1944, we didn't forget what we said, so she had to rush real fast to plan a wedding.

VR: Ten days. Formal wedding, engraved invitations, showers, everything.

GR: That's all the warning I gave her was ten days.

CG: You must be a miracle worker.

VR: … And I went to school at the same time.

CG: Oh, really? Oh, you were still in school?

VR: I was going to Columbia, yeah. I was taking a summer course at Columbia University.

CG: So, you had already finished at NJC?

VR: No, I had two years, and I had taken a summer course, because I had taken advanced chemistry in my first year, well, senior chemistry in my first year and missed freshman … no, advanced physics in my freshman year …. missed freshman chemistry. Then, I took freshman chemistry in my freshman year and I missed the English. So, I took the English at Columbia. So, I was going to school on our honeymoon, and got the wedding in ten days.

CG: So, you were home for this two weeks, or ten days?

VR: Ten days, he got home on Friday, we were married on Wednesday.

GR: If you look up the … well, you can't anymore, I suppose, the records have been broken, but for many years when the weather forecast was given, they would always say, "This is the hottest since July 1944," that was the record.

VR: It hasn't made that record. That's when we were married.

TK: On the hottest day of the year.

GR: Hottest time of the …

VR: No air conditioning in the hotels. Nothing.

GR: Well, they didn't have air conditioning in the hotels then. We went to New York City for our honeymoon.

VR: Well, I was going to Columbia.

TK: You got married, and got everything together …

CG: … and had a honeymoon, too.

VR: Yeah, while I went to school. I got up every morning, went to school. He stayed in bed.

GR: You did nest in the first day after we …

VR: Yeah, he said I should not go the first day. We were up at six o'clock … it was so hot.

TK: Where did you go after the furlough was over?

GR: Then it was back to Kansas.

VR: I had to finish and take my exams, and go out and meet him afterwards.

GR: So, everything slowed down for a while. Actually, the island of Saipan wasn't taken, I guess, until October, maybe September, or October of that year.

VR: You were there about six weeks, and then you went up to Kearny, Nebraska, and you got another leave.

CG: Why did you go back to Nebraska?

GR: I guess that was the staging … Kearny, Nebraska was the staging area for going overseas to the Pacific.

VR: You got another leave, though.

GR: We did not fly our own airplane over. The other crew did. Two crews shared a plane. Because the way it worked, since each mission was fourteen, or fifteen, or sixteen hours, you didn't usually fly a mission today and then another one tomorrow, but with two crews alternating back and forth on the plane, and the ground crew gets it all serviced and ready to go again, they can use the same plane possibly every day … and the other crew that's there. This was the commanding officer's crew … the commanding officer of our squadron crew.

CG: How long were you in the plane, usually?

GR: Average, fourteen, sometimes. The most was like almost sixteen, but that was not a regular combat mission, we were on a rescue mission.

VR: They didn't have bombs on it, so … they could use more gas, if they went sixteen hours.

CG: Did they have facilities and food and all that on board?

GR: Yeah, well, …

VR: Pork sandwiches. You all got sick on pork sandwiches.

GR: Yeah, once the whole crew got sick because they served pork, and apparently pork and flying don't go together. They told us that afterwards. You know, we shouldn't have had pork, maybe if it had been beef, or chicken, or something else.

TK: Not that it was bad, per se, it's just the altitude and the swine combined.

GR: I don't know. Yeah.

CG: So, you had everything with you there on the plane.

GR: Yeah, we were given enough supplies.

VR: That tail gunner back there, sitting there, I'd be claustrophobic.

GR: Well, he didn't get back in there until we got near the target, dear. The plane would fly low over the ocean in order to conserve the fuel, because it's very heavy on takeoff. It's loaded with the bombs, it's loaded with all the fuel it can carry, and so on. So, to lift that weight into higher altitude takes more horsepower on the engines, and all that sort of thing, to raise it up. So, they keep it down for the first 1,000, maybe 1,000 miles, or so, burning up the fuel without it having to climb. Then, it was lighter and when we were under a couple hundred miles off the coast of Japan, then we would climb up to the altitude that would be used for the bombing. Now, that was the highest that planes would be dropping bombs, because the others couldn't fly that high, over 30,000 feet. Now, that's common with today's jet planes. Every time you take a flight, you literally go off at 31,000 and don't think anything of it. That was a big deal then, especially with propeller engines. Although they were very powerful, they were not like today's jets.

SB: Did you ever get a chance to do low altitude bombings?

GR: That's another story. I don't know how much time you want to spend.

CG: Oh, we want to hear it.

TK: We have time. [Laughter] We also have an entire box of tapes.

GR: Well, I don't know how much detail you really want.

CG: What was your impression of the trip to Saipan?

GR: We went over on a plane, we didn't go by ship. We went over on an air transport plane, which was called the C-54 in those days. That's a separate branch of the Air Force that carries personnel, and supplies, and so on. It's not part of the B-29 outfit. They served everywhere around the world.

SB: What was your first impression of Saipan? When you first arrived, how built up was it?

GR: I have pictures here that really show … I don't know which book it's in now, how it looked. I wouldn't even guess how it looks today, it's probably like a regular tourist island. It was very barren. It had a couple … had a little harbor.

VR: It had a sugar mill?

GR: Yeah, a sugar mill. There were … Saipan had been in the possession of Japan for decades and decades. I don't know when it goes back to. Whereas, Guam was originally a US island. So, on Saipan there were more Japanese people living there, as well as native people that were called the (Shamorans?).

VR: Missionaries?

GR: There was a little missionary station there, but not really a lot of people. They had a little sugar mill, and a little harbor, and, I guess, that's about it.

CG: What about the landscape?

GR: The landscape of the island was just natural. I mean, how it had formed over millions of years, as, I guess, a volcanic island originally, with a lot of coral.

VR: They took off the cliff and dropped down to get the speed up.

CG: Was there much devastation from the occupation of the island that you noticed?

GR: See, they'd already started to … when we arrived there at the end of October, first of November, they'd already started to bulldoze places, and had a runway already filled and areas for soldiers to have their tents to sleep, and so on. So, some of this was already changing, almost in front of our eyes, before we got there and while we were there. So, how much was a little battlefield here and there, I don't know, because it was probably got all swept up there … But the Japanese had a lot of caves, and whatnot, from the nature of this land, that they were hiding in, and they would hold out for as long as they could against our invading forces. So, even after we got there, they were still capturing some that were in caves, and one night, in the enlisted men's mess hall, while they were having their lineup to get their food, as the soldiers went by, there was this one Japanese that snuck in there. They captured him, but he'd gotten in the line.

CG: For food?

GR: For food. There's a picture of him somewhere in here. If I have time later I'll get the picture. I can't talk and look for pictures, too.

CG: Oh, definitely.

VR: Well, they can't see the pictures on the tape.

GR: Where are we now? Do you want me to back up on anything?

CG: No, I'd like to hear more about your time on Saipan before the missions actually started.

GR: Okay. We lived in Quonset huts. If you don't know what those are, they're metal half-cylindrical buildings, and they were open at both ends, which was fine on a tropical island, because it was quite warm. I was lucky, I claimed a bunk at the end, so, I was near where air could circulate. There were fifteen of us living in each, at least with the officers, there were fifteen living in each Quonset hut.

VR: So, that was three crews.

GR: … Which represented the officers of three different crews. Now, we had a lot of casualties, throughout our tour of duty of planes shot down, lost, and somebody individually hurt, and so on.

In this particular Quonset hut, of our three crews, was the only one that nobody got hurt in any way. Just luck. None of us got any Purple Hearts.

CG: How were other people wounded?

GR: Well, the casualties came from, first of all, being shot down over the enemy territory … and if you made it okay, over the enemy territory, and still got shot at, maybe nobody got hurt, but the plane got hurt enough, maybe it knocked out an engine or punctured a fuel tank, or something, that the plane still was in trouble on this long trip home. So, some went down at sea, and they would radio in their position as to where they say they were ditching, and the base would send out search planes to look over that area.

VR: It's called the Dumbo Mission.

GR: Yeah. We served as a Dumbo Mission once. We had a boat strapped under the belly of the plane, and if we found a crew ditched like that, we would get down to the boat, if we could and drop it near them, and they would have a little boat … But in most cases when the search crew went out there they never found anything at all. As a navigator, I had my own opinion, and I think in many cases, the position that was given was not the place that they did go down. I think it was an error, not necessarily of the navigator, but …. I have to back up again and say something else in order to make that clear. Before the war, apparently even learned people had never known of something called the jet stream, which we know everyday now just by watching the news … But when we first encountered that jet stream, we didn't know what was happening, because we would be at that altitude, which was like 30,000 feet plus, where the jet stream would be operating, and bouncing through … but that thing is going a couple hundred miles an hour, the air of the jet stream, and we're going maybe 300 miles an hour, maybe 250 or so, and we'd look down at the target area and we're hardly moving, going against this wind, which is always coming from the West, as you can see on a weather map. Then, if for whatever reason, you turn around and go with it, you'd go "zoom," like 500 miles an hour in an easterly direction. Well, after a few experiences with that, then, they briefed us about, you know, watching out for this, and so on. If the plane … if the navigator has directed the pilot to fly a certain angle, a compass heading, based on the wind pushing it to the side, that's fine. You've got the right kind of a drift and you could go with a straight path you want, because you're heading into the wind as much as you're being drifted off, so it balances out, and you end up going straight … But, then, you turn around, after the bombing mission, and you head back home, and now you drop down to a lower level where there is no jet stream and you still have that … the pilot's still following that heading. Now, you're going to go … you've overcorrected for the new conditions, so you're going to go considerably to the left, or to the west, or whatever, and it may be a while before the navigator catches that to make a correction. In the meantime, it may have … First of all, an angle is only a few degrees, when you go 1,000 miles at that degree, you can end up in being 100 miles off your course. Then, the prevailing winds down around Saipan are from the East. In the meantime, we've been correcting for a west wind. So, if they report the position where the plane is going down into the ocean, it just seems inevitable that it can't be very accurate, and I think, in many cases, they were just, maybe floating out there for days, I don't know … and then the ocean is so big, you know, you just can't do the whole thing.

TK: Did you actually have cases where you would go and lower the boat down and find the people?

GR: They did, but we were only on one mission then. Most of our missions were regular combat missions, where we dropped bombs. We went on one Dumbo Mission, that's another Disney character ... and that was this boat that was strapped to the bottom of the plane, and would have been dropped if we had found anybody, but nobody was reported missing on that trip. On another trip, another combat mission was a weather strike mission, which means we went to Japan, all the way across Japan, into the Sea of Japan, which is between Japan and Korea, observing the weather all the time and reporting that back, so, the next day they would have the understanding of the weather to plan the missions of that next day.

VR: You had how many wings? You had wings of the navigator, you had wings of the weather observer. Did you ever get wings of the bombardier?

GR: No, but it was called navigator/bombardier. Am I talking too much? [Laughter]

CG: No.

GR: Oh, and the other … I might as well toss these in. There were two other times that we took off for a mission but we didn't complete a mission. Once we had barely taken off and look out at this number three engine here, one, two, three, four … number three … and there's a stream of black smoke like coming out of it. It wasn't smoke, it was oil that was coming out of it. Well, you can't continue a mission that way, so after … we had to fly around a little while, because the rest of the planes were still taking off and they're not going to make all that stop, while we come back for a landing. So, that was all right. They dumped the bombs into the ocean, near Saipan, just to get rid of them. You don't want, if possible, you don't want to land a plane with bombs on it. That's a no, no, because something could shake them up, and that's the end of everything. So, that was an aborted mission. There was another time that we had to abort a mission, two times, and I forget what was the real cause of that one. Some of the oil pressures were not what they should be and they dropped it.

CG: What was your first mission?

GR: I've got all that right here. I've got the whole bunch … one right after another. That's the whole of Japan there.

VR: Where was your first trip? That's what they asked you.

GR: Yeah. Okay.

CG: First mission.

GR: Well, okay. The official one was November 27, 1944, which was Tokyo.

----------END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE----------

CG: This continues an interview with Gerard Rau on December 4, 1998, in Pennington, New Jersey, with Carmen Godwin:

TK: Tara Kraenzlin.

LV: Lou Vitano.

SB: Steve Boikess.

TK: You were just explaining to us about your first mission.

GR: Well, the first official strike mission by the Seventy-Third Wing was November 27, 1944. That was Tokyo. The flight of our own plane … now every plane doesn't necessarily take the same time, but for us it was … thirteen hours and forty minutes.

CG: That was quick. [Laughter]

GR: The planes take off, one right after another, off the runway, with maybe … sixty minutes apart, but they had duel runways.

VR: Sixty minutes?

GR: Sixty seconds. I'm sorry, sixty seconds apart … but Isley Field had a second runway built right next to the first one. So, a plane would be released to run down the runway at a moment, and then thirty seconds later that next plane would be released to take off from the alternate runway, and then etc., and so on. So, it was sixty seconds apart for each plane, on each runway, but alternating between each other. So, all these planes, all getting out there at once don't start forming a big formation, because you use more fuel while you're trying to keep everything in exact position where … where they have to … accelerate a little harder and then you've got to back off on each plane, and so on. Each pilot has to …because they're very close to each other and compact … but you don't do that until you get up over the target area. That's where you want to be … in formation. If you're off by yourself somewhere out there, then it's bad. So, the planes are taking off like this and they're all going up on their own. They're each being navigated on their own, and then they are to meet at a certain spot, set ahead of time and agreed on by all. You'd get together and make this bomb run onto the target. At a certain point, they call the initial point, and the formation has to be formed by the time it's gets over that, and then we fly in formation over the target and they drop the bombs, and after that, they're all on their own once again … and they all come back separate.

So, that's why, for us maybe, on this particular trip it was thirteen hours and forty minutes. Maybe for another plane it would have been fourteen hours, or maybe it would have been a little less, or something, I don't know. I've forgotten which trip this was, but this notation tells me we had a little problem on that trip. As I said before, the B-29s are pressurized. So, if you … just like a balloon, if you puncture a hole in it and the air that's inside of it is a higher pressure than

the air on the outside, it will come escaping out that hole. Well, I don't remember why one of our blisters flew out. That's this picture here. I'll find the picture later. There's a blister there, which I used for navigation by the stars. It's a Plexiglas dome about two feet across. Now, if that thing blows out of there, then all the air that is inside the plane goes rushing out, and you've got to get your oxygen mask on or you're in trouble. You'll pass out. So this blister blew on us on our first mission.

CG: What were your first impressions while flying over Japan? Did you have any fears concerning the mission?

GR: Well, you don't really … it's just like traveling across our own country today, in a plane or on a train. In a plane … you look down there and it's kind of impersonalized, it's just a patchwork of fields, forests and so on. Whereas if you're traveling on a train, you look out the window and you see the people and how things look and things like that.
So, even though you're right there, at first anyway, we were maybe five miles away, never closer than five miles from Japan, because we were five miles high … and looking down on the land, and if it wasn't cloudy, you didn't really see anything except the geological image. So, it was not personal.

TK: What were your feelings knowing that you were flying over this country that we were fighting?

GR: If we were honest, we're kind of scared, because they're shooting up at us with antiaircraft guns … ends up being exploding fragments aimed to hit you, really … They didn't turn out to be that accurate … but they tried to hit with these exploding [shells], which are made up of little pieces of metal, and so on. As they explode out they puncture the airplane, or the engine of the plane or whatever, and disable it. Then besides that, you're afraid of the fighter planes, which try to shoot you down. Now, in a way, the Japanese pilots were different from the German pilots. In their philosophy of life, I guess, they, in their mind, they really believe they will get special life thereafter if they died courageously for their homeland. So, they believe that so much, they're willing not just to shoot at you, but to try to hit you with their plane … and they might injure your plane … or they did it with ships, too, in the navy … especially on Okinawa, by these Japanese pilots flying their planes right into the ships. For them it's suicide, but to us, it's not fighting fair.

CG: Did this happen to anyone that you know?

GR: Yeah. Somewhere I can show you pictures of this. One of them flew back all the way to Saipan with the top of the tail blown off … There's another one where the both went down. They never made it back.

VR: There was an awful lot of propaganda and hate.

GR: Yeah, they were very much afraid of us. I've got a picture here of one of the native people in Saipan with American soldiers … and they were afraid that we were going to kill them, or torture them, or something like that, they'd been told that by the Japanese, and yet it would have

been great to be a prisoner of war of the United States, because we did treat our prisoners civilly and humanly, and so on.

SB: With regards to the Americans, was there hatred towards the Japanese among the men?

GR: Well, also, it was hard to forget that here, we were attacked by this country when we didn't do anything belligerent against them, so, "remember Pearl Harbor." I mean to this day, it bothers me a little bit that the Mitsubishi …

VR: Better write it down, he is, one of these days.

GR: If I accidentally do that, don't quote me.

VR: Not the people, the Mitsubishi company, because they made the planes.

GR: Yes, because that was one of the companies that made the planes that were running into us. Yeah.

CG: How do you feel about the Volkswagen?

VR: He didn't go there.

CG: Otherwise we'll start eliminating a lot of brands of cars.

GR: These pilots were simply … Japanese and Germans. The Germans were pretty daring, too, but they knew when to sort of back off and fly the plane another day. They were … they had a different philosophy, and they were still a dangerous enemy, but we were dangerous to them, too.

TK: How frequently did you fly missions?

VR: How many flights did you have?

GR: Thirty-five all together.

VR: Thirty-five from November to …

GR: … But there was some time off. I went to … I got to go to a rest leave in Hawaii once. But here are the dates, February 3, 4, 7, 9, 13 … well, some of these are not combat.

TK: Some of those are local missions.

GR: Training in between … or test flights, calibrating.

VR: Here's 2/15, 2/23, that's eight days apart. Those are …

GR: This didn't seem right as I was reading them off.

VR: Two, 2/25 you went again, so that's two days later. Towards the end he went faster.

GR: Oh, yeah ... But these would all be like thirteen, fourteen hour missions. These say March … 16, 18, 21, 24, 31. Well, that gives you a rough idea.

CG: I know Steve had a lot of interest in the flying missions.

SB: One thing you were talking about before, about how the planes came back with the whole tail slashed off. There were no emergency stops in the sixteen hundred miles back.

GR: That was a bad thing … when you're fifteen hundred miles from home and you have trouble, it would be nice to pull into a rest stop, or something, but there wasn't any then. This changed, fortunately, there are. See, the Air Force is getting a lot of glory and publicity out of this, but I have a high degree of respect and admiration for the other branches of the armed forces. We had a very rough time, and what they were doing, they were doing it mostly, you might say, for us … Because Iwo Jima was after, halfway to Japan, and if only we had Iwo Jima, some of these crippled air planes coming back wouldn't have to ditch at sea, because they would stop in Iwo Jima and get fixed up.

SB: Was it common that planes would fly back here with minimal damage?

GR: Most of the time there wasn't any damage. It wasn't the majority of the times that everybody got damaged.

CG: When you were in Saipan, what islands did we have, or the United States, at that time?

GR: Up until then they captured all the ... Oh, gee, I forget them all now.

VR: Troop flights, you asked about making a pit, or a stop.

GR: I have to finish that story.

VR: I couldn't tell you.

GR: What is the other?

VR: The one where you ….

GR: Let's see, the Marshall Islands, Eniwetok … these are islands that we captured before Saipan.

CG: I was just wondering where your closest rest stop would be.

GR: There would only be one chance for a rest stop between Saipan and Japan, and that would be Iwo Jima.

TK: Right.

GR: That was one of the most casualties for an invading force to take, the taking of Iwo Jima, we lost a lot of Marines, and soldiers and sailors on that invasion. It saved a lot of us, because somewhere in the literature here I've got the count as to how many emergency flights were made there. I take my hat off to all the …

VR: He made one.

GR: We landed there once, which is a story in itself. I don't want to get one thing ahead of another thing, that's why I back up once in a while. You asked me the questions as you like and I'll try to answer what's in your mind. I may not have it all in the right order either. Just because we're mentioning Iwo Jima, I guess … These were pictures taken by aerial photo. I think this is Tokyo.

VR: You can't record that on this.

GR: I know you can't record what I'm showing, but this helps me get my thoughts together so that I know what I'm talking about. These are photos of, looking down on the ground from our altitude. Now that's not a cloud you see there, that's smoke, smoke of Tokyo.

CG: From the bombs?

GR: Yeah. Now, before May and June, when we had more and more airplanes to send out … at first there were just a handful of planes that went up. As more and more got built and sent overseas, and so on, the raids were able to get bigger and bigger. So, when they started to bomb the whole city like this, there were hundreds of … maybe 500 B-29s would go over at a time. Forget the one that I was about to tell you about Iwo Jima, and I'll go back. In the first several months of bombing experiences, the accuracy of hitting a target was kind of disappointing to everybody. Some of it was the weather, very high altitude from which we dropped the bombs, and things like that. They just weren't knocking out all the targets as they should have been. So, General Curtis LeMay, who was the general of the whole Twentieth Air Force, maybe you remember him, he even ran for President or Vice President, or something, once after the war. He came up with the idea that, "Let's bomb these cities at a very low altitude," like maybe only several thousand feet, and because you wouldn't have to fly at high altitudes you could take all the armament out of the planes, that's the bulkheads, and so on, that protect you on the inside from bullets getting shot around. That's heavy … and therefore you could carry more bombs if they took that out. They wouldn't have to put as much fuel in the plane, because it wouldn't have to climb that high, and if they went over at night, maybe you wouldn't be spotted too easily, even by the fighter planes. So, they started this blitz. Well, our morale was really down when we heard that. We were thinking with all our armament taken out, and all our protection around us was gone, and going in low … In the long run it turns out he was right. So, that, as you can see in these photos, are large fires there. Well, even if you have a little bonfire and you see the

little embers, and so on, the hot ones go up in the air like that. That is the illustration, that great thermo air currents are happening as the hot air is lighter and rises, and the cold air comes in, and you've got these great, big, fast plumes of air rushing up, and other air is coming down. This is a big picture of what is happening. Well, you fly through something like that there's a terrific updraft and downdraft, and it'll take a plane and suddenly it'll raise it several hundred feet, if you get into a downdraft and dropping down suddenly to several hundred feet, that's what happened. If you're not one of the first planes over when there aren't many fires, but you are after, when there's a lot of fires, there's a tremendous thermo experience going on here. Well, on this particular mission, we had just dropped our bombs at about the moment that we get caught, I guess, in a downdraft … and the plane fell down faster than the bomb did that fell out of the bomb bay doors. So it came back up into the bomb bay of the plane and by now it had turned around and faced the other direction. The front was towards the rear and the rear towards the front. It had gotten wedged up in there. So the bombardier crawled back in there, crawled into the bomb bay door, and tried to dislodge the thing so that it could drop, but he just couldn't get it to. So, we had to fly home with that bomb in there. As I've said before, you don't land a plane with bombs in it, because when you do, you might set the thing off, and when you do that, well, that's the end of everything. So, that's the flight that we were kind of scared of, scared of … but Iwo Jima had been taken by then, so we landed there … But along with all that, our radio equipment had been knocked out of commission. So, the pilot couldn't even talk to the control tower at Iwo Jima to tell them what our problem was … just that they'd see a plane coming in and they know that it's a B-29, so they're going to let it land, but when they didn't hear from us, they wouldn't stop from letting us do it … they must have figured we had a radio problem. Well, we landed and didn't explode …

VR: What was the condition of the runway?

GR: Dusty, I remember that.

VR: It was bumpy. They hadn't smooth it, there was a live bomb and a bumpy …

GR: Yeah, it was early days and the runway wasn't too nice, but … Oh, this bomb, and every bomb, has a fuse on the end of it … but that bomb has a round thing at the end of the bomb and has fins on it, and as the bomb falls through the air, the air turns, flows through these fins and causes it to turn. So the fuse, as it falls, is turning all the time, until it gets unscrewed from all its threads. Then it falls off. Well, at that moment on, it's fused. I mean, anything hitting it, or shaking it, or it hits the ground, or whatever, makes it explode. That's the basic principal behind it. Well, that had only gone about halfway down, as it got wedged up in our plane. So, it couldn't turn anymore, fortunately, and, I'm here to tell the story.

VR: How about the other trip when you were knocked out?

GR: Yeah. I forget the conditions over the target, right now.

VR: They weren't good.

GR: No, but that part isn't the basic part of the story, anyway, so, I can leave that out. We're not very far off the target now … this was another mission. We had dropped the bomb, and I, usually, I think I always did, gave the pilot the heading that he should aim the airplane at when we're done with the mission. I gave him that just before the mission. So, he already had that, so, if something happened to me, he'd know which way to aim the plane towards Saipan. So, apparently I'd done that on this trip, I'm sure. We're flying along not very far after the coast of Japan, when I looked over and the, diagonally opposite me was where the engineer had his station, and he's kind of slouched over a little bit and he looks very blue. His skin was bluish. So, on the intercom I told the pilot. I knew it was a lack of oxygen. He had no oxygen. This is what happens to people with anoxia, when you don't have oxygen, you get blue. You're in the process of dying, really, but that's the early stage. I can tell you about that later on, too. So, I told the pilot, on the intercom, that, "Chuck is out and he's blue." So, he told me to take the portable oxygen tank and go over and help him. So, I did, and that's the last I remember. Now, either I didn't put the thing on properly, or whatever, but at any rate, I become the same victim as Chuck. So, the first thing I know when I'm coming to again, they plopped me into the pilot's seat and I woke up, starting blinking and wondering, "Where am I? Where am I?" Well, all this took quite a while for everything to get all straightened out. The bombardier came back and helped us both, I guess, and I don't know … maybe, the co-pilot … I don't know what was going on all that time, but they got us all breathing again and being okay. I guess. So, all this time I'm not navigating, of course. Right? Who's knowing where the plane is? Are we going right? Are we heading home, or not? Well, it's daylight, at nighttime I could have shot the stars and taken the celestial fix, but it's daytime. If I could have seen the ocean, I could take a reading on the white caps, reading the drift of the airplane, which would be a help to navigate. It's not everything, but it would be a help … but it was all clouded underneath. There were complete clouds underneath. You couldn't see anything like that … and so it looked a bit hopeless, at that point, as to me being able to accurately do any navigating. So, all we could do is to just follow the heading I'd given the pilot before. So, all of a sudden, our left gunner recorded on the intercom, "There's an opening in the cloud down there and there's an island down there." Well, I'm on the left side of the plane, too, my location. I looked there and there's this island. I'm sure there's only one like it in the whole Pacific Ocean, which looks like a cigar sticking out of the ocean, because it's very narrow, but very tall … and I remembered such an island like that. Its name is Sofu Gan, and it's at least 100 miles off the coast of Japan … and now, I knew where we were. So, now I have a brand new starting point, you might say. So, from then on, we were able to have no navigational problems, but immediately after that the clouds all covered over again. It was just that, not a split second, but a split minute, when that window was open to see that island.

VR: Saved his life and all the others on the plane.

GR: I'd like to believe that God opened it up for us.

CG: You had mentioned earlier about the accuracy of the bombing.

GR: In the earlier days, the accuracy was disappointing.

CG: So did you have specific targets then?

GR: Oh, yes. The targets were aircraft engine factories, shipyards, traditional military type …

VR: Not the emperor's palace.

GR: No. We had specific instructions not to bomb the emperor's palace … but the factories, aircraft factories, and ports, harbors, things like that … steel mills, you know, you can imagine whatever would be a strategic industry.

VR: Not the population.

GR: No, but Japan was unique, too, in that most of its war machine industry were all little family-like shops. A family would have a place no bigger than this, and they would make a certain component for an airplane, for example, or something … and there were like hundreds, maybe thousands, of these throughout the city. They didn't have as many of the big factories, but they had all these little ones. So, that's why, militarily, they wanted to destroy-like the city, burning it.

SB: During the war how much of a sense did you have of how well your mission would do?

GR: Oh, we knew after each one how successful, or unsuccessful it was. I mean, nothing was kept back form us.

VR: We were censored, we didn't know.

GR: Maybe if you read headlines back here, they didn't stress the disappointing results, but maybe emphasized the positive ones. I don't know.

VR: The newspapers would say how many planes were shot down, but they didn't say how many planes were lost. Some were lost after they left the target.

GR: See, they didn't want the Japanese to know if we lost anymore after Japan. The Japanese knew how many they shot down, but they wouldn't have known if we lost them going home. So, they, naturally, wouldn't admit that publicly.

VR: This picture of the plane there, after this trip, they got the plane, and Tokyo Rose was after Thumper after that one.

GR: They mentioned us on the propaganda radio.

VR: 'Cause that meant that they had shot down six Japanese planes.

GR: Maybe I should explain what all this means. It was our tail gunner who was the artist. He drew these things on the planes. Now, that's just Thumper, but here, each of these little Thumpers here, where he's carrying the bombs like he is here, instead of the word, Thumper, it

says the name of the target … Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, or whatever. If it's a little Japanese flag there, that means this ship, this airplane shot down whatever number of Japanese fighter planes.

VR: The Purple Heart.

GR: Yeah, one of the Purple Hearts. The other crew was flying, and they got somebody hurt. Where's the Purple Heart? I can't find it.

VR: There's a Purple Heart right there, there's one, there's one, there's one, they were hit each time.

CG: So, tell us about Tokyo Rose.

GR: Tokyo Rose was a propaganda person that spoke as if she were English, I mean American, and would try to … she played modern music, and so on. That was modern music of that day, of course, that was our music, and she tried to lower the morale of American soldiers, not just flyers, but American solders anywhere … She would suggest our wives were having affairs back home, anything to start lowering our morale, or make us worry, or something like that.

TK: Make you doubt where you are.

GR: Yeah. She once referred to this plane, Thumper, that, "We're going to get you," or something like that, "because we know you now," or something like that.

VR: She would know the names.

GR: Yeah, I don't know how she got that stuff. There must have been some spies somewhere around.

CG: You could get this anywhere?

VR: Pardon?

CG: The station.

GR: Her radio station … Tokyo … I don't know what they called it. Radio Tokyo, or something, was in Tokyo. I mean, it was broadcast from Tokyo. We had our own station for our own use down in Saipan, called Radio Saipan … but it didn't do that sort of thing. It did play music and get the news and what baseball team was wining the [World] Series, or something like that … But, in fact, I even used that as a radio signal once in a while to see where Tokyo was, you know, on my various dials, and so on. If the radio operator tunes into a certain station it has a needle on the dial that tells where that station is in relation to the airplane. Maybe it's ten degrees to your left. If it's Saipan you're looking for, you know that Saipan is off to our left ten degrees. So, radios were a little help, also for navigating.

CG: Do you think she succeeded in lowering morale, or did people really take her as a joke?

GR: Most of us resisted her attempt, and part of it was a joke, I think. I don't know about, let's say, the soldiers in the foxholes, so to speak …

VR: Maybe the fellers that had "Dear John letters."

GR: Yeah. I don't know … but I think she even had a war trial on her after the war or something, didn't they?

VR: Yeah.

SB: Did you ever experience anything like Washing Machine Charlie, seeing a Japanese plane coming over and dropping a bomb in the middle of the night?

GR: We had … oh, there's definite destruction of our planes out, back at Saipan, in the early days they raided us. Yeah, as a matter-of-fact, we were on a mission up there once when they had a daytime mission and destroyed a number of planes right on the field there. We were safer up there then we were had we been home.

SB: It was a single plane that would go out and just drop a few bombs and just to keep people up in the middle of the night, they would do that.

GR: … But, see, you had our own antiaircraft batteries, and so on, to shoot those.

VR: You did have one plane that crashed there and that's the only time you smelled a burning body.

GR: Oh, let's not talk about that.

VR: That was the worst that he saw personally.

CG: Was it an American plane?

VR: No, it was a Japanese plane. That was the worst. Everything else was thousands of feet away.

CG: Did they ever kill any people on those missions, when the Japanese raided?

GR: You mean when they raided us?

CG: Yeah.

GR: I don't know. I mean, I knew then, but I just can't remember.

VR: I never heard anything about that, so I guess not. He landed back in Pearl Harbor the day the war was over.

GR: Oh, that's another thing.

TK: Did you know from the beginning that thirty-five was the number of missions you were going for, or …

GR: No. This was a low point in morale, because we were loosing a number of our planes in the early part of our campaign … and we were beginning to wonder how many of these missions can we fly and not be lost. If you, statistically, if you fly fifty missions where hardly anybody ever gets shot down, well, that's not bad … But if you fly fifty missions, and on everyone, ten planes get lost, you see the odds of surviving are a little bad. So, they didn't tell us at the beginning. They didn't even know how many there were going to make it, I guess … Morale was kind of low on that one point there. We figured that we couldn't probably fly more than twenty or twenty-five, before we'd have to be relieved, or replaced … but, it got to be twenty and then it got to be twenty-five, and then …

VR: Didn't the early ones do twenty-five, because they upped it, or did the later ones get reduced to twenty-five?

GR: No. The earliest to get out was thirty. I just missed that. I had thirty-five.

TK: So upon completion of your thirty-fifth mission, what happened then?

GR: Well, then I got … I don't know what happened with them, all I cared was about getting home. So, I was there, I guess, I've got the records here somewhere … but anyway, maybe a week or so after the last mission. By that time we'd turned in all our military possessions that we didn't need for our own selves … and we're put on a ship to go back for rotation to home, with the idea that the war was still going on, and we'd get home, and we'd have our furlough at home, and probably get sent back to there again a couple of months later, or whatever time slot it would have been. This boat was a very slow boat. It was a small boat, one of the liberty ship kinds, and I forget the exact style or class … but anyway, it was a small ship, room for maybe 100 personnel to sail in, but it mostly carried some kind of cargo, I guess, back and forth. We had a little destroyer escort up ahead of us there, to protect us against submarines, but it went about … what'd I say … about eight or nine knots at sea. It took sixteen days for it to get from Saipan to Pearl Harbor. Now, when we started out on this ship, the war was still going on steadily and forcefully, as it was when we left, but halfway through our trip you hear this news on the radio, on the ship there, and we didn't quite believe this thing, that a B-29 had dropped a bomb that was so forceful that it destroyed … the one bomb destroyed the whole city, or something. You know, this was baffling to us, who had already been through such things. We knew it took a lot more than that. How could one bomb be that big? … Then a few days later another bomb, as you know … So, we pulled into Pearl Harbor, I think this is correct, August 15th. Pearl Harbor is where the whole war started. We pulled into that harbor on August 15th, and as we pulled in … we arrived the night before, but we couldn't get into the harbor until daylight. The war was still going on up to that point, bombs and everything. Then we landed that morning, as I get off, the first thing I do is get a haircut, and while I'm getting my hair cut, it was announced on the radio, "President Truman has announced the Japanese surrendered." So, I thought it was kind of

timely, I got to the place where it all started on the same day that the war ended. Just a little sort of romantic story, I guess. I guess this is called romance, I don't know. When you're young and you dream up romantic thoughts, you think of some things that maybe … I don't know. Before I left to go overseas, I thought, "Gee, wouldn't it be nice, I mean, we were going to be apart, but, if at any one moment we could both look at the same thing, at the same time, and know that the other one is looking at it, too." Right? Maybe you can picture that. To me that's a romantic thought. So, okay, since I knew stars, we picked one of the stars in the Big Dipper, which is called Alkaid, and that was agreed upon, right? … Then, it occurred to me then and I'm going to be on the other side of the world and it's going to be daylight for one of us and dark for the other one.

----------END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO----------

GR: So, that thought was out the door. I'll give you a guess. What was the name of that slow boat that brought me home?

TK: Alkaid.

GR: It was the Alkaid.

CG: So, it worked out to be romantic anyway. [Laughter]

GR: No, no, no.

VR: Yeah. It took a long …

CG: You were set to come home anyway, but now you're coming home in peacetime.

GR: Yeah.

VR: He still said he was going back. They weren't going to let him out.

GR: Well, now the war was over. I guess, I thought … no, I had to stay there, I guess, for about two weeks in Hawaii, because the normal flow of planes, and ships, and everything, was a set pattern they had up until the end of the war. So many ships would probably going to Hawaii from the States, and so many from the States back to Hawaii, carrying supplies, and so on … But with the end of the war, now, they had to pick up our prisoners of war that were held by the Japanese, and all these things took priority now … and they had to send supplies over and even help the Japanese get through the transition of surrendering. So, there wasn't much air traffic, or ship traffic, or anything else, between Hawaii and California anymore. So, I was stuck there in Hawaii for two weeks … and it's nice to be stuck in Hawaii, but I wanted to get home, to her.

CG: So, then you went back to San Francisco?

GR: So, then finally I flew back to San Francisco and got a train home. I was assigned to Fort Dix for separation, and then we got back to Rutgers.

VR: Just in time.

GR: I just … the semester had just started, maybe, two weeks before.

CG: So, you just jumped right back into school, and right back into married life and everything.

GR: Now I'm a student with a wife and that made a difference.

CG: We often hear about the conduct of servicemen when they're not actually in battle, more so probably Navy men, as far as drinking and things like that. What kind of things did you observe?

VR: The government required you to take liquor with you.

GR: Well, we had an allotment, and so many … I don't even know the word, whiskey, or something. I didn't know one from another, but, anyway, I had an allotment of so many a month or something, I guess. I don't know what I did with it, but everybody had one, yeah. We didn't have to pay for it, but I didn't drink, so, I don't know if I gave it [away] or sold it.

VR: Sold it!

TK: You probably sold it.

GR: Yeah.

VR: He didn't smoke, drink, or swear, or play cards.

GR: I would have if I'd known how to play cards. [Laughter] So, I mean, it wasn't to excess. I mean, they didn't get in the plane to fly a mission and were drunk, or anything.

LV: How about when the men were on furlough?

GR: Well, furlough on Saipan … there wasn't such a thing. [Laughter]

VR: R & R on Hawaii, did they get drunk there?

GR: I guess so.

VR: In April he went to Hawaii for two weeks.

GR: Two weeks rest leave in Hawaii. Combat fatigue is something they feel, that if they get you away from the combat for a while, your mind, I guess, gets to rest. I don't know. It was nice to be there.

VR: He got to call me from there.

GR: Yeah. Yeah. Twenty-four dollar call, wasn't it?

VR: As much that I paid for my wedding dress.

GR: Yeah.

CG: Did you see people acting a little crazy in Hawaii?

GR: No. By that time everybody's lives, I guess, were just plain adjusted to a wartime economy, and whatnot.

VR: His R & R was in a private home on the far side of the island, kind of in the country, right on the beach, and he didn't have a lot of nightlife.

GR: Apparently, the owners of these nice, big, wealthy homes turned them over to the military to be used this way, and there were, I forget how many of us in there, twenty-five maybe. I don't know.

CG: What were you saying about the R & R in Saipan?

GR: The R & R from Saipan, I mean …

CG: While you were on Saipan?

GR: We were sent to Hawaii for this.

CG: Oh, I'm sorry, okay.

LV: You mentioned combat fatigue. Did you see a lot of men get involved in that?

GR: I never saw it. Theoretically, you know, how you begin to do crazy things.

VR: Didn't you say somebody was sent home from …

GR: I might have, I don't remember.

VR: It must be rare.

CG: So, you came back to Rutgers and jumped back into school, and married life and everything. Where were you living when you came back? Not in that old room on Douglas Campus.

GR: They had …

VR: Well, we finally ended up … we lived with a woman who was a teacher and went away every weekend, went home to West Virginia. We had her apartment. Then we moved into the faculty housing in … They're all gone now. We lived there for a year. No, we didn't live there very long. Then he went on for graduate work down at the University of Maryland.

TK: What was the transition like coming back to college? You had mentioned earlier, you noticed a real difference between yourself and all the other men who had been in the war and the people who were coming fresh out of high school. What was it like coming back having this mixed group at Rutgers?

GR: You were aware of it, but …

VR: We had our own fraternity. The married couples got together. We went to all the dances. We went to all the football games. We had a great time. It was four years before we had any children.

GR: Socially, you just didn't have anything in common with the younger students who hadn't been involved in service. We just didn't cross paths, except in a classroom.

CG: Did you find that they were less serious or anything like that in the classroom?

GR: I don't … I wouldn't say that they were less so than we were. We were coming back to get the rest of our education with a real purpose now, you know. We'd seen life.

VR: His grades jumped high, and he was fraternity chancellor, president of the Alpha Zeta.

TK: You were involved in the Ag fraternity.

GR: Yeah.

CG: What was involved in that?

TK: It's not a real traditional fraternity.

GR: No, it's not a house, a living …

VR: An honorary fraternity.

GR: It's just an honorary fraternity. You have to have certain grades, leadership, or something. I guess, I wouldn't have been put into that before the war, because, I think, leadership probably got developed a little bit as this experience. I think.

TK: So you're only at Rutgers another year?

GR: No, we finished … that now became my senior year, because as I said before …

CG: You had a shortened junior year.

GR: The junior year was already complete, in quotation marks. That was my senior year and that went right through June like usual … But I still did part-time jobs, one of which was working at the college's poultry farm, especially on weekends, and so on, when the regular staff that did that were not there. That meant feeding the chickens, gathering the eggs, and doing the record keeping that you do, and so on … but I also had help doing that. You didn't get paid, did you?

VR: (Holly?) did.

GR: That's right. I mean, you know, we didn't want to be apart on Sunday afternoons, or something, so she came …

VR: All day Sunday.

GR: So, she came out and worked with me.

CG: Makes the work go quicker.

GR: So, she had her experience with the chickens, too, like the rooster.

VR: We had one violent rooster. You went into the pen and they had garbage cans for the feed, to keep the rats out. So, this rooster, I mean, the first thing you went in there was grab the lid, and you'd hold it up as a shield, collect the eggs, record the numbers with one hand, and watched that rooster with the other. So, one day one of the fellows that worked there during the week, he got permission to take that rooster. Put him in a paper bag, with the legs sticking out, and he took it home on the train. It was in the bag so it didn't crow. He killed it when he got home, I guess … But oh, that was a … Then there was another rooster … this was hatching eggs. We were supposed to be hatching eggs. We had one rooster to fifteen hens. They were supposed to hatch, and that rooster would get into the nest and it would trap them. I'd leave it there all day. They didn't get any fertile eggs out of those hens. [Laughter] They were vicious, those two roosters. They didn't get rid of that one. It was interesting.

CG: Were you finished with school?

VR: No, I never finished. After he went overseas, I went back to college, 'cause I didn't get home from traveling with him, until November. I went to Brother's College, which is now Drew University, and so I went there for one semester. I was just reading the newspapers everyday and I'd get so upset. The young people who were in school then, they didn't seem to even know what was going on overseas, and that upset me, and by the end of that semester, I left. I thought, "I'm going to get a job with people around me." I went to work for a department store, and I had customers all the time, and I could talk to them … But we had a great time when he came home, because it was our school. I mean, we didn't loose any school years.

SB: What was it like when you first met after he came back from the war?

VR: Exciting, exciting.

TK: Did you notice any differences?

VR: No, no … We didn't know what we were going to do, and they took him right back into school, and he got his old car out of storage, which had no heater … and we found a room with Dr. Bear first, from … What did he teach?

GR: Soils?

VR: Soils … We only stayed with him for a short while. Then we found this apartment with this other woman, and we were there for a year, and then went over to Highland Park, and had an apartment there for a year, and then we went into faculty housing. We went down to the University of Maryland and lived with Dr. Olsen, and he worked in the USDA … He's the one that developed … he found out that … I don't know how many thousands of chicks he had … that he would have a fertile egg when there was no rooster. We would get a fertile egg … He got them to live, how long, six weeks? A very short time these chicks would live, a very short time. It was written up in *Life Magazine*, big center-fold and all, about this, that he was getting these fertile eggs from hens that hadn't mated and all. It was very interesting.

[TAPE PAUSED]

CG: Thank you.

TK: No problem.

VR: We had a lot of … You can turn it off and I'll tell about … and then put it back on and I'll tell you the end. Is it off?

CG: No.

[TAPE PAUSED]

VR: … At Toys-R-Us one night shopping for our grandchildren, we had all girls at that time, and I'm looking at girls things and he was over at the boys. He comes across a box of a model airplane, B-29, and on the cover is Thumper … J.M Campbell his pilot, exactly.

TK: Just the pilot and the plane?

VR: Well, it says …

GR: Everybody's name was outside the window. I mean …

VR: It was outside the window. It was J.M. Campbell, and all the names exactly. All his Thumpers, exactly.

CG: I guess you bought that.

VR: We bought that one, went back for another one, and when we were …

CG: Told the sales person?

VR: Well, I don't know, I guess he did. He was full of it, I'm telling you. We went down to Florida this year, and we went into a model ... and he's trying to get another one, 'cause he gave the first one to our oldest grandson, now our youngest grandson is getting to the age where he's thirteen, or fourteen, and maybe he would like it … and we couldn't find it. Not with J.M. Campbell … but they're going to try and see if they can get the things that glue on there, all the little Thumpers and everything … and maybe they still have that. They have the B-29s, but they don't have …

TK: Did you contact the company?

VR: Well, they're doing it. So when we go back … oh, he was so … So he bought two of them and sent them to the tail gunner who painted it, and he was thrilled, yeah.

TK: He hadn't seen it before?

VR: No, no. I guess, he didn't go in toy stores.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SB: You mentioned about Thumper being in Newark. At what point was the plane sent to Newark?

VR: It was about June.

GR: This crew, Colonel Haynes, had finished their missions. Maybe they only did twenty-five. They took it back over. Bond drive where …

VR: That's what it was for … and his sister, Colonel Haynes' sister, was my aunt's girlfriend. So, she was staying with my aunt when her brother came back, 'cause she wanted to see her brother, and the two of us went down to the airport together … and we got to go to the dinner that they were giving, and we got to crawl through it. There I am in a short skirt crawling through that tunnel, and climbing up into that plane. Nobody else went up, I did.

CG: So, when did you finally finish school?

GR: 1946. I'm the Class of '44, on record. I wanted to keep it that way, because of where I started out, but actually, I got out in '46.

CG: That's when you received your bachelors?

VR: That's when he got his bachelors. He got his Masters in '48, 'cause it took him a year and a half, because he had the fellowship, and he was working on the fellowship.

CG: Did you have your first child while you were still in school?

VR: At the University of Maryland.

GR: Well, after I went to graduate school, yeah, four years … '48.

VR: Down at the University of Maryland, 'cause we were married four years before we had any children. We were married in '44, and she was born in '48.

CG: You were at the University of Maryland then?

VR: Yeah.

TK: Okay, sorry.

[TAPE PAUSED]

GR: Distinguished Flying Cross twice and the Air Medal five times, I think … no, six.

TK: On the survey I think it is six.

GR: A survey?

TK: Just the pre-interview survey that you filled out for us, to give us information.

VR: It says six?

TK: I believe so.

VR: Yeah, they wanted to remove him from this crew, because he was a newcomer, and they said he hadn't enough experience. He said the pilot fought for him, so he stayed … he proved his worth, got them all back.

GR: See, when the colonel moved up to a wings position, and whatever else, a position elsewhere in the organization, then our crew became … was assigned to be a lead crew, which means that in those big raids, we'd go out ahead of the rest of them ... We were called pathfinders … and we would drop incendiary bombs, which could be seen in the dark, where they started fires, and then all the rest of the planes coming in the back wouldn't all have to make its own individual bomb run. They'd all aim at what we already started. So, at that point, they wanted, I guess, they thought I shouldn't continue with us, because I was …

VR: He did get first lieutenant in April, which was rather fast.

GR: May, wasn't it? About a year after I …

CG: So, how did you decide to go on, to graduate school? What spurred that decision?

GR: Job opportunities for any decent pay didn't exist for a bachelors degree then.

VR: He was getting $5,200 a year in the service, with his flight pay. That's a hundred dollars a week. That's fantastic, one hundred dollars a week. He got finished, his bachelors, and he applied for a job and he got a job offer of like $2,400 …

GR: … a year.

VR: Then he found a job in the University of Hawaii that was just perfect, just in his major, just perfect. They paid $3,600 a year and they wrote back, "Sorry, they want a doctorate."

GR: That's all … it was a doctorate they needed.

TK: So, you realized that you needed to get a doctorate to get somewhere.

CG: When did you start on that?

TK: Immediately following undergraduate?

CG: Immediately following undergrad.

GR: I just went from one graduate program to the next. I finished the Bachelors, then I went to the Masters, and then I started on the doctorate.

VR: … But he did not get it. Everybody advised him to forget it.

GR: They said the money is in the private business world, like being a farmer.

TK: Really? So, what did you decide, to do that after you decided not to continue with graduate school?

VR: Went into farming.

CG: Where?

GR: Right over here.

VR: Down the road.

GR: Three and a half miles from here.

CG: Oh, really?

VR: Built a chicken house, built a house.

SB: How long were you a farmer?

GR: Well, as short as possible. Unfortunately, at that time … first of all, let's back up, again. I'm always backing up. New Jersey had five thousand poultry farms in 1948, let's say, about that time, five thousand poultry farms. A lot of them were south and up here in Hunterdon County, and so on. We were the "Garden State" then, anyway.

TK: Right.

GR: … And that building holds five thousand mating chickens. Anyway, but that is the point when the whole industry turned around. Today, I don't think you could find fifty poultry farms throughout the State of New Jersey.

TK: Right.

GR: So, after getting into it for, maybe, five years, you get out of it, the sooner the better, because it was a declining industry. After the advent of refrigerated tractor trailers, eggs could be produced cheaper in the South, with cheaper land, cheaper labor, less severe winters, and so on, that New Jersey farmers couldn't compete with the prices that the southern states farmers could do it for, so, that knocked a lot out of …

TK: Did you continue to live in the farmhouse?

VR: Yeah, we just moved here four years ago.

GR: Yeah.

TK: You stayed there?

VR: We stayed there for … we went into business in '49, and Debbie was born in '52, and you went to work with General Motors in '52, so, that's three years.

TK: What did you do then?

GR: I went to work for General Motors. I would have done anything at first, just because I had run up some feed bills, that I wanted to pay off, to feed the chickens … and it was about this time of year, no, it was earlier, about the first of November, and I thought "I ought to get a job in a Sears, or something like that, a department store during the Christmas season and maybe I'll earn enough to pay the bills off." I did apply to Sears and they, I guess, I was accepted. However, on the way home I drove past the General Motors factory in West Trenton here, which makes parts for automobile assembly, and so, "Oh, I'll take a U-turn," just out in the front, and went in there, applied for them. Well, they were hiring like the dickens then anyway. It was just enough years

after the war that there was a lot of demand for cars, new cars, new cars … They offered health insurance, vacations, discounts on a new car, all this stuff, if you were a regular employee. "Gee, that sounds so much better than the chickens, eggs, and so on." So, they wanted to know how soon can I start? Well, this was like a Thursday and I didn't start Friday. "How about Monday?" "Well, okay." So, I started Monday. I worked there, I don't know, how many years, thirty-five, thirty-seven or thirty-eight, I guess.

CG: What did you do?

VR: First of all, he worked in the factory loading trucks, because he didn't want to stay there long.

GR: Yeah, I didn't think I was going to stay.

VR: They kept saying, "Come on," because they knew he had some degrees, "Come on in the office." "No."

CG: How did that happen?

GR: I had an office job and making reports, and so on, that I enjoyed. Half of those years, I worked at night, though, 'cause it just worked out to my convenience to work nights, and they had three shifts, anyway. So, I would go in at 11:00 at night and get out 7:30.

VR: He doesn't sleep well at night.

GR: I still don't sleep well at night. I do sleep easily in the daytime.

TK: What became of your farm, the land itself? Oh, do we have to keep flipping?

VR: [Referring to a photo album] Oh, this is the history of the farm. The whole farm, you didn't see the …

CG: Oh, should I pause it?

[TAPE PAUSED]

GR: We burned it on purpose.

CG: Oh, you burned it on purpose.

VR: On April 1st …

TK: Of?

GR: Of, what year?

VR: ’88, ’89?

CG: Because it was just too much a burden?

VR: No.

GR: I didn’t go out with a match and light it. The fire company …

VR: The fire company came.

CG: Why?

GR: Well, we wanted to get rid of the building.

VR: This is what the building looked like.

GR: It was deteriorating anyway.

VR: You see the sunlight coming through the roof? The tree growing out of the back wall.

TK: Right, since you didn’t need it anymore it wasn’t worth your money, to you, to repair it.

GR: No, no. It would have cost a lot to repair it.

VR: We had three fire companies come and burn it. Here’s the first.

CG: Did you like party or something?

VR: Yeah, we had a party.

GR: We had a party.

SB: Sounds like fun.

VR: We had a party. We had a party. We had a party.

CG: Have another one. Yeah, barn burning.

VR: We had coffee and donuts. Yeah, we had a table set out back.

CG: Referring to General Motors, I know that they had a lot of layoffs in the late ‘70s. Did any of that effect you?

GR: Every once in a while there was a scare of getting laid off, but I never was laid off. Actually, I earned more money because of the scares. They would layoff, I don’t know how many hundreds of workers at a time, and they almost always overdid it. They laid off more

people than they probably should have. So, then that resulted in shortages of the products we were manufacturing. Then, they had to have overtime for those of us still there, to make the reports and make the parts. I did the reports, and what went with it. So, I got a lot of overtime income by working Saturday, Sundays and even some holidays once in a while. So, income wise, those layoffs were actually a help to us.

VR: Our four kids went in college.

GR: … But now the plant is in death-throws now.

VR: In fact, it's closed.

GR: Yeah, as of December 1st. A year from now they're going to be demolishing the whole building, if you've ever seen it in West Trenton.

TK: Was your farmland ever developed?

VR: We sold … we had twelve acres. We gave two to one daughter, and that left us with ten. We sold our house, too, with two acres, and we had another two acres on the east side of us that we sold. That building is unoccupied yet. Then, we had six acres in the back, which is a flag lot, the driveway goes like this and the lot goes like that. So, this goes behind our daughter's, and this goes behind those two houses, our house and the new house there. That's six acres, and that is not occupied, yet.

GR: … But it's being built.

VR: It's got lights in it. We see lights at night. So, we have sold that. The reason why we went into this here, my father had twenty-eight acres, and he was an electrical engineer, and he had no use for the farm … and, so, he said, "You want to go into farming, go ahead. I'll help you." So, he built our house, he built our chicken house and sold it to us.

CG: So, could you tell us a little bit about your children?

GR: You tell it.

VR: This is your interview.

TK: Your first daughter was born while you were at the University of Maryland, right?

GR: Yeah. Our first daughter was 1948, in November. I had lab classes that day, and didn't get to see her right away.

VR: He didn't know she was born until the next day.

GR: No, they were supposed to call me when she arrived, but, I guess, for some reason they didn't, I don't know. That's number one. Well, anyway, two, three and four, all daughters, Patricia, Judith, Beverly and Audrey … And now …

CG: Do they all live in the area?

VR: They all live on that farm.

GR: Yeah, except one.

VR: That's right. One doesn't. One built across the street from my father. One bought my father's house. One, we gave the two acres to, and so the three daughters are right there, and when we have family reunions, we had our house and their three, we had four houses for a family reunion … but one daughter lives up in Edison, the other side of New Brunswick.

SB: We know it well.

CG: What do they do?

GR: The oldest works at the Educational Testing Service.

VR: She's the head of the contract office.

GR: Contracts, I know, it's something legal … the contracts the ETS makes with other companies.

VR: Contracts with the government. She's the head of that.

GR: Judith, number two, is at the Educational Testing Service, also.

VR: She works for college boards. I think, she's a financial person there.

GR: Number three, is Debbie. She's at home. She takes in day-care students.

VR: She wanted to be home with her children. She had two …

GR: Yeah, while they were growing up she wanted to be home anyway.

VR: She wanted very badly to be home, and she's been very good. They needed a lot of help with dyslexics, and that sort of thing, and she's had to fight for them, and she's done very well. Then the other one …

GR: She went to Virginia Tech, in Virginia. She got married. Twenty-six months later her husband died of cancer. So, she's a widow early on, and then she was single for about five years … and now she's gotten married again after that, and now has a ten-year old girl.

VR: … And she teaches …

GR: Clutter-control. She goes around to adult high schools, and things like that, and teaches people how not to be cluttered up.

TK: Where can I sign my mom up? [Laughter]

CG: One thing I just remembered that I have to go back to and ask you about, is if and how you used your GI Bill?

GR: I used it … It helped make it possible to go back, but, I guess, we would have managed it anyway, because you were getting your "PhT," right? You were "putting hubby through."

CG: That's cute.

GR: So, you worked at Johnson & Johnson at first.

VR: Oh, I worked up at the poultry department.

GR: Your worked in the office.

VR: I worked in the office, oh, what was that called?

TK: Did you have that house down here?

VR: We didn't build this until after he left the University of Maryland.

CG: So you didn't need the GI Bill for your home?

VR: No, no. My father took care of that. I mean, he owned the property.

GR: It was his land to start with.

VR: He didn't sell it to us until we were in there and going for a while. We paid rent, then he sold it to us. So, we didn't have to do that. He built the farm, the farm buildings and the house.

CG: So, did you use your GI Bill for Rutgers?

GR: For educational as far as it lasted, yeah. I think, New Jersey had an unemployment thing of twenty dollars a week for …

CG: I never heard of that.

VR: Yeah, he had a fellowship at Rutgers. as he got that, and then he has the GI Bill and I worked at J & J most of the time. So, we did very well. Oh, we lived high. No kids, we lived high.

CG: So, it was an important part of getting in school.

GR: Oh, the GI Bill, according, for many people, I don't think there would be as many educated people today if it weren't for that. 'Cause a lot of service people took advantage to it.

TK: So it made a difference in a number of people on campus even?

VR: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

GR: It was getting really crowded right after I got there. I mean, not only the regular students that were still coming in on a yearly basis, but all these guys coming back, out of the service, all within a year.

VR: A lot of them had babies and they couldn't work, you know. So, they had to … of course, he didn't get the fellowship until he went to graduate school.

TK: I noticed from all your materials that you are involved in reunions, and things like that.

GR: Yeah, this organization, which is called the Seventy-Third Bomb Wing Association, is made up of the Saipan people, you might say. I mean, it's not … if they … see, there are B-29s crew also from Tinian, which is where the atomic bomb plane was, and Guam … but they were different wings. I figure the Fifty-Eighth Wing is one, and something else was the other … but this is the organization of those who served on Saipan, whether they were flying crewmembers, or not, doesn't matter, as long as they were that part of this organization … that means, ground crew or supporting military outfits. These are all part of it … and they meet once a year. Now, I only heard about them a few years ago. So, we've only gone, the year I was in Wichita. Last year, I had to cancel the one that was in Asheville, North Carolina because of health problems, and we're looking forward to the next one in Tucson, Arizona.

VR: I told somebody coming in that we're going to Tucson.

TK: So have you always kept in touch with the men from the crew?

VR: The tail gunner.

GR: The only, the tail gunner. I don't know whatever happened to the pilot, or co-pilot, I kept in touch with for a few years, then he died.

VR: We went to see him in Seattle, Washington.

GR: He was quite a young person at that time.

VR: … But he was in a nursing home at that time when we went to see him.

GR: Then, I've gotten reacquainted with our radio operator, as a result of the last reunion, who lives in Missouri, Foley, Missouri. I'd like to track down the others, but I don't know where they are.

VR: He's had our daughter going to the web site to try to find these people. He did loose the tail gunner. He lost him and couldn't find him. The Christmas cards came back last year, and couldn't find him. She found him on the web. So he's in a retirement home.

CG: So, you're not on the web?

VR: No.

GR: We were talking about getting … well, we've got a computer that a 386, and I don't know what you can do with that.

VR: I play solitaire on it.

GR: Well, we'll have to get a better computer.

VR: Our kids know how, and they do it for us.

CG: Do either of you have any more questions?

VR: We didn't leave any questions in your mind? You know our history, you know our age, you know our disabilities.

CG: It might be good for you to say your name, since we've, you know, have gotten some information from you just over the microphone.

VR: Virginia Hansen Rau. I went to school as Hansen.

CG: Oh, in what year?

VR: I was the Class of '46. I still compute it all the time. So, I don't have anything to do with Brother's College.

CG: Is there anything that we've left out that you might want to talk about?

GR: Do you want me to read you one of these awards?

LV: Actually, yes. We didn't really touch on any of the citations that you have.

GR: I've got one here, I could read it, or you could read it. Would you like to read it out loud?

VR: It would be nice if we could give you a Xerox copy of it.

GR: Would you rather read it?

LV: Do you specifically remember any of the more memorable ones?

VR: You read one to me the other day, what one was it?

SB: Your entire unit got a citation after the bombing of Hamamatsu?

GR: Hamamatsu. We got a unit citation for … there was a five consecutive mission maximum effort, made by the whole wing. This meant the ground crews, and everybody had to work about twenty-five hours a day to keep these planes going … and we hit the Japan on like a daily basis, no more than two days apart, somewhere in March, I think it was … The whole unit got a citation from that, from the President of the United States. Well, here's just one of them. I don't know what this one's about any more. I've forgotten. Let's see. I want to find one that's got my name on it. "For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight on the 15th of February 1945. These individuals were crewmembers of a B-29 aircraft leading a formation of planes on a bombing mission against an industrial target at Nagoya, Japan. Severe weather conditions from home base to the landfall made formation assembly extremely difficult, and only a few aircraft were assembled. Due to the small number of airplanes in the formation, each aircraft received a heavy concentration of antiaircraft fire and fighter opposition, causing considerable damage. Repeated fanatical attacks from enemy fighters were successfully controlled while bombing the primary target with excellent results. The superior airmenship, leadership and determination to carry out the assigned tasks displayed by these crewmembers reflect great credit on themselves and the Army Air Forces." That's got all of our crewmembers mentioned there.

TK: There were times when you flew without escorts?

GR: Oh, in the early days we had no escorts.

SB: What was that like?

GR: Escorts only came in the last month or so. They flew from Iwo Jima.

SB: Right, so, you were flying in tight formations?

GR: Only … I mean, we didn't get into the formations until we were about ready to go on the bomb run, because it took too much fuel trying to keep it in tight formation.

TK: What would you say was the effect of receiving these awards? Do you think this helped to boost morale?

GR: I suppose it's supposed to, I don't know.

VR: Still had to go fight again.

GR: I always have to look up to see how many I even got. I don't remember all that. Let's see, I have some others inside here.

VR: He doesn't even know where they are. Some people have them in picture frames.

GR: Here. I've never worn the medals themselves. "For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight, 31st of March, 1945, and the tenth of May, 1945. These individuals were combat crewmembers of the lead plane in a flight, of nine aircraft flying from a base in the Mariana Islands on bombardments of the Tashiari Area Machine Works, Kyushu, Japan, and the Tokiyama Naval Fueling Station, Honshu, Japan. Working on a precise timetable to obtain the brief mission and bring their flights over the targets on time, this crew overcame the obstacles of heavy cloud coverage of the objective, determined enemy aircraft fire, and fierce fighter opposition. Thirty-eight attacks from enemy fighters were sustained in the Tashiari Area Machine Works raid, but the coordination and teamwork of these airmen contributed materially to a seventy-three percent of the explosives dropped within a thousand feet of the aiming point. On the strike against the Tokiyama Fueling Station, heavy and accurate flack was encountered for seven minutes during the bomb run, but despite this continued barrage, this crew led the attack so well, that seventy-five percent of the projectiles struck within a thousand feet of the aiming point. The teamwork and coordination of this crew added materially to these devastating results. Their skill, courage and devotion to duty reflect great credit on themselves and the Army Air Forces."

CG: I think that is it.

GR: So, they recognized us once in a while, I guess, to keep …

TK: That might be a good place to end the official record, unless one of you guys has a last question.

CG: Thank you very much. That's wonderful.

GR: Well, thank you for being patient with me while I wracked my brain.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by David D'Onofrio 2/6/03
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 2/13/03