Laura Calkins: This is Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University and I am initiating an oral history interview with Harold Anderson who goes by Drew. And also with me in the room is Drew’s nephew, Kevin Sailsbury, who is also an employee of the Vietnam Archive. And today is the 7th of February 2006 and we’re very honored to have you here, Drew, and thank you very much for being willing to participate in the Oral History Project. This is very important for us that we have an opportunity to document some of your service to the country. Let me ask you just a couple of basic biographical questions first, if you don’t mind. Where were you born and when?

Drew Anderson: I was born in Hood County, Texas and I forgot in 1950 to renew my driver’s license and they wouldn’t renew it until I produced a birth certificate and I was never named. I wrote to Austin and I knew my mother’s maiden name and my father’s name and so they sent – there was a baby boy born May the 22nd, 1916, but they didn’t have a record of me being named. It was just a male child.

LC: But that was you?

DA: That was me.

LC: Now, why did your parents – did they not have a name picked out for you? What did you hear about that later?

DA: My parents were dead at that time. The doctor evidently sent that in.

LC: He just filled in the form and sent it in. Well, tell me a little bit about your parents.

What did your dad do?
DA: Oh, my dad was never anything but a farmer and he farmed in Hood County, Texas until the boll weevils put an end to cotton farming and so we moved to Lubbock on Christmas Day of 1922, was when we arrived in Lubbock.

LC: And what was your father’s plan? What did he plan to do in Lubbock?

DA: Well, my grandfather, my mother’s father, he and his boys had bought a section of land out about two miles east of where there’s a canyon community out there. There’s a gin there now but they bought this – it was a section of land but that’s strip land. That’s where two surveys come together and it wasn’t quite a section. It was three boys and the old man and they bought the section.

LC: And were they planning to continue to farm and do cotton farming?

DA: Yeah.

LC: Dry cotton.

DA: Dry cotton farming.

LC: Is that what you grew up doing? Did you help out?

DA: Yes, I’d pulled several hundred thousand pounds of bolls in my life before I knew any better.

LC: (laughs) I can believe it. Did you think you might want to do something other than that?

DA: I don’t know. I didn’t have any ambition other than farming. I thought that was – in fact, I volunteered for the Army because I wanted to get my year of service, which we were promised, to get a year of service and I’d be back at the first of the year to start another crop.

LC: Now what year was that that you volunteered?

DA: In 1940. The draft had just started and there was one guy from our neighborhood who went on that first early draft and I thought, ‘Well, I’d like to go and get it over with before the first of the year in 1942,’ so I went up to the draft board and I knew the man in charge. He said, ‘We ain’t got no place to put you until after January. They’re going to build tent cities at El Paso.’ So the 23rd of January, I along with several hundred people went to Ft. Bliss.

LC: Now you went in and talked to the Army recruiter here in Lubbock?

DA: No, not the Army recruiter, the man in charge of the draft board.

LC: Oh, the draft board. That was here in Lubbock that you talked to him?

DA: Yes, in Lubbock.
LC: Did you know who that guy was?
DA: Oh yeah.
LC: Who was he?
DA: Douglas Pounds.
LC: Was he a businessman here in town?
DA: No, he was a farmer in the Acuff community. I knew him well. I mean, we went to the same church.
LC: Oh, is that right? Now what about your brothers?
DA: Well of course they were younger. They were both younger than I am. And at that time Doug was going to Texas Tech. You might mention his hero was the guy in the mathematics class. The name escapes me but he was telling Doug that – he said, ‘Those people out here are digging in the ditches. They may be making more money than I am today, but,’ he says, ‘by the time they get as old as I am, they’ll be worn out and I’m just in my prime.’ But I can’t recall that man’s name but he was – there wasn’t very many math teachers. That’s what he taught in the engineering division and he taught that for quite a long time.
LC: Just for the accuracy of the record, your brothers were how much younger than you?
DA: Doug was four and a half years younger than I and the other one was eleven years younger than I was. There was one that died. He died at fifty-five.
LC: So they were separated by quite a bit of time.
DA: Well, there is two girls in between.
LC: Well, I was going to ask you is there anybody else in there? So you have a couple of sisters, too?
DA: There was six of us and four of us still get together.
LC: That’s terrific. That’s excellent. And one of those sisters is your mom, is that right, Kevin?
Kevin Sailsbury: Uh-huh.
LC: And which sister?
DA: Mary. Next to the baby, she’s just older than the one that died.
LC: Oh, okay. She’s the next to the youngest, then. Okay. (To Kevin) And your mom still lives here in Lubbock.
DA: She's a native of Lubbock. She and John were both born in Lubbock County. The rest of us was imported.

LC: (laughs) So Drew, let me ask you about that time when you went in to talk to the fellow at the draft board. How much did you know? How much were you following international events? Were you aware?

DA: Yeah, I knew that Congress had passed selective service and it was just going to be for one year. I don't know what, in this day and age, but my dad owned eighty acres out by Idalou but that wasn't enough for one family but it always planted from January the first to December the 31st. When I went to Michigan, it always starts April the 1st, but that's just the difference.

LC: Yeah, they've got to wait for things to thaw out up there.

DA: Yeah, that's right. But I'm not going to mention that along about that time the sand was just starting to blow in this country (laughs).

LC: Oh yeah. Well that would be hard work. I can't imagine how hard it must have been for a family to make do on cotton farming out here. Was your mom quite – was she quite good at running the home and so on? Can you tell me about her?

DA: My mother was an angel. I think you can swear to that.

KS: Certainly.

LC: What was her name?

DA: Martha Elizabeth Huffstedler. That was her maiden name. That Huffstedler you know is German.

LC: It sounds like it.

DA: They were very ambitious.

LC: Was she born in Texas? Was she a native Texan?

DA: Yes, and all of her ancestors on both sides came from Arkansas.

LC: Is that right?

DA: But they came to Texas I guess just after the Civil War. I think they were in Arkansas. I can remember my great grandmother telling me about her father or her husband. I remember him well. We lived on their place in 1922 and she always had to milk the cows because he said, 'When I catch a hold of the cow's teat, the milk just goes back up into it.' That was his story and his wife was stuck with it.

LC: (laughs) Yeah, that got him out of that.
DA: And he drove an ox team from Arkansas to Hood County, Texas and there’s some dry
camps made and oxen can smell water for a long time. They got close to, and I’m not sure what
river it was, but they just – he was walking along beside with a pole. They took off and ran to the
creek or river and went right out in the middle of it and he and his ox cart and all his possessions
was – so when he got them out he traded them for a team of mules (laughs). My great-
grandmother – he died while we lived on that farm as tenant farmers – I can remember her saying,
‘I never heard Arch swear but once and he was wearing a full beard and he was robbing the bees
and the bees got into his beard and he starts saying, ‘Them god-damn bees.’ (laughs) I think he
can be forgiven.

LC: Yes, I think we’ll let that one go (laughs). He was provoked. Well, Drew, let me ask
you about – what did you know about Hitler? Had you heard of him much?

DA: Oh yeah, we had a radio. I don’t think anybody of my generation was sucked in that
war, that we wasn’t a hundred percent behind it. We subscribed to the daily paper and Dad had a
radio. He spent all his time listening to the war news so we were informed.

LC: Yes. And what did you yourself think? Did you think it was heading for war? You
knew that was coming?

DA: No, I really didn’t. I thought – after I got into the war, from January of ’41, I didn’t keep
up with the news then because I was that was for the brass to do. Whatever they told me, I was
going to do it.

LC: Sure enough.

DA: But there was really no resentment. I joined this National Guard and the 124th Cavalry
was – back in the late ‘30s, oil in East Texas was selling for one dollar a barrel and they were
having riots in East Texas and they formed this 124th Cavalry to fight the riots over the oil field.
Now I knew nothing about that because we was a long ways from there but I do know that’s a fact,
that oil was selling for a dollar a barrel.

LC: And that was what was causing the riot?

DA: Yes, yeah. And I know there was people that didn’t want to – I guess they thought if
they produced a million barrels a day at a dollar a barrel but the government was trying to keep the
production down so the price wouldn’t be so low. And I sure am not an authority on that. After the
war then, economics took over but in the Depression, that fact of producing oil at a dollar a barrel, it
just won’t wash.
LC: Well, it seems strange now because it’s gone –
DA: That’s right.
LC: What is it? Sixty dollars a barrel or something now? Fifty dollars is common, sixty dollars –
DA: Oh yes, why if it went down to fifty dollars we’d –
LC: We’d be happy. Yeah, we could fill up the gas tank.
DA: I think it’s sixty-five or something like that.
LC: Drew, when you actually entered the Service, were you sworn in here in Lubbock before you went down to Ft. Bliss?
DA: That’s right.
LC: Do you remember that? Do you remember being sworn in?
DA: Sure.
LC: Can you tell me about that, the ceremony? Where was it? Where were you here in town? Where was it?
DA: Oh, it was downtown and I’m not sure what building it was in. It could have been a depot. It was right downtown and we had two or three depots then and I don’t remember when we were sworn in. They had sent a corporal from El Paso at Ft. Bliss to herd us down there and of course I thought that corporal was probably the first cousin to the general (laughs). He didn’t have any trouble taking a carload of us down there.
LC: About how many were you? How many men?
DA: I can’t tell you that. I think there was just one passenger carload.
LC: Was that a proud day for you? Did you feel good that day? Was it a proud day or apprehensive?
DA: I didn’t think I was going off to save the world. It was just a job to be done and I didn’t...
LC: You were just getting on with it. You were just going to get on with it?
DA: Yeah, that’s right.
LC: So you drove all the way down to Ft. Bliss in this car?
DA: On the train. We was on the train.
LC: Oh, you went on the train.
DA: We had to go to – we started east and I’m not sure whether – I believe it was to
Sweetwater. We went to Sweetwater and then caught another train that turned around and went to
El Paso. It took us all night to get to El Paso and then at Ft. Bliss they had pitched tents out there
and piled up rocks – tons of them – and that’s what they set us to doing, was moving those rocks
from one location to another. Of course they did have carts for us to load them into. They kept us
out of mischief.

LC: Yes, sir. Did they set you up with accommodations in those tents? Is that where you
stayed?
DA: That’s where we stayed.

LC: How many men to a tent?
DA: I think it was six cots.

LC: And what kind of equipment and uniform? Did they give you all that? Did they set you
up with that?
DA: Oh yeah. They even gave us an overcoat there, GI shoes, but we didn’t stay there a
couple of weeks until this 124th Cavalry, it had been pressed into National Service and most of the
guys was from Houston and the surrounding area. They had come up to Ft. Bliss, God knows why.
But I guess they had come after us because all of these people from Lubbock joined that National
Guard and I lost track of most of them because there was eleven of us that went to this special
weapons troops. And so when I signed up for this, I thought, ‘Well, can I remember?’ There was
eleven of us, I know that, and I started writing their names down and I couldn’t come up with that
last name and then it was mine (laughs). I had recalled all of these other people but I was on
there, too.

LC: Now, this is when you were kind of brought into the 124th, at this point, at Bliss?
DA: At Ft. Bliss, that’s right.

LC: Did they give you some weapons training while you were there?
DA: No, they gave us just a little bit while we were at Ft. Bliss of marching. They didn’t
issue us any guns there but I don’t believe it was two weeks until they loaded us up from the train –
it was the first time I’d ever been on a Pullman car – and we went to Ft. Brown at Brownsville.

LC: And what happened there? More training or did you have to actually go out and do
some –
DA: Us recruits, we had – I think that it was six weeks training that we were supposed to get but I think that we didn’t get that much. I think this moving from Ft. Bliss down there, I think they counted that in and so we joined the troops.

LC: And when you say you joined the troops, where was that? Still at Ft. Brown?

DA: Still at Ft. Brown. They treated the recruits different for a few weeks.

LC: And that was kind of the training period?

DA: Yeah.

LC: And did they give you more weapons training down there?

DA: Not at that time, not at that time. We probably marched carrying the O-3 rifles which was bolt-action and probably the most accurate rifle that they had until maybe present day’s might be more accurate. But about midway in my service, they took the O-3 bolt-action guns away and they had – it was a semi-automatic weapon that they armed the troops with in the First World War. Sometimes we went out on the firing range for a couple of weeks and that was at Brown. Some hurricane back in the ‘70s obliterated that. The last time I was down there, our old rifle range was under water.

LC: Gone, yeah.

DA: Well, the targets were up on old-fashioned basketball backboards stuck up like that. The last time I was down there you could see them but the ocean had obliterated our training field. It was in 1970 or so that they had quite a hurricane down there and this was in the ‘90s that I was there last and it obliterated out –

LC: That’s a funny feeling, I bet (laughs). Did the 124th have a mission down there at Brown or were you primarily –

DA: They had barracks there and after the war started – there was a cavalry replacement training center in Ft. Riley, Kansas, and they put thousands of people through that but that was just basic training and really, this 124th was down there and they would send their graduates from Ft. Riley down there and we had all of Texas to maneuver in. We were riding horses.

LC: Yes, sir.

DA: We rode horses from Ft. Brown, right at the tip of Texas up to Laredo, which is two hundred and ten miles or so several times. There was another cavalry post at Ringgold, which is – there’s a little town there but the name escapes me. The last time I was down there, which has
probably been thirty or forty years ago, they was using these old barracks for Mexican labor. And we went – it was Ft. – I just mentioned it before. It’s about two hundred miles.

LC: Laredo?

DA: Laredo. And then one time we rode out to Marfa and that’s in the Big Bend country. We were supposed – there was colored troops in Ft. Huachuca in Arizona and they were going to meet us there for maneuvers but they washed out. They sent them somewhere for labor – probably to India. So when we got to Burma there was airfields there and they had black troops running these ground installations for the Air Force and they did a terrible good job of it. But they washed out on the cavalry.

LC: When you would make these cavalry trips to Laredo or to Marfa, was it for training purposes mostly?

DA: Yeah. Well (laughs), the first time was celebrating – they said it was the Mexican’s Fourth of July. I think it was in February but it was some Mexican holiday and we went up there and we went several more times. That was…

LC: Was part of the mission border security?

DA: No, no.

LC: You didn’t have to worry about that?

DA: The only thing about border security at that time – Mexico was not at war with Germany and we could not take anything to – Matamoras was our home away from home and we could only take two dollar bills over there, and silver, but no other bills could we take across the border.

LC: So there were currency restrictions?

DA: Yeah. Germany, they was making hundred dollar bills or fifties or twenties by the ream but they didn’t – you would have thought that they would have made some two dollar bills but they never did so we could take them.

LC: Well, you maybe remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor.

DA: Oh, well, I remember that very well. I was still there at Ft. Brown. I’d had a fourteen-day furlough. We had a week early in ’41 and I had just gotten back from a fourteen-day furlough and was just kind of sleeping in that Sunday morning and the first sergeant came out in the troop street and I’ll leave out the profanity but he screamed, ‘The Japanese has blown Pearl Harbor,’ and I didn’t know where Pearl Harbor was (laughs).
LC: I believe you.

DA: This is poking fun of the cavalry but it’s about time somebody did (laughs). See,
twenty years after the war, it dawned on somebody that we were the last horse cavalry regiment in
the Army. Of course after we had been to Burma they sent us to China and our 124th was no
more. It was a National Guard outfit but they just wiped it off of the books. But they really – I don’t
think that they knew that they even had this cavalry outfit down there. And as long as Ft. Riley was
turning out these recruits it was a place to give them kind of a little taste of war without sending
them to Japan or to Germany. But cavalry training was good for recruits because they couldn’t get
in very much mischief taking care of ten – well, I think it would be half a dozen. I think it was seven
men in a squad and a corporal and we had ten horses to take care of and that keeps people busy.

LC: Did you have to do everything for the horses? Did you guys have to do everything for
your horses?

DA: Well, not shoeing. This might be of interest. In the fall, I can’t tell you the exact date
but in the fall of ’41 they extended this year that we had been drafted for. I’m not sure whether they
extended it for one year or a year and a half. Anyway, it didn’t matter because we had war in a few
months. But when they extended this draft period, they’d found out that playing soldier wasn’t an
old man’s game. There was guys that was drafted from Lubbock that’s forty-five years old. They
had to be single but if they were single and forty-five, they drafted them. Well, they couldn’t get out
there and run half a mile before breakfast. They couldn’t run half a mile in a week. You asked me
a question and I don’t think I answered it.

LC: Well, I was asking you about whether you had to do everything for the horses and you
said, ‘Well, pretty much except for shoeing them.’

DA: Well, after they had extended this service for at least another year and a half but they
put a stipulation in there that if you were over twenty-eight years old you could go home. And all of
our horse shoe-ers was over twenty-eight years old. And this guy, a good guy, he was a staff
sergeant and he’s still alive by the way – [Louis] Billy Pizzo – and he knew that I would work and he
said, ‘I want you to come and shoe horses for me. I’ll give you 1st and 3rd.’ That means first class
private and it was the same pay as a sergeant. I think that same year they started giving you three
stripes with a T under it. That was for technician. I took him up on it just because it was sergeant’s
pay and I worked for a week or so and I wasn’t sure whether I could stand it or not. It made my
back hurt but I got a two-week furlough and I came home to Lubbock and I went back. Well, I
guess the war helped me, too, because the war was December the 7th. I didn’t have – and they
didn’t know what they were doing after that. There wasn’t very many horses shod through the – we
had, after twenty years, people that was interested in getting together. We had a man, he was a
major I think and a real good man. His name was Saddler. It didn’t have anything to do with
saddles but he organized this old 124th – we had a reunion every year as long as this man lived.
But he was entertaining us and telling about they got a report that the Germans was coming to
invade Boca Chica. Does Boca Chica mean anything to you?

LC: I don’t know where that is.

DA: Well, ‘little mouth,’ is the name of it but that’s where the Brazos River goes out into the
Gulf. But there’s a lot of desolate land out there and we had Army camps out there. But this thing
that the major told me about one of his fellow majors, he was in the office most of the time but he
thought he had to go out in the field. He couldn’t find his spurs (laughs). He was prying up hell
looking for his spurs. He’d been in the Army for at least a year and a half but the job he was doing
at the desk didn’t – but to go out to fight the Germans, he had to have his spurs.

LC: Well did you take that seriously, the idea that the Germans might be coming?

DA: Well, yes. We were on guard there. Do you know where the King Ranch is?

LC: Yes, sir.

DA: Okay. We had troops up there, which is probably better than a hundred miles from Ft.
Brown but they were out there. I think maybe – I didn’t go up there – but I think they might have
had a communications tower or something there that they were guarding. One time, I think that
would have been into the next year, but Franklin Roosevelt took a train through Texas and went
into Mexico to meet with the Mexican president. Of course I was shoeing horses then. I didn’t go
but they took all of our troops and guarded the railroad because – they didn’t tell us what it was till
it was all over but Franklin met the Mexican president somewhere, I don’t know where.

LC: Drew, what did you think of President Roosevelt?

DA: I admired him above all others.

LC: Why?

DA: I don’t know. He got people to work. I mean, when I was – there was just nothing to
do.

LC: During the Depression?
DA: Well, they got people from the cities – teenagers – and signed them up and put them out. Maybe they was doing nothing but they wasn’t getting in trouble and they give them spending money and sent money home to help those poor people.

LC: What did you think about him, the way he ran the war?

DA: Whatever Roosevelt decided, if he told me to jump off a bluff, I would have.

LC: Really? What did you think about Mrs. Roosevelt, Eleanor?

DA: I still love her.

LC: Do you?

DA: Yes I do.

LC: How come?

DA: Well, she had the good of the people at heart. She had everything in the world in her life.

LC: She was an aristocrat.

DA: Yes, that’s right. She was raised that way but she had a heart.

LC: And communicated that. Yeah, I think you’re right. Well, Drew, at what point did you find out you were going to go overseas? When did that happen?

DA: (laughs) I decided I wasn’t going to go overseas because as long as Ft. Riley was in business they would send their recruits. They sent them down here and it was kind of a finished school for those and I had met this girl and so I got married in February of 1944 and she had some nieces that were teenagers and they had – it wasn’t a family trait but these kids had a table that they would ask questions and they would convinced – and I’d say, ‘Am I going overseas?’ and it said, ‘No.’ (laughs) I wasn’t about to go overseas so I went back home and part of my friends had already shipped out (laughs) so I never put any faith in a Ouija board (laughs). I laugh about that because they were asking me to ask it anything.

LC: Sure, sure, yeah.

DA: I had never been on a rowboat. I was raised here in this dry country and you didn’t irrigate in those days and I had never – well, one year we had a lake that flooded out there and it stayed all summer and we put two sideboards to a wagon that carried cotton. We laid that down and put a fifty-five gallon oil drum at each end and that would float and we spent all our summer in our spare time, rowing around that lake. That’s the only time I’d ever been on a boat of any kind. When they sent us to Los Angeles, our troops when on first and we were going to guard the ship
and I figured on being seasick from the time it pulled out. And the first time, I guess it was before a meal, I walked out there and there was a little breeze and way up here the crow's nest would go back and forth and I said, 'I'd better quit looking at that.' (laughs) We went to Bombay, India.

LC: So you went from Los Angeles to Bombay?
DA: Well, we stopped for re-fueling in Australia. In fact, we stopped in Australia twice. We went around the bottom part of Australia, I think it's Brisbane, the first place we stopped and across on the west side is another port whose name escapes me. We stopped there twice. And we had gone from Los Angeles alone, no other ship with us. We just took off.

LC: Just the troop ship, all alone?
DA: Just the troop ship. And we would travel in a zigzag pattern and it went quite fast. We never saw any enemy ships until we got to Australia and there we picked up a cruiser. I'm not sure whether we picked up the cruiser first or two destroyers and then later on we got the cruiser but it was known that we did have somebody with us from the rest of the way to Bombay but we never did see an enemy ship.

LC: Drew, did they let you off the ship in Australia?
DA: In Australia, yeah.

LC: At Brisbane and maybe Perth or somewhere like that?
DA: Perth is around the –
LC: It's far out, yeah.
DA: The first is Brisbane and we could get off. We just stayed a weekend there, I think.

LC: Now what did you guys do while you had your weekend in Brisbane?
DA: You shouldn't have asked me that.
LC: (laughs) I'll close my ears while you tell.
DA: (laughs) No, there was – I was just a newly married man and I wouldn't – the Queen of Sheba couldn't have tempted me but some of the boys was hunting comforts of home. But they brought back a story about – yes, we had colored troops in the hold of our ship.

LC: Is that right?
DA: I'll mention that again and I'll go back to that. But they went to a brothel and this madam or one of the girls called this black man out and she very crudely said, 'It's not my house. I'd just as soon have you as anybody else but that's the law in this town.' These colored troops went with us from Los Angeles and there was a guy and he was my name. His name was
Anderson and he came from Lubbock and he was a troublemaker. He was six foot two or three and figured he could lick anybody and he always was ready to prove that he could. But in this hold there was a lot of fresh water tanks down in there. But we were just to keep order and somebody did something that didn’t please him. I wasn’t down there, I don’t know what it was but he hit him up the side of the head with his – that’s all we were armed with, was a billy club. And it almost caused a race riot on the ship. I told my first sergeant and nobody wanted to go down in that hold. I said, ‘I’d just as soon go down there as not.’ I never had a bit of trouble with those guys and I don’t think that this big bruiser had any reason to have trouble because I didn’t have any trouble.

Well, there was a ship – an officer – I don’t know how high up the ladder, but he came in down in this hold and was giving somebody hell for getting into the fresh water. It wasn’t me. I didn’t even know it was fresh water down there or I’d have probably been into it (laughs). But he threatened and left and not very long after he had left, this young black boy was getting down to the faucet and he was going to get some fresh water. I said, ‘You heard what the man said,’ and I said, ‘As long as I’m in here, you’re not going to get into that fresh water.’ He backed off and that was the only time that I ever had any even telling them what to do. But I wasn’t going to have him doing that and getting me in trouble.

LC: Was it tense all the time on the ship, the whole way over between guys?
DA: You mean between the whites and the blacks?
LC: Yeah.
DA: No. Of course I guess – I don’t remember seeing the blacks up on the other floors. They were down there segregated. I never thought about it at the time but I don’t remember.

(laughs) I do remember we had – the troop commander was of the Jewish faith but he was a nice guy and he was in charge of all of us guys that were guarding. He told a story and I think he was telling the truth. He was on the rounds one day and this black boy says, ‘I’ve got a problem.’ In those quarters – we had good quarters because we were guarding the ship but there was a hammock like this and just room for one man to lay down here and then there was about five high and he says, ‘This guy that’s got the hammock just above me wets the bed every night and it flows down on me.’ He says, ‘Could you do anything about it?’ ‘I don’t know what I can do about it.’ Well, he said, ‘Couldn’t you get him to change beds with me?’ (laughs) Now I know that that part’s the truth but I don’t know whether he made this guy change beds. I think that was a reasonable request (laughs).
LC: I have to agree.
KS: Not asking for much.
LC: Drew, do you remember the name of the ship, the name of the troop ship?
DA: I'll tell you in a minute.
LC: Okay, you probably tried to forget.
DA: Forty years later we were having a reunion in Brownsville, Texas and this same ship
was in the shipyard down there being broken up.
LC: No kidding.
DA: The one that took us over – Butner, I believe William Butner, B-u-t-n-e-r, but that was
quite a coincidence.
LC: That's a funny thing, yeah.
DA: We were having a reunion there and this ship that took us over there was being
broken up.
LC: Yeah. How'd that make you feel?
DA: Oh, not old (laughs).
LC: I don't know. I might have been glad to see it go, but maybe not.
DA: Well, I just thought it was a coincidence. I didn't have no fond memories of that ship
(laughs). This was just a wartime era. They made lots of mistakes. But that ship would, on a
rough sea it would come over and it seemed like it would be a 45-degree angle and it would come
back up and it would never go on the left side. It would never go beyond perpendicular but it would
come over. Somebody on the ship claimed that they knew what they were talking about and said
that the ballast – the bottom of it wasn't right but it never did capsize with us. But you get to
thinking that it would.
LC: Yeah, something's wrong here.
DA: It would never go beyond perpendicular.
LC: Were a lot of the guys seasick?
DA: Oh (laughs).
LC: I know I shouldn't have asked that.
DA: Have you got a strong stomach?
LC: I do, I do. And I've been seasick. It's the worst. It's terrible.
DA: You know, when I got on that ship and I saw that mast going that way...but I never got seasick and everybody was seasick. And it came mealtime and of course usually -- well, the fact that we were on guard, we got three meals a day. Just the passengers that was getting peed on (laughs), they just got two meals a day. But I felt all right. I went down and the chow lines were just deserted but a line went here and a line went here and of course the table was a little wider than this but they met down here after you'd got your food. We all went out together and I went on the right side and picked out what I wanted. The guy was there serving it but you didn't have to take all of it. And this guy came down the right side and just as the lines come together, he got sick and he go sick and threw up right into his plate and it splattered over on to my tray and I just -- there was a waste barrel there and I just went back to my bunk and laid down. It wasn't the sea that was bothering me (laughs).

LC: Yes, sir.

DA: I didn't want him regurgitating in my tray (laughs).

LC: (laughs) Yes, sir.

DA: But I still never got seasick.

LC: That's amazing.

DA: We was on that ship better than forty-five days. No, no, I'm lying. Thirty-five days.

LC: Boy. Tell me about arriving at Bombay. Did you know that that's where you were going to be ending the trip?

DA: Yes, I did know that because someplace, they told us.

LC: Sure, okay.

DA: I was a great friend of Rudyard Kipling. I mean, an admirer of him, and boy, we're going to India. And as we approached the dock, a guy there with a robe around him and a turban on his head -- there was a sidewalk by this great big building. I don't know the nautical terms of it but he reached over or leaned over and let a mouthful of betel nut juice, just as red as blood, and it ran into the ocean. I think it discolored quite a lot of the ocean. And I said, 'I don't like that very much.' and it got steadily worse after that. Now I don't expect you to make a lot of converts but after we docked and I don't remember whether we marched to the depot or not but we got on a train and there was, I swear, five hundred or more kids, say nine to twelve years old, following us and begging, 'Boxees, Saab, boxees.' And I lost my faith in God. I do not think a just God could
have that big of a people with nothing to do but beg and I haven’t changed my mind since. I just
don’t think a just God would let people do that.

LC: What did some of the other guys say? Did some of the guys give them money? Did
you talk about it with some of the other men that were there?

DA: You couldn’t give them money.

LC: Did you give them candy or anything like that?

DA: (laughs) Well, see, at the time I had read – nobody had pronounced it to me –
‘boxee.’ In the Hindu language they’re begging for something. ‘Boxees, Saab.’ But it just – I just
don’t think a just God could – it’s all over that whole…I think the people haven’t done anything
about it. The AIDS epidemic, that tunes them out.

LC: Well, that’s certainly true, as do other things like the tsunami and cyclones and all that,
right? They’ve got a lot to deal with over there, in addition to poverty.

DA: You know, the ice cap – I was in Alaska a few years ago and the one place there that
was every few seconds a whole bunch of a glacier would fall off and since I was there somebody
told me that that river is way back half a mile or so where before it just came out to the bay and
that’s what I was seeing, seeing this glacier cove in there. But the whole thing is warming up up
there. Where is that water going to?

LC: Well, you’re right, sir. It’s raising the sea level.

DA: The water is connected and when they had this tsunami – I can’t pronounce it like it
should be but –

LC: You got it.

DA: It shouldn’t be spelled like that. But we’re not through with those things. We’re not
through with those at all.

LC: I think you’re right. I think you’re right. Well, Drew, where was that train going, the
train that you got on there at Bombay?

DA: Well, there was a place I’ll tell you in a few seconds. It was a training camp I think that
they had – do you remember Joe Stillwell?

LC: Vinegar Joe?

DA: Vinegar Joe. See, the Japs run him out of Burma early in the day and he took – of
course they hadn’t had an airplane over there. The Japs would have took over pretty quick but
they took a lot of Chinese into – Ramgarh was the name of this place and I have never been able
to find it on a map.

LC: I’ve never heard of it.

DA: I think it was probably just a village and they put thousands of Chinese in there and
then we went. When we got over there that was our staging area, was Ramgarh.

LC: Now, the Chinese, were they laborers to establish the camp?

DA: No.

LC: They were troops?

DA: They were Chinese fighting men and they went to Burma and I don’t know how much
fighting they did but getting there, they impressed me. They carried their provisions with them and
I would say a company – I don’t know what they called it, but a hundred or so men – they traveled
at a trot and two of them would have a pole from their shoulder to the next shoulder with a live pig
on that, tied with their hands and his forefeet and hind feet straddling the bamboo pole. And they
could trot all day, those coolies could. That wasn’t a six hundred pound hog but he probably
weighed a hundred and fifty pounds shared between those two of them. And I imagine after an
hour or so they’d change and put another one on there but I never saw them making that change.
It was always two of them carrying that pig, going at a trot.

LC: That’s hard work. Now were the Chinese troops, were they in uniform?

DA: Oh, they were in Chinese uniforms. Chiang Kai Shek was – you know, nobody
understood him.

LC: (laughs) I think that’s accurate.

DA: His wife came on over here and she was well educated and she could present a pretty
good place, and she sold a lot to Franklin Roosevelt about what they needed and they did need it.
There’s no question about that. But Chiang Kai Shek, he couldn’t...he just couldn’t cooperate with
anybody because he thought he – he felt God had his hand on his shoulder.

LC: That’s why they called him the Generalissimo. Did you have a sense of the politics in
China? Did you know much about that then?

DA: No, no. I couldn’t make – (laughs). My first corporal after we got out of basic training
– we’d ride all day and then it would get dark and then somebody knew where a water hole was
and we’d start leading horses to it and it seemed like we would go around in a circle. Everybody
was pretty well at the end of their rope and they appealed to the corporal. Pops Cullinan
was...they had broken the mold when they made him. ‘Pops, what’s going on?’ He said, ‘I don’t
know. Christ don’t know. It’s got him puzzled.’ (laughs) We started to go from Brownsville to El
Paso in a six by six truck. There was a hundred of them and Pops drank quite a lot but he got
sobered up enough, he got on the truck. This was in south Texas in June and he woke up
probably before we got to – we wasn’t going to San Antonio, but about that far from our starting
point and we’d all hung our saddle bags with a full canteen on the bow. These trucks were
covered in canvas. He reached up there to the first canteen and he unsnapped it and turned it
right up and just swallowed all of it. Just before he got it down, this Elmore – and he stuttered – ‘P-
p-p-pops, that’s my canteen.’ Pops said, ‘I know it.’ ‘W-w-well, why don’t you drink out of your own
canteen?’ Well, he says, ‘I didn’t bring any. I’m roughing it.’ (laughs) Out of his drunken stupor he
pulled something funny out of it. ‘I didn’t bring one. I’m roughing it.’

LC: Well, you guys up in India were roughing it, too, I think. What kind of set up did they
have for you up there? Did they have tents?

DA: No, where are we? I was back in Texas.

LC: Well, I know but I’ve got to go back to India because this is pretty interesting.

DA: Oh, they had bamboo. They build everything out of bamboo there and it lessens the
job a lot if you’ve got a lot of canvas to make a roof. And a whole bunch of coolies can make a
shelter pretty fast when you’ve got a roof.

LC: Now was it the 124th that was all together there? Were all of you together in one
place?

DA: Not together. I mean, yeah, we had the same objective but each troop – we went
along the same path but we were separated. There was no man following me. There was just a
troop. There was several troops that came along at intervals.

LC: Now what did they tell you the mission was? What were they telling you?

DA: Well, everybody knew what that was. Before we got in the war the Japs had taken all
of the sea ports in China and so those industrious Chinese, they went out and built a road from
Kunming, which is on the extreme western edge of China down to – across Burma – to Rangoon
which is on the ocean and that worked pretty good for a year or so and then the Japs come around
and took Rangoon. And then old Joe Stillwell, he had been trying to wake Chiang Kai Shek up for
several years. They didn’t speak the same language and I don’t know why he went to Rangoon
and got surrounded down there. He and a hundred or so men, they walked from Rangoon into
India. He wouldn’t give up. And somebody arrived at this – they were going to go to Ledo and build a road across Burma, which nothing had ever been done there, and intersect this road that the Chinese had built. And what we did was walk from – well, somebody, the MARS Task Force had taken mules and walked down to Michinaw. It was just a village but that was where they were going and they did do it and they took it. There was an airfield there. They flew us – when we got over there they flew us down to Michinaw which had been taken by the Americans and the Chinese had a part in that. And there we shot – we got a bunch of mules and shod them up and took off across. If my memory is right – I couldn’t find my book. This man wrote a book about Mars men in Burma. You might have one.

LC: We may have it upstairs, yeah.

DA: But we just took off across pig tracks and we went to this place where the Chinese had built a road from Ledo. This road was built to intersect. It was probably five or six hundred miles from there to Rangoon but they didn’t have no reason to go down to Rangoon any more. This was just to get supplies into China.

LC: And what were you bringing with you on mules? Was it just your own provisions?

DA: We didn’t even carry our own provisions. It was supplied from the air every third day.

LC: Air drops.

DA: No, if we had started out with our own provisions we’d have starved to death before we got there.

LC: How long did this take? How long did your walk take?

DA: You know, we didn’t go to Sunday school. We’re neighbors just like the next but we started just before Christmas. We had two or three marching days and then we celebrated Christmas.

LC: Christmas, 1944.

DA: Christmas of 1944, right.

LC: Did you do something special on Christmas?

DA: No.

LC: Nothing?

DA: Well, they fed us well.

LC: Did they?
DA: I mean they fixed Thanksgiving dinner. I think it was probably – we didn’t have
nothing but a field kitchen with us and I don’t know that we had that after Christmas because we
was getting meals ready to eat. But this wasn’t meals ready to eat Christmas. We had…

LC: Something a little better?

DA: You wouldn’t want me to argue with – who’s this guy that used to finish 60 Minutes?

LC: Andy Rooney?

DA: Andy Rooney. I always admired him. I really did. He wrote a book in the last year
and I purchased it as soon as I heard about it. He told about being in Europe when the war was
won there and they jerked him away from his round up, I think it was. And he told about they sent
him down to Burma where this Pick was building that road. We ate Christmas just a day or two
after we started the march and we went three hundred and twenty odd miles just across country,
right up hill and right down just pig tracks. People had – before we started out they put an
ammunition cart with shafts in it if somebody got his leg broke if he was sick. They was going to
put that behind the mule and it lasted about half a mile after we left the Burma Road. The trail was
so that you couldn’t get that cart around there so we abandoned it. We had some guys that
couldn’t walk but they had to sit astride a mule. That was the only way we would get them out. But
it was – this all happened in less than two months that we left Michinaw and the war in Burma was
over. I mean, we had just wiped them out and there wasn’t many there to start with. But you know
the dates when the war was won in Germany and Hitler killed himself and everybody quit fighting,
but Rooney – they wanted him to go to China and report the war from there. He told the story that
after the war was over there, he went down here to see General Pick and Pick took him out and all
of his road building equipment had vanished from the monsoon but in that same length of time I
was right there on the intersection of the road to China and this new road and it was going day and
night. And I think he embroidered his story a little because there just wasn’t time enough. Pick’s
bulldozers and so on that they built a thousand miles of road with didn’t just sink into the earth.
There might have been one, two, or three piece of it that disappeared but he said the whole road
building equipment just disappeared and he just made that out of old cloth. It didn’t happen.

LC: That’s why we’ve got to do these interviews. We can’t let him get away with that kind
of stuff. I’m serious (laughs). Did you see, in addition to your own unit moving along, did you see
Chinese also moving on the trail?
DA: Yeah, I did. And I don’t know what impression this is going to give to you but I think that this was after we had made contact with the Japs, that we had some supplies dropped and there was some Chinese. They were in uniform and they had pack mules and they were coming to get this grain to feed their animals and somebody from our side had told somebody to stand over that grain with a gun and not let those Chinese have that. Now I saw that and that was the first time that I ever saw that they didn’t share. We had the same goal but somebody didn’t want — and it wasn’t a general, it was some shave tailed lieutenant probably that didn’t want those Chinese to get part of our grain.

LC: There wasn’t a lot of trust there.

DA: Well that didn’t make the Chinese feel very good, either.

LC: No, that’s right.

DA: They had taken every step we’d made over those mountains.

LC: Yes sir, you’re right. Now what about you arriving in Kunming? When did you get to Kunming? Do you have an idea of when that was?

DA: No, I don’t.

LC: What was it like there? What did you see?

DA: Just a bunch of huts. There was nothing. Did you see — it was some time this last year that National Geographic showed the skyscrapers that the Chinese have built there?

LC: I have a sense of that, yeah. I may not have seen the exact program.

DA: Well, they had one that showed part of Kunming like I saw it, just a low — and they used a lot of hollow tile and cut it in the middle and make a roof like that. I saw one of those on that thing and then all of these new buildings, all the skyscrapers. Fifteen years ago, I believe it was that long, what I remembered of the Chinese was starving kids from fifty years ago. But somebody – this was the Grange. The Grange used to be a real good farmer’s organization but it’s…the Farm Bureau has taken their voice away from them. But somebody brought a bunch of pictures and it’s showing before the Chinese started this one child to a mother, but these kids were well fed and you could see they were well fed. It didn’t look like the Chinese that I saw. And something I read recently, that this making a modern China, they’re just going to let these old people out in the backwoods die off instead of — they’re not going to try to change them because they’re set in their ways.

LC: I think that’s right.
DA: I don’t say it’s right but I think that’s the way –
LC: I think that’s accurate, yeah. Where were you camped when you were at Kunming?
DA: There was at least eleven – they called them hostels. I had never heard the word until
I got there. It was h-o-s-t-e-l-s and I lived in two of them. Not at the same time but the first one
that I went to, they were trying to make an MP out of me because while the war was going on I had
been misplaced. I was in an intelligence squad and we had to walk out in front of the troops and
we had a guard dog, a man with a guard dog and he walked fifty yards ahead of us and we were
ahead of the rest of them and he had this guard dog that could smell an Oriental. I suppose
Chinese and Japanese smell the same but we was on the lookout for Japanese but he stood out
there ahead of us. And when we would contact the enemy his job was over. Well after we had
wiped the Japanese out we got a medal and ten dollars a month extra. Combat Infantry Badge.
I’ve got one that I’m very proud of but this guy that led the outfit fifty yards ahead of us, he was
quartermaster. He didn’t get that extra ten dollars a month, nor the combat badge (laughs).
LC: Something’s wrong there.
DA: I thought that was the most unjust thing I ever…
LC: Now, Drew, what was the contact that you had with the enemy? Can you describe
that?
DA: Okay. It’s not very – I’m not a hero (laughs).
LC: We’ll see.
DA: We had been marching for a couple of days and we knew we was getting into enemy
territory and we had a man; he shared my name, Anderson. He was our platoon commander and
he was over age in grade and they didn’t want him overseas. I think he was thirty-six years old but
he just fought tooth and nail. He wanted to be a hero. So we had been leading the troops and he
woke us up one morning and the enemy is right close and we had four or five or six mules with us.
We don’t want them braying and alerting the enemy so everybody gets up and feeds those mules
at the same time, which was different because somebody usually fed them all and the mules are
(howls). Well, I thought at the time that it was a good idea and it was a good idea but do you know
what a nose bag is?
LC: Yes, sir.
DA: We got them on and meanwhile these mules were eating. Here comes this guy and
I’m not sure if he was a first lieutenant or maybe a captain but he’d been in the South Seas for
several years but he came back to Burma. They promised – these were marauders. They were
the first ones in there and he joined them and he really wanted to be a hero. He and his
intelligence squad, while our mules was all eating by the numbers, they passed us and got in the
lead. We had been leading this for several days and Anderson thought that we had the honor of
being the first up there. Oh, was he mad. He was fit to be tied but we marched all day and there
was a little stream. It wasn’t no wider than this from end to end here and we crossed that thing I
believe fifty times. And along the middle of the afternoon a shot rang out and this guy that had
robbed my lieutenant Anderson of his glory was shot and I’m still not sure whether it was the
Japanese shot him or one of his own men. Well that just put a stop to the whole column and the
Air Corps, they had this hill right up here that had been picked out to send supplied in to us. So
there was nothing for us to do. This six-foot stream, there was just room for a man to lay down
between that stream bank and the bluff over here. So it got dark and it wasn’t bedtime but it was
dark and laid our beds down there and was waiting for somebody to tell us what to do. Earlier, it
would have been the day before, we got a mail drop and we had good mail service. We could
send a message to Hastings, Michigan, and I’d get an answer the same way pretty quick. Of
course they had some place where the airmail, whenever they’d give us a mail drop we’d get to get
letters. I got a letter from her and she said, ‘I can’t figure what’s the significance of sixteen roses.’
I had sent her sister I think a ten-dollar bill. I think that’s right and so she invested it in the roses for
my wife for her first anniversary. And so I was telling – we was not whispering but we wasn’t
shouting and this kid, he was a cub reporter for the Chicago paper. At home I’ve got the paper that
he was a columnist for them but he volunteered to go over there. He was going to write a great
American novel about the Second World War and I don’t think he ever did it. He died three or four
years ago. But he carried, on that trip across the mountain, he carried that manuscript. It was like
a big telephone book. It must have added ten pounds to his weight but he swore, ‘Here we are and
we don’t know where the enemy is and they’re shooting at us and you’re talking about this
significance of sixteen roses.’ (laughs) He wasn’t mad, he was just, ‘Why not take the war
seriously?’ (laughs) but while this was going on, the bluff rose up here and the people that were
getting our supplies, they were taking mules up here to where the airfield was. That was no part of
it. We were reconnaissance. We didn’t have nothing to do with supplies. Well, here comes a
mule with a pack saddle on from the dark up here and he landed upside down in this stream and he
got up and shook himself and took off. Well, this friend that called me last night, he was nineteen
years old. He just got in. They was taking them at eighteen then and he was a conscientious guy and he’d taken those mules up to get supplies and one of them got away from him. He said, ‘I was up there all night and I was afraid to report back to Captain Pfeiffer that I’d lost a mule because I’d be charged for it.’ (laughs) But he got back to where the other mules was and that mule was there. I didn’t see that man. I knew him when we were at Ft. Brown but when we went overseas he was with a different squadron and I never did run into him. But just from our talking about it here, he found out what happened to his mule and I found out where that mule came from. We was in the same war.

LC: Yes, sir. Well, you know, when Kevin brought you in the first time we were talking about that plane trip that you made where I think you were resting and someone came up and said, ‘I need somebody to go on this flight with me,’ and they made you a crew chief I guess for that day. Was it something like that?

DA: I don’t think so.

LC: How did that happen?

KS: How did you end up flying into Indochina?

DA: See, we started at Ramgarh and we took a train as far as a wide-track train goes and then we got on a riverboat on the Brahmaputra and we was two days and three nights on that. I don’t know how much ground we covered but we was going upstream and then when we came to the end of that we got on a narrow gauge railroad and went to Ledo where we caught the plane. I can’t believe – oh, wait a minute. When I left Burma we had got some new officers and one of them says, ‘take your men and go to the airport here and guard this place until we get everybody moved out of here.’

LC: Now was this at Kunming or near there?

DA: No, this was near Lashio in Burma but we were going into Kunming from there.

LC: I see.

DA: But this was – see, everybody took their insignia of rank off while we were in battle because the story was that they liked to shoot non-coms or generals or officers. Generals don’t go out there with – but he said, ‘You’re going to be here and guard this airport for ten days for everybody to pass through here.’ And before daylight the next morning he woke me up and says, ‘The officers played poker with too much to drink last night and I can’t get them up and you’re going to have to go with this.’ And he gathered up all of the odd people where he could get a planeload I
thought we were going to Kunming but we went into Indochina. And when we got there this tall 
young man comes here and he’s looking for brass. He says, ‘Who’s in charge of this outfit?’ And 
we took off all of our insignia of rank while we’re in battle and I thought, ‘Well, I’ll just see how long I 
can get away without doing that.’ Because everybody knew everybody and knew who was a 
sergeant. When I told him, I was I was in fatigue clothes and had no insignia of rank but he took 
me at my word because he couldn’t find anybody else in the outfit that had any stripes on. But that 
was that. I couldn’t imagine me lying to you.

LC: No sir. That’s how it happened.

DA: That’s what it was.

LC: Now this flight was just a very quick touch down and then…

DA: It was in the Hanoi are and it was close enough – it was a battle area and I got five 
points on a star for being in that area while the war was going. That’s what these officers thought, 
that that would look good on their service record if they was in. And I wasn’t even supposed to be 
there.

LC: So you got five points for landing there?

DA: Yeah, five points for being in a battle area.

LC: How long were you there? Any idea? How long where you on the ground there?

DA: Well, see, I was in India and China and I can’t tell you. I guess from the time I landed 
from the ship until I landed back at Calcutta was about thirteen months, I guess, because I was 
only gone fourteen months and of course that one going home didn’t take near as long.

LC: Funny how that is, isn’t it?

DA: They didn’t go this way and that way and I got a world’s tour out of it because we went 
back through the Suez Canal and into New York, where we’d left from Los Angeles.

LC: When you were actually in Hanoi or near Hanoi for that very brief flight, how long were 
you on the ground?

DA: Oh, a couple of days?

LC: Is that right? What did you during that time? Do you remember?

DA: Well, we went out and got drunk (laughs).

LC: (laughs) Yes sir.

DA: You don’t strike me as the type of person that would read – who wrote down to earth, 
about the dust bowl and the people who went to California?
DA: Right, Steinbeck. What’s the one I’m telling you about?

KS: *Grapes of Wrath*?

DA: Steinbeck was the author, but the Dust Bowl evacuees from Oklahoma, what was the name of that?

KS: *The Grapes of Wrath*.

DA: Yeah. I forget things like that that I’ve known for years.

LC: That’s why you have us around (laughs).

DA: Well, it wasn’t that book but I’ve bet you’ve read the other one that he wrote. A real young man starred in that and died right after it.

LC: In a film of it?

DA: In a film, yeah. It’s the only film he ever made I think.

KS: It was a Steinbeck story?

DA: Steinbeck wrote it and they were drinking Chinese rum and said it tasted like rotten apples but good rotten apples. That’s the only reason I brought that in. But that was what we was drinking, that Chinese rum. And it did. It had a faint taste of rotten apples to it. (laughs) I had a friend. He shoed horses with me and he was a self-taught horse shoe-er. He went from Arkansas to Nebraska as a fourteen year old and started doing chores on a ranch and he stayed there until at least ten years and then he got drafted and came down and I learned more from him about shoeing horses than the Army had taught me. But we got separated and I had seen him write to his mother in some little town in Arkansas. I forgot it now but I wrote after I got home. I wrote to her. This is one of those where it’s no address, just the name. And she wrote me a letter and said, ‘Charlie hasn’t made it home.’ I knew he had married a girl in Texas but they moved to – Nebraska was where he had spent his life and this place where he had worked all these years as a cowboy, they had no place for married men with a family so he got a place on a farm and then this guy needed a house built. Chuck went out there and built a house for him and then he decided that he’d work the place himself so he didn’t have any job. So I got him to come to Michigan and farming went all to hell about the time he got there but we remained friends. What did you ask me?

LC: I forgot. But I have another question to ask you.

DA: Okay.
LC: When did you find out? Where were you when you found out that Japan was going to surrender the end of the war?

DA: Oh, well I can sure tell you that. I had got – they’d put me on – I was a sergeant of the guard every third day. I’d march a bunch of guys down, the guardsmen, at six o’clock, and I would sit there and answer the phone, which never rang until about midnight, and then I had two more non-coms that would finish out the night.

LC: Now is this at Kunming? Where were you? Is this at Kunming or near there?

DA: Yes. And I developed an ulcer. I did that for one night and then I had two days off with nothing to do (laughs). There was a guy who came there. Somewhere they had got a bunch of wax and officers and they had put on Oklahoma, which was right new, and they toured. He was a hell of a swell guy and he was on guard one night. He was officer of the day. I had a corporal that was hard of hearing and he whispered. But for some reason somebody else was taking the phone early in the night and they was going to wake me up and I was to wake up the cooks. And this OD, the officer of the day, was in there and I woke up and somebody was getting the dressing down. Some general had missed a plane and he was just giving his major hell. And boy I just came right up in my bed and I had a watch. I had the only watch but this corporal, I’m sure he shook me by the shoulder and said, ‘It’s time to get up,’ and left. And when I raised up my watch fell down. I said, ‘Oh, this happened.’ And I went and woke the cooks up and they, I think, were already awake. But I came back to this and the general had gotten wore out and as I recall, I said, ‘I don’t suppose it’s any use of telling you what happened.’ ‘Aw, hell,’ he said, ‘Forget about it. That could happen to anybody.’ (laughs) So I thought he was a pretty good guy.

LC: Yeah.

DA: But he had just taken a great cussing out and I told him that he seemed to be a good guy. I said, ‘I just can’t get along with this outfit. I’m getting ulcers.’ So I went to his office and told him that and he flipped open his date book and said 094 was code for horse-shoeing and also my general classification test, I’d gotten 127 on it which 110 is non-com material. He said, ‘094 with 127 says you’re in light flyn.’ And he sent me over to horse shoeing school. And as I reported in to that place there was a notice on that bulletin board that the first atomic bomb had been dropped in Japan. Of course a couple of days later they dropped another one and the war was over. So probably just me transferring from this guard duty into the war –
LC: That was the end of it. Well, let me ask you one more question, Drew. What did you think about the use of the atomic bomb? Once you found out kind of what it was, what did you think about it? Good decision?

DA: If they hadn't have dropped that bomb, we'd have lost as many more men as we already had lost in Japan. Those people didn't know how to quit.

LC: Yes, sir, that's true.

DA: That's my honest opinion.

LC: As you think about it, it was the right decision? It was the right decision, you think?

DA: Well, in my estimation, it was. Of course I might not have gotten into it because I was a long, long ways from Japan.

LC: It's possible, though. You were in the right area.

DA: Those guys – of course, I have to explain this. This intelligence reconnaissance that we were walking ahead of the columns, there was danger there but after we contacted the enemy there was nothing for us to do. The squads, they were organized for that and went ahead and did it.

LC: I bet you were glad to see the end of it, thought.

DA: Well, yes.

LC: When you arrived at New York, were you demobilized? Were you out of the Army?

DA: Let me see. No. We came in there and of course about the first thing I did next before Ft. Dix was I found a telephone and called my wife's number and she was at a movie. Well, this was a lady that Jean had boarded with and she told me she was down at the movie. I guess she told the operator that because I don't remember having to – well, I'm quite sure I called her collect (laughs). I called the movie and they paged her and got her there. She didn't have a penny on her (laughs) but the lady trusted her anyway. She took the call and then there must have been some more telephone calls go in there because I went to Indian Town Gap, Pennsylvania. Are you familiar with it?

LC: Yes, there's a big camp there.

DA: But it didn't take but a couple of days. One of the funniest things, they stripped us to our shorts and footwear, whatever you wanted because they was going to issue you all new – when the cavalry was disbanded in China, they said 'You can have these boots for a souvenir, the last boots in the Army.' So they said, 'We're going to give you everything new besides one pair of
footwear and your shorts.’ So I wanted my boots and I wore them into this room. Oh golly, it was a
good room but there was this row of officers that reached from this wall and down this and back here
and they’d all say, ‘Where in hell did you get those boots?’ (laughs) All of that group of officers
didn’t realize that they’d been cavalry defending there.

LC: Well, Drew, I want to thank you very much. This has been very, very instructive. It
was very nice of you to spend your time completing this.

DA: You know what my time’s worth? (laughs)

LC: Well, it’s worth quite a lot to us because you’ve told some great stories and now we
have a better sense of what it was like to be there then and to see what you saw and that’s very
important to us and it will be important as the years go on and this will always be safe here. So
you have my thanks.

DA: I was telling – you’re quite welcome. I was telling my uncle that never was very far
from Amherst, Texas. He asked if you’re in more danger – there’s a road that goes past his house
out in the country. Nowadays they’d look because there’s just a steady stream of traffic but he
said, ‘You’re more in danger going to your mailbox than I ever was.’

LC: Well sir, you served the country and it’s important that we know.

DA: I’ll tell you something and I don’t have to tell you that. The first night we flew into
Burma. I’ve told you two or three times.

LC: Lateo?

KS: Ledo?

DA: Michinaw.

LC: Oh, Michinaw.

DA: We flew in there and somebody met us with a truck and we went around and we were
half a mile from this and I guess it was the last Japanese plane that they had working and they
dropped a bomb close to where we landed and there was this little Mexican boy. He was raised in
Chicago. He didn’t know anything about Mexico but boy, he didn’t like that being there. He hid out
someplace after that bombing and strafing went on and we got to the place where it was sandy and
he started digging that foxhole and I was trying to tell him he was getting in more danger digging in
that sand but he wouldn’t stop. He just wanted to get out of sight. We had a few times that an
unidentified plane would fly over us and we could see it. We would sit on the side of our foxhole
and he was down here nearly out of sight and he would cuss us for tempting that guy.
LC: You guys are making a target out there (laughs).
DA: If that thing had come over us I'd have been right down in that foxhole with him.
LC: Well sir, thank you very much. Thank you.
DA: It's been a pleasure.
LC: The pleasure is all ours.