

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
ROMAN A. CARPENTER
Quartermaster, Army, World War II
1999

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Carpenter, Roman A., (1921-). Oral History Interview, 1999.

User Copy: 2 sound cassette (ca. 90 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 2 sound cassette (ca. 90 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Video Recording: 1 videorecording (ca. 90 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

Roman Carpenter, a Madison, Wisconsin native, discusses his World War II service as a supply sergeant with the 789th Engineering Petroleum Distribution Company in the China-Burma-India theater. Carpenter talks about volunteering for the Air Corps but being made a quartermaster instead, basic training and quartermaster camp at Camp Lee (Virginia), acting like a drill sergeant to train new recruits in a mobile refrigeration company at Camp Swift (Texas), starting a new mobile refrigeration company at Camp Blanding (Florida), resigning from Officer Candidate School, and operating a training camp in a pipeline company at Camp Claiborne (Louisiana). Carpenter describes his ship ride overseas and putting into port for a day at Cape Town (South Africa). After arriving in Bombay (India), he explains he was assigned to wait for the supplies to be loaded onto a train, and he describes the two weeks he had to explore the city. He talks about the train ride to Calcutta and the “tank farm” owned by the Burma Shell Oil Company and Standard Oil Company in Budge-Budge (India) where the India-Burma-China Pipeline started. Carpenter offers detailed descriptions of the operation and repair of pipelines and pump engines, adjusting fuel octane levels, communications between pump stations via teletype, and his own responsibilities supplying pump stations with food, equipment, clothing, and mail. He mentions learning some Bengali phrases and having friendly relationships with civilian Indian workers and families as well as Scottish and British oil company employees. He briefly tells of the one USO show that came through and the makeshift movie screen in camp. Carpenter discusses shutting down the pipeline after the war’s end and he mentions getting sick from the rich food at his homecoming in New York City. He describes attending the Agricultural School at University of Wisconsin-Madison a week after getting home and, afterwards, working for Land O’ Lakes Creameries in Minneapolis (Minnesota).

Interviewed by James F. McIntosh, 1999.

Transcribed by Katy Marty, 2008.

Checked by Channing Welch, 2008.

Corrections typed in by Katy Marty, 2009.

Abstract by Susan Krueger, 2009.

Transcribed Interview:

[Tape begins abruptly. Total time ca. 90 min.]

JIM: You were born and raised on Eton Ridge.

ROMAN: Correct. [Unintelligible] We lived there until college days. My folks Moved out to Sherman Avenue. Wasn't your house right next to the Endres?

JIM: Right next to Endres, right, exactly.

ROMAN: Ned Proctor (??) on the other side?

JIM: Right, and right between those two. You've got a good well; Marian Endres was in my class. Beautiful lady. Charming.

ROMAN: Yeah.

JIM: She truly was.

ROMAN: Have you ever heard or seen anything of her?

JIM: No. Once I tried to find out, but, you know, when you have a class you keep track of so many people. They didn't do a good job as our class did. We were class of '41; you were '40.

ROMAN: Now she went to West didn't she?

JIM: Yes.

ROMAN: That's what I thought. I went to West, too. You were in '41?

JIM: '41. Right.

ROMAN: I knew you were just a little behind me but I wasn't sure.

JIM: Yeah, one year.

ROMAN: Just one year. That moving?

JIM: It's moving slowly.

ROMAN: My kid sister Peggy, she was 1943 if I remember right. Did you know her at all?

JIM: Nope.

ROMAN: 'Course Fritz was '39.

JIM: Yeah, Fritz, I remember even more because he used to deliver our paper.

ROMAN: Yeah and I used to for a year when I was still in grade school. See Fritz got his route first, in 1935 and he was at West High as a freshman then and I was still finishing eighth grade at Blessed Sacrament so I used to help him with his route. The summer of 1936 I got my own route. I got the one that completely circled almost [unintelligible]. Mine went up Regent, down Rowley, Virginia Terrace, Rugby Row.

JIM: Yeah.

ROMAN: Commonwealth--

JIM: It's my--

ROMAN: Childhood memory seein' him come down in the middle of Eton Ridge. He'd fold those papers into a square [unintelligible] off 'em.

JIM: To each house, but he'd stay in the middle, throw --

ROMAN: I did the same thing with Virginia Terrace.

JIM: Did ya? You could hit those front porches.

ROMAN: Right.

JIM: It was really very good. That's a long time memory.

ROMAN: I can remember yet throwing those papers Jim, Post Theater. I throw those papers in a tube like this and curve sometimes they'd curve this way and land. Sometimes they'd curve this way and around. You got pretty damned good at it after a while.

JIM: I'll bet. So, now Roman Carpenter, it's the 13th of September.

ROMAN: Did you say 13th?

JIM: This is the 13th.

ROMAN: 13th of September. Oh, I thought you meant my birthday.

JIM: No, your birthday's --

ROMAN: 15th of September.

JIM: Right, two days.

ROMAN: You're going to be 39 then, too?

JIM: Yeah.

ROMAN: Thirty-six and you'll be thirty-seven. No, (laughs). 78 I'm celebrating the 39th anniversary of my 39th birthday on Wednesday.

JIM: Oh, I see. You'll be seventy-eight; I'll be seventy-six. All right, anyway, you were born in Madison.

ROMAN: Right. Born and raised in Madison.

JIM: Then you entered the military in July of '42. Right?

ROMAN: Volunteered.

JIM: Did you volunteer for any particular --

ROMAN: Oh sure, I wanted to be in the Air Corps.

JIM: So, how'd that work out?

ROMAN: It was a down. I ended up being a quartermaster. (laughter)

JIM: Right, but how did that evolve?

ROMAN: The Army at that time, they put you where they needed you. There again I wanted to get into the Air Corps. Of course I couldn't get into any of the flying [unintelligible].

JIM: Oh, I see.

ROMAN: Okay, well I'll get into Air Corps.

JIM: [unintelligible]

ROMAN: I ended up taking anything I could get, basic training in the quartermaster.

JIM: Where'd you go?

ROMAN: Camp Lee, Virginia outside of Richmond. Quartermaster camp.

JIM: How long were you there?

ROMAN: Three months, something like that.

JIM: Your training, specifically to do what?

ROMAN: Just basic training.

JIM: Oh, just basic and then –

ROMAN: Then they put me into a mobile refrigeration company.

JIM: Oh.

ROMAN: And that was over in Texas. At, if I remember correctly, it was Camp Swift, Texas. I was in that mobile refrigeration company for two months. It was just getting started and I was sent there with a group of about a dozen guys from our basic training unit. In this outfit in Texas all they had was a cadre of eight or ten enlisted men. I think just one officer. [unintelligible] first he came through the swamps of [unintelligible] He was the company commander but then he made captain. And then from there, we were there for a couple of months. All of a sudden out of the clear blue they sent to our company something like 100 or 150 recruits, guys just coming into the Army. They'd only been in the Army a week. They sent them down to us and we had to give them basic training. Well, us ten or twelve guys along with this cadre ended up being essentially drill sergeants, although we were all nothing but buck privates. So we went into a basic training camp with these guys. Then about the middle of, the first part of December of 1942 our company there had a order to send a cadre to Jacksonville, Florida to Camp Blanding, just outside of Jacksonville. The cadre to start another mobile refrigeration company.

JIM: What does a mobile refrigeration company consist of?

ROMAN: What it meant was semitrailers, refrigerated semitrailers. Not big ones, not the big ones with the double axles in the back. Single axles are used for refrigerators. So they sent eight or ten of us guys as a cadre there, and they designated me to be the supply sergeant. Well, Jim the only thing I knew about a supply room at that time was that once a week you would send in your dirty clothes and they sent them to the laundry and on Friday night or Saturday morning you took your dirty sheets and pillow cases over there and got clean ones for the upcoming week. We of course were busy as hell giving basic training to these guys in Texas and then they shipped me off to be a supply sergeant in this new outfit. Well, I ended up down there in Florida. We got a bunch of guys down there that had had basic training. In

the meantime, about in January, February something like that I had put in just for the hell of it to OCS, Officer Candidate School. It was in the spring that they sent me to off to Texas for Officer Candidate School in Medical Administrative Corps. Well, I went out there for that, and right off the bat I could see that wasn't what I wanted. So within a couple of weeks I resigned. They sent me back to camp, the one in Virginia where I had taken basic training as a quartermaster. Yeah, they sent me back to Camp Lee, Virginia and I was there for a month or two, somewhere around, I don't remember exactly how much. Pretty soon they shipped me out. Where the hell did they send me? Oh, they sent me down to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, to the engineers to be a supply sergeant. I'd had an interview in Camp Lee, Virginia with this guy, a captain. He needed a supply sergeant. He said, "I want you to be a supply sergeant in the engineer's pipeline." So that's where I went down to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. I was supply sergeant in a pipeline company.

JIM: What did that consist of?

ROMAN: That consisted of - the whole idea of the pipeline was the shipping of fuel, aviation gas, and automotive gas. So I ended up operating the training camp down there, our training camp where we went through. Putting up a building, but there was already built. A pipeline where they put a pipe into a water, into a river there, a smaller one, a four inch line. Pumped the water out, ran it through five miles of pipe right back into the river again and then along this pipeline there they had two or three pump stations where they pick up the water, pump it through the pipes, ship to the next pumping station and then eventually back into the river.

JIM: This was to train you?

ROMAN: A training camp, yeah. Of course I was the supply sergeant in this outfit. We had a bunch of guys that had gone through basic training, had a number of different, mostly young, mostly [unintelligible] engineers, but they got them from other places too. That's where we had our (??) deployment to operation of a pipeline. We were out there, oh, for about a month out of bivouac. Some of the camps along the pipeline, the various pump stations had a regular camp. They had their own mess hall and everything. So that was the training situation. Then in the spring of '44 they shipped us from Claiborne over to Port of Embarkation, which was at Hampton Roads, Virginia. They put our company on a ship there I don't remember the name of it. We took off in the spring of '44, went across the Atlantic over by the Azores. This was on an unescorted ship. It was a fast one; it could move. It would head up to twenty-eight, thirty knots. No submarine could keep up with us. At least one night going overseas that ship was zigzagging across back and forth. Apparently their radar had picked up a sub or something so they were doing evasive action there.

When we got over we went past the Azores. We could see it and wave hello, from there went down around. Then we thought well, maybe we're going into the Mediterranean, but apparently they didn't want us through there. That was a little too dangerous area so we went along the coast of Africa and all the way down to Cape Town and we pulled into Cape Town one night or early morning and they let us off of the ship, and that afternoon we went into Cape Town and looked over the place. We stocked up on food. The food aboard the ship was not the best. Going over there, it was loaded, probably was something like 5,000 troops plus a detachment of army nurses on the upper decks. It was the officers and all us GI's on the under part. A matter of fact our company, we were put onboard ship the day before because our company was assigned to interior guard duty onboard the ship. The nice thing about that was they put us in staterooms below the officers' quarters and up above. In the tearooms, gee, nice mattresses and bunk beds two or three high with regular mattresses, not just pads. It was more roomy. But we had duty aboard the ship, four hours on, eight hours off.

JIM: To do what?

ROMAN: We had our men assigned to different areas on the ship where all the GI's were from the four decks. We were top deck, where our rooms were with also the three decks below were almost right above the hold where all the other GI's in the ship were. We had our assignments for different areas of the various decks.

JIM: You just marched around?

ROMAN: Just sat. Mostly we just sat and yackety yakked with the guys there.

JIM: Waiting for something to happen.

ROMAN: If anything were to happen we were supposed to give the instructions on where to go and what to do. We didn't know ourselves (laughing) what to do, and of course, I was the staff sergeant being the Supply Sergeant. By the way I was also my quartermaster outfit. Before I went to OCS I was a staff sergeant there and then when I went back to out of the OCS they gave me my staff sergeant rating back.

JIM: Oh.

ROMAN: So I was a staff sergeant again with this pipeline company. Being a staff sergeant on ship made me a sergeant of the guards (laughs), along with a bunch of other sergeants in our outfit. We were onboard that ship, I think was right close to thirty days onboard that damn ship goin' over. Then the stop at Cape Town and then we got on board ship again and went around South Africa, finished going around the South African coast. We stopped

at another place along the African coast there near Cape Point (??) or something like that. Just pulled in there for a day, they didn't even leave us off ship.

JIM: What was it like in Cape Town?

ROMAN: Cape Town is a beautiful city. During the six or eight hours that we had off we walked all around it. Residential area, we found this one small restaurant. "Let's go have something to eat." Well, we were kind of lookin' forward to some good food because we weren't happy with the food. So went into this little restaurant, this was like 1:30 or 2:00 in the afternoon we hadn't had any lunch yet. We looked at the menu. Ham and eggs, boy, does that ever sound good, with toast so we ordered, I was with four or five buddies, we all ordered double orders of ham and eggs or what not, three eggs and two nice great big pieces of meat. Well, that was so good, Jim we were still hungry. We ordered another order, double order of ham and eggs. This young lady who was the, our waitress said she couldn't believe what she was hearing, these Americans ordering twice double orders of ham and eggs and toast. Well, we wolfed that double order down the second time, and then we were pretty satisfied with the food. It was good. We were hungry as the devil. (Laughs) So after that we chased around some more sightseeing in Cape Town. I was impressed with it, a beautiful city. Then right after we left the other place, Darwin or Darcow or whatever it was along the west or the east coast of Africa. Got on board the ship again. I can't remember which side of the Madagascar that big island off of the east coast of Africa. I can't remember where we went around the west, the east end of that or whether we went in the strait between the island and the African mainland. But anyway we went up there right up to Bombay. At Bombay we debarked and they unloaded allof our supplies and they couldn't get our supplies on the same train as with the troops. So myself, another one of my supply guys and one of our lieutenants, ah Lieutenant Heinman (??) we were held up to wait until they unloaded the ship of all supplies. Swell, they didn't unload the ship of all supplies. Well, they didn't unload the ship of all the supplies for a couple of days. In the meantime the rest of our company went and got aboard a train and went over across Vindhya (??) to Calcutta. So we stayed around and within a couple of days we had the stuff all unloaded and put on a train. But they didn't put on the train. My buddy, the lieutenant and myself, the three of us. Well, "We'll put you on another train later." They put us up into a cap of a British Army Camp, and we didn't have anything to do so everyday we'd hop on a streetcar or whatever, go into Bombay. We bummed around Bombay for damned near two weeks.

Bombay was a beautiful city. The downtown area, the business area was very, very nice. Good business type district you know, but they had their shantytowns in there too. We got to go through some of those. It was kind

of a forecast of what we were going to run into when we got to Calcutta and around Calcutta, but anyways the downtown area was nice. For a couple of days going down there we ended up going into the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay which was very deluxe.

JIM: Beautiful place.

ROMAN: We'd go into the bar with the lieutenant. The other guy that was with us was a T5, T4 which is a sergeant with a T under it and I was a staff sergeant. We'd go in there in the afternoon, sit around, have a couple of rum and sodas. That worked out real fine. We had enough money.

JIM: Get something to eat?

ROMAN: No, we'd usually eat in camp, but we did find one or two restaurants in Bombay that were reasonable and ate there. But I got a kick out of it. About the third or fourth day into the Taj Mahal Hotel suddenly the manager of the bar came over and started talking to us and said, "Now, you two sergeants in the American Army right?" "Yes, and this man here is a lieutenant." He said, "Well, your friend can stay but the sergeants will have to leave. You see this bar is exclusively for officers only." So, rather than, we left, all three of us, and that was the end of that. So for the rest of the time in Bombay we just bummed around in other places within the city. We were getting a little fed up with just hanging around. So finally after about ten days, two weeks they did get us on the train to Bombay.

JIM: Calcutta.

ROMAN: Or Calcutta, and that took about I think two nights and three days.

JIM: Slow train.

ROMAN: It's about twelve hundred, twelve hundred or fifteen hundred miles across. It was a slow train. It was all troops and supply train, boxcars, full of Army supplies and whatnot. They were forever sending us off to side tracks for higher priority trains, passenger trains, civilian passenger trains, or other military passenger trains to go by us. Sometimes we'd sit there at these sidings for a half a day or more.

JIM: You didn't have anything to eat or drink.

ROMAN: Oh yeah, we ate right on the train. They did have train, ah, the soldiers for our meals.

JIM: Oh.

ROMAN: But the train, Indian troop train, wasn't what we would call like a Pullman train here for troops. These were trains where they had racks, wooden racks which were also your seats. Adjust the seat on the lower one you'd, that's where you sat, and then you'd lean up against another wood rack which at night you could pull up and that was another bed. So you had the army blankets that you spread out and then above was another flat area for a third person would be up there. Now, these were not put in lengthwise but crosswise across the bar so when you sat you were sitting like you did on an American train where you could sit and look out the window but the other way. So going across India there it was a long trip as I say and we could get off and eventually we did get to Calcutta after about two nights and three days. Got off the train there and then went down to Army trucks picked us up from our outfit took us down to near where the pipeline company was going to start the pipeline. We were there for a couple of weeks and then we, they put up a building in a little village called Budge-Budge. B-u-d-g-e B-u-d-g-e that was the name of the village. Now Budge-Budge was famous for two things. It was along the Hooghly River. See the Calcutta itself is inland from the Bay of Bengal, sixty, eighty miles, something like that up the Hooghly River which is one of the tributaries of the Ganges. See the Ganges came down to a delta very much like the Mississippi and one of the rivers, the Hooghly, was navigable by ocean vessels. They could go right up to Calcutta. We were south of Calcutta at Budge-Budge. At Budge-Budge was an oil depot which was a peacetime oil depot that was operated by the Burma Shell Oil Company and Standard Oil Company. They had big, it was a big what they call in the oil industry a "Tank Farm" a whole bunch of huge tanks where ships coming up unload mostly 100 octane plus aviation gas or 80 octane all purpose vehicles for trucks and jeeps and and stuff like that.

And also along this river, right next to this tank farm were there was bunch jute mills burlap. These mills produce jute, usually in big sheets. They were then used to make burlap bags which our farmers use here for grain and whatnot and over there they used the burlap for rice. And a number of different just mills there and these jute mills were staffed by mainly by primarily Scottish civilians. And we got to know a bunch of these Scottish civilian people because they had a little private club called the Budge-Budge club. It had a nice little facility building there with a room and bar and a big field where they had the soccer field. So we got acquainted with these people and pretty soon, I had five of us guys, the five of us were pretty much buddies. Three of us were in supply and two of us, the other two were guys that worked in our petroleum lab. The petroleum lab was a small laboratory where we tested all the incoming tankers where we could take aviation gas, run octane ratings on it to see if it was up to snuff on 100 octane before it was accepted. We also ran a couple of the centrifugal lead tests in too (??) Two of my buddies worked in that lab as chemists. The five of us guys were very close. We went off

in the war together. We were made honorary war time members of The Budge-Budge Club which was very nice to be an honorary war time member, but the other advantage we got our drinks at club rates. (laughs) Now, club rates was that was about half to two-thirds that any non [unintelligible] was charged. That made the drinks dirt cheap. For \$2.00 American money we could go over there and have at least four or five drinks on a night when we would want to go over.

JIM: \$2.00?

ROMAN: For two bucks, yeah. So we would be paying like hardly thirty or forty cents a drink or so. Otherwise they were fifty or sixty cents. Well, then, and it also had other advantages.

JIM: Did you eat there too?

ROMAN: No, they didn't have a restaurant. But over in the other area on the road toward Calcutta there was a--have you ever heard of Bata shoes, B-a-t-a?

JIM: No.

ROMAN: Well, Bata shoes are throughout the world. There were some in the United States too. Bata Shoes Company had a factory there where they made shoes and for a while we used to be able to go over there when we were first overseas. We could go over there, and then when they had a restaurant and they would let us come in. We could have restaurant food. Now the Bata Shoe Company was a Czechoslovakian company, and they of course were occupied by Germany. But they were still operating independently there. They were still operating making shoes and sandals for the market over there. So we would go over there to a dinner, and also their club they had a swimming pool and we could go swimming, too, and that was nice too. But then after awhile they kind of, they didn't kick us out but they switched over to using their club, not just for us fellows from our outfit, but bringing people from various other organizations, military organizations. **[End of Tape 1, Side A]** mostly British, Indian and American so we could no longer go over there as we used to. So that took care of that, but we found nice places in Calcutta that were, three good restaurants in Calcutta that we could go to.

JIM: Was Calcutta pretty messy?

ROMAN: Downtown Calcutta was beautiful. A nice British environment, ya know. A lot of Scottish people and British civilians that were living there. A nice big park. Maiden Park was one of 'em, but Maiden Park had one long road that the British, it was a straight road. The British converted it into a fighter landing field, and so fighter Spitfires and whatnot, the fighter pilots

would land their planes there, and they were stationed out there. But, yeah, there were a couple of nice stores, a shopping area in downtown Calcutta. The restaurants Firpo's, Christie's and the Grand Hotel. We didn't go to the Grand Hotel much. We went to Firpo's and Christie's

JIM: What would you buy there?

ROMAN: Restaurant?

JIM: Oh, so those were restaurants.

ROMAN: Those were restaurants. Yeah. There you could get American type, British type, meals of all kinds.

JIM: What was your main business with this pipeline now? What was your mission?

ROMAN: Our main business, the India-Burma-China pipeline started at Budge-Budge. It was a six inch diameter line and it pumped gas through India into Burma, across Burma and eventually into China. There were several areas where other additional pipelines were installed, particularly in Burma. The airfields where we pumped nothing but 100 Octane plus gasoline. Now the gasoline, aviation gas that we got from tankers came either, tankers directly from the west coast or sometimes from the east coast where we go around South Africa and then later in the war where they could go through the Mediterranean and they'd come down that way. But they would come, bring gas over directly from the States or else they went up to the Persian Gulf area, the oil fields there and brought it down there. But the gasoline coming into us would have gone anywhere from 100—to as high as 120 octane stuff, they'd put it into a separate tank and then maybe another tanker would come up in with octane of only 95. Well, well we would blend it, raise the octane level up to 110, 112 because we wouldn't put anything into the pipeline that wasn't at least 100 octane.

JIM: How did you offload from the ship?

ROMAN: How did we what? Oh, that was- our company had nothing to do with that. The Burma Shell and Standard Oil Companies took care of offloading the ships.

JIM: They would put it in --

ROMAN: Tank farms, yeah.

JIM: And you dealt with the tanks.

- ROMAN: We dealt directly with the tanks only.
- JIM: Did you transmit only gasoline, not oil?
- ROMAN: We didn't do anything but 100 octane gas. That's all we ever put into the -
- JIM: What pushed that gasoline? What pushed it along with pipeline?
- ROMAN: Oh, at the end of the pipeline we -
- JIM: Air pressure?
- ROMAN: No, pumps, pumps. No air, just this gas would go from pump to pump .
No, gasoline powered pumps.
- JIM: Okay.
- ROMAN: These pumps were set up in a series anywhere from three to five pumps in a row. See along the pipe line we had these pump stations every few miles, anywhere from ten or fifteen up to twenty miles or so apart. The gas would come into these pumps at maybe down to around fifteen to seventy, eighty pounds per square inch. It would go into the first pump, and these were gasoline powered pumps. We would pump it up to the next level maybe 150 pounds per square inch going into the second pump, from there maybe to 250 to 300 or more pounds per square inch and then out into to the pipeline. Each one of these pumps upped the air pressure. The pumps themselves were gasoline engine powered. The gasoline engine that was used for them was the same engine, the same GMC engine that went into the old Army 2 ½ ton 6 X 6 trucks. I don't know if you're familiar with those, but that's the engine we used. Now that engine was not developed to be used as a pump station engine, but it worked fine. The only thing is that it didn't last as long. The engine itself was fine, but it was the heads with the valves. It was a valve in head engine. As the station used as the stationary engine those valves after a while got pretty well beat up. So they'd take the heads off, put a new head on with good valves, and away they'd go. So we were constantly replacing engine heads along the line and General Motors in Calcutta area had a plant where we could send the valves. the heads down, where the valves were beat up. By beat up I mean you'd swear that somebody I've seen some of those valves, you'd swear that somebody had been going after them with abullpen hammer, heavy ball peen hammer and hammered the hell out of them because they were bent all out of shape. So we'd send those heads over to this GMC plant and they would rebuild them and put new valves in them. We'd reuse 'em again.

- JIM: You had no problem with supplies over there? Building supplies?
- ROMAN: Well, the pipeline itself was built along the railroad, the Bengal Assam Railroad which operated out of Calcutta. It was along this line where all the pump stations were. So all of our supplies went by railroad.
- JIM: Did you have to go inspect all these pumps all along the line?
- ROMAN: Well, at the pump stations each one of the pump stations was a little camp in itself. They had anywhere from twelve or fifteen up to twenty-five, thirty men or more.
- JIM: Your mission was to keep to keep that pump going.
- ROMAN: Right. These as I mentioned, these pump stations were anywhere from fifteen up to twenty miles or so apart. So each pump station was a little camp in itself so we had to supply these camps with the necessary equipment, pumps, and replacement heads.
- JIM: All that and food?
- ROMAN: Food and clothing –
- JIM: You can't put in a [unintelligible] after that grime.
- ROMAN: I had, as supply sergeant, my responsibility was supplying the necessary equipment for the operation of the pumps. The stations, the clothing, engineering equipment, mechanical toy, ah, tools and everything for the guys to –
- JIM: Mail?
- ROMAN: Pardon?
- JIM: Mail.
- ROMAN: Mail. We sent mail. We had a guy that was our mailman. He supplied, took care of all the mail, preparing the bag. We had couriers that went up and down the line and the train stopped at each one of these pump stations which was located right near a small Indian railroad station. So the guys at the pump stations, they had jeeps. They could come into the railroad stations, pick up their supplies that were coming in which included – food, everything, clothing. The mess sergeant, our mess sergeant, he had the responsibility of sending all the, dividing up on a monthly basis all of the non perishables supplies and shipping those out.

- JIM: How many stations did you have under your rule (??) there?
- ROMAN: We had, our company was set up and equipped to operate twelve stations.
- JIM: Which is how many miles?
- ROMAN: Well, the mileage was set up, what ended up, Jim was instead of having twelve we had all together I think it was eighteen stations. So we needed additional equipment and men to divide up for all along this line. Of course each one of the staff was personnel, equipment and whatnot. Food, they had their own little mess hall, whatnot.
- JIM: At each spot?
- ROMAN: At each spot. They had their own cook or cooks; sometimes they had a couple cooks. Also, they also had Indian help, Indian men that worked with 'em.
- JIM: Did the menial work.
- ROMAN: Did the menial work. From the mess hall helping the cooks to working with the guys at the pump station helping them operate those pumps.
- JIM: Tell me what the average guy would do at a pump station. What was his daily routine?
- ROMAN: At a pump station the guys, would – see, these operated twenty-four hours a day.
- JIM: I understand.
- ROMAN: So on a particular shift they divided 'em up into usually three shifts. The guys would work eight hours and then off. Then they'd have a couple extra guys there so they could get a day off or so. On their shift they would maintain the, make sure these engines were operating and they also had the mechanics where they were taking the heads off of engines that, where the valves were burned out or replacing the pumps themselves. Now the pumps themselves were centrifuge pumps. They weren't twisting type pumps. They were centrifuge. The engines sometimes the whole engine or sometimes just the heads, had to be replaced and they were constantly doing that. And something replacing the entire pumps themselves or the pump parts, maybe the impellers, which was the round circular part of the pumps that did the actual pumping had to be replaced.
- JIM: So, a pump breaks down, how do you solve that? Did the line stop or –

- ROMAN: No, that line, they could just bypass that pump and shut it down.
- JIM: There would be no stoppage then.
- ROMAN: Right, and they had no - the other two or three pumps were still operating twenty-four hours a day.
- JIM: How could they tell how the pump was doing? In other words, you couldn't walk up to your pump twenty- four hours a day to look at it.
- ROMAN: Oh, they could tell by the sound of the thing. It would start making a lot of noise, you know, and stuff like that.
- JIM: If things weren't going well you could tell--
- ROMAN: No, these were good mechanics. So they could go shut down a particular pump.
- JIM: Did you keep in contact by phone or telegraph or someway -
- ROMAN: We had -
- JIM: With other stations.
- ROMAN: We had both teletype, the teletype went all the way through the line. All the way up to -
- JIM: All the way up to China.
- ROMAN: As far as I know, yeah. Our company, we operated about the first, somewhere 250 miles or something like that of that line. We went up as far as the, the not quite up to the Brahmaputra River. There it crossed into-
- JIM: Burma.
- ROMAN: Burma, but almost up to that, and then there was another pipeline company that took over from there. Along this line we had teletype primarily and -
- JIM: So if you there's a problem they could immediately tell everybody [unintelligible]
- ROMAN: Yeah, each station had a teletype machine. They could teletype messages up and down the line whichever way they wanted to go. Then along the lower parts you also had telephone communication too, but that didn't go all the way up that only went up to maybe the first four or five stations or

so. At some stations, think we had two of them, would being a regular station it was also a small supply depot, not so much for food, clothing but for pump supplies. There they had extra supplies of engines, pumps, heads, things of that nature. Pipe supplies in case there was a breakdown of the line itself The could break in and replace the line. Now the line itself was made out of six inch pipe, case iron pipe with a Victaulic coupling connection. Now Victaulic was, the coupling was two pieces of pipe could be put together and there was a groove around the end of each pipe about roughly about that far from the end and the groove was about that wide. It was cut into the pipe about so far, and then there was a rubber gasket that was put over and this gasket was built so that it would hook into the grooves. Then around the grooves making the Victaulic coupling journal a two piece journal which was clamped together and screwed together tight and that prevented leaking. That's why that every twenty feet there was a break and a Victaulic coupling.

JIM: Every twenty feet?

ROMAN: Every twenty feet for miles.(laughs) Blows your mind doesn't it?

JIM: Well, it it seems excessive, but, you know.

ROMAN: Well, that was –

JIM: This all above ground?

ROMAN: Yeah, this was all above ground. It was right along the railroad tracks. Some places I understand where they had run another line that they could put below ground too, but the above ground made it easily accessible for repair and whatnot. As I say it was right along the railroad tracks so that they could --

JIM: Do all the repair they wanted. Somebody had to shut it down for a segment.

ROMAN: Partially, yeah. But ah, they didn't have, we had very little trouble where that occurred.

JIM: What troubles did you have?

ROMAN: I never had, I never got up on that line because I was always down at Budge-Budge at our main tanks.

JIM: What about sabotage or things like that?

- ROMAN: No, we never had any problem with sabotage at all. No, we did have between these stations they would everyday you would go by jeep, we had a couple of jeeps mounted with railroad wheels that they could put on the tracks. Those tracks over there were not standard American tracks.
- JIM: Narrow gauge?
- ROMAN: They were ah, wide gauge.
- JIM: Oh.
- ROMAN: So, they were a little wider than our standard American track. The standard American track is thirty-six, thirty-nine inches or something like that. This was a British y- gauge. It was like four or five inches wider. They had a couple of jeeps for sidecar types where they could go up and down and inspect these lines almost on a daily basis to make sure that everything was O.K. or as they say in Indian Tee-ki (??).
- JIM: Is that O. K.?
- ROMAN: Tee-ki (??) is O.K.
- JIM: Is that Hindu?
- ROMAN: That's Bengali. Around where we were we spoke mostly Bengali.
- JIM: Bengali?
- ROMAN: It was a language like -
- JIM: It's really a dialect I'm sure.
- ROMAN: We picked up a minimum amount to get along like (??) – "So long, let's go (??)," you know, or "Good bye." When we were working with an Indian he was having a little problem we thought that. [unintelligible] "What's the matter, friend?" Stuff like that.
- JIM: Sure.
- ROMAN: Around the Indian villages there we were surrounded with civilians all along our camp there. We got to know a lot of these people there. Families there with kids, you know. We had our supply warehouse about a block away from camp, an old two story building we used. It had now I guess an apartment of some kind I believe. We used all the rooms for our supplies to glow up the line. We filled all of our orders that were put on

the pipeline, supply train. But in this village, yeah, we knew a lot of the natives around there. We see the native men and women and kids.

JIM: Very good. Friendly?

ROMAN: Oh, very friendly. Yeah, we were just like neighbors you know, "Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. How are you? [unintelligible] That means whodatcha (??) means very good, very good [unintelligible] and –

JIM: Did you ever eat with any of the natives?

ROMAN: No, no we had our own mess halls and we just stayed right there.

JIM: You were advised not to?

ROMAN: There was no need to, and they were not that rich.

JIM: Most of them were very poor.

ROMAN: Yeah.

JIM: Did you bring them any GI food?

ROMAN: We occasionally would give 'em some stuff, but not very much. Now in our mess hall our mess sergeant and a couple of GI cooks – and the GI cooks also had some Indian helpers to help with the production of food because in our main camp there, Budge-Budge, we had all of our communications people and we had a bunch of signal corps people assigned to us. They operated the telephones, and the –

JIM: Telegraph.

ROMAN: What do they call those machines?

JIM: Telegraph. Teletype.

ROMAN: Teletypes, yeah. They had in charge of the operation and maintenance of the teletypes, although our men knew how to operate the teletypes, like operating a typewriter you know. So they were assigned to us signal corps guys. And who else? I think that was about all we had was the signal corps.

JIM: So you were there for how long?

ROMAN: Well, we got over there in the spring of '44, and we got the operation, the line going by June of '44, and we operated continuously. The war ended in end of August, first part of August of '45

JIM: '45

ROMAN: In '45. Well, we couldn't shut down right then. Our line continued operation until the end of September 'cause we had to supply all these aviation, air corps, bases for the operation of their planes and whatnot. So they finally shut down the line the end of September.

JIM: They went on. They said we don't want to expose the end of the line to say that they don't want any more gas right now. They had enough. Did they stop the operation or slow it down, or how did they deal with that?

ROMAN: As far as I know at the various pump stations when they were pumping into the tanks they let 'em know, "We don't need any more gas." Of course then we just pumped a lot less gas into our line. Now our line was speaking of to capacity, as I understand it the line was built to operate and pump 10,000 Imperial barrels per day. Now a standard American barrel is fifty-six gallons. Imperial barrel was a few more like sixty, sixty-three something like that. So 10,000 Imperial barrels was a lot of capacity. Now I think only on maybe one or two occasions did we ever get close to 10,000 imperial barrels. Most of the time we were probably operating with 7 to 8,000 barrels per day. So we were pumping a lot of gas on that line. That's twenty-four hours a day. That wasn't my concern. That was operations.

JIM: You just had to make sure you had enough where you were.

ROMAN: Right. All I had to do was make sure that they had the necessary supplies to keep it going.

JIM: Did the Red Cross ever show up around where you were?

ROMAN: On only one occasion the Red Cross group from the United States came down to Budge-Budge and performed at the Budge-Budge Club.

JIM: Oh, that's not the Red Cross, you mean the USO?

ROMAN: USO, Red Cross, yeah. The two of them – well, the Red Cross was in Calcutta. They had a place there in town where we could stop in and--

JIM: Get a donut and coffee.

ROMAN: Donut and coffee, but the USO came down only one time during late '44 a '45. They did come down to Budge-Budge and down the road, further down the road from us about four or five miles, the quartermaster had a large quartermaster depot for quartermaster supplies. They shipped a lot of stuff. I don't know whether they used the line or the railroads or what they used. I think they did, but they had a bunch of GI's down there, not a lot of 'em, probably oh maybe no more than, maybe twenty-five or thirty guys. We didn't have much contact with them at all. As I said one time the USO did come down to Budge-Budge and a bunch of these quartermaster guys -
-

JIM: Come up to see the show.

ROMAN: Came up to see the show. It was sort of a nice show, including a lot of – we invited all of the local Scottish civilians. They came over for the show, too. And also in our camp we put, we made a little theater. We had a bunch of engineers that were good at construction. They took a lot of salvage pipe, welded it. They were guys that were welders and whatnot, and they welded a bunch of pipe together and they put together a little overhead theater.

JIM: Oh.

ROMAN: Just with some roofs boarded so we would get movies. We got a screen and put a bunch of benches and folding chairs and so once a week, sometimes twice, we could get movies through the USO and bring 'em off and we had a projector and these were sometimes popular movies that were shown in the States. And we'd invite all the Scottish and British civilians from the jute mills and also some that worked for the Standard, Shell, and Burma Oil Company to feel free to come over to our movie. So they would come over with their husbands and wives and sometimes their kids. They had small groups and they'd come over and join us for an evening of a movie, and that was very nice.

JIM: They were pleasant people, weren't they?

ROMAN: Oh yeah. Very much. The Scottish people were wonderful.

JIM: Did you keep in contact with any of them?

ROMAN: Very little or none, no, but during our period over there we got to know a number of these families, probably six, eight different groups.

JIM: So again, at the end of the war you had to stay a little longer.

- ROMAN: Yeah, as I say we had to continue operation of the pipeline until the end of September, and after that essentially we didn't have anything to do so we were pretty free. Of course I would still do supply work because the guys were still at the pump stations, keep them with food and clothing and what not. Of course they didn't need a lot of the supplies anymore for the operation of the pumps and whatnot.
- JIM: How did you turn those over to civilians?
- ROMAN: We stayed there until the first part of December, about the 12th or 14th of December. They put us on a boat. Now, this wasn't the whole company. At the end of the war you were given credits. Maybe you remember that?
- JIM: Of course.
- ROMAN: Points for years in service, types of service. Well they broke it down, you had to have so many points to qualify to go home there on a boat in December. Well, I qualified because I had plenty of service time and overseas time. A lot of our guys didn't have the necessary total points. So they were kept there in India and essentially they were there to finish closing down the lines and everything. I understand a lot of those guys they didn't get out until about sometime in April '46 before they finally had everything closed down.
- JIM: Was that line closed down and wasn't that taken by the civilians?
- ROMAN: No, there was no longer any --
- JIM: They just left everything?
- ROMAN: Once we closed down pumping gas the end of September. There was no more pumping ever through that line to my knowledge.
- JIM: You don't know what happened to the pipeline then.
- ROMAN: No. I think it was just abandoned for the most part. Maybe somebody else took it over to salvage metal from it because the Indians did have their own steel mills and they could have utilized that steel for other purposes. So anyway at the end of from the end of September until about the 14th or so of December we had essentially nothing to do, really. Once in awhile a company commander would get us out in the afternoon and take us on a hike up and down the roads, you know, just to occupy our time .
- JIM: Did he get you into trouble?

- ROMAN: Nah, no we just had fun. We had a lot of friends there among the Europeans and what not. So finally on the 14th of December we went into Calcutta, actually a few days before, got aboard a ship and --
- JIM: The five of you still together?
- ROMAN: Yeah, all five of us were able to --
- JIM: Got home at the same time.
- ROMAN: Right, keep together and go home at the same time.
- JIM: Where did you go to then?
- ROMAN: Well, on the way home we got on the ship at Calcutta, went down around Southern India, up through the Red Sea, through the Mediterarian, right directly to New York City. That's where we got off the boat. We were in New York's well, there again that was a long journey 'cause this [**End of Tape 1, Side B**] a slow boat. It was again close to a month, twenty-five, twenty-eight days. When we got to New York we were there only for four, five days or so, and I got a kick out of it. Soon as we got off of the boat in New York we went on a train right directly back to camp which was only four or five hours on the train. First thing they did was put us into a nice mess hall and serve us a big steak dinner. T-bone and sirloin steaks. We weren't used to that and (laughter) by the next day most of us had the "GIs", which you know what I mean there. From that food, and fresh lettuce and salad stuff like that we we weren't used to, so kind of had to readjust our digestive systems to that rich food. (laugh) That took a day or two, but being young and whatnot we adjusted to that pretty fast. Then for there they split us all up. A bunch of us went on a train directly to Chicago. I was only off of that boat a week, ten days. I was discharging in Madison.
- JIM: So when you sent to the graduate school, did you use the GI Bill?
- ROMAN: I was home for one week and started school at the University. Started around the 20th or so of January of '46 a new semester. In one week I got everything in order. My veterans stuff.
- JIM: [unintelligible]
- ROMAN: Went back to the Ag School again. See, I had gone to the University two years before I went into the war.
- JIM: You were in Ag School?

- ROMAN: In Ag School, yeah.
- JIM: What was your goal?
- ROMAN: Before the war I didn't know just where I wanted to go in agriculture. Then after the war I ended up getting my bachelors' degree in 1947 in Animal Husbandry. Then I went right into graduate school and in 1949 I got my masters degree in Dairy Husbandry.
- JIM: Oh.
- ROMAN: And that was with the idea of going into the field of artificial breeding in dairy cows. But also in my undergraduate work in animal husbandry I worked for two years at the University Meat Lab.
- JIM: Oh.
- ROMAN: Now the meat lab there was we did both the slaughtering, cutting of animals of all type. Beef, veal, and lamb, the whole works. Not - no poultry. The poultry department had their own slaughtering thing for that. In the meat lab there we did everything. The second year I helped Bob Bray who was finishing up on his PhD in animal husbandry. Helped him teach his meats courses. He was primarily a meats man. The first year working under him and then helping him teach meats courses.
- JIM: So armed with your masters degree you set out into the real world and what'd you find?
- ROMAN: I ended up working for Land o' Lakes Creameries up in Minneapolis area. Outside of Minneapolis Land O' Lakes Creameries had established a bull stud where they had five major breeds of cattle, bulls, Holstein, Guernsey, Jersey, Brown Swiss, and Milking Shorthorn. They had something like about fifty head of bulls in these five breeds. I was put in charge of the collecting of the semen, the laboratory processing, the shipping out of the semen to the inseminators, and I also trained the inseminators how to inseminate the cows, and the inseminators they're were up to your elbows in work.
- JIM: Yes, I know that. I had a patient who--
- ROMAN: Yeah.
- JIM: For ABS.
- ROMAN: Yeah. ABS were competitors of ours. They operated up in that area too.

- JIM: When did you collect the semen from the bulls on a stanchion or something?
- ROMAN: The way we collected the bulls, we made up what we called an artificial vagina, and it was a piece of heavy tubing, like a radiator type tubing and at the end of it various lengths anywhere from that long to that long. Obviously larger dairy bulls have larger penises you needed a larger thing.
- JIM: Right.
- ROMAN: When we lined it with a rubber tubing, pulled it through the tubing, pulled it over the ends of the holes with heavy rubber bands around it. Then there was a hole in the hose where you could put warm water in and then put a cork into it to stop it up. Then in the inside of the rubber tubing you used some KY jelly as a lubricant and off at the other end you had a cone, a rubber cone, which came down to about finger diameter in which you would put a glass tube, like a test tube on the end of that but the way you would do it is you would have either a cow or another bull tied up into a and the bull that we were going to collect the semen from, the herdsman in the barns we would bring the bull in and those bulls, they knew what to do.
- JIM: (laughing)
- ROMAN: They would mount this cow or bull and then we would intercept the penis. I did the collecting, a lot of it, into this artificial vagina and they would thrust and ejaculate into the artificial vagina and that semen would go down into the tube.
- JIM: The bull would mount another bull?
- ROMAN: They would mount a bull or another cow.
- JIM: Didn't seem to make any difference?
- ROMAN: No. When we'd get a new bull in we'd bring the new bull in and let him watch.
- JIM: (laughing)
- ROMAN: And it didn't take long. (laughs) He would see another bull working there and he was ready to go. We'd take him. Seemed wasn't (??) very often we'd just go in a cow yard. We'd go ahead and --
- JIM: The bull didn't have to be in heat.

ROMAN: Not necessarily, no, no. They knew what to do.

JIM: It just seems that, - and they could fill there ?? too?

ROMAN: Sure, and with bulls like that sometimes --

JIM: Put 'em up on anything?

ROMAN: Nope, no, just on they'd be on.

JIM: They would mount the --

ROMAN: The bull or cow would be in the stanchion with pipe around on both side of the [unintelligible].

JIM: The cow [unintelligible].

ROMAN: No noise, no noise. Very quiet.

JIM: So that would take you what, five minutes?

ROMAN: Oh, not even that. Might run a couple of minutes.

JIM: How many times did you use the bull? Once a week?

ROMAN: Generally, about once a week and then sometimes you would take two collections from a bull. You took one collection for if you didn't have enough. You put the bull aside a bit in the collecting room and come back in maybe ten minutes he'd be ready to go again. Take another culture from him.

JIM: [unintelligible] Seems like a lot of problems --

ROMAN: Yeah, now --

JIM: One sample from --

ROMAN: One sample of semen --

JIM: Diluted I know --

ROMAN: One sample of semen from the bull, depending on the breed could run anywhere from, oh, five or six up to fifteen, sixteen, eighteen cc's . Now we would dilute that out into a solution of sodium citrate and egg yolk. We would get the sodium citrate solution. They would make that up for us

down at the Land O' Lakes Creameries in Minneapolis. They put in gallon jugs and it was sterile.

JIM: Sterile. What kind of solution?

ROMAN: The gallon jugs. It was still sodium citrate solution. We always had gallons of that in the can, and then we would take that and mix egg yolks. Now to do that, you cracked eggs, separate the yolks from the eggs, put the yolks on the, - remember the litmus pads that you sued to culture stuff? They were about yea diameter. You would put this egg yolks, right on it, and we'd have the citrate solution in large flasks like 2,000 cc flasks and maybe have it half full with citrate. Then we'd put these yolks, fold the paper over, break the yolk, and the yolk would run down into the flask. Then we'd fill up the flask to double the volume. But then we found out that we could get by nicely with three quarters sodium citrate solution one quarter yolks, still plenty. The yolks were supposed to be a source of food and whatnot. So, anyway that's the way we did it. We would dilute-

JIM: How many samples would you get for the day?

ROMAN: The way we would do it, we would --

JIM: [unintelligible] how many would that produce?

ROMAN: Well, we would never dilute usually over one to a hundred. So with a six cc solution we could make up, if we wanted to make up as high as 600 ccs of diluted semen.

JIM: You'd make it fully out of one sample, could fertilize 600 cows --

ROMAN: Exactly, because the technicians inseminating the cows used only one cc.

JIM: [unintelligible]

ROMAN: So, what it ended up was, Jim, was we made up a hell of a lot of solution. And shipped out a lot of solution because we shipped it out to around twenty-five or thirty different places and at each place where we shipped there would be anywhere from one or two to as many as four or five technicians going around the farm area there inseminating the cows every day. For that number of cows, if they were going to be breeding, varied from day to day. I mean it wasn't up and down like a ladder, but there was a variation within the day. Maybe we'd put out, we might have four or five cows all together in the day when just one guy was working. And at different times of the year, maybe the fall of the year there'd be more cows. Then you might have fifteen or twenty cows in a day. You know he was working long days.

- JIM: Odds were best that they [unintelligible] home.
- ROMAN: Yeah, yeah –
- JIM: Long hours.
- ROMAN: Long hours. Well, during the day what they would do, the farmers who had had a cow come into heat, he'd call at the station in the morning, early: "When did this cow come into heat?" "Well, it was in heat yesterday afternoon. When we milked the cow that night it was in heat." O.K.
- JIM: How could they tell? The one's in heat would be mounted by another –
- ROMAN: Another cow, yeah. So they would, that cow would – they'd check, no sooner, the cow was in the thing, find out if she was in heat.
- ROMAN: Another cow would mount it. It would stand and let another cow mount. Cows will do that in the barnyard. They do that. That cow in heat – "Well, that cow came in heat yesterday afternoon or evening. This cow came in heat, wasn't in heat last night, but this morning it was in heat. So what they would do is the technicians would try to get out and inseminate cows in the mornings that were in heat the day before. Even before the morning ones we'd try to get in the afternoon.
- JIM: What window did they have? A twelve hour window or just--?
- ROMAN: Well, roughly twelve hours, yeah. You see in the south we were shipping out semen six days a week, everyday but Saturday. The reason we didn't ship out Saturday, that would mean that the semen, we shipped it all by the way by the Post Office. The Post Office wasn't open on Sundays so there was no semen collecting, but we collected semen on Sundays so that they'd have fresh semen on Mondays. How'd we ship the semen? It had to be refrigerated so we took bores, heavyweight bores that were about yea long and in the faucet we put the end of the balloon over the end of the faucet, filled it up with the cold water about approximately that length and about that gib around. On the end of the balloon, just by hand, we tied into a knot. And we put it into a paper bag, then put a couple, one or two rubber bands around that. The we would put this bore into a freezer. We had several box freezers, ten, twelve, fourteen foot freezers, leave them in there. They were frozen and then we would get them out, depending upon the number that we'd need, like we were shipping to twenty-five to thirty boxes p[er] day. Pull off the number of balloons that we needed, one balloon per box. A couple of hours or so before hand, just lay them out on the table where we did our packaging, a big long table and set these

balloons on there. Let 'em get a little bit frosty because we didn't want to freeze the semen, just keep it cold. So when we get ready for packaging we usually put the semen in the mornings and then after lunch we packaged them. We'd put them into tubes, small glass tubes. At first we used glass tubes. Then we switched to plastic throwaway, but with glass tubes the [unintelligible] were returned to us and we washed them and sterilized them and reused them and put a cork in them. They held, oh, about ten or twelve cc's, so each tube was good for ten or twelve inseminations. We'd take these tubes and put them under the rubber bands right next to the [unintelligible]. That'd keep them cold. Then we'd wrap the whole thing in a black paper, about this wide, about this long, double rolled with insulation in between. You just roll up this plastic or this paper over the balloon with the glass or plastic vials of semen in it and then put it into a box, a cardboard box about yea square and about that high which had corrugated squares on the bottom, a couple of 'em. A double corrugated liner inside of it. The box itself is corrugated, a couple of more corrugated squares on the top and then seat it wover with a regular machine. Tape, you know, paper tape. These were all addressed to so and so at some city, very large town along the railroad. And that would go by Post Office, some by truck, some by railroad. And that would go by Post Office, some by truck some by rail road.

JIM: Was it by special delivery or anything?

ROMAN: No, no special delivery. The inseminators would go to the post office in the morning and pick up their semen samples, supplies that we had collected the day before and shipped to him. And he would keep that in his refrigerated box and whatever he need, the breeds they'd use, got calls for it. They'd use it, and he gets six packages a week. So he had plenty of semen. He could us it for two or three days because--

JIM: [sigh]

ROMAN: See, now all these bulls that we had were purebred. All registered purebreds. They were all proven bulls, that is proven in the sense genetically proven that they would produce, mated to proven cows, the desired level of milk production. So some of these bulls were expensive. We had bulls at our stud that they paid \$20,000 dollars for. This was back in 1949, '52, \$18 - \$20,000 for *a* bull. These were damned good bulls.

JIM: Those faces on 'em are so big. You guys ever worry about those or – they're so damn big.

ROMAN: No, we don't have any problem with those Holstein bulls, they would run anywhere from, for the younger ones 16 – 1700 pounds up to as much as high as 2800 pounds. Guernsey were smaller. Brown Swiss were heavier

then the Guernsey's. Jerseys were a little less – Milking Shorthorn were in there with Brown Swiss. Then from another breeder association, in Southern Minnesota, Owatonna, they had some beef bulls there. So we would get some beef bull semen, a shorthorn, or not shorthorn but Hereford or Aberdeen Angus, Black Angus.

JIM: Mm hmm.

ROMAN: We'd get some bull semen from their deep freeze two or three times a week.

JIM: I thought that these were, the beef bulls, they were all did their work on in the fields on their own.

ROMAN: Right, right,

JIM: They didn't – It was organized.

ROMAN: They didn't, no, there was no –

JIM: There was no artificial insemination on them.

ROMAN: There was to some extent with some beef breeders, the purebred breeders, but what most of the beef semen that we got from them and shipped out to our technicians a lot of times a farmer would want to breed a young heifer, a first calf heifer, would breed it to a beef bull with the idea of getting a combination dairy beef animal which they would raise for their own beef.

JIM: Oh.

ROMAN: And also it helped establish whether that young heifer was a greed breeder, whether it was going to be a good future cow in the herd where they could depend upon it to produce some good female heifer calves for their replacements in their herds.

JIM: Hmm. Fascinating. So did you join any veterans groups?

ROMAN: Never have joined a veterans group. I don't know, just some of these guys that I got out of the service, and well, that was three and a half years in the service, I'm happy and--

JIM: Did my –

ROMAN: Did my share, and I –

JIM: Now, you're something else.

- ROMAN: Yeah, right. So I never did join the veterans groups.
- JIM: And you never kept track of these four other guys?
- ROMAN: To some extent. We would occasionally –
- JIM: Do you ever go to [unintelligible]?
- ROMAN: No the only one of ‘em that I know of is Leo Deshoney (??) who was one of our guys that worked in our petroleum lab. He was quite a guy. He was not a chemist by training, but in our outfit our company commander had to send three or four guys from Camp Claiborne up to Tulsa, Oklahoma to petroleum institute school where they train the technicians to do the various testing of gasoline like octane ratings, perhaps leads and all that sort of stuff. Ph’s, you know, standard laboratory procedure. Well, Leo Deshoney (??) was one of the guys that signed up to take the training. You know what his background was? He had just finished the St. Louis University Law School.
- JIM: (laughing) Typical.
- ROMAN: Typical of the Army. The cook, they made him a drill sergeant, the lawyer the made him a cook, they put him into a lab. (laughs) Well, I guess the thinking was, with the company commander, “God, if he’s got brains enough to go to law school, he sure as hell can handle this.” (laughing)
- JIM: Where’s he living now?
- ROMAN: He’s from St. Louis area, and he still lives down in that area.
- JIM: You don’t write?
- ROMAN: Occasionally I’ll get a birthday, Christmas card from him. We owe him. I’ve seen him on one or two occasions. He’s come – in October we’re going down to Ohio. As a matter of fact it’s going to be this coming weekend, going down to the Dayton, Ohio area for a reunion of a few of the guys. It will be about eight or ten, maybe twelve from that outfit. Hopefully Leo Deshoney (??) the lawyer/technician, lab technician, will be there.
- JIM: That would be nice for the unit.
- ROMAN: Yeah, Leo several times through that. He’s a great guy.

- JIM: Great. Anything else you haven't thought of that you remember, any interesting experience?
- ROMAN: Ah, here's one thing I always thought of that was kind of funny. I went into the service in 1942 at the age of 20. I enlisted, I wasn't drafted. I had checked with my professors, Professor Searls in Bacteriology Department in Ag School. Was on the drafty board here in Madison. That spring I checked with him to find out approximately when I might be drafted because I was wondering about maybe going back to start another semester in the fall of '42. So he checked it out for me and he said "Well, from the looks of things right now I'd say you would be drafted in October or November. I said "What if I'm in school?" He said, "In Ag School, they way you are now, you'd be drafted right off. If you want to transfer to medicine or engineering you could probably stay in school. "Well, I wasn't interested in either one, so that summer in July I enlisted. That was, as I say, I wasn't 21 until September. I was only 20 so I was in for three and half years. Got out in January of '46. I went in and I weighed right around 160, 165. Three and a half years later I came out I weighed 160, 165. I weighed myself several times in the service. I always weighed 160, 165.
- JIM: Never changed.
- ROMAN: Never changed.
- JIM: (laughs) Amazing.
- ROMAN: You know how I finally changed? In 1958 at the tender age of thirty-eight years old, what do I have done, Jim? I had my tonsils and adenoids removed. I'd never had any problem with them. All of the sudden that year for six months I kept repeating infections in my tonsils and adenoids. This was when we lived in Philadelphia. I was with Oscar Meyer of course, out there. And our GP that we were going to he filled me up with antibiotics to get me clear, get me ready to have tonsils and adenoids removed. I'd get clear, and all of the sudden ten days, two weeks later, reinfected. Well, that happened three or four times. Finally they get me cleared. I had the damned things taken out at the tender age of 38. (Jim laughs) And after that, what was remarkable about that, was after that I finally started putting on weight. I got up to 190, 200. I'm holding now around 180, 190.
- JIM: That's good.

[End of Interview]

[End of Tape 2, side A tape ends abruptly]