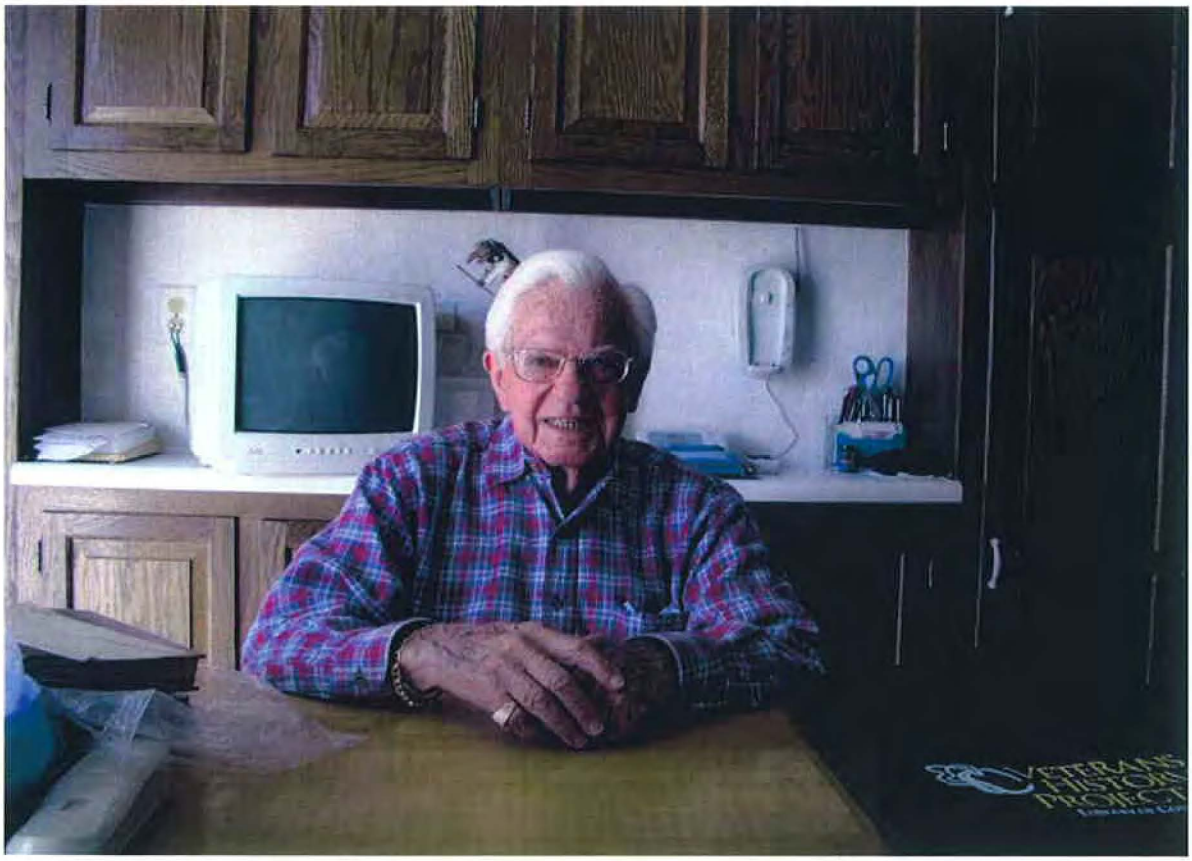
Hymen H. Ray

U.S. Army Air Corps
World War II

HQ Squadron 5th Air Force
Homefront and Pacific
Master Sergeant



Veterans History Project Transcript

Interview conducted February 21, 2006

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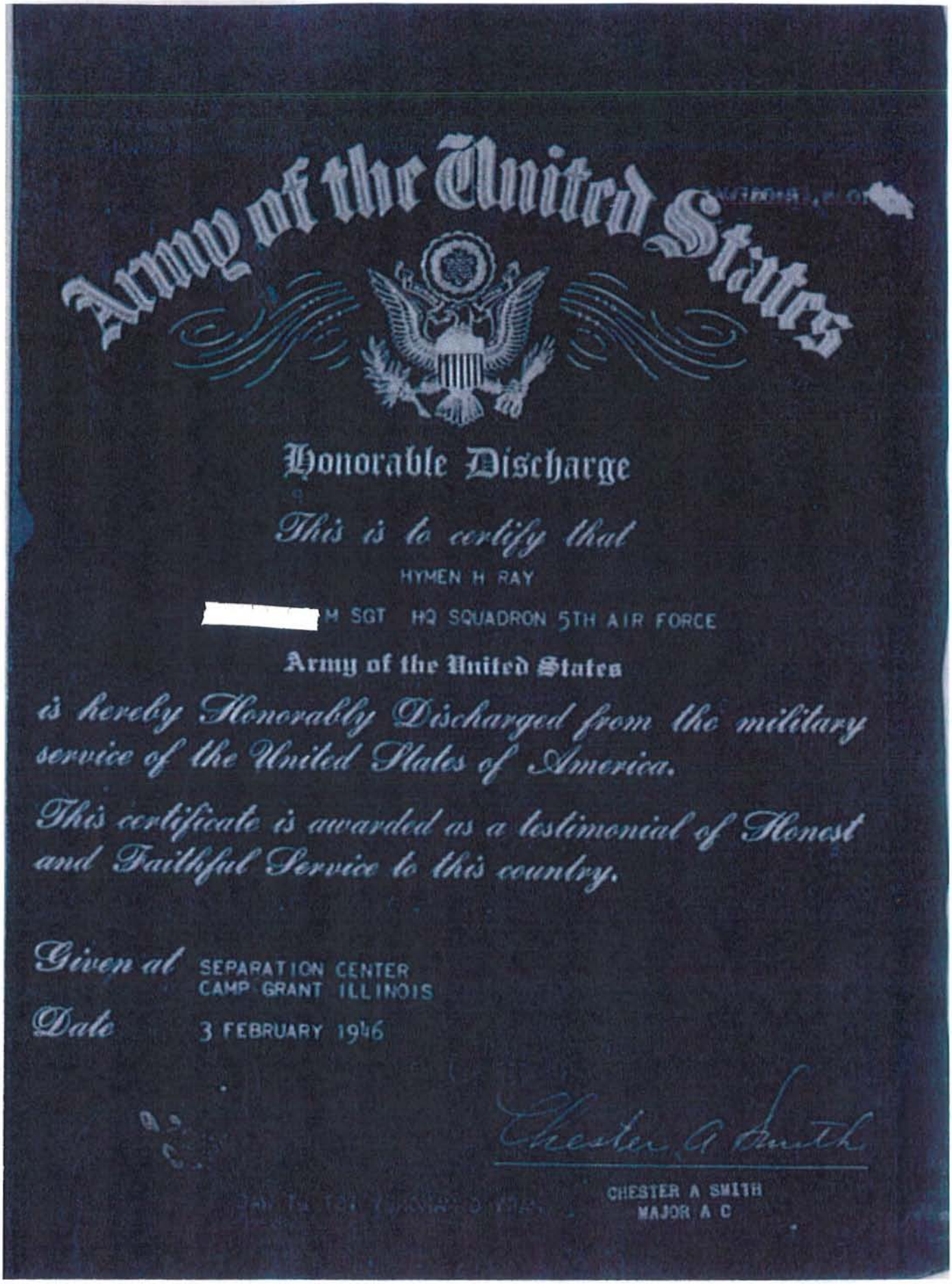
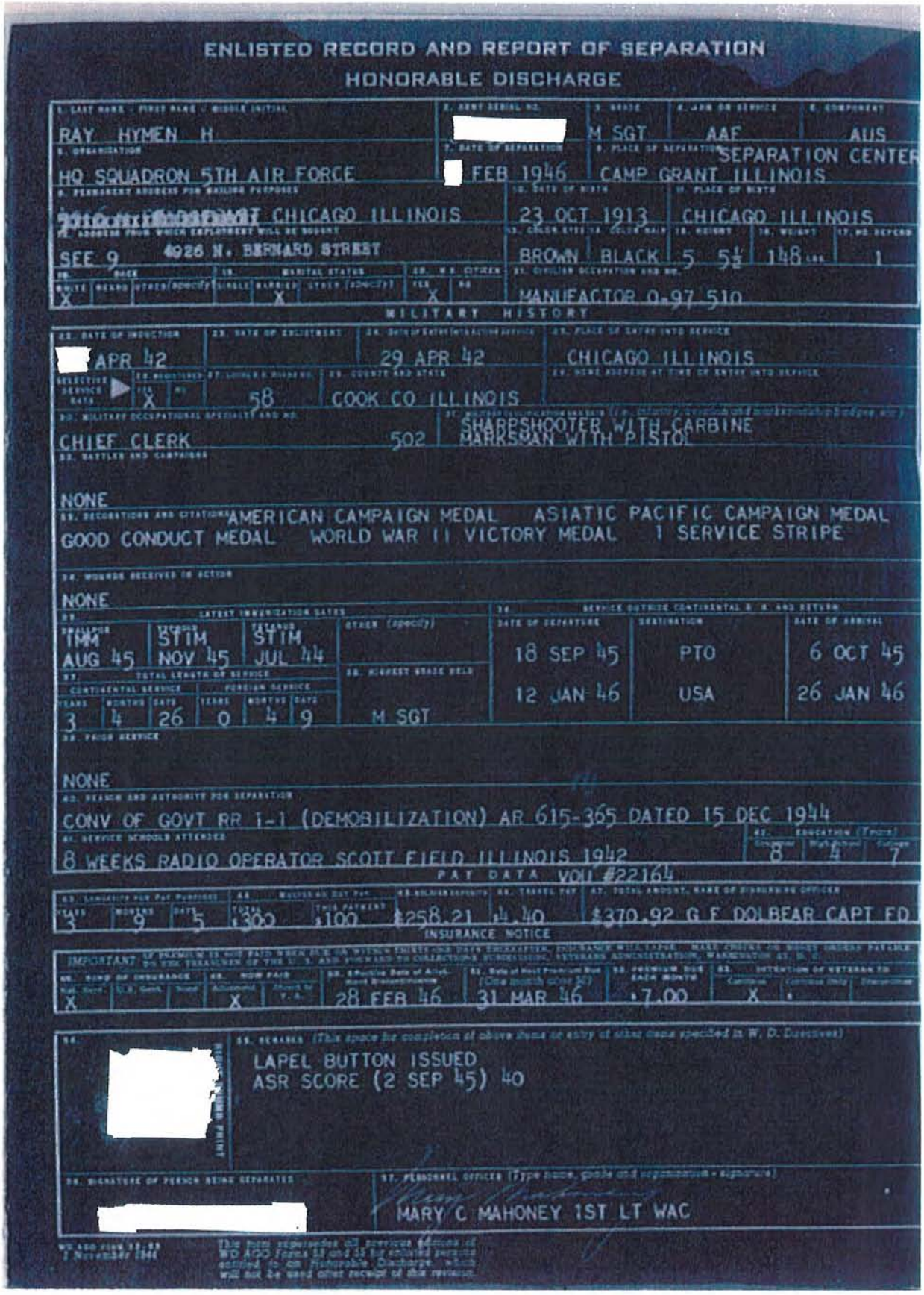


Hy's "ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION HONORABLE DISCHARGE"

Enlarged scan of playing card-sized copy of original document which Hy carries in his wallet.



ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION
HONORABLE DISCHARGE

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL: RAY HYMEN H
2. ARMY SERIAL NO.: [redacted]
3. GRADE: M SGT
4. ARM OR SERVICE: AAF
5. COMPONENT: AUS
6. ORGANIZATION: HQ SQUADRON 5TH AIR FORCE
7. DATE OF SEPARATION: FEB 1946
8. PLACE OF SEPARATION: SEPARATION CENTER CAMP GRANT ILLINOIS
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES: [redacted] CHICAGO ILLINOIS
10. DATE OF BIRTH: 23 OCT 1913
11. PLACE OF BIRTH: CHICAGO ILLINOIS
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT: SEE 9 4926 N. BERNARD STREET
13. COLOR EYES: BROWN
14. COLOR HAIR: BLACK
15. HEIGHT: 5 5½
16. WEIGHT: 148 LBS.
17. NO. DEPEND: 1
18. RACE: WHITE X
19. MARITAL STATUS: MARRIED X
20. U.S. CITIZEN: YES X
21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO.: MANUFACTOR 0.97 510

MILITARY HISTORY

22. DATE OF INDUCTION: [redacted] APR 42
23. DATE OF ENLISTMENT: 29 APR 42
24. DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE
25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE: CHICAGO ILLINOIS
26. SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA: YES X
27. LOCAL BOARD NO.: 58
28. COUNTY AND STATE: COOK CO ILLINOIS
29. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE
30. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO.: CHIEF CLERK 502
31. MILITARY QUALIFICATIONS (Rifle, pistol, machine gun, etc.): SHARPSHOOTER WITH CARBINE MARKSMAN WITH PISTOL
32. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS: NONE
33. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS: AMERICAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL ASIATIC PACIFIC CAMPAIGN MEDAL GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL WORLD WAR II VICTORY MEDAL 1 SERVICE STRIPE
34. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION: NONE
35. LATEST IMMUNIZATION DATES: SMALLPOX TMM AUG 45; TYPHOID STIM NOV 45; TETANUS STIM JUL 44; OTHER (Specify)
36. HIGHEST GRADE HELD: M SGT
37. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE: CONTINENTAL SERVICE 3 YEARS 4 MONTHS 26 DAYS; FOREIGN SERVICE 0 YEARS 4 MONTHS 9 DAYS
38. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN:

DATE OF DEPARTURE	DESTINATION	DATE OF ARRIVAL
18 SEP 45	PTO	6 OCT 45
12 JAN 46	USA	26 JAN 46

39. PRIOR SERVICE: NONE
40. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION: CONV OF GOVT RR 1-1 (DEMOBILIZATION) AR 615-365 DATED 15 DEC 1944
41. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED: 8 WEEKS RADIO OPERATOR SCOTT FIELD ILLINOIS 1942
42. EDUCATION (Years): Grammar 8; High School 4; College 7

PAY DATA VOU #22164

43. LONGEVITY FOR PAY PURPOSES	44. MUSTERING-OUT PAY	45. UNUSED LEAVE PAY	46. TRAVEL PAY	47. TOTAL AMOUNT, NAME OF DISBURSING OFFICER
YEARS 3 MONTHS 9 DAYS 5	TOTAL $300 THIS PAYMENT $100	$258.21	$4.40	$370.92 G F DOLBEAR CAPT FD

INSURANCE NOTICE

IMPORTANT: IF PREMIUM IS NOT PAID WHEN DUE OR WITHIN EIGHT AND ONE HALF MONTHS AFTER SEPARATION, INSURANCE MAY LAPSE. MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND FORWARD TO COLLECTIONS SUBSECTION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

48. KIND OF INSURANCE	49. HOW PAID	50. Effective Date of Allotment or Start of Direct Payment	51. Date of Next Premium Due (One month after 50)	52. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH	53. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO CONTINUE
X	X	28 FEB 46	31 MAR 46	$7.00	X

54. [redacted]
55. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)
LAPEL BUTTON ISSUED
ASR SCORE (2 SEP 45) 40

56. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED: [redacted]
57. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - Signature): MARY C MAHONEY 1ST LT WAC

WD AGO Form 53-55
1 November 1945

This form supersedes all previous editions of WD AGO Forms 53 and 55 for enlisted personnel entitled to an Honorable Discharge, which will not be used after receipt of this revision.

Hy's "ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION HONORABLE DISCHARGE"

Enlarged scan of playing card-sized copy of original document which Hy carries in his wallet.

Niles Public Library District
Veteran's History Project Transcript

Veteran: **Hymen H. Ray** Rank: **Master Sergeant**

Branch of Service: **U.S. Army Air Force** Theater**: World War II, Homefront and Pacific**

Unit: **HQ Squadron 5th Air Force**

Interview Date: February 21, 2006 Place: Home of Hymen H. Ray, Niles, IL

Equipment: Panasonic Standard Cassette Transcriber Interviewer: Neil O'Shea

This interview is being conducted on February the 21st in the year 2006 in the home of Mr. Hymen Ray here in Niles, Illinois. My name is Neil O'Shea, and I am speaking with Mr. Hymen Ray. Mr. Ray was born on October the 23rd, 1913, and he has kindly consented to be interviewed for this Project. And here is his story.

008- foregoing a deferment to apply to the School of Naval Intelligence

Mr. Ray, when did you enter the Service during the time of World War II?

When war was declared, I wanted to enter the Service right away. I could have received a deferment because, in our business, we were manufacturing gloves, and we manufactured Marine Corps gloves for the Marine Corps. But I told my dad, "I want to go in."

Wow.

"I feel that it is my duty."

So, I wrote a letter to the Navy Department in Washington asking to apply to enter the School of Naval Intelligence because my background-- I have a legal background. I am a licensed attorney. But the letter I received, and this is the letter I received from them back—(Opening it up) Here we go. January 14th, 1942. "We have been advised that you will be unable to secure a waiver on your physical deficiency"-- referring to my eyesight-- "in view of this, we will be unable to give further consideration to your application for a commission in the Intelligence Branch of the Naval Reserves. We regret that this action is necessary and wish to assure you of our appreciation for your interest in the Navy and in naval activities," signed by Lieutenant Commander Naval District Intelligence Officer, 9th Naval District. I've always kept that letter.

And I said, when I got that letter, I said, "Okay. I tried to enlist. You don't want me. Come and get me." And they did!

024 – being drafted

And this is in January. They got me in April, April of 1942. That's when I was drafted as 1A. Previously to that, I traveled through the South by myself. I had a convertible car, and I went to visit a friend of mine, a distant relative who was a colonel in the Medical Corps at Lake Charles, Louisiana. I went to see him, and he tried to get me to enlist down there, but they wouldn't take me because I'd been-- I was referred as 1A up here. So I said, "Okay, then. I'm going home and I'll wait."

And when I got home, I noticed after that, I could have had a deferment. But I decided, I'm going in. My dad says, "If that's the way you feel, then go ahead." So I enlisted—or rather I was drafted in April of 1942.

038 - eyesight deficiency but 1A for radio school but…

So the eyesight deficiency that prevented your working in Naval Intelligence,

Right

it wasn't serious enough to prevent you from being classified as 1A?

No. No. Still 1A. But they took me in-- I'll skip a lot and tell you that they put me in radio school. And I was up to fifteen words a minute, and then they called me in and told me, "You can't go any further." I said, "Why not?" He said, "Because of your eyesight. You can't fly." So, after so many weeks of radio school, I was out. Went back to doing nothing and I, finally, in fact, a couple of times, I was even wielding a shovel outside trying to do something to keep busy because I was going crazy.

045 – arranging transfer to administration

Then I heard that somebody in the main office had been transferred and there was an opening. So I was brash enough to go ahead, went to the main office, and I said, "I understand you are looking for somebody to work in administration." And they asked me who I am and my background. And I told them. They said, "It sounds good. Would you like to work here? Can you type?" Well, I couldn't tell them I don't finger type. I mean, I type with two fingers, that's all. I said, "Sure, I can type." Like anybody else, I just embellished a little. They took me.

And that's when I start --I started out as a private. I went all the way through. And then going through the years, I advanced to sergeantcy, first corporal, first PFC, then corporal, then sergeant, and then staff sergeant.

056- from Belleville, IL to St. Louis

And I was stationed at that time in Belleville, Illinois, at Scott Field. Now, there's friends of the family who we used to do business with-- lived in St. Louis. So, I went to visit them-- and I got to know them very well-- on weekends when I had a pass.

And one day I went to visit them, and I'm sitting there talking to them, and, all of a sudden, a staff car pulls up outside his house. And an officer gets out. And I see an officer, and here I am

sitting with my shirt open. I'm in uniform, and bedraggled, and everything. And I say, "Wait a minute. I'm going to get it cleaned up." And he said, "No, leave it just the way you are." So, he comes in, and my friend introduced me to the colonel. They went in the kitchen to talk. And then they come back about fifteen minutes later. And the colonel says to me, "What are you doing over at Scott Field?" And I said, "Practically nothing." I says, "So little administrative work, but it's pretty tiresome." He said, "How would you come and like to work for me?" I says, "Colonel," I says, "I don't know who you are. What do you do?" He says, "I'm in charge of the G4 section of the Central Tech Training Command. That means it governs all the schools in the Midwest here, all their contracts, and everything. And, with your legal background, you'd fit in beautifully." So, I looked at him, and I said, "Look, off the record, can we speak?" He says, "Sure." I said, "Man to man, what's in it for me?" I said, "I'll be very brash about it, but I'd like to know what I am getting into." He said, "I tell you what," he said, "What do you want?" I said, "I want to be a master sergeant." Here, I'm only a staff sergeant. That's two more grades up, and they're difficult grades. He says, "I'll tell you what," he says, "You earn it, you'll get it." And I looked at him, and I said, "Okay, I'll take your word on that. I'll go."

I came back to Scott Field. The next day, I was called in by my commanding officer. "You're being transferred." They sent a staff car from headquarters in St. Louis to pick me up and take me to St. Louis.

Wow.

079 – reaching Master Sergeant

So, I entered their office over there and worked for this lieutenant colonel as one of the clerks in his office. Well, I progressed all the way through, and, more and more, took over more and more contract work for him and a lot of investigating work. And he kept his word, and by January of `44, that's almost two years later than when I went in, and I became a master sergeant. And I've got pictures of the master sergeantcy. And I was there until the War was declared. I mean war was over in Japan. On that day, I got my orders to ship overseas.

088 – VJ day and orders for overseas despite points for discharge

Now, I told them, I said, "I got enough points not to go." And they said, "Not according to us. You're going." So, okay, half way across the ocean on the way to the Philippines, they called me in and said, "You were right. You had enough points. You didn't have to go." I said, "I'm in the middle of the ocean. You're not going to turn the ship around." They laughed and they said, "Nope. You're going to the Philippines."

So, I got to the Philippines, and there they're looking around for something for me to do because they had nothing I would qualify for, I was overqualified for what they had, but, finally, the orders came through to send me to Tokyo.

095 – from Philippines to Tokyo and the Judge Advocate Office

When I got to Tokyo, I was called in for reclassification. And when I talked to the officer there, he looked at my record, he says, "Oh," he says, "You're a licensed attorney." I says, "That's

right." He says, "How would you like to work for the judge advocate?" I said, "Wait a minute. I don't like Army law from what I've heard what happens to enlisted people." He laughed. He said, "No," he says. "You've been hearing a lot of things." He says, "There's a lot of gossip, but it isn't that at all." So, I says, "Well, I don't know." "I tell you what," he says, "Take the job for a month. If you don't like it, I'll transfer you out." I said, "Well, in that case, I have nothing to lose." So, I took the job for a month, and I wound up six months, and after six months, my time was up, and they sent me home. But that's what happened to me in my Service days. So, I went through all the grades from plain private to master sergeant, which was the top enlisted rank, and I felt fine. I was treated royally by officers. I only had trouble with one officer and

110 – trouble with only one officer

Was that for any particular reason?

This officer, this happened at the headquarters in St. Louis. My job at that time was to compile a report compiling records from ordinance, from, let's see, personnel, from-- there's three things. I forgot the other one. And then our section, I was in maintenance section - G4, and I had a lot trouble with one officer in one of those sections. I forgot which. He was just brushing me off because he was an officer, and I was an enlisted man. And he wasn't listening, and I told him, "I got to have it to complete my report for the colonel." He thought I was, you know, he just brushed me off. And I came back. And I was burning. And I sat down at my desk and my, at that time I was working close with a major who sat next to me, and he said to me, he said, "You don't look good. What happened?" And I said, "Oh, I think I had a run-in with an officer. I don't know what's going to happen, because I opened my mouth." He says, "Who was it?" And I told him. And he said, "What did you do?" And I told him the story, what happened, the way I was treated. And I just couldn't take it anymore, and I just blew my top. And, sure enough, ten minutes later, in walks that officer. And he comes over to our desk, and I'm here, and my major is sitting here. And this officer is standing right in front of us. He looks at the major, and he says, "Major, how do you like working with that cocky sergeant of yours?" Just the words he used. I never forgot it. The major looked at him, and he looked at him. Can I say things I'm not supposed to?

Sure.

He says, "Look, you son of a bitch," he says, "You ever treat my enlisted person like that again and I'll have your stripes. I'll have your commission taken away from you."

Beautiful.

"Now get the hell out of this office!" And he turned around, and he got out. And this major was from the South, and I heard stories about the Southerners where they call them a redneck, how their back gets turned red, that's actually what happened. I never forgot it. And from then on, I had no trouble. That's the only time I ever had trouble with an officer.

137 – defended by a "redneck" officer

And he was-- he was a redneck, the officer that you had trouble with?

No.

He wasn't. Your defender was.

My defender was a redneck.

Was a redneck.

But he came up through the Service from enlisted man to major. So he'd been in the Service for quite a while. In fact, for many, many years, even after he died, after the Service, his wife used to send me Christmas cards.

And I was shipped, I mean, at that time, that's when I was sent overseas. I was called in. They had they came out with a ruling. No enlisted personnel could work at headquarters, only officers, so they brought in a lieutenant colonel to take my place.

Wow.

So--

Yeah.

What happened then was I went overseas, and went to Japan, and wound up, like I told you, in the Judge Advocates Office, became chief clerk over there. And that colonel for many years after the Service sent me a card every Christmas, wanted to know how I was, how I was getting along, so

152 – responsibilities and life in Japan

In Japan, were you involved in any of the war crime preparation or

No, only with charges against personnel. I mean, some of them were charged with desertion. Some of them were charged with stealing something, something like that, but nothing with criminal, with Japanese prisoners, but we were sent -- we lived in a camp called Irumagawa, outside of Tokyo, Irumagawa, outside of Tokyo, and one of the fellows in our barracks happened to be a chauffeur for the general, so, on weekends when the general wasn't doing anything, he allowed this sergeant to take the car, and us fellows, and we drove through Japan to see what Japan looked like. He took us and showed us Lake Hakone, which was by a lake, where they interned all foreign nationals during the war. And I have pictures of that place. And we had one heck of a time because most of the boys in there were college graduates, and we used to have arguments on all subjects, religion, status, the way we were being treated, how we should treat people. And it was an experience I'll never forget.

How did you find the Japanese people, or the Japanese culture, or

No problem at all.

No problem.

No problem at all. All you had do was-- if you had chewing gum or you had American articles, you were king. I mean, some of the boys even, that's the way they picked up women, but by that time I was just married before I went in the Service, before I was shipped, and I said to myself, uh, uh, I'm going home clean. I'm not touching anybody.

Yeah.

So I never enjoyed time with women.

Yeah. So, did you think the Japanese people were ill-served by their government or their leaders that the, how

That's a difficult question to answer, because we had no contact with them. The only contact we ever had was on these little trips that we took with the general's chauffeur, visiting these people. They treated us nicely.

185 - "5 packs of cigarettes"

I mean, I brought home a silk-- I brought home a silk kimono for my wife. That happened to be the vacationing dress of a Japanese girl. Those were beautiful. I still have it here, and some yard goods, silk. In fact, at one time, the colonel stopped at my desk and said, "Do you know where the silk mill is?" And I said, "Sure." He said, "Well, I'm going to get a car this afternoon." He says, "You come with me. I want to go and get some silk for my wife." And I looked at him because the order had just come out-- we went over to the silk mill, and the guy brings out this beautiful silk, and I said to him, "Out of curiosity," I said, "How much for this?" And he tells me, "Five packs of cigarettes." That's what he tells me. American cigarettes! And the colonel is standing right there, and we had just issued a directive against black marketing. The colonel looked at me. And he says, I'll never forget it, he says, "I didn't hear a word, sergeant." That's what he told me. So I brought it. I just had enough for that. And I was going to get more. My wife had sent me a whole carton of cigarettes. But I never got them because, I'm not kidding myself, I know what happened. When it came to Japan, the boys in the mail order, when they saw that, they kept it. We never saw it.

So, all told, you were in Japan for?

I left the States in September and I came home in April.

And you had a stop along the way in the Philippines?

In the Philippines. Yeah.

So you did, you did

210 – pinpoint bombing in Manila

Midway Island, and Okinawa, and I saw Manila. I got pictures of Manila, and everything, the way it was bombed out. And we were always amazed how pinpointed the bombing was. I mean, they could have a section like across the street completely bombed out, and this side here wasn't touched. That's how accurate our bombers were. And they did a job, no question, but we rebuilt everything. In fact, our office was the-- I don't know what they call it. There was a name for it, where General MacArthur had his offices in that building. And we were supposed to move from the camp to that office the next day. And that's when I got my orders to go home. So, I never did--I saw the office, but I never stayed in the office, and worked there, so

Did you see MacArthur ever when you were there or?

No, I never saw him. No, I just see this-- all I know-- here's something that might be interesting to you.

218 - unique wallet card

Hy is just digging from his wallet this laminated card issued by the Army of the United States. It's an honorable discharge card that certifies he is honorably discharged from the military service of the United States of America and this certificate is awarded as testament of honest and faithful service to this country, and it is given at the separation center at Camp Grant here in Illinois on the 3rd of February 1946, signed by Major Chester Smith, and on the card it does indeed say that Mr. Ray reached the level of master sergeant with the headquarters squadron of the 5th Air Force. (The card in a scanned, enlarged version follows this interview.)

Yeah, now turn it over.

And on the other side

Is my record.

You know, I have never seen one of these before.

I know. I know you haven't. I'm the only one that I know of all my friends who ever had one.

All my decorations which I haven't-- I'd like to find out someday if I ever can get those replaced, because they are gone somewhere.

Did you want to read the medals that you received just into the record there? That's nice that it mentions on the back there. Can you read it? It is kind of small print.

I know the print is very small, but it is amazing how much information they get on the back of the card.

237 – medals received

Let's see the order. A sharpshooter with a carbine, a marksman with a pistol, American Campaign medal, Asiatic Pacific campaign medal, Good Conduct medal, World War II victory pin medal, and one service stripe. That's it.

That's very impressive. So, what did you think after-- did your opinion of Army law, did it change as a result of working in

260 – opinion of Army law

The only thing that changed was I didn't like the fact that when enlisted personnel many times were brought before a court-martial, there were no enlisted personnel on the board. They were all officers. Because I remember one time, one of these fellows was charged, I forgot what the charge was, but he had a civilian lawyer, and the civilian lawyer came to me at my desk one day and said-- he wants me to get a copy of the whole record. He wants to take it back to the States with him. I said, "Uh-uh." He says, "Why not?" So, I said, "You see six stripes on my arm." I said, "I got six stripes. I'm not going to lose them. If I were to divulge the records the Army records to you as a civilian," I says, "I can be court-martialed. And I'm not going to lose my record, my history with the Service, because you want this." I said, "You can file for it. You can request it, but I'm not going to do it myself, no way!"

So you had accumulated enough points to qualify for

Not to go overseas.

Not to go overseas.

Yeah.

And they later agreed with you, but you wound up serving another seven months.

Overseas.

280 – serving in Japan seven months beyond the required.

Overseas, but you got to see Japan, and the Army legal side. And was it worth it?

Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, it was the first time in my life that I had ever been outside of the States and to go to see the Philippines and to see how they lived over there. And it was terrible. I mean, you see pictures now of what is going on, and I can picture in my mind a lot of that stuff that was happening then when it was being bombed out with no homes or anything. Or like in Japan itself, one bad thing about Japan was, you know how they irrigated their fields, human waste!

Yeah. I've heard that in certain places, yeah.

We used to call them honey carts. So, when you were driving, if we saw one ahead of you, you got ahead of them. You don't stay behind them. The smell would kill you. But that's what we used to call them, the honey carts.

That would fertilize the rice fields?

With human waste.

Yeah.

That's the way they fertilized in Japan, see, but land was very, very valuable, put it that way, because there wasn't a lot of it. That's why they wanted to expand. They went into China first. And, thank God, I mean, they hit the wrong people when they hit the Americans. And I remember I was in the Philippines, and I saw where the Arizona was still, you know, bombed out in the harbor. And it was still there. Now, they've built a building over it or a shelter over it where people come and can see just what happened. There were hundreds of sailors that were killed on that ship.

Yeah

when it was bombed out.

But, as an average, even when we traveled on their electric trains to go from one place to another, you know, we had a pass, a couple of GIs, we'd get on a train and ride. We wanted to see what was going on, and nobody bothered us, so we had no problem at all after the war.

No resentment of the occupying or anything.

If there was resentment, it wasn't against us, that's all I know.

Yeah.

Because, like I say, I traveled quite a bit through Japan through Lake Hakone, Yokohama, and Osaka, and all those different places. And we were treated well. All you had to do was have American money or merchandise to trade with them. We picked out some beautiful stuff. I mean, I've got-- I have one thing I brought home. I'll bring it to you. I'll show you.

And he says, "Are you free for a while?" I says, "Why?" "Come on down here. I want to show you something." So, I went down to the PX, and he had a carton sitting on the table. And he said, "I just got this in." He says, "But I can't sell it here in the PX. It's too nice." I said, "What is it?" He said, "I'll show you."

Let me bring it in. Here, come on. Move it here. Just sit. From Japan to the islands, the main coast, like Taiwan over then at that time wasn't Taiwan. It was something else. I forgot the name, anyway.

Taipei or

I forgot what it was. But, anyway, I told him, "I tell you what," I said, "I want you to bring my-- get a tea set for my wife." Of porcelain, you know, not porcelain, what do they call this-- like Lenox or, you know,

Fine china or

Yeah.

Yeah.

And I gave him the money. And he came back and he brought this beautiful set. And we packed it up and we shipped it home. And I still have it here. My wife has it. I brought that home in there.

So, Hy, it's maybe if we could just go back a little bit, it's

Sure.

345 – Hy's life in Chicago before the War

You already trained, qualified as a lawyer. Had you grown up in Chicago?

Oh, yeah, born and raised here. Born and raised in Chicago.

And you went to high school at

High school. Roosevelt High School.

Oh, the Rough Riders.

When they first opened, I was in the first freshmen class at Roosevelt High School.

And then you went to

Went from there, went to, we couldn't-- that's when the Depression started, and I went to Crane College for the first two years. It was free. And after two years, my folks were a little better off and could afford it, I wound up two years at Northwestern University in Evanston. And when I finished there, then I went to Northwestern Law School for three years. And I came out and practiced law for a little over a year. And Uncle Sam came and took me. I was 30 years old.

What branch of law did you practice?

Probate.

Probate, wills and estates.

I was in probate at that time. I worked as an assistant to a cousin of mine who was an attorney here in Chicago who had an established practice and, on my own, I did a couple of probate, some probate work. I didn't get much done, because everything happened too fast. The Army came. And that's when I could have been deferred because of my family business. I said, "I'm going in."

So when you were mustered out after your separation date and released from Camp Grant, did you want to go back into law then or go back into the family business?

I went back into the family business because I was married while I was in the Service. In fact, our first anniversary, I was overseas.

Wow.

383 – family glove business and Marine contract

See, and I have pictures here showing cards that were hand drawn by one of the GIs who was an artist who made up a card so I could send it home to my wife on our first anniversary.

And I went back into the business because at that time we were extensively into military work, and the last contract we had, I remember, was 150,000 pairs for the Marine Corps to be shipped to San Francisco. And we had a wonderful reputation because, out of 150,000 pairs, we had 6 pairs rejected. I mean, they were tough! They used to count the stitches per inch on a glove.

Where was the plant or the factory?

In Chicago.

In Chicago.

Oh, yeah. It was all in Chicago.

391 – Ray Brothers Glove Company

A particular company, or what was the name of the company, may I ask?

Oh, at that time, it was Ray Brothers Glove Company. My father and his brother, the two families, we had that. But while I was in the Service, it broke up. And when I came out of the Service, I went back with my father. We opened another plant on Montrose Avenue. The original one was over on Ashland Avenue in Chicago. We had close to 200 people working at that time, and we took contracts when we opened up the place on Montrose Avenue. But we stayed there 48 years. And my parents had passed away, and my wife and I were running the business, and we decided we've got to give up manufacturing. We can't compete anymore with the imports. They're killing us. Because we had government contracts and we were losing that, too. We could meet the prices of the American manufacturers in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, but we could compete with raw material prices, but not with labor. We had to give it up. And we decided, my wife and I decided, instead of batting our heads against the wall, let them do the manufacturing

and we'll wholesale them and buy from them. And that's what we did. So, we stayed in business until 19, let's see, `46 to `80, no, 48 years, that would be what, `70, `80, 1980s, `84, I think.

Retired from the business in 1984.

Yeah, we just closed the doors because our children, neither one, I had two daughters, and neither husband was interested in that. One was-- one son-in-law was a lawyer and the other son-in-law was in retail, in men's clothing business, and they were not interested in manufacturing.

Did you --had you ever thought that you might pursue a career in law instead of the family business?

In the beginning, I thought so.

In the beginning

Yeah, until Uncle Sam took me away.

And then when you came back, you just went into the family business. It was a lot-- makes a lot more sense

I could see what was happening with my dad. He was getting older and it's one of those family deals.

So, you were married in 1940?

`44.

1944.

436 – getting married while in the service

Was that a lady you had known for a long time? No?

No. I met her-- I came home on a pass when I was in service in April. He was getting married; this friend of mine was getting married. And he says, "I want you to come over to my girlfriend's house and meet her." So, I can just picture it, walking into the front door, and there was a young girl standing there. She was ringing the doorbell. And I'm ringing it. And I turned and was ringing it. I was ringing the same one. And she-- I didn't know who she was. And we went up together. And it turned out that we went to the same apartment. It was my boyfriend's wife's good friend. And he wanted me to meet this new girl. And that's the way I met her. It was on Friday, the 13th, on a blind date.

Wow.

I'll never forget it.

It was a lucky Friday.

Well, this year it will be 62 years of marriage between the two of us.

Wow.

So, thank God, we had a nice life.

Were you wearing a uniform at the time?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Sure, sure, I was in uniform.

And then how long from when you met your wife … so, six months later, then, you were married.

I wasn't supposed to be married until after I got out of the Service. She actually came down and she lived with me. We had a little house in Belleville when I was stationed at Scott Field. So, we rented a little house down there, so we were there for a while until I was shipped to St. Louis and then from St. Louis, I was overseas.

So, it was an exciting, challenging time for your wife too, she--

Oh, yeah.

She gets married, and then she has go live on an Army base somewhere, and then what's going to happen to her husband, where he is going to be shipped?

That's right.

Yeah.

I had a Buick convertible at that time. I can't forget that. We used to call her Betsy.

Betsy, the Buick.

A black car, whitewall tires, red leather upholstery.

Beautiful.

1400 dollars, that was the cost of the car. In fact, when I was gone, somebody offered her 2000 dollars for the car, but she wouldn't sell it.

Oh, yeah, we used to bring stuff home. I used to take, once in a while, when I was in Service in St. Louis, and before we were married, she used to tell me that they were short on rations and this buddy of mine was the head of the commissary down in St. Louis, so every time I was going home on a pass, I'd tell him what I'd need. And he'd give me pineapples, and he'd give me sugar, and he'd give me all this stuff. We piled it in the car, and I drove for eight hours to get home, and I brought all that food home. So, that's the old story. It's not what you know. It's who you know. Even then, that was the trick, and it still works. Even today, that's what happens.

So, after the war, did you have any, in a sense, you didn't, maybe you had less, was it-- it might have been less difficult to adjust to peacetime or civilian life, because you worked with your dad and you already had a beautiful education? You didn't have to worry about the GI bill and anything else?

No. There was no such thing as the GI bill, because, I mean, my tuition, I think, was $150 a year or a semester. Now, it's thousands. And, at that time, it was no such thing.

Yeah.

And you got in a school, and the only thing, to tell you the truth, the only thing I worried about, because it was difficult to get into Northwestern, because I was Jewish, there was a quota.

Is that right?

Oh, there was a quota at that time, no question.

You mentioned that there may have been some or there was an anti-Semitism quota system at Northwestern. Did you have any experience of that in the Service? Because I've interviewed quite a few veterans, and a few have been Jewish, and they had, everyone of them, has had an unpleasant--

The only time I had a problem was when I was a head, where was it? In St. Louis, I can't remember, was it in St. Louis? When I was a chief clerk, when I was a master sergeant, no, it was in Scott Field. And I applied for membership to the enlisted men's club, and the president of the enlisted men's club was a staunch Nazi.

Oh, dear.

He was terrible. He used to-- everybody used to talk about the way he used to train his kids to do anything on command. And he blackballed me. So, I said, "Okay." I says, "You blackballed me. Now, it's my turn." Sure enough, about a month later, I got a requisition from the men's club, he was the president, for a refrigerator or something like that they wanted to replace in the PX. And it came to me and I told the colonel, "Uh-uh, no." And he said, "Why not?" And I told him what happened. He said, "Okay, mark it NG." We sent it back, can't have it. And that's the way I got back at him. But that's what happened. That's the only time I had trouble. Otherwise, in the Service, everywhere we went, there were four of us who were master sergeants, three Italian

boys, and myself. You know what they used to call us, the four dagoes! To me, I was one of them. But I never had any problem, that's the only time I ever had a problem, that one time.

After the war, did you keep up with anybody that you'd met in the Service, or the VFW, or--

Oh, yeah, my first sergeant, until, was it last year, last Christmas, I didn't get a card. He was from Ironwood, Michigan, but two years ago was the last time. Every year, I used to get a Christmas card, and I used to send one to him. And, this time, I sent one to him, but I never got an answer. So, I don't know if he passed away or what.

Yeah.

But that was the last contact I had with anybody in the Service.

You didn't go-- Did you go to monthly meetings of any veterans' organizations, or reunions, or - not too much?

No. You want to know something funny? You know who the American Legion sends letters to? Not to me. To my wife. They don't even mention my name. But I joined the men's club at the library. But I used to go to it, but there was nobody there that I knew.

Yeah.

And only once in a while, I met one fellow and I used to see him a couple of times, but then I didn't see him anymore, and there was nothing there for me.

Yeah.

So, I just stayed away from it. I just don't go.

I'm just going to stop the tape now and go over to the second side.

Side Two

Sure.

And Hy is referencing some of his materials, diaries or journals, from the war. Hy, you were telling me an interesting story there that you had kept a diary all during your Service years, but then when you went overseas they said

I couldn't take the diary with me so I used to-- wait a minute. It should be in the third book. Let me show you. This is the second book. This is the third book. Boy, I really glued them in, all this stuff, every day, what the heck is this? Oh, here's the ticket. There's tickets to the World Series back in 1944.

Wow.

Right here. World Series tickets.

Down in St. Louis.

Yeah. Grand slam seats. You know what it was?

I don't remember who won it in `44.

A dollar and a quarter.

Yeah. You can't get it for a dollar and quarter these days!

You pay 65 dollars now for a bleacher.

Yeah.

I had other things. I know there is-- oh, here it is. Here's some of the skins, see.

Oh, yeah. You can tell they're much thinner.

Yeah, that's how I used to paste it in. I don't know what this stuff is.

So, oh, they're beautiful. Ray is showing me an Army Air Force certificate of appreciation for war service signed by the commanding general of the Army Air Forces. I can't make out his signature. That's not Arnold or someone, is it, or no?

I don't know.

Yeah. Not too clear, but certainly official. I wonder if that's Hap Arnold, but I don't know.

Some of these are immunization registers of the shots that were given.

Yeah, that's fascinating.

Oh, I remember watching these guys, big guys, they would faint

Yeah

when they got shots.

Yeah.

45 – decision to volunteer

Was it the-- As I'm sitting here-- it's your decision to volunteer. Was that common among other young men after Pearl Harbor that they wanted to respond as patriotic Americans or

No. It wasn't common. It wasn't common at all. I was the only one of my friends that I remember who volunteered.

And why did you volunteer?

It's hard to answer that question. Looking back, I say to myself I must have been a jerk. Why should I volunteer to get killed? But, at that time, I felt that I owed it to the country I was born in. It was my way of giving back something that they gave me. And my father looked at me, and I remember we were driving on the way to the draft board to get a deferment. And he looked at me and he says, "Is that the way you feel?" And I says, "Yeah." And he says, "Turn the car around. We're going home." We never got to the draft board. So, they came after me. So, that's when they drafted me, when they—so, as a volunteer part on my part--

So, were they, your parents, were relieved that you weren't sent overseas then into combat?

Oh, sure. Oh, sure.

And how did you feel about that? That was just--

064 – "without your glasses"

I was lucky. I was very lucky, because twice I was called up. They were taking people from the Air Corps to fill the ranks of the Army because they were short men. And, both times, the officers in charge of the physicals, they told me, "We'd love to send you, but, without your glasses, you'd be shooting our own men." They said, "You're not going." And that's why they never sent me.

Had you always had worn glasses or was from it being

I never did until I got to the university.

Was it the studying and the reading, do you think?

I don't know what happened. It could have been, because all I remember is that, I can just picture it, one day in school, I was sitting in a class, and the teacher, instructor, I don't know what you call it, professor, or whatever it was at the time, we didn't have classes like they do now where there are 200- 250 people, we had small classes, he was lecturing-- something up on a board, and he asked questions, and I didn't know what the hell he was talking about, because I couldn't see it. And then I got home and, on the way home, I looked at various things and I remember one thing in particular that I know. There's a truck store on the corner. But I'm not sure that was what I saw, so I decided I'm going to have my eyes tested. And then I found out how bad they were, and when they put glasses on me, I mean, it was like a whole new world. In fact, when I was in law school, and I was-- I didn't want to wear glasses, because I thought that it wasn't manly enough. And I used to walk into the lobby, and the main lounge was at the end of the hall. And you walked in the lobby and then you turned right to go upstairs to a class. If you go left, you go down to the lounge, and I went towards the lounge that day. And somebody there was

waving at me, and I didn't know who it was. When I got home, I said, "There's something wrong." So, that's when I had my eyes examined, and I found how bad I was. And I got glasses. And then I realized I was seeing things I never saw before!

That's true.

Yeah.

That's the way it was, so since then I've been wearing glasses.

095 – 12 weeks training as a radio operator and winding up as a master sergeant

So, all of your service was with the Army Air Force, even the

No, I was in the Army, itself, for--

As a radio operator?

They were training me to be a radio operator but, like I said, after 12 weeks or so, I don't know how many weeks, 10 or 12 weeks of class, they pulled me out, because I couldn't pass the eye exam, even though I passed all the other exams with high marks, as to hearing and everything, but not for the eyesight. So, that's when they pulled me out. And I was just doing nothing until I finally found this administrative work, and I did a job, and I will say this, that I earned every commission I got, because I worked for it, because my goal was to be a master sergeant. And I was going to get it! And I finally did get it, so....

So, you were, as you look back, you feel pride in that, you did--

Oh, yes.

Enlist, and you have to feel proud that you made master sergeant.

Oh, darn well, no question about that. No question about that.

Yeah. Well it's certainly--

111 – letters of commendation

Because I got letters of commendation from officers when I was leaving. I don't know where those letters are, but a general and a couple of colonels wrote beautiful letters of commendation for me, but it didn't do any good, because I couldn't pass the entrance exam for OCS at that time.

Because of the eyesight.

Yeah.

So you would have considered--

123 – missing out on OCS because of shoes

They passed me, the board passed me, because, you wouldn't believe it, I went before the board for final passage to go to OCS, and they asked me one question, and the question was: was I wearing issued shoes! At that time, you had regular shoes, but I went and bought some half shoes like officers wore. And I said to some of the boys in the barracks who were enlisted people I said, "Is it alright to wear these things before the board?" I said, "I don't know." They said, "Sure, why not? The officers wear them. Why can't you?" This is just a half shoe, half the size of a regular boot, and, apparently, it didn't go over with the board, because that's the only question they asked me, was I wearing issued shoes. And I said no, and they passed me. And I found out later, through friends of mine, that I had enough grades, but not enough to go to officers' school. The grade was high enough, but it just missed because of that. So, I never became an officer.

So, you would have enjoyed that, you would have gone on to

Oh, yeah, if I made my mind up to do it, I would. But I was very happy being a master sergeant, no question.

You would have never have thought of making a career of the Army?

132 – turning down a re-enlistment in Europe

Oh, no, when I was in Europe, not in Europe, when time came for what do you call it, leaving the service, they came to me, and they wanted me to stay in. I said, "What for?" "They want you to help go to Europe and help renegotiate the contracts we let that we don't need anymore for materials and stuff." I said, "Uh-uh," I said, "Four years is enough." I says, "I'm going home." And that's when I went home instead of going to Europe and staying another enlistment. I just said that I had enough, and I'm going home, and that was it.

So, as we approach the end of the interview, do you think your World War II service affected your view on life or--

Sure.

Or history or--

Oh, yeah.

In what way?

140 – benefits of having serving in the military

You look at people differently, different classes of people, that you lived with, how they lived, and you began to understand why some of them are antagonistic, and some are not, and some are educated, and some weren't. And different views even, we talked about religion, we used to argue about things: would you be a better person if you went to church or if you stayed home and

didn't go to church but believed in God? And we had terrific arguments about that, but we never had an answer, but it was worthwhile just to discuss it.

Yeah.

So, I met some nice people, very nice people.

You got a better feel for the human race then, yeah.

In fact, I remember how bad it was as far as the black people were concerned. Except when they came out with a regulation on swimming classes that whites and blacks at Scott Field would swim together. And, oh, we had a lieutenant in charge of our squadron that was from the South, and he was dead against it. All you had do was tell him you don't feel good. "Okay, you don't have to go." And he knew why. But that's the way it was. But you learn now, even now, I look at black people, and there's certain ways, some I admire, others I don't, but I'm able to distinguish. At that time, there was no distinguishing. It was all one thing, black or white, but it changed over the years. We used to have-- we had a big factory, it was manufacturing gloves, we used to have a black fellow who was a chauffeur for my father, very nice guy, he used to take us everywhere. He was a wonderful fellow. And other times, we had people that were very antagonistic, so it was a two-way street. Sometimes, they could accept it, a white man's way, and other times they couldn't.

170 – interesting tasks in service

So, as you look back on the Service, would you say the most interesting work that you did was the work in Japan, or not necessarily?

I think it was the most interesting because of the background, the legal background, but, on the other hand, I did a lot of very interesting things before they even knew about my-- before I went to Japan. I used to work on history, the history of a section. The colonel would say, "See what you can find out how our section started out, how we became one." And I used to go to the library of the building. We were quartered at that time in a girls' school. They had a library, and I used to go through the files there, trying to find different things, and pick up something here and there, the directives appointing us, and how they opened up the school here. One of the schools was at the Hilton Hotel in Chicago. One was over at the South Side on 55th Street. And then they had Sioux Falls, South Dakota. We had different schools, and it was called Central Tech Training Command. It was all under our office.

And at that time you were working in?

St. Louis.

In St. Louis.

Yeah.

So that's why-- My colonel was transferred to Texas. He wanted me to go with him.

I'm sure.

That's what he said. But I talked to my wife, and I said, "I don't know." I said, "I'm not sure if I want to do that. Leave here, because people know me. They know who I am. They know what I do." And going down there, even though it would be a pleasure to go with him because he'd asked for me, but I had to do the initiation of the request, and my wife and I decided, no, we'd rather be closer to home. So, we said, no, we won't go.

So, that would have been like Fort Sam Houston, or Kelly Air Base, or San Antonio?

Somewhere in Arlington, Texas.

Arlington, Texas.

There was an air field down there. That was where he would go.

Yeah. So, the bulk of your time in the Service was spent in this Tech--

In St. Louis.

In St. Louis.

Yeah.

And your wife was able to live with you down there in a house that you rented?

We had a little house.

But then when you went overseas for the final six or seven months--

She went home.

She came back to Chicago.

Sure.

She stayed with her people then, yeah.

She stayed home with her folks.

Yeah. So the Army got more-- they got another half a year of service out of you that you didn't necessarily have to provide them with, but you have no regrets, though, doing that?

No, I never resented the fact that I went.

Fortunately, I was never seasick. And we went through some terrible storms on the ocean. And I know the only time I got close to it was one time when I was sitting at the table, and the guy next to me got sick at the table. Well, I didn't like that! And there were times when it was so rough that we couldn't sit at a table. We used to sit on a floor with our back against the wall and a tray in your lap. And that's the way you ate.

Yeah.

The storms were so heavy.

Yeah. Do you remember the ship that you traveled on or?

Yeah. I got names and everything. Sure. It was all in the pictures.

221 – rarity of college degree

Yeah. Did you encounter other men in the Service who were as well educated as you were?

No, nobody with a degree. I had college boys who went to college, but I never met anybody who had a college degree, myself.

Your major at Crane and Northwestern, you majored in, your degree was in?

Bachelor of Science in Commerce.

Commerce, yeah.

BSC. And then I got a JD in Law School.

Yeah. You are the first veteran I've interviewed who was a lawyer and had their career already established before the war happened. Usually, it's a case of the veterans coming home and picking up their college again or finding a career.

Yeah, I know.

So it's interesting.

I went in-- at that time, I guess they must have been desperate to start taking older people.

Yeah.

But, like I say, I was fortunate that I was never transferred to the Army and remained in the Air Corps.

Yeah. But you were a wonderful man, another, you know, shining example of that generation that stepped up and served their country. It's an honor to have interviewed you.

Thank you.

240 – final, " interesting thing to add" – the only enlisted man!

So, if there's anything else you care to add, but I think we've kind of covered it?

I can't think of anything else except, oh, one thing that was very interesting was when I was in St. Louis. One day, the colonel told me, he says, "You're going to Salt Lake City for a conference." I said, "What are you talking about?" At that time, I wasn't a master sergeant. I wasn't even a tech sergeant. He says, "You represent our headquarters at this conference." I says, "Who is going to be there?" He says, "You'll see." So, I went with a lieutenant. We stayed in a hotel in Salt Lake City. We went to the conference. When we walked in there, my God, I didn't know what the hell to do! I was the only enlisted man there. The rest were anywhere from lieutenants to generals. Everyone was an officer. And they had a placard on the desk. Sergeant H.H. Ray, that was me. I was the only enlisted man in the whole place. It was something to do with the training in the various schools. And, fortunately, when I came back with the lieutenant, I said to the colonel, I said, to my colonel, I said, "Do I have to write a report on this?" He said," No, you don't have to. We aren't going to send a report out on what happened." I said, "Thank God, because I didn't know what to write if they asked me for a report."

Oh, yeah?

But I felt so funny at first being the only enlisted man in the whole place.

Yeah. What a compliment!

Well, I appreciated it. Like I said, when I left, they brought a lieutenant colonel to take my place.

Yeah. One last question, these training schools that you mentioned in Chicago, in Sioux Falls, or

Yeah, Chanute, down in Illinois on Champaign.

Yeah, a lot of schools.

They were flying schools, that's what they taught.

So you were engaged with the administration of these training schools for flying?

Mmm-hmm.

For that, yeah.

Those were schools for flying. Yeah.

Well I think, at this point, I'm going to conclude the interview and say thanks a lot, Hy, thank you very much.

Sure. 269 – end of tape