

Video Recording Log
Veteran Merle Roughton

1. Name and address of collector of interviewer.

Name of Donor/Interviewer: Dee Breeding
Address: 300 N. Goodwin
City: Urbana
State: Illinois
Zip: 61801
Telephone: 217-353-7300
Email: breeding@uiuc.edu
Partner organization affiliation (if any): WILL AM-FM-TV

2. Name and birth date of the veteran or civilian being interviewed as appears on the Biographical Data Form:

Name of Veteran/Civilian: Merle Edward Roughton
Birth Date: 05/01/1922

3. Recording format

VIDEO type: Mini DVD

4. Estimated length of recording (in minutes): 148 minutes **Date of recording:** 07/20/2007

5. Location of recording: WILL AM-FM-TV, 300 N. Goodwin Ave, Urbana, IL 61801

6. Please log the topics discussed in the interview in sequence.

- 00:00 Introduction
- 00:27 Background—high school in Urbana, IL—National Guard, 106th Cavalry—horse troop, heavy machine guns
- 01:00 Illinois National Guard—end of Depression—January-November 1940—armory—horses
- 03:25 August, 1940—Camp McCoy, WI—remount horses, not ready for Cavalry
- 05:00 Dysentery—horse hair infection—forced march 72 miles—experiences with horses
- 06:20 Uniforms
- 07:00 Tents—bonfire—dysentery
- 07:40 Returned to Illinois—patrol at County Fair—parade down Main Street in Urbana, IL
- 08:10 Machine guns loaded on pack horses—water jug, ammunition
- 08:30 Saddles—maybe from Spanish War—really old and broken—problems with equipment
- 09:10 Urbana, IL—draft notice—with the Army for monthly training—men signing up, university men and farmers trying to beat draft—this unit called long before draft
- 10:25 November, 1940—took horses away, became Service Troop—needed organization to transport horses and men—their Cavalry to become Horse Mechanized outfit—stationed at Urbana
- 11:00 Went to Camp Livingston, LA—training—knew war was coming

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- 12:00 Federalized in November—Army of the United States—reserves—2 squadrons: horse and mechanized—horse troops from Chicago, originally Polo players
13:30 Cavalry changing—year in Camp Livingston, LA—Louisiana Maneuvers 1941
13:55 77 semis—portays—hauled 8 horses, men, equipment—his troop was drivers for portays—equipment slow to arrive
15:20 Boots and britches laced—uniform of horse troop even though had no horses
16:15 Issued a 66 truck without driver's license—drove night and day—hauled manure to veteran's hospital—not enough trucks, down-time
17:20 Camp Livingston, LA—mud roads—6-man tents—winter
18:00 War started—took over all bridges between Alexandria and New Orleans, LA—December, 1941
19:25 Split outfit—left horse troops in Camp Livingston—took Mechanized to Panama
20:00 Service troops—drive men
20:35 Went to POE beach—very cold
21:10 New Orleans practically closed down—walked 7 miles to port—converted cattle car—sailed to Panama—suspected location of next enemy target
22:05 Patrolled Panama from January 1942 to August 1943—interior mountains, building more lochs
23:40 Did not go home for duration of stay in Panama—furlough while at Camp Livingston—called back to break up Pennsylvania coal strike—close friends in National Guard
25:00 Proud outfit—also patrolled border in early 1900's
25:50 After Panama, went to San Francisco, CA and Pittsburgh, CA—deloused, from tropics
26:40 Train to Camp Maxey, TX—original group still in TX while his group had gone to Panama—military government wanted to send his outfit to Europe immediately because they were seasoned troops—flunked core test so they could go home on furlough—other group had their wives living with them in TX
27:30 Sent to LA as umpires for maneuvers—furlough to Urbana, IL
28:15 Fort Raleigh—mechanics school
28:25 Core test—combat readiness—sent guy from Washington to take over outfit—32nd Squadron of 14th Cavalry
29:30 Went to Europe, 1944—arrived in Glasgow, Scotland—train to Bournemouth, England
30:25 Only took 2 odograph jeeps—map-makers for reconnaissance—bringing Jeeps to Brooklyn Naval Yard
32:00 Europe—drove all over England—equipment hidden
32:25 LST across Channel—rough waters—lost armored car off of top deck—took over 1 day
32:50 Omaha Beach—went into hedgerows—pup tents—voted absentee for FDR
33:10 Went across France and Luxembourg—32nd in Saar Valley doing reconnaissance for right flank of 1st Army—18th Squadron up North—caught Battle of the Bulge—put 800 Cavalry men up front to hold
34:00 18th, 32nd Squadrons—Battle of the Bulge
35:40 Outfit pulled back to refurbish, get new men—went back to battle
36:00 Crossed Rhine with 7th Armored—drew tanks with 24's
36:15 Joined Patton—making run across Danube to Czechoslovakia

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- 36:30 Got to Austrian border—war ended—pulled back
- 36:45 Outfit going to South Pacific—took high-pointers and transferred to infantry outfit to be shipped back to States
- 37:05 Outfit left to go to South Pacific, went to States, got a leave—his group still waiting for ship in France
- 37:20 Got a ship in August—V-J Day occurred while at sea
- 37:40 Cavalry—eyes and ears of Army—equipped lightly to move faster—primary objective—also used for combat, quick hits as necessary
- 39:00 Patton used them to hit and move—Germany a mess at the time
- 39:20 Vehicle in France—commander of big wrecker—2 men from 104th Division, driver and mechanic—carrying half-track on back most of the time
- 40:00 Few times when actually with platoon—Line Company would have an accident, go pick them up
- 40:15 Battle of the Bulge—sent to Saint Vith to get half track that hit a mine—all vehicles on road going the opposite way—no radio in wrecker
- 41:00 Saint Vith—people still in houses trying to block roads—MPs taking them back inside—Red Ball express vacated supply vehicles, firing directly on cliff over railroad yard
- 41:40 Half-track in railroad yard—maintenance platoon with track off—hood up, engine on cooking dinner—towed it out, going 5 mph
- 43:10 Does not remember anything after railroad yards until December 25th—bad time—so cold, people froze to death on roads—Battle of the Bulge—terrible weather
- 44:15 Cavalry not equipped to dig fox holes, but did—18th in trenches
- 44:30 Squadrons—his attached to airborne unit—pulled reconnaissance for 82nd Airborne
- 45:15 Reconnaissance work—not job to engage, but did sometimes—Patton ex-Cavalry
- 45:55 Discharged
- 46:00 End of Battle of the Bulge—by 3rd day both squadrons decimated—pulled back to Belgium—18th new tanks—his had old tanks—firepower in vehicles
- 47:15 Vehicles in Cavalry—didn't have armored cars in Europe, did have in Panama—M-8 Armored Car—37—light armor
- 48:15 Company of light tanks—37 mounted—“pea shooter” compared to German tanks—American tanks could out maneuver German tanks
- 49:00 End of Battle of the Bulge—Germans captured American equipment and used it against Americans
- 49:35 Germans had troop of Americans with German heritage—could get through road blocks
- 50:00 Chaos
- 51:15 Manning bazooka—man in foxhole from PA National Guard—Pennsylvania Dutch—wrecker driver also PA Dutch
- 52:30 In Luxembourg—lots of German speakers—Luxembourg neutral, people still there—taverns still open—in Luxembourg 2 months—HQ for 14th—stopped back to visit town on way to Paris later—town had banquet for him
- 53:50 War over, pulled back to Erlangen—pass to Paris—used camera lenses for money
- 55:45 Panama—malaria—Panama Canal—yellow fever
- 57:15 [tape transfer]

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- 57:38 Fort Clayton—lochs—aircraft carrier—Albrook Field down the road
- 58:35 Army Air Corps—“white sheeters”—slept on white sheets—his unit didn’t get a shower for 6 months—washed and cooked in steel helmet
- 59:35 Cavalry units—everyone carried Thompson sub machine gun—in Panama carried side arms—45 Colt revolver and sword
- 01:00:45 Gorgona beach—no one there because wartime—alligator hunting—bullets from WWI caused bulge in barrel
- 01:02:05 Sloths
- 01:02:30 Side arms
- 01:03:05 Horses on German side—Germans running out—troops of boys and old men
- 01:03:45 Never injured during Battle of the Bulge—can’t get anything from VA now because never injured or taken prisoner
- 01:04:45 Cavalry—supposed to be there, then gone—always glad not in infantry
- 01:05:05 Howitzers—M-8 tank like mortar—2 Cadillac engines
- 01:06:00 Camp Livingston—5 men and corporal from Urbana—only one of 6 was killed—all now live in Urbana together
- 01:06:45 Germans missed gas supply storage—German tanker trying to hit—would have been really bad
- 01:07:30 What most people don’t know—18th and 32nd Cavaliaries in foxholes—what happened at beginning of Battle of the Bulge
- 01:08:30 Riding in wrecker had advantages—picked up half tracks all the time—riding in no-man’s-land
- 01:09:05 Omaha Beach—sank tank in deep water
- 01:09:55 Drove tank across Rhine River—most exciting thing ever done—built pontoon bridge—drove tank across alone—water really swift and dangerous
- 01:12:15 Bridge under attack night and day—would take cover under railroad
- 01:13:35 Remagen Bridge—railroad bridge with tunnel—Germans wired bridge to explode but it didn’t go off—finally fell down
- 01:15:55 Joined Patton—joined 1st Army—thinks Patton asked for Cavalry outfit—14 there—wanted them to run front because wanted to get it over in a hurry—106th was there, original outfit
- 01:17:05 Went to Austria—war ended—went to Relagen in May—shipped out in August
- 01:17:30 Part of 106th saved King Leopold—ford du guerre—French decoration—Presidential Unit Citation for Mechanized part of 32nd—for taking Remagen Bridge and getting men across—alludes topic regarding Presidential Citation--“some argument about that”—should have had some other honors
- 01:19:20 Never got Presidential Citation—when took high-pointers out of unit, that outfit never went through files to award ribbons—has proof, but records burned in Saint Louis—to go back and get it, have to prove was in 32nd Cavalry unit at the time
- 01:20:20 Man’s dad was in outfit—lawyer in Chicago—trying to find out information—read *Time For Trumpets*—never told his daughter had been in Battle of the Bulge
- 01:20:50 Made shadowboxes for daughters
- 01:21:05 Planned on writing book—made lots of notes to write book—shadowboxes

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01:22:20 [Shows and describes shadow box]
01:27:45 U.S.S. Algonquin—converted cattle ship--Panama canal
01:30:00 Panama
01:31:10 Young men and young students in National Guard
01:32:10 After discharged August, 1945—work at bakery, then at Chevrolet—friend's brother—father & son duos in outfit—sets of brothers
01:33:45 Joined National Guard again—sworn in as staff sergeant—
01:34:45 Series-10 program to become 2nd lieutenant—offered officer position in maintenance
01:35:00 Becoming warrant officer
01:37:00 Work as mechanic, service manager, mechanics field
01:38:00 Warrant officer—don't get discharged—armored his specialty—active reserves
01:39:00 Chicago—met friends from 106th
01:40:30 National guard outfit—serving with friends from hometown
01:42:00 Uniforms, boots, laces
01:43:30 Communication with officers
01:45:15 Battle of the Bulge—lucky
01:45:45 Half track, Saint Vith in December—saw him on way to Lucky Strike in June
01:48:15 Didn't want to talk about it after the War
01:49:30 Pennsylvania Dutch men
01:50:30 German Castle—wanted to see what was in safe—buried two sets of China and said would come back and get after War—not really stealing
01:52:30 Chicken hunting inebriated with Thompsons—
01:54:05 [Tape transfer]
01:54:30 Gliders, motorcycles, drinking hidden French champagne
01:56:30 Chicken hunting—German farmer asked them not to kill his chickens but they did anyway—shot chickens with 45 shotguns—meat ruined--almost shot himself—riding motorcycles while drunk—“shows how you get”
01:59:30 Problems with POWs—would not admit they were Nazis
02:01:30 Friend captured by Germans, POW camp—reunited with brother in POW camp
02:04:00 Lost some men to OCS, Cadres
02:05:00 National Guard—families knew each other—correspondence infrequent, no entertainment
02:06:15 When returned to Urbana, family had moved
02:07:00 14 days furlough—left outfits in Korea too long—rotated men in—feels as though should have trained together and gone overseas together
02:08:30 In Europe August to August—supposed to march down 5th Ave. on VJ-Day—didn't happen—sent to Fort Sheridan
02:09:00 With friends in Chicago—New York City—Brooklyn Naval Yards
02:12:00 Camp Kilmer, NJ—new uniforms—put on train to Fort Sheridan—discharged—discharged in second tour of duty in Colorado—desert, mountains
02:13:45 Texas to Teloma—didn't want men to get off train in middle of the night

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- 02:14:15 New Years Eve—Memphis, TN—got fifth of whiskey—first time drinking—when first called up
- 02:15:15 [Wrap-up]—one more story—Fourth of July parade—tanks
- 01:18:15 Teaching brother to drive
- 02:19:00 Armory—horses—high school gymnasium—horse shows—horses got out—pack horses
- 02:21:45 Friends in 106th—mother owned boarding house
- 02:22:35 Loyalty to friends in National Guard—reunions
- 02:24:15 [Wrap-up]—global is not going to work—giving country away—would be in bad shape in Iraq if not for National Guard—people now don't know meaning of patriotism—buying foreign not good idea—Patton museum
- 02:26:50 [Wrap-up]