Video Recording Log
Veteran Hale Burge

Name of Interviewer: Nancy Rotzoll
Name of Veteran/Civilian: Hale Francis Burge
Birth Date: 05/21/1922

Recording format
VIDEO type: Mini DVD

Estimated length of recording (in minutes): 60 minutes  Date of recording: 11/08/2007

Location of recording: Hoopeston Public Library, 110 N. Fourth St., Hoopeston, IL 60942

Recording log:
00:01 Introduction
00:18 Personal experiences at beginning of War; Hearing about Pearl Harbor on radio
01:33 Working before War: railroad, printing company
01:43 Draft notice in Spring, 1942
01:58 Working on railroad
02:05 Physical in Danville, IL in July
02:15 Inducted to Army in October, 1942
02:28 Physical in Chicago
02:45 Reported to Camp Grant in Rockford, IL in November
03:00 Testing at Camp Grant: Tank Core, Medics, Air Force
03:39 Childhood love of airplanes
03:47 Traveling by train in S.E. United States
04:00 Basic Training in South
04:10 Wanted to be gunner in order to be on airplanes
04:12 Passed high on automotive exam
04:35 Jefferson Barracks, MO
04:50 Growing up: guns, hunting
05:20 Departed Jefferson Barracks from Saint Louis in 1943 to Fort Lawton, WA
05:35 Hospital stay 10 days
06:12 Boarded Troop Ship March 18, 1943 from Seattle, WA to Alaska, trains through Alaska
06:45 Boarded ship with 5,000 men
07:00 Ordinance men
07:15 Traveling through islands by ship
07:35 Adak Island
07:45 Major Taylor
07:50 Driving supply trucks for Major Taylor
08:08 Hauling bombs
08:25 Unloading barges, fear of Japanese torpedoes, Tokyo Rose propaganda
08:50 Boarded boat to Attu
08:52 Battle of Attu, hearing battle from boat in dock
09:40 Boarded barge to Shemya
10:00 Describing island and wildlife, blue fox
10:18 Runway on Shemya
10:35 Sleeping in tents by runway
10:50 Outfit went back, only 50 people stayed on island
11:13 Working in supply, salvaging wrecked planes
11:30 Lieutenant Ernest Taylor
11:45 Became airplane mechanic
12:02 P-40 fighter planes, working on
13:26 Fighter squadrons meddling with airplanes, causing crashes
14:00 Describing runway crash
16:35 Major Tracy
16:45 Saving lives, airplanes
17:42 Describing crash, bomb detonating, 9 casualties
19:15 Cleaning up crash and explosion
19:38 Generator House boy killed by concussion
20:32 Crash crew, fighting fires, disarming and deactivating planes
21:18 Describing crash of B-24: pilot crashed in fog, fell out of hatch and into propeller, died.
24:25 Airplane ruined from crash and fire
24:30 Breakwater built, Baring Sea, rough wind and weather
25:02 Waves broke down Breakwater
25:07 Mainland Recoup Furlough, 1944
25:35 Soldiers’ concern about furlough affecting rotation date
25:50 Vacation
26:03 Boarded civilian boat hired by military to Attu, Waiting to get back to Shemya
26:26 B-24’s painted black for radar resistance: photo recon squadron flying missions to Japan
26:48 Asked mail boy to fly him to Shemya
27:05 Flying in fog
27:28 Planes out of Shemya flying bombs to North Japan and Korean Islands
27:33 B-24’s with oil tanks for photo recon: Bombay fuel tanks: flew 24 hours without landing
28:00 Plane from Shemya shot during combat, flew back with many injuries to plane, pilot and co pilot, technical sergeant flew and landed it.
29:19 Sitting up at night when mission was out
29:45 Waiting to turn on runway lights until plane was close
30:00 Planes would get close, signal the base for landing, then run out of fuel and crash into the Baring Sea/North Pacific, all eleven men on board dead from crash and cold temperatures of water.
30:20 Planes landing in Russia as last resort, getting interned like a P.O.W., Russia kept plane
30:45 Russia, cold war
31:15 Friends in service
31:45 Working on planes, B-45 from Attu, engine trouble
32:15 Captain Boatright, the cold shoulder
32:45 Captain Boatright, fixing airplane
36:10 Purpose of campaign in Aleutian islands
Adak island, building runway
Battles in Kiska and Attu after runway was built, bombing campaigns before troops landed
American presence in Aleutian islands to keep Japanese forces from moving forward, going to South Pacific, tie up troops.
Orientation movies about war elsewhere once a month or so
Living in tents, then Pacific huts, then Mess Halls
Malcolm Ford from Sacramento, CA
Watching 2-3 movies a night in Mess Hall: projector, Western movies, orientation movies
Rotation of others on base to South Pacific, many casualties
Shemya base not dangerous
Japanese airplane raids on Attu, Japanese bombing techniques
P-38’s, P-40’s on Shemya base not allowed to go to Attu to shoot down Japanese bombers
After war, end of May, coded messages every afternoon from unknown source
Japanese soldier found with hand-crank radio in a hole sending reports of runway activity
Only Japanese soldier left on islands, all others died during war, “Harry Carey,” Japanese evaded capture by Americans
Japanese soldier stole food from mess hall for 2-3 months
Stayed on island after war, May 1945
Due to join outfit in Anchorage, AK: 39th Air Depot.
C.O. had been Maintenance Officer at Shemya
Waiting and doing nothing
Didn’t salute Second Lieutenant, reprimanded by Captain
Family back home during war
Writing letters, censorship
A.P.O. Numbers, letters
Returning from AK by train across Canada
Telegram from Canada to parents announcing pending arrival
Two Brothers in Navy
Processing, Camp Grant
Chicago
Camp Grant
New outfit was going to form in Roswell, NM
Reporting back to Chicago
War ended while at home in Hoopeston, IL
First Atomic Bomb while in Hoopeston, IL
Personal reflections on Atomic Bomb, A-Bomb protestors
Would have been difficult to invade Japan
Younger brother on duty in submarine in Tokyo Bay taking pictures at night
Bombing campaigns in Japan
Truman’s order
Second Atomic Bomb
Looking back on experiences: best thing that ever happened to America
51:13  Family, childhood, Depression, welfare, W.P.A.s, War; Jerking sweet corn by hand as a child
51:42  Working inside plant
51:48  Quitting railroad job, railroad bosses
52:45  Cincinnati, OH: U.S. Printing Co.
52:51  Draft notice
52:55  After service
53:00  Rebuilding crashed planes, P-38s, Martin B-26
53:08  Describing crash
53:36  Rebuilding plane
53:55  Rebuilding P-40’s
54:05  Moving airplanes when war winding down
54:20  When war ending, wouldn’t repair crashed planes
54:28  In charge of crash crew, wrecker truck
54:35  Dropping crashed airplanes off of bluff into Baring Sea
55:05  Never returned to Aleutian Islands
55:15  Renamed island Eareckson Air Station, emergency landing site for commercial airlines
56:10  Civilian activities on island
56:20  Closing of Air Force base
56:26  Watching base grow over time
56:40  Blacktopping the runway: Tokyo Rose knew about it because machines made a lot of smoke
57:02  Could not get U.S. radio stations, listened to Tokyo Rose
57:15  Not worried for personal safety, Japanese forces concentrated more on South Pacific
57:25  Midway Island
57:35  Reflections on experiences
57:40  Loneliness, environment, climate
58:10  Story: bringing back milk to island from mainland, hiding in life boat, snow banks
59:49  Conclusion; best thing that ever happened to America