

Transcription: Ben Fuelberg

Today is Tuesday, June 29, 2010, and my name is James Crabtree and I'll be interviewing Mr. Ben Fuelberg. This interview is being done at the Stephen F. Austin Building in Austin, Texas, and it is being conducted in support of the Texas Veterans Land Board Voices of Veterans Oral History Program. Sir, thank you very much for taking the time today to sit and be interviewed. It's an honor for us. I guess the first question is just tell us a little bit about your boyhood and your life before you went in the military.

Ben Fuelberg: Well, I was born on a farm in Washington County. We were actually what we called cotton farmers at the time. I joined the local National Guard unit in 1934 I think. This was the Troop E, 124th Cavalry. It was the local unit in Brenham, Texas. This unit was called to active duty on November the 18th, 1940. This of course was a year before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and the call was extended. Of course we were called to active duty for one year, which the Congress had extended the call for six months and then Pearl Harbor happened and of course it was obvious we wasn't gonna get out of the service for some time.

Now to back track a little bit, in 1934 you joined the Guard. What was it that prompted you to do that?

Ben Fuelberg: Well it was probably finances more than anything. The National Guard paid for meetings and we had four paid meetings a month, and a summer camp on 15 days, and of course the pay wasn't very high, but a dollar was worth a lot more in 1934 than it is now.

Sure. Did they send you to basic training somewhere?

Ben Fuelberg: No, we had a training session once a week. And then the summer camp when we stayed in the camp for two weeks.

Did they train you just how to be a basic infantryman or that sort of thing?

Ben Fuelberg: Well that, and this was a horse cavalry outfit. We actually rode horses and practiced.

How old were you when you went into the Guard in '34?

Ben Fuelberg: Well, I was born in 1916. I would have been 18 years of age.

Did you have any friends or siblings that went in with you?

Ben Fuelberg: Well, I had two brothers that joined it, had already joined prior to my joining.

OK, so you joined in 1934, and that was just like you said kind of a part time thing. Were you going to school or working at that time?

Ben Fuelberg: My parents owned a cotton farm and I worked on the farm with them.

And this was near Brenham in Washington County?

Ben Fuelberg: Yes.

So do you remember sir where you were when you learned that Pearl Harbor had been bombed? Do you remember that day?

Ben Fuelberg: What I remember about it is, we didn't have television at that time, the news went out over the radio for all servicemen to return to their post, and the announcement of course was that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, and of course things changed a whole lot. Everybody that was in the service I'm sure returned to their post. I did.

And you knew I guess instantly that you were going to be going to war yourself?

Ben Fuelberg: Yes. Things changed. We were permitted to wear civilian clothes up to that time. We wanted to send all our civilian clothes home and get in uniform and stay in uniform.

You said you had to report back to your post. Where did they have you report to first?

Ben Fuelberg: My unit had been called to active duty. We were stationed first at Fort Bliss in El Paso. From there we were sent to various posts along the border. My unit, second squadron 124th was stationed at Fort Ringoll, which is an old post up the river from Fort Brown where they camped at Brownsville. Fort Ringoll was part of that same unit at, around Granite City.

OK, and at that time did they go ahead and start doing more extensive training to deploy you? Did you feel like you were going to be sent overseas pretty quickly?

Ben Fuelberg: Well I don't know whether I felt like I was gonna be sent overseas quickly. What happened, and lots of people volunteered to get, for instance, the Air Force was expanding and there was a lot of young men in it, the school for aviation cadets. We had people in our unit who actually transferred out into aviation cadet schools and became pilots. Some of them of course lost their lives in the Pacific when they were flying off of these FF carriers. I stayed with the unit. I was sent off to candidate school later that year, and this is 1942. I was commissioned to second lieutenant and my first assignment after I was commissioned at Fort Riley, Kansas, my first permanent assignment after I became a second lieutenant was really the second cavalry division at Fort Clark, Texas, which was a unit with black troops and mostly white officers.

OK, and what was that like being in charge, I guess at that time segregation was just an accepted thing, but did that pose a unique challenge to you?

Ben Fuelberg: It never posed any big problem for me. There were problems, of course, with colored troops and white officers, but generally I think it was pretty good.

What type of training or things did you do with that unit in Fort Clark? Was it a typical infantry unit?

Ben Fuelberg: Most of our troops came from Fort Riley, Kansas, which was really a cavalry training location. The enlisted people that had been drafted at that time usually had 12 weeks of basic training and they came to us with that training and we carried on from that day, and they had very little training as far as using horses and so forth. But they had schedules of unit training and then the larger training and we ended up usually in maneuvers out in the country somewhere and we stayed for several -

And how long were you with that unit?

Ben Fuelberg: I think I arrived there in January of '43 and I left there in probably October of '43.

To backtrack a bit sir, go back to your time at officer candidate school, you mentioned that you got commissioned in 1942. How were you able to be selected for OCS? Was there a screening process for that? Were they looking for volunteers?

Ben Fuelberg: Well you had to volunteer of course, but when you first entered the service at that time they gave you an IQ test, and that IQ test gave you some score, and that score had a lot to do with who went where and whether they were officer candidate material or not.

Sure. So you had a good enough score and you volunteered for it. How long was your training at OCS?

Ben Fuelberg: 90 days. They called us 90-day wonders.

So you got commissioned and then from there you were in charge of the black unit at Fort Clark, and then up until October of '43, so you were still state-side. Did you have any desire at that point, did you feel like you were missing out on the action overseas?

Ben Fuelberg: Well yeah, that's part of what got me to transfer. This black unit was being sent to Italy, and we were told in advance that it wouldn't be sent as a combat unit. We were also told that if an officer didn't want to go that route, they could ask for a transfer. I actually asked for a transfer back to my original unit which was the 124th Cavalry, and starting from that after some training again at the border post, I was stationed at Marfa ____ and Fort ____ for a time, and from there I went back to Fort Riley to the officer's advanced course. From there, the unit had then been warned that they were going to be sent overseas. I returned from school to the unit at Fort Riley, Kansas, and we got ready to go overseas.

During this time, you mentioned you had a couple of brothers I guess that had gone into the guard when you went into the Guard? Is that right, back in the 30s?

Ben Fuelberg: Yeah.

Where were they at this time? Were they also –

Ben Fuelberg: They didn't stay in the Guard. One of the brothers was drafted almost immediately, and the other older brother it was another two, couple of years before he was drafted, but they were both called to the service by the drafters.

And during this time did you know where they were or how they were doing? Did you have any word from home or that sort of thing?

Ben Fuelberg: Yeah, I pretty well, we corresponded and we could write letters. I pretty well knew where they were.

How did your folks, I mean I know everybody was at war at that time, but how did your parents handle the worry of having some of their sons going off to war? Or did they ever talk to you about that?

Ben Fuelberg: Well, like you say, everybody, every family probably had a son if they had any sons in the service, and I'm sure, although my daddy didn't show much concern, my mother of course worried about it a whole lot.

So you were getting ready, you were back with your original unit and you were getting ready to go overseas. Did you know at that point any idea of where you were going to be going exactly?

Ben Fuelberg: Well I wouldn't say exactly. We left from Long Beach, California, probably about July the 18th. We went to Australia for resupply and then went to Bombay, India. I don't remember exactly when we realized what our mission would be, but it was known that we were gonna be what was called a Morris taskforce and we were going to go into northern Burma to drive the Japanese away from an airstrip that they had taken over up there, and they had brought in some of their zero fighters and they were shooting at our planes, our transport planes that was carrying supplies into China. Our mission really was to drive those Japanese, take over that airstrip and drive the Japanese south so they wouldn't endanger our air supply system.

Can you tell us, sir, a little bit about the Morris taskforce, where the name came from and how it was organized, that sort of thing?

Ben Fuelberg: Well, the 124th, which was the unit the Texas National Guard, the unit that I started with, it had another regiment, and each regiment had three battalions and this was, I don't know exactly who named it Morris taskforce, I guess there was a lot of secret about it being there or why it was there, but we landed in Bombay and trains were waiting and we were taken to a Camp Ramguard training center which was closer to the Burmese border. After a couple of months staying at this Camp Ramguard training center and reorganizing, we were flown into northern Burma to a camp that had been established there. I have to back up a little bit – to take over this airstrip. A part of the unit had some 200-300 men had been walked into northern Burma. They took over this airstrip that the Japanese were holding, and immediately they flew in additional troops. Now I wasn't part of that unit, but it was part of the Morris taskforce that occupied the airstrip and took it away from the Japanese there in northern Burma, and we were shortly flown into northern Burma in a basic camp that we had established there and we stayed there until oh, about mid-December I guess 1944.

When you went through India, did you have much interaction with any British soldiers?

Ben Fuelberg: Well, India was a British colony at that time. So was Burma. The overall command of the whole operation I think was a British officer. We didn't have much interaction with them. We had our own colonels and generals that did the command of our operation.

What are your memories of the weather and conditions in Burma?

Ben Fuelberg: They have a monsoon season over there and it rains a whole lot. In fact it rains even when they don't have a monsoon season, and part of the mission in trying to get this accomplished was to finish the job before the monsoon season started. So we were always in a hurry or being pushed to get on with it and get on with it, and I guess we did eventually, we did drive the Japanese south, and the British landed a force further south and started coming north,

and they didn't meet any opposition. We got as far south as Laseo, Burma, and we occupied another airstrip there that had been there before the war, and things changed. We were able to finish the road. There was equipment that was left in India to be taken to China. They finished the road. We flew some of our people back to India and they did the driving of the six trucks. They drove them from India into China, and turned the equipment over to the Chinese.

And during this time you were a platoon commander as part of that force? Were you still a second lieutenant?

Ben Fuelberg: No, I was promoted to a first lieutenant when I was still at this horse cavalry outfit with the black troops. When we were in Ramguard training center, part of the reorganization was to change this regiment from two battalions to three battalions. This opened up a lot of changes in personnel, and I was actually promoted to the troop commander of Troop E, which was the same troop I had come on active duty with. Some of the people that were in the unit that were in there were about 25-30 of the original members that were still there.

Tell us, sir, a little bit about some of the men you served with in that unit, maybe any of them that stand out in your memory of where they were from or what they were like, that sort of thing.

Ben Fuelberg: Well, these units, they came from some small town usually, and I told you Troop E came from Brown, there was F Troop came from Mineral Wells. We had some skirmishes with the Japanese as we moved along. None of them were very serious until we got to a point where a hill that overlooked the old Burma Road. The Japanese had it. The Chinese were supposed to take it away from them and they never really got around to it, and when I set there, we were being rushed, pushed to get this thing done now, and the second squadron which was my squadron was selected to take this hill away from the Japanese. F Troop and G Troop were the two original troops that were supposed to do the attack. Both bogged down, and after the thing got into trouble, E Troop which was my troop were called to enter the hill and get on the hill. F Troop had taken a lot of casualties, their troop commander, all of the officers had been casualties. One of the officers, a guy named Jack Nide, actually was awarded the congressional medal of honor. All of these soldiers, in my contact with them, all of the soldiers in F Troop, and I knew a lot of them, they were all brave men. They had an individual hate against the Japanese I guess mainly for that attack on Pearl Harbor. Some of them actually had friends and brothers who were casualties at Pearl Harbor, and there was never any doubt that these troops would attack the Japanese if given the opportunity, and they did this, like I say after they took a lot of casualties. E Troop, which was my troop, we had six killed in action, and a number of others were wounded but they recovered.

So you always felt then that you had the Japanese on the run and there was never going to be any doubt that you guys were gonna win.

Ben Fuelberg: There never was any doubt in my mind. I never had any doubts that the American troops would do the job.

And you mentioned those six that you lost from your unit. Did you have to write letters home?

Ben Fuelberg: I did, in this case, I wasn't told I had to do it, I did write a letter to each of the parents and told them what happened. I still have their names and I don't do it anymore, but some number of years after that I still sent Christmas cards to 'em and things like that.

I would think that would probably be one of the hardest things you had to do during your entire time in the service.

Ben Fuelberg: I would say so, yeah.

So you guys then were successful there in Burma. You pushed the Japanese forces back. You'd gotten the roads and airstrips built. What happens at that point for you guys?

Ben Fuelberg: Well, we stayed, we established camp at Laseo, Burma, there on an airstrip, and we did supply system. The Burma Road had been opened. These trucks that came from India that hauled food, I might say that while we were on this campaign which lasted from about mid-December until last of April, we lived off of air drop. We didn't have any truck supplies, stuff like that. Food and ammunition and the things we needed were brought in by and dropped to us by the Air Force at various locations and we had a system where we marked the place and they knew where to come, and it worked real good.

So they dropped big pallet-sized freights and things of that sort. Were you able to get mail that way?

Ben Fuelberg: Sure, we did. We got mail just like, the supply system worked just like it would at any other place except that it was dropped to us from the air rather than hauled by truck or train or whatever.

What type of connection did you have to the outside world in terms of news when you were there in Burma? Did you have any idea what was going on in the rest of the war in terms of what was going on in Europe or other parts of the Pacific?

Ben Fuelberg: I don't know how up to date it was, but a newspaper was published, I can't remember the name of it, but there was a newspaper that was published there that had all this information in it.

Was that Stars and Stripes?

Ben Fuelberg: It wasn't Stars and Stripes, it was available, I don't think it was called Stars and Stripes though. But we did know what was going on. We knew when the war ended in Europe and of course our mission hadn't been completed when we arrived at this airstrip in central Burma, and the British, this was really their colony, they came in and brought in their civilian administrators and things and took over the administration of the country again. Of course we were there in order to go to China, and we were flown from Laseo, Burma, into Kunming mostly, headquarters at that time, and we were sent to various units in China. I went to a unit that was on what was then French Indochina border. There's been another war since then that he participated in. But anyhow, I joined a Chinese unit on this French Indochina border, and I remained there until the war ended.

What was your role with that Chinese unit?

Ben Fuelberg: We had a small group of enlisted men and I think one or two other officers and we supposedly taught the Chinese how to use their weapons and we were given to them.

I know during that time in China towards the end of the war there was a lot of tension building between the Communist forces and the Chinese Nationalists under Chang Kai Shek. Did you see any of that within that unit that you were assigned to?

Ben Fuelberg: Well, this was going on at the time we are talking about. The Chang Kai Shek who was the man we supported, but we supplied these units and organized some new units for the Chinese army, but I don't know that they ever really got into action against the Japanese. They kind of were waiting to see, end the war and they knew there was a fight coming between -

Yeah, their own civil war.

Ben Fuelberg: Yeah, and this did happen and of course history tells us they didn't win. The Japanese -

They fled to Taiwan and Mao took over.

Ben Fuelberg: But I don't know that we were, I wasn't, I wasn't any part. I know that this unit that I was with, there was some indecision about whether they were gonna go to the Communists or whether they were going to stay with the Nationalist government, so there was some trading of materials going on. We gave the Chinese government, let them decide who was gonna get this material and equipment, and 6 by 6 trucks that we gave them. They of course gave it to the units that they thought would support their cause when the real fight started.

How were you able to communicate with the Chinese? Did they speak any English at all or did you learn any Chinese?

Ben Fuelberg: We had an interpreter. I had one that stayed pretty much. I never did learn how to speak Chinese.

Was he a Chinese soldier?

Ben Fuelberg: He was a Chinese civilian I think.

So you were there then I guess when you learned that the war had ended, the atomic bombs had been dropped and the Japanese surrendered? Do you remember what your emotions were, what your thoughts were when you learned that it was finally over?

Ben Fuelberg: Well of course the first thought that everybody had was when can I go home? And we were delayed, at least my part of going home was we had established a group of people, American soldiers with a lot of units around China, a lot of American equipment, and I'm not talking about artillery pieces, I'm talking about typewriters and stuff like that. We had officers all over China, and these things had to be closed down and the stuff packed up and sent back. I got hooked up in that for some time. But we did box it up and we sent it back to Kunming, China, to a warehouse. I don't know what happened thereafter.

So the point system didn't really apply to you or your men because you had already been disbursed out and they couldn't just pull you out quickly I guess is what you're saying. Because I know there was a point system for a lot of the troops in World War II where if you had accrued enough points, they would send you on home.

Ben Fuelberg: Well I think there was a time when the war ended in Europe, and this point system you're talking about applied to all troops, and one of these brothers I told you about earlier had been sent with a unit, that was water supply that dug wells and supplied water to the troops. Anyhow he had been in north Africa and been in Sicily and been in Italy and southern France. This point system applied to him. When the war ended in Europe, why he was sent home and he got a trip.

So he was home before you were.

Ben Fuelberg: Yeah, he was home before the war ended in the Pacific.

During this time, were you married or engaged at that time?

Ben Fuelberg: Yes, I was married to my sweetheart on April the 12th, 1942, and I might add this here, a year or so later in July, when I was sent overseas, my wife was pregnant. I didn't see him until 17 or 18 months later. He was born about the time I got on the ship. But this didn't happen to just us, it happened to lots of other people.

But I think a lot of people today have a hard time relating to that or understanding that, it's just a different country today, a lot of things are taken for granted. How did your wife cope with you being gone? I imagine you and she exchanged letters or that sort of thing as best you could?

Ben Fuelberg: Yeah, her family lived not far from where I grew up. She went back home to stay with her parents until the war was over.

How did you learn about the birth of your first child? Did you get a telegram or a letter, any sort of thing?

Ben Fuelberg: Yeah, well I'll tell you about that. When we left Long Beach, California, there were Red Cross personnel available. You could talk to them about anything that you were concerned about, or anything that you wanted to check on for you. When I left California, I talked to one of these Red Cross people and told them my situation and asked them to check on it and let me know. When we arrived in Australia, a Red Cross person from there looked me up and told me that my wife had a son and that my wife and son were doing fine. And this was a wonderful system. You could do this all through the war. You could talk to a Red Cross person and they could check this thing out for you and let you know, and it worked.

That's great. So you were in Australia then when you learned that you had a son.

Ben Fuelberg: That's right.

Then from there you went off to Burma and China and all that sort of thing. When were you finally able to come back home to the States?

Ben Fuelberg: Well I had some dates, I checked that a day or so ago, I believe it was November the 2nd, 1945. I landed in a troop ship in New York harbor.

So you took a ship back. I imagine that ship took quite a while.

Ben Fuelberg: Both ways, and this is part of the story also. I told you we left from California and went to Bombay. When the war ended, we were flown by the way from some converted B-29 that flew us from Kunming, China, to Calcutta, India. From there, I went by ship and came the other way through the Indian Ocean, the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic. Of course this completed a trip around the world.

Yeah, no kidding. Yes sir, wow. So when you arrived there in New York, had your family come up to meet you or did you still have to travel all the way to Texas to see them?

Ben Fuelberg: We were taken off the ship to encampment in New Jersey which was, I guess the Hudson River is probably the border between New York and – anyhow, I was there for a day or two and then by trains to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. It took four or five days.

Tell us a little bit about the difference, I was told the troop ships were a little different on the way over and on the way back, if you could tell us about that.

Ben Fuelberg: Well, of course the troop ship for the enlisted men especially is a little tougher situation. Going over there, the troops were fed two meals a day and of course they were some 5,000 or 6,000 troops on a ship, and feeding all these troops kept a continuous line going. Now there was a difference in the enlisted and the officers. These ships belonged to the Navy, and the Navy really treated their officers, they had a lot of difference between the treatment of how they lived between the officers and the enlisted. As far as I was concerned, I ate three square meals a day on that ship. They had mess people that served you and everything. That was one of the benefits of being at that time a first lieutenant I guess.

Then on the way back was it better?

Ben Fuelberg: Well, I don't know. Things were more relaxed of course. Everybody was happy. I remember one instance, when we arrived in New York, the island with the Statue of Liberty, our ship dropped anchor right there by the Statute of Liberty. Lots of troops had come back to New York, and they had a ship or a barge of some kind all fixed up. They had somebody from the city spoke on it, and they had a band on there and they had dancing girls on the whole thing. It was quite a welcome home party all right. One of the things I remember about this, some GI, and of course they were calling up the dancing girls, meet me somewhere and all that kind of stuff, and I told my wife I didn't participate in that. Anyhow, one of the guys called out to the Statute of Liberty, which is female I believe, and faces out to the ocean, called out to her and said lady if you want to see me again, you're gonna have to turn your butt around. I'll never come this way again. I remember that one in particular. It was a happy day for all of us. I was glad to get home myself.

So when you got back home, you took the train back to Brenham, I guess?

Ben Fuelberg: I took the train back to Fort Sam Houston.

Is that where you reunited with your family?

Ben Fuelberg: My wife came to San Antonio to meet me.

And what was it like seeing your son for the first time?

Ben Fuelberg: Well she didn't bring him to San Antonio. We came to Brenham, at that time, we didn't have all these airports and stuff, and we rode a train from New York to San Antonio and a bus from Fort Sam to Brenham. He was waiting at the bus station when I got there.

Did he know who you were? I mean he'd not ever seen you before. He'd been told.

Ben Fuelberg: I don't know about that. His grandparents, they were good folks, they took good care of him.

Yeah, that's great. So you got back home and then was it much longer before you were able to get out or did you stay in the Guard?

Ben Fuelberg: Well, they had an option. When the separation thing at San Antonio was real short, you went through a line and they told you what your options were. In my case, they said you can stay in or you can, the permanent rank for me would have been a master sergeant. After that, the person that processed me said that if, and I had a lot of leave coming – I hadn't had any leave for some time – so I was entitled to a couple of months of leave. He said I'm going to put you on leave for, he said how many days, and if you want to stay in, come back. If I don't hear from you, I'm gonna transfer you to the Reserves. And he didn't hear from me so I was transferred. I got orders to transfer from active duty to Reserve, and I belonged to the Army Reserve as a captain, and I might add that I stayed in the Reserve for a number of years after that. I went again to summer camps and schools that they had for Reserve officers. I was promoted twice, once to major and then later to lieutenant colonel, which is the retired rank that I have right now. The military, I'm still a Reserve lieutenant colonel. They send me a check I might add every month.

That's great. Was there any risk, sir, that you would get called up for Korea?

Ben Fuelberg: Well yeah, this point system that you mentioned earlier applied to that. I was called to take a physical and somehow the orders to take the physical were sent to the wrong place. When I finally got it, I took the physical. I had to go to Houston to do the physical. They then let me know, the office at that time was in Austin, and they told me that if I didn't want to join that I had enough points in my prior service, and the fact that I had a son and I'm married, that counted for a certain number of points. I don't remember the details of all that. But I didn't volunteer. I stayed out, and they didn't call me, so I didn't go to Korea.

Sure. And then did you go back to work on the farm when you got back home from the war?

Ben Fuelberg: No, I took a job with the Lower Colorado River Authority, which is an Austin agency right here. I worked for them for some 30 years. My activity with the LCRA really applied to cooperatives. We had a Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative in Giddings that we operated, we had Pedernales Electric department in Johnson City which we operated. We had

several cities that LCRA owned the electric system in that city. San Marcos was one of them. But anyhow, that's the work I did. I worked at both cooperatives, both Pedernales and Bluebonnet during that 30 something years I worked there, and I'm a retired LCRA employee, too, right now.

That's great, yes sir. I remember, too, your son had emailed me some information and mentioned that at one point you were out at Fort Bliss for an atomic warfare course. Tell us a little bit about that.

Ben Fuelberg: This Reserve officer thing, they tried to keep you informed and you got an opportunity to go to various schools, and this was probably in 1946, '47, this atomic weapons thing was getting a lot of attention, and there were people in the military of course that thought that future wars would be all supplied from, even artillery shells. This was what that school was about. They were trying to show us how they could make an artillery shell and use it. I don't think that ever happened. If it did, I never heard of it.

But that was what you were there for in the training, and so –

Ben Fuelberg: I was just there for a week and we went out to I believe it was called White Sands, where they did this sort of stuff, and there were some shells fired and I guess at least some of the dust got over to where we were, and there are people who think that might, I do have a lot of problems with skin cancer. The Veterans Administration hasn't shown any interest in it at all.

Did you see the explosion itself? Did you witness a mushroom cloud type of thing?

Ben Fuelberg: Yes, the mushroom cloud type but mostly dust.

Mostly dust. That's pretty fascinating. There's not many people that can say they've seen a blast like that.

Ben Fuelberg: Well they did it, and like I said, the purpose was to teach the possibility of using this type of weapon in an artillery shell. I don't think they were talking about enlarging, I'm sure they were thinking of the guns on these, on the battleships that could put out quite a bit of fire if they used it. I don't think that ever happened.

No, I think you're right. That was just something they talked about the tactical nuclear weapons and that sort of thing.

Ben Fuelberg: I think there were treaties made and that got the thing under control.

Well then sir, I know you mentioned you had your one son while you were in the war. Did you have any more children after that?

Ben Fuelberg: Yeah, this youngster here, he was born about six years later.

That's great. Well sir I know, like I mentioned to you before we started the interview, this is being done for posterity and our hope is that future generations will listen to this long after you and I are both gone, and maybe glean some knowledge from it, and with that in mind, is there anything that you would want to say to future generations or anyone who may be listening to

this, conceivably hundreds of years from now, about your time in the service or any words of wisdom?

Ben Fuelberg: Well, my thoughts are I have a high regard for American troops whether they are Marines or whether they are horse cavalry or whatever. I never had any doubt about the sincerity of the bravery of those people, and I saw it in Burma. These American soldiers and lots of them knew where they were going and knew the danger involved and knew they might not make it. They never backed up and they never gave up. This F Troop that I mentioned lost probably half of their men, all of the officers, and still they don't have any regrets that I know about. They did what they were told to do, what they went to do, and they did it.

Absolutely, and did you, kind of a follow up question, did you stay in touch with many of the men you served with in the war over the years? Did you have any reunions or keep in touch with them for a while?

Ben Fuelberg: Both. We had a Troop E reunion each year at Brenham. These were E troopers. But there was also a regimental reunion in Brownsville. Well, the whole regiment and lots of people came to the Brownsville reunion and I saw lots of people there. I went there, my son and myself, had once a year, and there were people that survived. Some of the casualties of F Troop of course, they were taken to the aid station, flown out and recovered, and they came to reunions also.

That's something. Well sir, I tell you, it's an honor to be able to interview you about your service to our country, and Commissioner Patterson is a veteran and myself but there's also a lot of people that work at the Land Office that aren't veterans, and we all want to thank you for your service to our country, and this program is all about honoring our veterans and we really want to thank you for your time and your service for our country.

Ben Fuelberg: Well thank you for taking the time to do this.

Thank you.

[End of recording]