

Charles Ray Vogler
Narrator

Philip Leonard
Hoosick Falls Historical Society
Interviewer

Interviewed on January 18, 2000
Louis Miller Museum, Hoosick Falls, New York

Charles Ray Vogler **CV**
Philip Leonard **PL**

PL: Can you please tell us your name?

CV: My name is Charles, better known as Ray, Vogler.

PL: Where do you live, Ray?

CV: At the present time I live up on Parsons Avenue. I've been there about 30 years, but I was born and raised on Clay Hill.

PL: I see. And would you tell us what you did before you went to the service?

CV: Well, I started school at the [unclear] school, better known now where the VFW is, and I went through the third grade over there, and transferred over to St. Mary's in the fourth grade. I went on through and graduated from high school.

PL: What year was that?

CV: I graduated in 1946. While I was in high school, about my junior year, I started my military career. I joined the state guard. This is when the National Guard got called out and those days when you could shave-even if you were a little underage-you could join the guard so I joined the guard with a lot of fellas around town and put in twenty three months. While I was going to school I worked part time at the Untied Markets. The United Markets was down on Church Street where Jimmy Monahan has his medical building next to his drug store. So I worked part time at the United Markets and went to school. After I graduated from school in June, I joined the army in July of 1946 and I traveled. I was inducted in Albany, New York. I went to Fort Dixon, New Jersey for my induction, you got all your shots and your clothes and were processed into the Army. One of my disappointments came then because of my name being Vogler with a "V". I was

the last one to get on the train to go to Fort Brag, North Carolina and I had made friends with two fellas from Rochester, New York, by the name of Dick Wheel and Art Winters, "W's", and those guys went to Fort Knox, Kentucky. I was kind of disappointed because these were some of the guys that I had grown to know early in the service. While at Fort Brag I took field artillery basic training and they weren't the self-propelled-I don't think they had self-propelled armor at the time-and took basic training at one zero five howitzer. I made a lot of friends there. There were two fellas from Albany, New York that were in my battery, and a good friend of mine who slept in the bottom bunk was from Sale Creek, Tennessee. After basic we split up, and this fella from Sale Creek, Tennessee went on too. We both went to Japan, but they would never tell me where he was because he was with the CIC or CID [Criminal Investigation Command], and he traveled in civilian clothes and he was one of the guys that was looking for these guys in the black market.

So after basic I came home on what they call a delayed route and met up with these two fellas from Albany. We went on to Chicago, Camp Stoneman, California, and that was probably in late October of 1946. I left camp Stoneman and we got on the ferry down to San Francisco. I boarded the ship and had my supper. I went up on fantail after and I was talking with a fellow, a civilian type fellow, who was going over to work for the government. I told the guy I think I'm getting a little sea sick-this is before we even left San Francisco [Both Laugh]. He said that's your imagination. So we stayed there a few minutes and I showed him my imagination and I got sick. We sailed underneath the Golden Gate at about- I'll never forget it-quarter after six on November 2nd, 1946. I got sea sick, but the next day I was fine, I enjoyed the trip. It took us about twelve days to get to Japan. When we pulled into Tokyo Bay, because of the war there were still a lot of ships that had been sunk and the masts were sticking above the water so it was quite impressive for a young fellow like myself. I was only seventeen years old when I shipped out of the country. I don't think they would do that today. I spent my eighteenth birthday in Japan.

PL: No that's something, that's different.

CV: I got assigned to a transportation battalion. I worked in the office as a clerk typist. Our job was to deliver the goods from the docks to various units throughout the area. Sometime, it was after Christmas of 1946, a fellow by the name of Lieutenant William Duffy from Sea Cliff, Long Island, was being sent up to a place called the Atsugi Air Base and this was where the Japanese trained their Kamikaze pilots. He was going to run a motor pool up there which was in operation. He was interviewing some of the people who were going to go up there with him and he asked me what would I like to do? Well I wanted to drive truck that's all I wanted to do. He said I need a clerk typist in the office I'll tell you what I'll do: You will go in the office and clerk type for me, type requisitions, dispatch vehicles, and I'll see that you get your driver's license. I did, and he did. He used to send somebody with me an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon different days and we'd go out on the airfield and practice driving and that's where I

learned to drive, at the Air Base. I got a lot of experience driving the trucks because the truck drivers, who would come in at night, would go to the barracks and have their trucks parked outside. So me being full of vim and vinegar wanted a little more experience, I would offer to take the trucks back to the motor pool and turn them in for these guys, no problem. So I got a lot of experience driving back and forth...

PL: What size trucks were these?

CV: Two and a half ton trucks. I drove everything. I got to learn to drive up to the ten ton record, which was the biggest one. We had Deuce and a Half, quarter tons, three quarter tons, ambulances, and we had two different wreckers, one was a light wrecker and the other was a ten ton wrecker, which was the biggest one we had. So then I would drive to Yokohama and I never drove Deuce and a Half to Tokyo, but while we were in Yokohama, the city was devastated. There were only three or four buildings, as I can recall, that were still standing. One was a Red Cross building that was used for the GI's for coffee, doughnuts, games-sort of a happy hour type thing at night. And another one was used for RPX and another building that was standing over there was the hospital, and the hospital wasn't touched at all. I'm not quite sure that might have been the hospital that Leo Mahar went to after he came back from Korea, he got wounded. After I got transferred up to the Atsugi Air Base, like I said, I worked in the office and drove truck. I didn't do an awful lot of traveling in Japan. However I did get a chance to climb Mt. Fuji. I went up above the timberline and Mt. Fuji is one that you could see from the whole area that I was in. As the spring progressed into summer you could see the snow gradually recede up the top of the mountain but no time during the year, as I can recall, did the snow disappear. Then as the fall set back in you could see the snow come back down.

Now getting back to these two fellas from Rochester, Art Winters and Dick Wheel. We got separated, I went to this unit in Yokohama and they got sent to the first cav division. They got sent to Camp McGill, just by Yokosuka naval airbase. We saw each other quite frequently over there. Dick and I remained friends after I came home. Like I said I joined the guard and Dick had people in Watertown, New York so different times I would call him and he would come up to Watertown and we'd see each other. After my tour of duty in Japan I got sent home...

PL: Could you give us some dates so we have some idea of when you came home?

CV: Yes, when I first went over to Japan I went to the fourth replacement depot, Camp Zama they called it, and I put my name on a wall as a lot of GI's did. Lo and behold about two weeks after I went through, Billy [unclear] came through and saw my name on the wall and he told me about it when he got back home. In October of 1947, I got transferred back to the states. I was getting ready for discharge and I came to Fort Washington and then I was discharged and came home. Being that I was in the military and I spent twenty three months in the state guard prior to, I joined the national guard on the first night they had their drill after I got home. I joined the guard as a private and

worked my way up through first sergeant. I joined ironically the 27th infantry division and landed at Atsugi Air Base. That's where division headquarters went in. That's where McArthur went in when he landed in Japan. We were infantry and got transferred to part of the division signal company. Then we were changed to tanks. We went to the two zero fifth tank battalions, later changed to the two tenth tank battalions. I held various jobs from... I never was a driver because by that time I had been promoted to tank commander, platoon sergeant, and made first sergeant. Then I got transferred to battalion headquarters in Albany, New York where I was the operation sergeant, Intel sergeant, and I spent about eighteen to twenty years down in Albany. My last twenty three months I got transferred up to guard headquarters where I made sergeant major in April 1986, I believe.

PL: Can I ask you a question? When you were doing your tank, that was in Hoosick Falls, before you got transferred down to Albany right?

CV: Yes we had tanks in Hoosick Falls. I used to keep them over underneath the railroad underpass going in to the flats over there and we could get the key and go in and drive around a little bit over there.

PL: And then you went into Albany and you would go there...

CV: I transferred to Albany as the...

PL: That would be at night? Or when did you go in because you worked in between right?

CV: Our drills were basically weekends and we had our administration nights on Thursday nights. When I was working in Albany, I would go from Albany-the post office-to the armory for my administration nights. I was working five days a week so it didn't interfere with my weekend drills.

PL: Alright, let's go back. Where did you go to work as far as when you came home?

CV: I went back to worked in the United Markets and I wanted something a little bit better so I went on over to the Pownal Tannery in North Pownal, and I changed to the wood flaun (?). While I was there I worked wood flaun for about seven and a half years. While I was at Fort Benning, Georgia going to school for the guard my wife got the paperwork for me for a test opening up. She sent the paperwork down to me and being that I was in active duty at the time, I could take the test when I came home. So I went to Albany and took the test all by myself. Two or three years later I met Tony [unclear] and he said he was going to take the fella with the highest score. I knew what one score was but I didn't know what the other guy's score was, I knew what mine was. I figure the guy that had the better score was smarter than I was. So he interviewed, like I said before, he

said I'm going to take the guy with the higher score. A few days later I met him outside of the bank and he said to me when do you want to come work for me, Ray?

PL: When did you start working the post office? What year...

CV: I would say 1955, '56. Somewhere around there.

PL: And you stayed with the post office until you retired?

CV: Yes, until I retired.

PL: Okay, I'm just trying to get the sequence of events. So now you're in the guard, you worked up to first sergeant. What went on in the guard, because you've been in the guard quite a while?

CV: Well, I spent a lot of time in the tanks and then after I got transferred to guard headquarters I didn't have to be on the tanks. We went in the field but we used the command post vehicles, five seven sevens. Whenever we went to the field this was the hub of battalions. Everything that went on in the battalions came through our headquarters.

PL: I see. How long did you stay in the guard?

CV: I spent forty one plus years in the guard, plus my army time in the state guard, so I had about forty four and half years in the military all together. I have to say that while we were part of two tenth tank battalions we were signed to the 30th SIB, the 30th separate infantry brigade from North Carolina, we were capstone to them being a tank battalion they had to have armor. We made several trips to South Carolina to train with them and we did get a chance to go to Italy. The 30th SIB had a mission to perform in Europe in the event that any war broke out with the eastern bloc nations. We went over there and spent about eighteen days working with those...

PL: What happened during the Korean War? They didn't call your units up is that what happened?

CV: We were at Fort Drum on a parade on a Saturday morning and Governor Dewey-I can still see him standing up at the podium-saying I don't mean if you go I mean when you go. But the division never got called. Back before we got a chance to go to Italy I had a chance to go over and reforge in Germany. That was when they had these war games. They had them probably every year. There were three fellas with the two tenth tank battalions that had a chance to go over there. We volunteered and when I got sent to Germany I did the same thing over there as I was doing in the battalions. I worked as the S2 NCO [noncommissioned officer].

PL: How long were you in Germany?

CV: About eighteen days.

PL: About eighteen days, I see. You got married...what year...

CV: Yes I married a girl from second war, Jane Doherty. Ironically when I worked in United Markets, Jane worked for Bill Andrick. He had a studio in there upstairs in the same building. Different days when I was waiting for a truck to come in, say 1 o'clock, I would go up on the fire escape and id sit and talk to Jane and I never thought that we'd be dating each other. So finally one night, Bill used to have pictures downstairs, we were looking at pictures and she said something about wouldn't you like to go to that prom or dance and I said no-I wasn't much of a dancer. Then I asked her out and we went to my alumni in probably 1947, 48, something like that. Then we started dating and we got married in '51. We have three nice kids: Bill, he lives in Jersey, Pat, married Rod Post, lives in Eagle Bridge, and Steve who lives here in Hoosick Falls.

PL: Alright. Is there anything else you'd like to say about... I think I read that you became a first lieutenant or second lieutenant?

CV: Yes, I took a commission in 1951 and that's why I was at Fort Benning, Georgia. I was going to school down there, it was about a sixteen week infantry school. A lot of fellas had come back, this was in '51 or '52, I think it was. A lot of fellas came back from Korea that were in the West Point graduating class and were going back through the school and that's where I met a fella by the name of Arnold [unclear]. He was all America from West Point and that's why I still follow the Giants because he worked with the Giants. At that time I was still working in wood flaun and I was transferred to A Company in Troy and it was a conflict of interest with my work. I was working in tile work so I resigned my commission in 1955 or '56, something like that.

PL: Yes we have clipping upstairs about that. That's where I read it.

CV: So then I went back in as a platoon sergeant and I worked my way up through to first sergeant.

PL: Well good. Is there anything you'd like to say about the service or about Hoosick Falls or is that it?

CV: No, Hoosick Falls is a great little place to live and thank you for having this opportunity to work with you.

PL: Well thank you for coming.

