

**Robert E. Covell  
Veteran**

**Michael Russert and Wayne Clark  
New York State Military Museum Interviewers**

**Interviewed on 16 December  
New York State Military Museum  
Saratoga Springs, New York**

Michael Russert: **MR**

Wayne Clarke: **WC**

Robert E. Covell: **RC**

**MR:** This is an interview with Robert E. Covell, December 16, 2002 at NY Military museum, Saratoga Spring, NY. Could you give me full name, date of birth and place of birth?

**RC:** Robert Covell, date of birth December 16, 1918 in Saratoga.

**WC:** We mention that today is your birthday. So, could you tell me what was before you go military service ....

**RC:** Second year high school, so I quit the second year and that time I was just depression get over and I was working in the company and captain Hill came town, because I was in Saratoga office, he come down here new Army do for induction, so I came down I was inducted October 15, 1940.

**WC:** So you went to service priority too?

**RC:** No, I was in inducted in October 15, we left here October 23, for Alabama and...

**MR:** I want to pull back for second. What do you remember where were you and what was your reaction to Pearl Harbor?

**RC:** Well, when I was in Pearl Harbor, I was in a, and I had only 1 week to go and I was to beat discharge to be there December 15. But my sergeant came in, in that morning heard the radio, it says Pearl Harbor's bombed. I said you got to be kidding me. He said yeah. I said guess I am not going home and he said yeah. And we stayed another week after Pearl Harbor, and we pulled out California. We went to March field California. So I stayed there month or so or longer maybe and we pulled out Hawaii. We went to Big island Eloy.

**MR:** What was your unions and your division? What was bring you to the army?

**RC:** And we went to big island back over Hawaii, then while replace 25 division, so I was one of them. Then I was into, I was put Machinegun Company. Then I operate the machinegun. Because I did not know was is the machinegun. I was a rifle man. Machinegun Company attached 25<sup>th</sup> Division State of Washington. We

went to there with and we got there were there and we went up for lunch January 3<sup>rd</sup>, we stayed up there until battle was over, which was ...night and end of the battle, stayed there another couple of month. Then my ear got drub.

**WC:** You were talking us story when you were working gasoline.

**RC:** That was after we were on the line.

**WC:** You did not mention that story.

**RC:** Then I came down used to do different jobs. So you want me to repeat that thing? So we had a different jobs. Bunch of us got boat, there was a lot of ships in a Harbor that day. So I went to start load the boats, not that very long and we got addition ...The guy had to stay on, he said ship pulled out, all the ships pull out at the Harbor, we got all the way, my buddy name is Papa from Schenectady, he looking with binocular, he says look who is coming. I said what? He said....I said you got to be kidding me. He said I am not. I script my eyes to see where the rising sun is, all red circles around you know. I said oh, this is it. They were ...information 3 3, I started diving, you can hear the bullets you know bing bing bing. All you can do is lay down, so we lay down don't get the bullet, so anyway I want to see what is going on and our gun, you know the machine gun 44 mm shout, hit water and they got another one, they got 2 of it. And we got order go on, so went to harbor style, new harbors stayed 3 days and we got order go back Connecticut, ok back there and marines still there, so we went back to Guadalcanal and I stayed there for short time, then I want to get transferred , I wanted to be ... at .....Company and we went to Rustle Island wait for canal, we stayed there about 6 month or little longer something.

**MR:** What 8000 chemical do?

**RC:** That is for a ... you know anything what to do gas bomb, anything like that stuff. That is the just in case of use that staff, but we never use that staff over there. You know I stayed there for just the short time and kept malarias..... I had s Sargent coming up and I had this, this was my 11 attack of malaria and went to hospital and Bobby start to come, I am getting better for about a week, you want to come back to company? I take a chance to getting back, then I went back Guadalcanal again, that was too bad there, then I stayed at the hospital for about a month.

**MR:** What kind of treatment they are giving for malaria?

**RC:** Well you get a, you take a....., what they gave you at the hospital to get your d.... system. After you got it 4-5 days in the hospital, like that they treat you and it go away like that, you chills go away you know what I mean. First you get it, you really get it, I had highest temperature one of my ...do 5.2 that is high sick, I mean sick. But you went to bed, shake it easy like that, the next day your temperature went down about 102, then normal but you are sick, it will go about

4-5 days. But it is easy, you don't get out. I still got it there. It did not bother me know, but it on hot weather like we say July I feel bad, a little tired.

**WC:** We ask you this subject, were you eligible any kind of disability?

**RC:** I did, I get disability. I get 40% now for concussion.

**WC:** Is that what you got while you in Canal?

**RC:** Oh yes. But I got, this ear is (he is mentioning right ear) good, this one (he is mentioning left ear) is the one I lost the hearing.

**MR:** When you back to the state working, were you charge for ....?

**RC:** No, no, no, I came back to the hospital. When I left the Russell Island, they put me in a hospital, I wanted new..., they said new .... 2 months in hospital area. That when I saw the old entertained boys you know at that time. And then I went back to there, Letterman Gentleman's hospital, you know San-Francisco and stayed there little over a week, then we got hospital trained, 30 to the 30 east, here kept to Long island St. General hospital, stayed there for a little while couple of months. While I was on ....there is a girl, married to her, French girl and left her there came back to the hospital November 25, 1944 and I guess my life in army .....

**MR:** You were in the 105<sup>th</sup> part of the 27?

**RC:** It was a 27<sup>th</sup> division, I went to Alabama and uh that time company got nations down 1940 Pearl Harbor, they did not have any ....., but they enlisting, started that time, were there 6 months, then started bring .... And your company filled them up, made your whole division out of it. See it was not complete division, all the drafts got in there, because it was 1 15 I was living here, see company... 150 man, full company.

**WC:** Did you ever hear over the .... October?

**RC:** Last time, yes, yes.

**WC:** You want to tell us about that? What is meant?

**RC:** To over the hill you mean?

**MR:** The term over the hill Ohio, I heard the guy on 27, they were set the whole ... in this charge?

**RC:** Oh, oh there. You see, there a lot of guy were signed up for a with the beat's charge, then I left on October, for the be in this charge before the Pearl Harbor next October they were 1 year man, well I suppose to be man too, but I had a bad time to make up. Right? I went to hill for few days. Because that it started with hill. That is why Pearl Harbor was there, I only had 1 week to go, which was the 15

December for this discharge. I said no, no, I have no place to go, until long time after, then I got this charge on 1944.

**MR:** Could you talk about little ..... What is it like?

**RC:** What is like? It is hard to talk about somebody you know..

**WC:** It is up to you, you know

**RC:** No, no. Well, day time was very bad. But night time is the worst. You hear noises, you don't see them, what they do charge on you, if you quit, there is two of you to hold, you sleep together at a time. When I make a charge there is rifle, machine gun ready there, point to. You are on a hill, hills fighting Guadalcanal, hill 27, that was the first hill, that was a tough hill to take, I took it 4-5 days we got there, charges coming often on, we lost a lot of man over there. We lost a sergeant, Sergeant was from Washington State, this guy got bullet from sky, over the hills, they see you and straight from hill they come in. As I said hardest part of the battle side night time, the day time at least they make a charge you can see them, we got a chance, which you are under the hills. Sometimes we liked be the on the ....., I was on the hill most of the times. When I get the Rifle land, there is flat land over there, trees, you got to go thru and it is hard to get in there, there is a sniper. You got to go trees, slow. After that Canal way we get to use, there is no more fighting ..... We did not like them, but we use them. It was like nighty corns. Every night we called ....you get up, they shoot up there, they put the lights up there, we saw the lights up there. They drops their bombs. We get that every night, that is the pissed off, that is a damn thing.

**WC:** After you left the service, are you joined the any....?

**RC:** Yeah...Agent

**MR:** Are you candidate any unions? Are you contacting anyone?

**RC:** Oh yes. I do all the time VFW like that. My brother was Commander Frank, he was on the Pearl Harbor. He was passed away 2 years ago. He was very well known Frank. He was commander for a while.

**MR:** Did you ever make any use of TI bell?

**RC:** No, no. The only thing I got, while I was in a service for a while after 220..., I was on that for a while, you would not get a job right away you know, so I went to 220, then finally when got around I did a lot of roofing work, painter. My brother was paint contractor. Then I got state job and I went to Saratoga department of transportation and, then I started work on ranches Northway like that. Then I got former job on there you know, I paid ...Then stayed 25 years, then I retired. I retired young, I retired when I was 58.

**WC:** What do you thing, your service change fact that your life is?

**RC:** I think very much though. I think to the good. When I was a young, be Frank.., I was held, I mean I get trouble one a while, when I was a kid. You know uncontrollable, like a lot of young today. Back of days get trouble and I think if I had up above. Right? But this captain in a ... .Right? This captain, Captain Hill was one small guy, he was editor Saratoga. When I was asking to come company ..., he cannot let. I said I got to come in, get away from Saratoga. I said I am going to tell you what I am doing captain, I am talking here in the army. Said what Rob? I said I am very persistent. I said when you were in your office in morning, I am going to sit here every day. I aid you will let me come to that company. He said no cannot do that. I said yes you can. Every day for a week I was there .... to meet him. Couple day before induction he said you are so persistent. So, are you promise me will you make a good soldier? I said I will do my best of my ability. He said ok. I am going to let you in. You said you will be do your army and [non understandable]. I was, I was here 50 years. That is why I got in an army. [Non understandable] I think I would be the big difference if I could come here. [Non understandable]

**WC:** Ok, thank you very much

**RC:** You are very welcome.