Robert L. Wincowski
Veteran

Mike Russert and Wayne Clarke,
Interviewers

Interviewed on July 17, 2003, 2:30 PM
North Merrick, New York

Q: Could you give me your full name, date of birth and place of birth, please?
RW: Robert Elwin Wincowski. I was born January 7th in 1925 in Auburn, New York.

Q: What was your educational background prior to service?
RW: I went through my junior year and into my senior year. I left to enlist in the service before I graduated.

Q: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?
RW: Yeah, I do. I happened to be over at one of the small game rooms where they had pinball machines, and I was playing pinball machines that day. And they had the radio on and we heard about it.

Q: What was your reaction?
RW: I was stunned. I couldn't understand it. Of course, at the time I was only 16 years old. I knew nothing about war and nothing much about World War I, other than it was a ferocious war, a lot of people wounded, a lot of people gassed and you know that sort of thing.

Q: Did you even know where Pearl Harbor was?
RW: I had no idea whatsoever. You know, Dollsville, New York was a very little town. You didn't go too far away from it, maybe to Utica. Albany was a big deal but basically that's the way life was.

Q: Did you enlist or were you drafted?
RW: I enlisted.

Q: Why?
RW: Why? Well, the main reason that I enlisted was because all of my buddies… They were older than I was. I hung out with an older crowd. And they had all left for the service. The fellows that I knew that were left, were going. So, I decided that I would enlist and go into the service. The Andrew Sisters were singing the right songs, ya' know. The bands were playing the right music. And you just kind of fell into the spirt of the thing. There was hell to pay with my father and my mother. But I went to Utica to enlist.

Q: Were they aware they were going to do this?
RW: They had no idea. I went to Utica to enlist. And at the time, they would do much of anything for me, because I was too young. They said I need my father's consent. I did manage to get them to do the physical. I said, "Well, if I pass the physical, I can probably

get him to agree." So, I passed the physical, took papers back, had them signed by my mother and father. It was terrible. And enlisted and that was in December and then in February, I went into the service.

Q: Of what year?
RW: 1943.

Q: Did you pick the Army Air Core?
RW: I had a choice, so I picked the Army Air Core.

Q: Why? Why did you pick that?
RW: It just sounded like a great place to be, all going into the wild blue yonder. They were singing those songs.

Q: Had you ever been in an airplane?
RW: Oh yeah, I had been in planes before. Yeah, Piper Cubs. That sort of thing. Nothing big. I enjoyed the Airforce. It was nerve wracking, a lot of it. Initially it was a real experience for me. I had been in the woods as a Boy Scout for years. I was used to roughing it. So, none of that bothered me. Going to Camp Upton, that was a little bit exciting.

Q: Is that where you went for your basic training?
RW: No, that was just the induction. We got our shots there and so on. We were only there three or four days or a week.

Q: Why was that such an experience for you?
RW: Oh my God, there were people from all over. I mean, I was meeting people from New Jersey from the Carolinas, from every place. It was such a busy thing. You know when you live in a small town like Dollsville, you don't anticipate large crowds. So, it was something to me.

Q: Where did you go for your basic training?
RW: Miami Beach, Florida. We arrived at Miami Beach wearing ODs. It was very, very cold at Camp Upton. So, when we got to Miami, it was very, very hot. We didn't have time to change clothes. We went down… well, the cars had wooden seats in them. So, there were no comforts all the way down. It was a terrible ride. But when we got to Miami, it was quite hot. It was in the 80's as I recall or 90's. We were very quick to change clothes.

Q: What was your basic like in Miami?
RW: The only duty that I had at the time, other than the parading up and down the marching and the hip hip, we were out on the beach as guards at night, submarines coming in and this sort of thing. As far as the parade drills went, I got a break because I played the trumpet when I was in high school. They needed a bugler. So, they asked if anyone here could blow a bugle and I said, "Sure, I can blow a bugle." I used to blow it up at the scout camp out at White Lake. So, they got me off all of the details. That's all I had to do. It was a very easy basic training.

Q: How long did that last?
RW: I think were down there about six weeks, five, six weeks. It wasn't long. The accommodations were great. I recall the address. It was Ninetieth and Collins. All the way up on the beach and we were using motels at the time, little hotels. That was different. We had been tested while we were there for whatever occupation we were going to enjoy in the service. Fortunately for me, my hobby was photography, as a kid, I loved it. I had developed my own pictures and printed them and everything else when I was in high school. So, it was almost a natural that they would send me to a photo reconnaissance outfit. I went out to Lowry Field; Colorado and I was there for twelve weeks. The training out there was very extensive. We had the finest equipment that you could possibly ask for as far as cameras. We were using a speed graphic four by five for most of everything that we were doing. We had enlargers that were unbelievable. They could blow out the side of that wall. I trained there for twelve weeks. That was a wonderful experience. We'd get a chance to go into downtown on weekends into Denver. And people in Denver were very hospitable. I'll tell ya, if they saw a GI walking back to the base, they'd stop and pick them up and take them for a ride. Many times, I was invited out to dinner, the families in Denver. It was quite an experience there. After my training at Lowry Field, I was shipped to Thomasville, Georgia, a complete reversal in the way people treated GI's. What seemed to become most apparent in Thomasville was that they hated negroes. It was terrible. They weren't allowed to walk on the streets. They walked off the curb, when white people came by. We had no blacks in the outfit at all. That's where I got into the 38 401 Recon.

Q: Did you find southerners not as open with you because you were a northerner? Were the people in town, how did they act towards the soldiers, especially northerners?
RW: The people in town weren't that sociable, really. I think they had a resentment knowing that all of these guys from the North were down in the South. And of course, we used to frequent the bars, go out for a beer on the weekends if we got out. But we did spend a lot of money there, in the town. I met a girl there. Her name was Joyce Fineburg. She took me home to dinner. But I've got to tell you, her parents were not happy that I wasn't Jewish and that I wasn't from the South. But it was funny. I went out with her quite a bit. I liked to dance, and we had great times. Working out at the base was a lot of fun, it really was. We had a lot of crashes, plane crashes, P39's. They had a nose cannon in them, and they were very, very nose heavy. All of our pilots that were coming there, were trainees. They were twenty-one, twenty years old, twenty-two. Probably the oldest was twenty-two. They'd take these planes up after flying primary trainers. Well, they'd go into a flat spin, end up in the peanut fields in Georgia. We'd go out and take photographs of the crashes and that sort of thing.

Q: Now you were assigned to your unit the 38th there.
RW: Yeah.

Q: How long were you in Georgia?
RW: I was in Georgia for about three months, maybe three and a half months.

Q: And where did you go?
RW: I was shipped to Muscogee, Oklahoma to go overseas. We were in Muscogee for

about thirty days max. And from there we shipped out to where ever we were going. No one knew at the time. We left from Pittsburg, California.

Q: How did you get from Oklahoma to California?
RW: They took us by train. It was night time when we got on the ship. We were out for about, I think eighteen days on the water, because that ship stopped so many times for what they thought were submarines. It was very nerve wracking to say the least.

Q: Now were you in a convoy?
RW: No, we weren't in a convoy. It was a lone ship, all by its lonesome. We were about six-teen hundred people on it.

Q: Your whole unit was on it?
RW: Yeah.

Q: How many was on it roughly?
RW: Most of these guys you can see in this picture. They were much of my unit.

Q: Are you in there?
RW: Yeah.

Q: Can you point to yourself and I can zoom in on it?
(He points to a young-looking man, third from the right in the front row kneeling.)
RW: Right here. I remember it well, because I had an ulcerated tooth.

Q: When you say that's the photo. What do you mean by that?
RW: Those were the ones that I worked with.

Q: Okay, so they were the ones that did all of the developing?
RW: They did everything. They did some mosaics, not a lot, but some.

Q: Now what do you mean by mosaics?
RW: The planes would go over, reconnaissance planes, and take pictures. And then they'd come back with the pictures. And they had a ten second overlap on the cameras. When they came back, you would piece them together and come up with one big picture. Then they would look at them and they would send them to the pilots down at the airstrip. And they would fly the missions. And based on what reconnaissance took and what they had mapped out for (paper ripped), that's the way they held the bombing raids.

Q: When you went into the pacific where were you stationed?
RW: Hollandia, New Guinee to begin with.

Q: What was that like?
RW: Oh man, I thought I was going to see Tarzan come out of the jungle any minute, I'll tell ya'. When we were unloaded at Hollandia… They brought us in on a barge, CB's were

there. The CB's had already built a unit for our 404 unit, which was some five or six miles up the coast. As we came into Hollandia, I said, "What the hell is all of this?" There were these great big piles of these of things. You couldn't tell what they were because it was a little bit dark. It was almost morning and it was raining. They had these big tarps over it. They said, "This is the supply depot." They had these piles of shoes and shirts and clothes all down there at that end of the dock. And if you wanted something… if you needed shoes, then someone from your outfit would down there with a truck. And they would pick up what supplies we needed for our outfit. Going from that dock all the way up to our location, it took an hour and half to two hours. It was so slow. The island itself is all clay. And the road to the area where we would be stationed was filled in with all kinds of stuff, but it was very slippery for the trucks. We had trucks go over the edge. It was very dangerous. And of course, the Japanese were still all over the island. The main fighting was over pretty much. But all of the Australians… We had a lot of Australian infantry over there and Americans. We set up a perimeter and we weren't really allowed to ever go out of that perimeter unless we got called to take a picture. So, I got called out to take pictures of Japanese that they shot, ya' know and that sort of thing. But for a small-town boy, I got to tell you this was something else. And I have to tell you. When I was ready to get on a train…We got on a train at Little Falls to get up to Camp Upton. My father was there, first time I ever saw him cry. He said to me, "Bob, you'll rue the day you did this, but I love ya'."

Q: Was he right?
RW: (whispers) Yeah. He was right. When I got to New Guinea, I said to myself, "How the blazes did I ever do this to myself?" It was frightening. It was no fun.

Q: What were your living conditions like? What did you live in?
RW: I lived in a tent.

Q: There were no permanent buildings at all that you lived in?
RW: The only permanent building that we had, we had a mess hall. It was wide open. It was built like a hut. The sides were all open, so anything and anybody could get in there. We had Japanese that would come in at night to steal food or try to steal food and they would shoot them up. We had snakes coming through the tents, scare the hell out of you. We had scorpions, so we slept with mosquito nets. All the while, you never went to bed without a mosquito net. You never knew what was going to end up on it. Mosquitos were unbelievable! We took atabrine all the while. You'd turn yellow from it after a while. And all day long, we'd take salt tablets because it was so blasted hot a hundred-ten, a hundred-fifteen degrees in the shade. Nothing but jungle all around you. We didn't have any showers per se. We had the fifty-gallon drums, you know with the usually bit of water in there that they'd bring up from one of the lakes and put it in or if it rained, we had that. Pull a cord and you were allowed to stay in there about a few seconds really. And that was to get the red clay off. Anytime you walked anyplace, there was always dust all over the place. We had fighter planes flying overhead all day long, seven days a week coming in from their missions. They'd do their barrel rolls. We'd have them try to climb up the mountain that was right there alongside of where we were camped. On occasion, one of them would try to go too far and it would stall out. You could stand there and watch them drop right into the jungle. Then they'd send a crew

out, mostly Australians because they knew that area well. They would go up to try and find them and bring them back down.

Q: Now what was your food like?
RW: Food? (chuckles) Everything was dehydrated. Dehydrated eggs for breakfast, dehydrated potatoes. We had a lot of shit on a shingle. That was good. I learned to love it. It was very tasty.

Q: How about Spam?
RW: We had Spam. We had K-rations. We had C-rations. They weren't all that bad when you got used to them. The coffee was generally pretty decent. We did have a lot of canned food, which was nice. After we served our time in New Guinea…

Q: Can I ask you? What was the structure like where you did your developing of the film?
RW: Well, we had a nice developing… We had a nice arrangement really. The CVs put it. They knew what had to be anyway. We had a K-1A machine that developed gun camera film. That machine came from Eastman Kodak. (choppy). It made me feel like I was at home. Gun camera films would go in there. It was a wonderful process, so when it came out at the end, it was ready. Those films would go down to operations and the pilots would see the gun camera films telling them how well they did, whether they shot anyone down or they didn't. Basically, we did that. A lot of it was printing some of the bomb pots that the bombers flew, B-24s, at the time. Most of the day was spent developing film, a lot of it. And we'd get called out for different things. We had a hospital in New Guinea. In fact, General MaCarthur had a headquarters way back in the jungle. Once in a while we'd see his car go by, (snicker) salute. Try to look like you weren't stupid. He was very fussy about some people. For the most part, we wore very few clothes. We were in New Guinea. You have to remember New Guinea was as about as wild as Borneo at the time. You had all kinds of animals all over the place. When I talk about snakes… We had one snake that they shot in our area, that thing was fourteen feet long. And I got to tell you, after they killed him and they propped his mouth open it was like this (hands apart about a foot wide). To look at it you'd say to yourself, "How would you like to walk out in the jungle the other side of the perimeter and get nailed with one of those snakes?" They're huge. You know talking about this (chuckles)… When I reflect on it all, I'm amazed that I made it back home, I am, really. We took a lot of chances on our own going out into the jungle. The one thing we were told was not to pick anything up if we went out the other side of the perimeter. The reason for that was because the Japanese still had little traps out there for crazy people like me. I was young.

Q: Did you ever have problems with your equipment with the humidity or any problems like that at all?
RW: No. We had fans that were working off the generators. That made it pretty comfortable inside and it was closed most of the time. The only time it was open is when we came out of the dark room itself. The humidity, you know, on the outside was terrible. It really was. You never gained any weight. You sweated all the while. I think I weighed a hundred and forty pounds or something when I went in. I probably didn't weigh much more when I came out.

Q: Did your immediate group lose any personnel?
RW: Yeah, we just lost one guy. A fellow by the name of Wedakind. But that was just through an automobile accident, a jeep accident. I told you that the roads were slippery coming back. He went down to pick up some developer in Hypota that was waiting for us down there and we needed it. So, he took the jeep down and on the way back, his jeep slid off the road and he went down about a hundred feet, a hundred-twenty feet off the side of the road. He got killed. It almost buried him in the clay. In fact, they let us see him afterwards. His glasses were all… He had sunglasses on. Glasses were pushed into his eyes. They shipped him back to the states after they registered him at grave registration. Other than that, we didn't lose anybody because most of our people were lab people. We were pretty well protected every place that we were.

Q: How long were you in New Guinea?
RW: I was in New Guinea for about five months, four or five months. Then when we left New Guinea, we went up to Morotai in the Halmahera islands. We were stationed there. Morotai was a small, really coral reef. It was about a mile and a half long and a couple of miles wide. We had an airstrip there. We tied in with the Thirteenth Bomb group that was there. They were flying B-17s or B-52s out of there. I don't recall which. We went up there and did a lot of work for them, took a lot of pictures for them, that sort of thing. Incidentally, I might mention, that when I was in the states… I was in Thomasville, Georgia. I was always invited to the Officer's Clubs for their parties to take pictures. (grins) You got the same thing overseas. In New Guinea, you'd always get invited to the parties. The officers had their own club and you know, it wasn't all war. I mean, they were having good times too. They had the booze. They had a beer. They had the nurses. They had the nurses from Australia. There were times for fun and relaxation. In fact, I've got to mention this, just to tell you that it is a small world. I was on my way up to the hospital to see one of the guys from out outfit that was in there. He was sick. And on my way up, I was walking up the side road, and this truck went by and this guy yelled, "Hey, Dollsville!" I said, "Yeah, it must be somebody from the outfit." They knew I was from Dollsville. I got up to the hospital and here was a guy from my hometown that I knew as a kid. He was older than I was. His name was Cole Wilbur and he was a captain, and he was a P-47 pilot. And he wanted to take me up for a piggy-back ride, but I wouldn't go.

Q: Did you ever fly any missions at all?
RW: Just one from Morotai, but that was a quirk, you know. I made friends with some of the guys of the Thirteenth Bomb group. They got me on a flight to Valley Kuppam in Borneo. So, I went with them. They had automatic cameras on there. They would go off every 10 seconds. When they dropped the bombs, the cameras were taking the pictures. When they came back, I developed some of them. It was exciting. It was quite a flight. I had silver fillings in my back teeth. Gees, I had toothaches all the way out and back. Then we realized that something like that would happen. It was the altitude at the time. And they weren't flying high, I mean, ten thousand feet something like that. Once you get decked out with a Mae vest, you were ready for any problems. But that was the only one.

Q: Now what were conditions like on Morotai? There was a coral reef you said. How was that different?

RW: It was just a corral island. There were Japanese running all over the place, and we had prisoners of war there. They were starving to death. Once the action was over, they were still all over the place. They never believed the war was over. I don't think they believe it today, some of them. They're probably still over there, New Guinea and in Morotai. They went out to look for them and hunted them, but it's hard to find them. I have pictures in there with Japanese prisoners. I had so many pictures. My grandchildren took them for different things for school. And a lot of them, I'm sure the school teachers liked them. And they disappeared. That's something else. I lost some coming back on the ship. They wanted to see the pictures that I had and I showed it to them. They were gone. I got back to the states, somebody took them out of my bag.

Q: How long were you in Morotai?
RW: About three and half months, something like that. Then the war ended, in August. I couldn't believe it was over. Honest to God, I had no idea of how we were ever going to get back to the states. Then we went up to Leyte. Once we got into Leyte… I might've been there before the war ended. But once we got into Leyte, then we were just the local photo outfit. That's all. We didn't do much of anything. We waited to be shipped back to the states.

Q: Did you hear about the droppings of the atomic bombs?
RW: While I was on Morotai, we always got our information from Tokyo Rose. She was wonderful. She played all of the nice music from back home. And she even announced that Morotai would be a blood bath the next day. And sure as hell, we got a bomb come over. It was nice to watch the artillery shoot down a couple of Betty Bombers. It really was. It was something I hadn't seen before. What was your question… Atomic bomb?

Q: About the atomic bomb. How did you hear about it and what was your reaction?
RW: We heard about it over the radio. That's how we heard about it. We always had a radio. In fact, I was trying to remember the names of the radios. They were from Australia. They were terrific. You could pick everything up, short wave and so on. Reaction was one of unbelief that the war was really over, as far as I was concerned. I couldn't imagine getting back to the states. When I went into the service, I never anticipated that I would ever end up in the South Pacific. I thought I would certainly go to Europe. My cousin, Buddy, went in with me. We were in the same group in Miami at the time. This colonel that was inspecting us said, "You know, you'd make a great gunner. You're the right size for a gunner." I said, "Well, I'm going to photography school." My cousin, Buddy, went to gunnery school and they shipped him to Europe. He was eighteen. When he was nineteen, he was dead. He was killed on his first mission. He was a B-17 gunner. And fifteen years later, they shipped his body back. I went to the funeral in Auburn. A farmer found it up in the woods in Germany. That was heartbreaking when I that news.

Q: Did you ever get any tropical diseases at all, malaria or anything?
RW: No, not me. Sunburned. That was it. The natives got tropical diseases. There are pictures in there. They have elephantiasis. They had jungle rot. The little kids with jungle rot all over them and the foot. They didn't have homes. They had huts, thatched huts. They had pigs for food. I don't know what else they ate, but it was just like you'd

see it in the movies. Just a side of cannibal, really. One of the strange things on New Guinea, because it was a Dutch held island the Netherlands east Indies owned it, we had people running around there, natives that were black and white as a result of the Dutch that had been there. That was the strangest thing to see. They would never let you take a picture of them.

Q: How did you get home?
RW: I came home on a ship called, Admiral Bird's ship. He had used it for an artic expedition. And that's what we came home on. Not too many accommodations really. Coming home was the most exciting part of the war. And yes, when we came under the Golden Gate, oh yeah the hoses were going off with the water, the stuff was coming down from the bridge. It was breath taking, really, to be back in the states. I'll never forget it.

Q: How did your parents greet you?
RW: God, I'll tell you. When I got back to Dollsville… You know, I can see myself now. We went to Fort Dix for our discharge and they asked that famous question, "Would you like to join the reserves?" (chuckles) And the last thing I would have ever joined was the reserves. All I wanted was that ruptured duck that they were talking about and his signature on that discharge and I was out of there. I went into Trenton, changed my clothes, I bought a suit and a shirt and a new pair on non-bush shoes, and I was on my way home. And that's how I arrived home with my duffle bag over my shoulder. But I can remember going around that corner to the house and I was so happy to be in Dollsville and I can remember how happy I was to leave Dollsville when I went into the service. It was crazy. At the time that I got home, there were a lot of my buddies coming home and a lot of them that weren't home yet. So, it was celebration, celebration, celebration. We were out drinking, dancing, playing cards down at the local beer joint. We were having a lot of fun. That went on for about a month, I guess, a month and a half. Then I went back to school. I wanted to get my high school diploma. (laugh) And I've got a picture in there of the group that went back to school with me. I got my high school diploma and after that, I went to Utica College.

Q: Did you use the GI Bill for this?
RW: Oh, sure. To go to college. Oh yeah, I used the GI Bill to go to college. They were paying me $75 a month to go to school and they paid all of my expenses. So, I went to school at Utica. I'd go to school in the morning at 8 o'clock get underway. At 2 o'clock, I'd be at Little Falls. When I got to Little Falls, I had a job at Synder's Bicycle factory grinding bicycle frames, dirty job. I'd be coal black when I'd get out of there. It was a good job. And back then we're talking 1946. I was making $125 a week back then grinding bicycle frames. It was a dangerous job, but it paid well. I went to school at Utica for a year. I wasn't happy with it. I wanted to go somewhere else. So, I went… In the meantime, I met my wife. I hadn't married her anything. She was my girlfriend. Anyway, I decided I'd like to go to Miami again having been there before. So, I took a transfer and went down to Miami, still on the GI Bill and started down there. I spent a year there and when I came home on vacation, I got married. After I got married, I decided, "Well, there's no sense in going to school anymore. I've got to do something else." So, my wife was from Amsterdam, New York. I took a job in a rug mill, but I thought I was much

better than that. But at the time, I needed money, because we bought our furniture and our appliances and we were broke, both of us. I took the job at the rug mill as a weaver. I worked there for six months. That was enough to pay for my furniture and my appliances. That job paid me about $150 a week weaving carpets. I was weaving at Axeminster's in the lower Axeminters' mill in Amsterdam (NY). Then I took a job. I applied for it. There was a furniture store opening up. And I had always loved selling. I was a great salesman. I thought I was anyway. So, I took a job for $32.50 a week as a salesman to build a future for myself. I got one percent commission on all of the toasters they would allow me to sell and of the baby potty chairs because I had no experience. Well, as I got the experience, I really learned the business. Next thing I knew I was making $7,000 a week, I mean $7200 a year. And back then, it was good money in those days. Finally, I decided that, "Okay, I'd worked there two years. I'm a manager, or I'm out of here." So, they gave me a managers' job in Mechanicville, New York of all places. I worked there for a year, maybe a year and a half. I did a good job for them. And came here, to Union Fern. It was Union Fern. And managed a store here on Broadway in Saratoga Springs. Then from Saratoga to Utica to manage a bigger store, and from Utica up north to a different company. And after that, I went to work for Montgomery Ward as a district manager. I had a lot of experience. I worked for them for twenty years. I was thirty-seven when I went to work for them and then retired from there.

Q: Now, did you join any Veteran's organizations at all?
RW: Well, I'll tell ya', when I got back to Dollsville, I decided well they have American Legions here. I'll go to the Legions and see what I think about it. I went down there. It wasn't anything I wanted to get involved in. All the guys, they were old men. None of my buddies had gone. So, I just went to the one meeting and said, "Nah. This isn't for me." In Saratoga, I joined this small post over here. But I belonged to that for about ten years, twelve years. I never went to any of it. The reason I joined it was because one of my buddies was running for commander. (laughing) And he needed a vote. Micky something, I can't even remember the guy's last name. But I've never really bothered too much. In fact, I belong to the museum, but I don't go down there that often. I belong to a lot of organizations like the Kiwanis. I belong to the Elks. I belong to the Knights of Columbus. After I retired, I gave a lot of this up, because I had been away from my wife a lot. See, when I worked for Montgomery Ward, I was on the road most of the time. I wouldn't get home until the weekends really. Then I'd spend a day in the office in Albany doing all of the paperwork.

Q: Did you ever stay in contact with anyone that was in service with you?
RW: Oh yeah. A friend of mine lives out in Arizona and has been trying to get me to come out to Arizona to live ever since. In fact, the guy's name was Sam Finaca. He and I spent much of our overseas time together. He was a great comfort, believe me. He and I got along well. After the war, when Lotty and I got married, good ol' Sam came to the rescue. I didn't have a car. Sam had a brand-new Buick. He and his wife, Lena, came up and handled the whole thing for us and Lotty and I got married. And when we left, he took me all the way to Rochester with him, which is where he lived. I took a bus from Rochester to Auburn. My uncle owned a car dealership there, a Plymouth dealership, and gave me a brand-new Plymouth to take on my honeymoon. At the time, my father-in-law was dying, Lotty's father. We spent our honeymoon in Niagara Falls for a few

days. Then we proceeded up to the shrine in Montreal to have prayers said for him. Then we went up to Quebec to Saint Anne Deaupre and had masses said for him. After the honeymoon was over, that was in May, he died in June. I lived with my mother-in-law. I lived upstairs. She had an apartment upstairs. We lived there to begin with.

Q: How do you think your time in the service had an effect or changed your life?
RW: It had a tremendous effect on my life. I was a wise guy when I was young. My God, I got a deep appreciation for everyone and everything, believe me. I love people. After what I had seen over there, I love people more than ever alive. I feel terrible about this war that's going on now. I mean it. I would love to see it end. You know when you're in the service, you meet all walks of life and you have to cope with a lot of different things. You learn to have patience. Nothing happens fast in the service anyway. Never did.

Q: Could you hold up that photograph and tell us where it was taken?
RW: Lowerly Field, Denver, Colorado in photography school.

Q: Do you have any other photographs you want to show us?
RW: I've got a lot of photographs if you'd like to look at them. This is our encampment at Lattey. Here's a bombing Balikpapan in Borneo (aerial view). This is a group that went overseas with me from Muskogee, Oklahoma. This is another shot of where we lived in Lattey in the Philippians as the war was coming to a close. It was just rain, rain and more rain. Here are some of the pictures I took in New Guinea. That was a bunker that these Japanese were in. The Australians came across them. That was early in the morning. It wasn't too far from our perimeter. And there were a couple of Australians that were killed when this happened. It's an interesting picture. Here's a picture of myself and a couple of Japanese prisoners at Morotai. We had quite a few Japanese prisoners there. I think that pretty much rounds it out.

Q: Do you want to show us that artillery shell?
RW: Yeah, this is what it is. This is a shell that is used in the P-39 training planes. It's a 37-millimeter tracer. I wanted the museum to have it because the case shows that it's a 1942 vintage. They might be interested in it.

Q: Thank you very much for your interview.
RW: I was glad to do it.