1979

Midwest China Oral History and Archives Collection

H Mead Cavert

H. MEAD CAVERT

ORAL HISTORY ABSTRACT

BORN: March 30, 1922, in St. Paul, Minnesota.

EARLY LIFE: family background; education; joins U. S. Air Force and assigned to the Tenth Weather Squadron, 1943.

CHINA EXPERIENCES: examples of local Chinese technology; visit to a Chinese university; description of a local village and local agriculture; memories of inflation; participation in a Chinese dinner; the YMCA in Kunming; weather forecasting in Kunming; description of military installations in Kunming and Nanking; forecasting, travelling, living and other activities at Laohokow and other bases, 1944-1945; a Maryknoll mission compound in Fukien; response of American servicepeople to Chinese; awareness of corruption in China; scholarship support given graduate students in Amoy University by Nationalist government; the Nationalist livestock experimental farm near Yungan, Fukien.

INTERVIEWER: Jane Baker Koons

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PLACE: Minneapolis, Minnesota

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INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWER: Dr. Cavert, could we begin by your telling where and when you were born?

CAVERT: I was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, March 30, 1922.

I: Would you give us something of your family background?

CAVERT: My father and mother were both from upstate New York in the Mohawk Valley area, in ruralcommunities named Charlton and West Charlton, New York, near Schenectady. My dad was brought up on a farm and became interested in agriculture and decided he wanted to make a career of it. He took his master's degree and later, much later, a Ph.D. in farm management. For his first job in that field, he got into the Extension Division of the University of Minnesota, College of Agriculture. That's how they came to the Midwest from upstate New York.

I: Would you describe your educational background, please?

CAVERT: I went to the University of Minnesota, St. Paul Campus, in 1939. I graduated a little bit early because many young people, young men at least, were finishing up early due to the start of World War II. In the meantime, I graduated December 22nd with a major in agricultural biochemistry and went into the military service.

When I returned from service, I went to graduate work in physiology at the University of Minnesota. Subsequently, I became interested in medicine. There was a combined M.D.-Ph.D. program, so I entered that and finished both degrees in 1952.

I: Before going into service, what contacts, if any, did you have with China?

CAVERT: Really nothing directly or definite. If it hadn't been for the service, I might not have had any up to this point, but there were really no close contacts before that time. Maybe an occasional Chinese student, but that was about it.

I: How did you become a part of the Tenth Weather Squadron?

CAVERT: When I finished the training as a weather officer, graduating from the cadet school at Grand Rapids, Michigan (that was about November of 1943), like others in my class I was sent for a month of seasoning and practical experience at a training base in Georgia. Then, after only a month of that, which most of the rest of my class had, I was shipped overseas.

Of course, in the military in those days, you went where you were assigned. I was assigned first to the weather unit in the China-Burma-India Theatre (CBI), first in India, especially in the Assam Valley. There were two weather stations there in the Assam Valley. Within six months (that would have been about May of 1944), I was flown over the Hump to China, where I spent the next 18 months of my military life.

I: How did you and your military colleagues respond when you were assigned to the CBI?

CAVERT: I think most of us felt that that would be interesting, perhaps exotic, compared to other theatres at the time, probably a relatively safe place, so we were pleased with that assignment. In fact, on the boat going over, which was probably potentially, at least, the most hazardous part of the whole experience, we knew we

were going to be in the CBI. No one knew, however, who would be in China, compared to elsewhere in that theatre. One of the people who had had some experience in the study of Chinese--I can't recall whether he'd had it previous to the war or as part of his training, as he was an O.S.S. (Office of Strategic Services) officer--gave a little class on the boat in the Chinese language. It helped while away the days we were on that long trip. There were several of us who struggled through that little course with him.

I: How much Chinese did you actually pick up at that time?

CAVERT: Just a few words, most of which I've lost, of course. We all had trouble with tones and inflections and pronunciation. He didn't really attempt to give us anything on Chinese characters. We picked up a few useful words that later came in handy when I was practically the only American in the southeast portion of China, where I was stationed for the last six months I was there. At that time, I was traveling around a good deal in the countryside. There I picked up a little "shop talk" and local talk in Chinese--a few phrases that could handle just the usual conversation in the restaurants and on the streets. A few cordial greetings to Chinese people over boiling water or tea. There were interpreters almost all the time, so I really didn't get a great deal of Chinese language.

I: When was the decision made of who should go to India and who should serve in China?

CAVERT: Nobody knows how military decisions are made at the time. Somebody, somewhere up in the general's office, perhaps the adjutant, makes out orders--you get your orders and away you go.

I: Was the group separated once you got to India?

CAVERT: More or less. Several of us who had known each other, at least on the boat going over, would run into each other again here or there. For example, when I was in Kunming for the second time, one of my friends from the boat trip--he was a weather officer--had been stationed (I don't remember the name of the town) about 30 or 40 miles north of Kunming. We used to get together. He had been stationed there. I would see, occasionally, one of the other people from the boat trip, or even one or two who had been in my class in the weather officers' training school in Grand Rapids. We were not assigned as a unit from the group that had come on the boat--we were broken up--but we saw several of them off and on.

I: What was the military set up and involvement in the Assam Valley?

CAVERT: I was there in the Assam Valley from December to May, 1944. The Assam Valley was the staging area for two things; it was the base for operations into Burma, which at that time was still being cleared of Japanese. Central Burma was still being cleared. I recall at the time that Mithyina in Central Burma, which was the jungle outpost in the central part of Burma, was taken from the Japanese. That battle was something of a landmark.

There were staging operations down the Lido Road and the China Road from Burma into China, so the operations from the Assam Valley supported those activities. "Merrill's Marauders," so called, were in the group in the jungle. That was the military operations part of it.

On the other hand, the Assam Valley (of major importance) was the western end of the Hump into China. The weather stations in the Assam Valley were looked at as being weather

forecasting posts for numerous daily flights over the Hump; that is, over the low part of the Himalayan Mountains into China to either Chungking or Kunming or a couple of other bases in China. Of course, all the supplies into China were flown over the Hump at that time. Nothing came in from the other side, from the eastern side of China. It all came in from India and the Assam Valley and had to be flown over the Hump in C-47 or C-46 cargo planes.

I: What were some of the difficulties in weather forecasting for flights over the Hump?

CAVERT: We really didn't have much day-by-day, detailed weather observations. Very little in the way of data that could be plotted on a map--at least that was useful to us. There was plenty of information in India, and some, although not a great deal, in China. To the north and northwest, where much of the weather came from, there were hardly any observing stations. So most of the information was obtained by talking to the pilots and navigators who came back over the Hump. They were very good about giving reports on cloud layers and what they had encountered. You could sort of extrapolate from the last information, from somebody who had just flown over the Hump and his observations on weather at various locations en route, what that ought to mean for the next six hours or 12 hours or so.

I: What was the success rate of flights leaving the valley and actually getting to where they were supposed to in China?

CAVERT: Most of the time it was very high. They were, for the most part, excellent pilots and had to do a lot of flying by the "seat of their pants," so to speak. Almost all of them got through; however, there were times when the thunder storms built up over the Himalayan Mountains. The weather conditions got pretty rough. Sometimes those planes would have to go through those storms, or those storms would come up so suddenly that they weren't expected. There were certainly planes lost over the Hump. I don't recall the rate of loss; but there was certainly a number of planes that went down over that treacherous area. You'd have reports every now and then, or talk with somebody who had bailed out, parachuted, or had crashed and survived and who walked out of that area. Sometimes they walked through the jungles of Burma, so there were some survivors and some who did not.

I: What contact did you have with Indian military personnel?

CAVERT: Not very much, in India, as I recall. We stayed at a couple of Indian camps in transit (that is, on the way from Bombay, where we landed, across India to the Assam Valley); we stayed at a couple of Indian military barracks, but I had really very little contact with Indian military, as such.

I: Why were you transferred to China? (laughter)

CAVERT: Because the orders said that is where I should go. (laughter) There was expansion, at that time, of the operations in China. There was some hope, at least, which later became a very likely hope, that as the American and Allied Forces moved up from the South Pacific, island hopping, there might well be an invasion of Taiwan or even

Japan, itself. That being the possibility, the whole operation in China became crucial, from the China side of it, to support and be involved in that operation, should it happen. It never did happen; but that's one of the reasons that there was a lot of interest getting people into China, to establish the bases there as well as possible, and to look forward to assisting in that operation with the Fourteenth Air Force.

The whole military operation in China, exclusive of that possibility of landing in Taiwan or even the southeast China coast, was a "hit and run" kind of thing, where the Fourteenth Air Force was largely supporting Chinese ground troops and running fighter missions. Fighter planes were running missions in support of ground troops, hitting here and there at Japanese-held bridges and some of their encampments. In Central China it was a very diffuse front; in fact, it wasn't a front at all--just sort of an amoeba-like pseudopod of Japanese invasion down the central part of China.

The Americans had no ground troops to speak of; it was all support services for the Fourteenth Air Force. There was no major movement of military on the ground by Americans. Whatever was done on the ground was by Chinese, and much of that was not very exemplary from a military standpoint. The role of the support services was simply to help the fighter pilots run these bombing missions and strafing missions against the Japanese--partly in support of the ground troops and partly just as a delaying action--harassment.

I: What, do you recall, were your initial impressions upon arriving in China?

CAVERT: I've got some things in the letters that say a little bit about that, if you'd like me to read something from them.

I: That would be great.

CAVERT: "Let me attempt to describe to you one of the most interesting examples of Chinese primitive genius I have witnessed for several weeks. (This was the 22nd of November, 1944.) Just beyond the road near the hospital, where we are temporarily staying as transients, (between assignments at two bases, apparently), there is a Chinese mill on the river and the operators have several of the most intriguing of Chinese hand-hewn machines. The mill house, itself, rests on a rock promontory from 10 to 12 feet above the river, whose course rushes rapidly around the end of the conveniently located island, and is coaxed into an even swifter, narrower stream, induced by a restrictive rock dam, cutting out diagonally into the main stream.

"After being forced into the mill stream, by this strategically located dam, the water plunges below to a homemade sluice gate, about two or three feet square, pours over the paddles of the slowly revolving mill wheel and races madly on to join the primary current. When the Chinese operator desires to cease grinding for the day, he merely removes a wooden peg in one of the poles supporting the sluice gate and down goes the release gate. The water is inhibited in its progress; there is insufficient force to push the paddles, and so shop is closed for the day.

" When the wheel is turning, here is how the power finds its way to the grind stone: The near axle of the large mill wheel rests upon a hollowed stone, upon an embankment of stones, along the mill stream (I sent a little diagram of

this thing), while the far end of the axle rests on a similar stone bank, just below the floor of the mill house. At the end of the axle is the crude wooden gear wheel with a set of wooden gear teeth, formed by standard lengths of pegs, driven at definite intervals into the circumference of the wheel. This vertical gear wheel meshes with a horizontal gear wheel just below the floor, and its vertical axle protrudes, then, through the floor of the mill house. Attached to the upper end of it, is a horizontal pole, grooved into the revolving vertical axle. On the end of that pole is the round grind stone. When the mill wheel turns, the gear wheels turn as the teeth mesh, the vertical pole revolves and with it revolves the grind stone--in a wide arch--goes across the room, especially grooved to allow grinding of the whole grain, as the stone revolves in its path.

"Are you confused? Well, so was I until I had seen the entire set up and then I was rather profoundly impressed with the simple ingenuity. I suspect the forefathers of this family have been grinding wheat and rice for the community's farmers in this same manner for generations. I wouldn't be at all surprised if one could find a near duplicate of this entire mill set up, if he would ply among the settlements of the mountaineers of Kentucky and Tennessee (speculation, of course), nestled among the pines and overlooking a clear mountain stream.

"The mill wheel set up itself was not the only display of the Chinese inventive talent in that same center of local business. As one watches the grind stone progress steadily in its endless journey about the circle, and he observes with mild surprise that very little mash appears

to displace the very little grain that might have been crushed, he wonders if all this elaborate, laboriously-made machinery was actually achieving its purpose with any astounding rapidity. It seemed to me that if about one-quarter the amount of rice were poured into the path of the grind stone, four times as often, the grind stone would prove much more efficient. It looked very much as if the excess rice was merely providing a cushion for the heavy stone as it rolled over the kernels. Well, given 4000 more years, the operator might attempt to make a reformation of their system.

"To hull the rice kernels, in order to polish the rice, which incidentally answers your question (my father's) of some letters ago concerning the use of polished rice by the Chinese, the mill house boasted a hand-operated machine, consisting primarily of a circle shaped-stone, mounted on a two foot-high base and enclosed in a shallow basket. Above this was a second stone enclosed by a larger, taller basket. These parts could be rotated by a bent, wooden handle attached to a crude eccentric. The far end of the handle was suspended from a cord, which prevented the operator of having to bear the weight of the heavy wooden handle. All he needed to do was rhythmically push back and forth the suspended end of the handle, and the attached eccentric caused the upper basket and stone to rotate.

"When the upper basket was filled with fresh rice grain and the operator commenced his tedious, monotonous movement, the stone shelled the white kernels from the hulls and the chaff dropped to the lower basket. A paddle attachment on the handle pushed the chaff, with each revolution of the handle into the receptacle provided below, in the bottom of the lower basket. Lo, another operation of the mill is accomplished." Want to hear more?

I: Sure.

CAVERT: Here is another machine: "The final, fanning machine, which cleans the grain for the last time, is surprisingly similar to our own hand-operating fanning machines, which are stock equipment on the farms that I was familiar with--and the granaries there. The polished rice, obtained from the operation outlined in the previous paragraph, is poured into the hopper of the fanner, where a boy turns the crank, which revolves the fan blades and the cleaned rice drops out from a convenient shoot. Just like I saw it done down on the farm.

"To sort out the largest kernels and any large chaff, the Chinese proprietor has a simple, large bamboo strip sieve, about four feet in diameter. Again, using the Chinese aptness for study of motononous rhythms, the operator rotates and shakes this sieve, full of rice, again and again, until all the fine kernels have dropped through the sieve onto a large platform below."

"This is how the coolies, peasants, worked on the road. (This was the 24th of September, 1944.) Today I watched the coolies working on the hostel road. Watching peasants at work brings very close views of the plodding way in which all construction and production is accomplished. Scott (one of my friends on the base) remarked today that one good American bulldozer with a dozen GIs could probably do an excellent job of building that road in half a day. It has already taken the peasant gang a couple of months to put in a few hundred feet of road work. This particular group that I observed was moving small stones from the bottom of the hill, where a rickety old truck, driven by one of our GIs had dumped them. Each coolie slowly scooped

up several handsfull of stones into each of his two woven bamboo baskets. Then he adjusted a basketful on each end of his long yoga poles (you probably know the terminology better than I), and with baskets suspended from each end of the pole to balance against each other, the laborer thrusts his shoulder under the center of the pole, straightens his back slightly and commences the slow, grinding climb to the top of the hill.

"Once at the top, he waited at the end of a short line of fellow laborers, who were waiting to have their loads weighed. Officiating at the balance is the overseer, at least I imagine his position might well be termed that. His balance was set on a tripod of poles, crossed about five feet above the ground. Suspended below the tripod was a horizontal bar, marked off with equal divisions from the tripod intersection to the far end. Suspended from the bar was a weight, which could be moved to various positions below the bar by sliding the cord which suspended it from the bar.

"The laborer stepped up with his basketful of stones. The basket was suspended from a hook on the short end of the bar, and the weight on the long end of the bar is adjusted to balance. The position on the calibrated bar, which was noted, and the weigher marked down a few appropriate characters on his records. It is a very simple application of the principle of torque and statics. I wonder if the operator realized that sometimes a pair of ingenious workers attempted to push a cartful of stone-laden baskets up the hill, but, in the main, they could have moved the cargo more rapidly, if they carried the baskets slung on shoulder poles.

"A few days ago (the 16th of June 1944) I visited one of the two universities in the city nearby, Kunming probably.

Since the school is far on the other side of the city, the first day I went I took a ricksha all the way; but the second day, I walked through the narrow winding streets of the city, the entire distance. It was raining hard, so, in spite of the draping field coat and a matched hood I bought in North Africa, my legs were wet from the knees down. It didn't matter to me since there was so much of interest along the route that I scarcely noticed the wetness.

"While at the university, I fell into conversation with a junior who was majoring in political science and is taking a minor in economics. He has studied English for seven years, so, of course, he speaks that language fluently. Of course, he does have a very noticeable accent. Full of gutteral consonants and dipthongs. Spoken Chinese has little in common with English as we speak it. When my friend mentioned he was well-versed in the theory of economics, but that his acquaintance with practical economics was lacking, he found it very difficult to pronounce the word theory. The th sound is apparently not present in Chinese, as far as I know, in my very brief acquaintence with the language. Even though I repeated the word several times, he could never pronounce theory correctly. And, to an even greater extent, I find it difficult to pronounce accurately the few Chinese words I know, as the Chinese approach to sounds and phonetics is certainly different from our own.

"After a while we walked across a small courtyard from the main classroom building, which is about the size of one of the buildings on the University of Minnesota campus--for example, the Agricultural Administration Building--and we walked to the dormitory where he lived. The building and rooms are very simply constructed, but, after all, they are quite adequate for the needs of students in attendance in the warm summer season.

"He lives on the second floor. As we walked along the hall adjoining the long rows of rooms, I found it expedient to duck my head about every 10 feet to avoid whacking my head on rafters raised some 5'-10" from the floor. Very few Chinese people here would need even consider the possibility of these--that their heads might approach the danger zone.

"As I mentioned, the room was quite simple and undecorative in appearance, although pictures of American movie actors and actresses dotted the walls and study table. Called on to identify the faces, I'll be darned if I knew any of them, but these fellows grinned as they pointed out Rita Hayworth, Tyrone Power, and other American actresses and actors, without any hesitation. Also on the table was a quotation from Goethe, whose works seem to be quite popular with freshman and sophomores here.

"One of the books that a Chinese freshman was reading for his English course was Goethe's The Sorrows of Young Workers. On the bookshelf of this fellow's room were several economics and government texts, all in English. They were standard elementary economics textbooks in his classes and one of them was Fairchild, Furniss and Buck, which I had used in a class for Mr. Lowe, on the St. Paul campus, a couple of years earlier. His present text in public finance was titled Public Finance by Loats of Yale. Some of the English in that book is quite involved and complicated, it seems to me, so I wondered how the Chinese scholars got around it." (That's the end of that one.)

(This was to my mother and dad, too, and I mentioned that my father was interested in farming and agriculture.) "You might be interested in the small fields and gardens, which occupy much of the land surrounding the post and nearby city. (This was June 11, 1944, so that was probably

either Kunming or Nanning, in the southwest of China.) The plots are very meticulously cultivated, with very infrequently any indication of neglect or laxity on the part of the farmer. There has been ample rain and sunshine for the spring crops, and the hardy growing plants reflect the favorable conditions and excellent care they've received.

" Much of the land hereabouts is devoted to the common garden products we grew annually in Anoka, Minnesota, where I grew up. Small plots of tomato plants beginning to blossom; squash and sprawling melon vines now covering the area surrounding the main vines. Onions, carrots, beans and potatoes also promise of a good garden produce harvest. Of course, a good full harvest in China is even far more important than at home, for not only the livelihood of 90 percent of the population is dependent on the soil, but there is an increasing demand for food by American Army units, Chinese Army units, and the multitudes of refugees and starving victims of the brutal ravages of war.

"In the town, it is common place to see farm people traveling quickly, back and forth to market, laboring under stout, flexible poles balanced over the shoulders. They carry load after load of large green beans, overflowing wooden buckets, placed on either end of the pole. In the market, one sees large sacks of various grains and seeds for sale. Most of them I don't recognize, although beans and rice are two. Next to rice and cabbage, bean curd and innumerable other creations of bean preparations seem to be staple Chinese food.

"Here, as in India, there are house boys (we called them bearers in India) to look after one's personal needs.

Most of them are very quiet, courteous, smiling young fellows willing, always, to be of whatever service they can. I am particularly impressed with the fact that these fellows are continually reading, often studying; whereas in India, most of the bearers were content merely to jabber among themselves in small groups. Here, practically every houseboy can be seen, at odd moments, reading some article or book, generally in Chinese, but not infrequently in English. Two of the fellows I know are learning English, for I have seen them laborously pronouncing the letters on the official signs, posted about the billeting hostel.

"That general spirit and energy, by and large, seems to be reflected in the rush and pulse of the crowds in town. There is little of the idle, lolling or sleeping in shops that was so characteristic of the towns in India. Here, men and women walk rapidly to and fro. They talk and argue with each other enthusiastically. Children scamper about in high good humor; yet there is, even so, the same filth and poverty here, that was so prevalent in India." (End of that one.)

(This is one of the first ones from China, June 9, 1944--I'd just come over the Hump a few days, or a couple of weeks earlier.) "As I was beginning to feel quite at home in India and enjoying the environment of jabbered Hindustani and bamboo trees, I was transplanted into China, along with several friends and other weather officers. (I was waiting for assignment, so this would have been in Kunming.) Last night, several of us hitchhiked (the same system of transportation the world over) our way into the nearby city, and enjoyed an excellent, although admittedly expensive, supper. Feeling quite hungry, after eating a little sparingly at noon, we made our way through the narrow side streets to a clean, comparatively elite, hotel-restaurant, managed by a motherly French or English lady.

"Having first disposed of an exceedingly tasty, albeit it small plate of steak, we launched into an equally tasty chicken dinner. Having enjoyed both of these, we reordered the first, and supplemented the whole with a bowl of soup and a piece of walnut cake. The whole meal cost some 600 in Chinese inflated denominations--Chinese National currency. Having thoroughly enjoyed the luxury of the entire affair, we returned to the misty air of the town, walked through the dimly lighted streets beside the bazaars, drinking in the strangeness and accompanying excitement of the people and their occupations.

"While one of the fellows stopped to dicker with a dealer in one of the shops, I attempted broken conversation with a couple of local shoeshine boys and found the very limited phrases of Chinese Mandarin I had learned en route could be understood to some extent. Most of the shoeshine boys' English consisted of filthy GI expressions, an indication of the caliber of our western influence."

(This is to my parents, too.) "I am sure you would find considerable interest in the prices now prevalent in this locality. (This is August 28, 1944, and probably from Nanning.) Pete, our ever loyal and ever accommodating interpreter in the weather station, gave me a brief conversational report the other day. As wheat, corn, oats and other grain products are frequently used as an indication of the economic trends at home, so in the same manner, rice, as might logically be expected since it is the principal grain and food, reflects the market fluctation and/or stability here.

"Pete reports that the last year's price of rice was about $1,500 to $1,800 CN, Chinese National currency, or about $7.50-$8.00 (at the black market ratio) per one hundred catties, approximately 110 pounds. The catty is the common measure of weight in this section of China, at least, and the equivalent in our system is slightly less than one pound.

"This year, at the same time, quotes Pete, the same amount of rice can be purchased for $1,000 yen, or about $5.00 in American money, known as 'gold' here. Yet, although the rice price is down compared to that of last year, other commodities, including especially craft goods, leather craft, jewelery, and so on, are generally unusually high in price.

"Pete believes that current flood conditions in this region will probably bring about a considerable increase in the price of rice within the next few months. Much of the second crop of rice has undoubtedly been ruined by high waters. Yet it is probable, providing the waters recede quickly enough, that the farmers will attempt to plant another second crop. Pete tells me that it is quite possible to harvest another rice crop before the end of this year's growing season.

"Tonight we enjoyed another delicious repast at a favorite Chinese restaurant in town. Surprisingly enough, it seems that each time we go to the same place, we can get the same number of choice dishes for a trifle less money. I always anticipate these Monday night dinner-out affairs, in spite of the fact that our own base mess is famous for serving the best food in China. That is, Nanning has a reputation among GIs in China as a good base to be sent to." (That sort of closes that one.)

"I was surprised to see (this was about November 22, 1944) that cotton is a predominant crop in this section of China. I had not realized that there was any part of China where cotton is such a staple crop. From the looks of the fields and the terraced plots in this area, cotton must assume an agricultural importance second only to the perennial standby--rice.

"Today, at the intriguing crude mill, which is nearby, and which we described earlier, we saw a simple ginning machine, operated by an industrious little Chinese youngster, some eight or ten years of age. The ginning machine was merely a hand-operated wringer, very much like that on an old washing machine, through which the little tyke ran the cotton boles. The wringer forced out the seeds which fell to the ground, while the ginned cotton passed on through the wringer to a table on the far side. More primitive Chinese ingenuity."

(This is more about laboring groups of peasants). "While in the air freight depot, awaiting an airplane ride to another base, I watched a gang of peasants loading a ton-heavy machine on a truck, preparatory to loading it on an airplane. Their method and unified, through extremely slow, work was much like that we saw so often in India, as carried out by the native wogs (that was the term used for a peasant or coolie type by GIs in India.)

"In China, the head coolie, more or less, begins a kind of wierd, monotonous singsong. He sings a few words and waits for the rest of the gang's answer by repeating him. They heave-ho at a certain apparently predetermined emphasized word in the chant. As the moment for the big push approaches, each coolie adjusts his prying pole or lever to the best advantage. Then, as the group of them

enter the responding chant and strike the hidden signal in unison, a mighty effort finds outlet and the weighty plate moves a few, faultering inches.

" Frankly, I suspect a few GIs with will and strong backs, supplemented by modern tools, could move the load in half the time with half the exclamations; but I must admit that the coolies do get the work done and, after all, if it takes you half a day to do an hour's work, what matter to them? Haven't they struggled through life in this same, unspectacular fashion for 400 years? War? What is this talk of war? Have not they seen wars and rumors of wars come and go for countless generations? Besides, if the American bosses can loaf often, and take their world lightly, why shouldn't they, the peasants? My speculation, of course. At any rate, it was fun to watch the peasants work and hear the rhythmic, monotonous chants and see their coordinated movements.

" This afternoon, one of the Chinese interpreters, a particularly pleasant fellow, with whom I have become well acquainted, is going into town with me. The main purpose is to pick up a few items I've been looking for, such as some wide belt straps for my jacket and some wood chops needed in the weather station. Then we are planning to eat supper in one of the Chinese reataurants he claims to be superior. Wouldn't you like to join us in the enjoyment of typical Chinese party--drunken chicken, sweet and sour pork, peas, crab meat rolls, beans, tea and boiled rice? Chopsticks and rice bowls, of course." (That's about the end of that.)

(This was November, 1944--I think this was Southeast China.) "Yesterday Bill and I, one of my colleagues, together with a few of the enlisted men who were traveling

with us, took a walk into town. There in the miller's shop I noticed a new scene that is very similar to most Chinese methods of accomplishing work, yet applied a little differently. In the center of the room was a large, flat, round stone, superimposed by a second stone of the same dimensions. Hitched to the upper stone was a frail, emaciated and blindfolded little horse, which upon his plodding slowly in a circle about the stones, made mandatory by the short hitch, caused the upper wheel to grind against the lower and make a meal-flour of the rice placed between the two stones. There was a busy Chinese miller supervising the operation as busy as a Gold Medal Flour operator. I opened my camera as wide as possible, so with the Super XX film I should be able to get something of the operation."

(This must have been central or southeast China at this time.) "I don't think I mentioned one of the last comments made by our friend, the mess boy, whom we called "Sea Level," before we left that particular base. Sea Level was waiting on our particular table when a companion who had already had some two or three helpings of dessert, known as "sweets" to the GIs and mess boys in this theatre (CBI), asked Sea Level for another sweet. Since he'd already had ample sweets, we jokingly admonished Sea Level not to bring him any more.

" Whereupon, Sea Level, taking everything very seriously, replied, 'Of course, he shall have more sweets. I want you boys to eat a lot so you will be able to do more for China.' This is the kind of remark that can touch the heart where it is vulnerable."

TAPE ONE-SIDE TWO

(This is about a dinner with a group of local Chinese, and I'm not sure what the date was, but maybe it will become more apparent as we go along.) "Our host was the local Chinese general--a short, fat, pudgy man dressed in a green tight-collared Chinese uniform. Often it is difficult to distinguish a general from a private in this Chinese army, for a number of these generals wear only the universal cotton or wool standard uniform adorned by no insignia of rank whatsoever.

" On the other hand at the very first of the type of joint friendship and goodwill banquets I ever attended, all the generals but one, and there were four, were splendidly attired in the handsomest, most smartly cut of of uniforms, looking for all the world as if every one of China's millions of undernourished, half-clad soldiers were the possessors of a complete wardrobe of matching uniforms. Perhaps you were momentarily impressed with the casual mention I make of dining with generals. If so, you are misled, for in China, at least the parts I have visited, practically every town of any size which boasts a local army station seems to have at least one general stationed at its head. So, it isn't at all strange to have the local commanding general of the Chinese unit play host to the American-based officer personnel, of which the ranking member is frequently on a captain, and the base commander often a first lieutenant.

" Among the local dignitaries assisting the general was the station master--a congenial, mustached man in a dapper Chinese Air Force uniform. He had formerly been commandant of Chinese cadets at one of our largest flight training fields in the States, and his uniform had been tailor-made while he was assigned there.

"Interpreting for the general was the jovial, witty, Chinese lieutenant, who was being flatteringly addressed as 'colonel' by happy American 'ganbei' enthusiasts. ('Ganbei' is 'bottoms-up', a drinking phrase. The Americans were drinking.) Before the close of the affair, Wong, for that was his name, was most helpful in explaining to me the name and contents of each dish as it was carried in since many of them were strange to me.

"At a Chinese party of this type, always characterized by a variety and abundance of strange and wonderful dishes, one is always torn between curiosity, which demands detailed explanation of the ingredients and process peculiar to each new course, and his more practical realization that his appetite might maintain itself more readily if he is not fully acquainted with the agricultural and culinary history of each dish. Highlights of this particular feast were numerous and some were scarcely sampled by our eager, but often faltering chopsticks, before the steaming vessel was replaced by another which demanded our attention.

"A steaming light and dark brown pudding, bearing the misleading title of 'Chinese ice cream,' was a nicely sweetened hash of soybeans. 'Bomb Tokyo,' an appellation ceremoniously applied to a delicious sauce and potato concoction, was the favorite with all of us who had never been introduced to that particular delicacy. As always, the soups, sauces, dressings and fowl dishes were excellent and chopsticks and saucespoons flew ceaselessly from the dishes at the center of the table to the individual rice bowls.

"All of this came after, of course, the customary ceremonial invitations and bows by the host, signifying his pleasure with our presence, the inadequacy of the humble preparations, and his request that we partake of his offerings of food. Naturally, it would not be a typical Chinese meal if there were not a course or two that Americans found difficult to swallow with some hypocritical enthusiasm. This time, it was stewed octopus, apparently believed to be a special delicacy by these Chinese; but which was most adequately described by the communications captain when he remarked, 'It is just like a piece of an old boot.'

"As is all too typical of Chinese dinners, 'ganbei' is a standard remark between every two courses, and it almost seemed that one waiter was kept busy leaning over guests to fill their small wine cups from his white porcelain teapot. (I don't know if I mentioned it here, but the GIs always called the Chinese rice wine--which is pretty poor, so they say-- 'Ching bao juice.' 'Ching bao," at that time, was the Chinese term for air raid, so 'ching bao juice' was what they called this local poor rice wine.

"Now you know quite well what my sentiments on drinking are, so naturally my activities were nil in that field. One must be a little more sly and careful in China, though, than at home, for here the tipping of little wine cups is as much a part of a social routine as is the use of chopsticks. Even last night, at a very quiet, fine affair with a Chinese couple, there was a certain amount of 'ganbei' exercised.

"Here practically every drink is in the form of a toast or ritual 'ganbei.' Everybody lifts his wine cup and says 'ganbei' and drinks it down and shows his cup upside down,

so it's empty. If the host asks you to 'ganbei' with him, he will probably consider it a slur if you don't concur. Fortunately, there are a couple of extremely useful escape channels, and so with a certain sense of discretion, a wet rag like myself can make out quite nicely.

"One is saying 'your pleasure' and infers that your partner may sip at his pleasure. So when the general lifts his cup to me, or one of the other guests of similar temperament, we reply to his 'ganbei' with 'your pleasure,' which generally means to lift the cup only. The Chinese enjoy wit and cleverness, if one is fortunate enough to possess a bit of it, so remarks like 'mine is a magically filling cup,' or filling it with tea on the sly are not too anti-social.

"The general, himself, found it necessary to cease his own frequent 'ganbeis' in toasts later in the evening, for after about the twelfth course his face, already colored and pudgy, became very scarlet indeed. His eyelids began to flutter wearily, and he seemed to find it necessary to concentrate his efforts for the remainder of the party in keeping himself presentably awake and solicitous of his guests' welfare, which is one of the better attributes of the Chinese social way. They never seem to become uproariously, dangerously and disgustingly drunk the way many American and British soldiers, sailors and marines do. They just quietly nodd off to sleep under the noses of all their guests or slip ignominiously under the table." (laughter)

(1944) "This morning we awakened to find another minor flood over most of the rice paddies surrounding the field. Since the weather system which caused this flood seems to have moved on and the rain has temporarily ceased, I doubt if we will be particularly inconvenienced by the flood this time. The roads, which were made impassable by flowing

waters during the previous two floods, are still fairly high above the water mark. It seems that every time we have a fairly extensive frontal system or weather front bringing extensive rain into this area, we find the rice paddies flooding within a short period of the heaviest rains.

"It has been a good deal of fun and a rather different experience to dabble in the art of flood forecasting, and watching the relationships between the height of the river surface and the extent of rainfall. You can be sure that our little old weather station has been watching the situation with an eagle eye. Although we have not had any high waters to compare with the disasters that struck the Missouri River each spring, or the tremendous irresistible, fearful river rampages for which other parts of China are well-known, we have had sufficient fluctuation of the water level from day-to-day to be able to make a few deductions for future forecasting.

"In the last letter, I described a Chinese play which three of us saw earlier in the week. When we were deciding whether to attend the show, conversation occurred which made me stop and think of some of the thoughtless, hurting acts we sometimes commit. We were gathered at the dinner table (the officers-of-the-day at Nanning, I think) and Taylor mentioned he had received four tickets to a Chinese play that afternoon. He inquired whether any of us would like to attend.

"Several of the group, either by facial expressions or blunt rejections, indicated they weren't particularly interested or enthusiastic. They had seen these Chinese plays before and had been completely bored. They couldn't stand sitting through all that noise and meaningless chatter for four or five hours. (That <u>is</u> a long time

to sit on very hard and uncomfortable straight-backed wooden benches, but I understand from Doc and others who are veterans in China that it is generally not considered particularly bad taste to walk out after one-third or one-half of the performance is through. If the gang did not want to go, that was their privilege, of course; but after all, the tickets were a gift to us and there was undoubtedly any number of worthy Chinese who would have given a week's pay to possess one of those tickets.

"As a matter of fact, the point was rather strikingly demonstrated to us when Willy, our faithful Chinese mess boy followed Taylor and myself from the dining room to the hostel and timidly asked if he could have a ticket. He evidentally was very eager to see the play. Since he had been in the mess hall absorbing all our ungrateful conversation about the boredom and lifelessness of Chinese operas, he thought we must have several tickets we weren't planning to use.

"As it happened, we were able to procure a ticket for Willy and, although those of us who went did actually find the opera exceedingly to our liking, probably none was more proud or more appreciative of his opportunity to attend the performance than Willy the houseboy.

"As we rode into town that afternoon, Willy told me enthusiastically that this was the most celebrated troupe of players in this part of China, and it was a great and rare occasion when they came to our city. His comments and enthusiasm were sustained and amply verified when we arrived and noticed the large, excited crowds in the street near the theatre, and the occupation of every available square inch of space within, be it in the aisle, along the walls or on the balcony."

(1944) "As is generally our custom (this is still Nanning) on Monday evening, our gang of officers gathered at our favorite restaurant in town for Chinese food this evening. There were seven of us this time, and every one of the seven came away remarking that this was one of the best Chinese dinners we had ever consumed. I am enclosing with this letter a copy of the menu from which we generally order our six or seven dishes. The items that are penciled in are the dishes we have had at one time or another. On the left margin, I have painstakingly copied the Chinese characters which identify the dish, so I can point out my desires at any time to the 'shih-ying,' a Chinese waiter.

"Yesterday afternoon, Pete, our interpreter, and I found it necessary to drive into town. Having stopped at the Chinese weather station to find out the height of the river water at that time, we returned to the car, only to find that there was practically no life in the battery. The starter barely gurgled and no coaxing with the switch, choke or throttle would induce the motor to turn over. Pulling out the crank in the backseat, I tried to instill a little life into the obstinate engine, but it was steadfast in its stubbornness. Once I induced a brief spark of life; but Pete is not a skilled manipulator of automobiles, so before I could reach the throttle, the engine had coughed and given up its efforts.

"Always in China, and especially in this section, there is a large, staring, expressionless crowd of natives, standing in an idle group, whenever an American appears. So, when I realized that the provoking car would not produce a humming motor as long as it remained stationary, I asked Pete to round up a few of the bystanders to help push.

Within a few minutes we had four Chinese boys applying themselves to the task, while I pushed on the left side of the car with one hand and kept an eye on Pete's efforts at the steering wheel. But remembering to let out the clutch slowly, press down on the throttle and steer the car was too much for a novice driver like Pete, who had to remember them simultaneously, so I took over the steering with my free right hand.

"Meantime, I had been so absorbed with these operations that I was completely surprised when I glanced behind me to see the four boys retreating at a safe distance and leaving me to push alone. Naturally, I was a trifle aggravated with this turn of events, so I asked Pete to tell four, loafing Chinese soldiers nearby that I needed help--and immediately! For some strange reason, they were inclined not to hear, however, so we managed to commandeer three more youngsters, who helped us push for a block. By that time it seemed all too evident, that the machine was radically opposed to being coaxed into service, so after removing any valuables from the car, Pete and I went back down the street to telephone the base.

"The Chinese telphone service defies description. Only their lighting and radio systems compare in their ability to be out of service, under repair or laboriously useful. At the first building we spied, which was the water works, Pete rang for the operator for several minutes. Upon hanging up the receiver in dismay, he was told by a disinterested, lounging attendant that the telephone line had been flooded, and was, therefore, unserviceable.

" We hiked up the road to a printer's establishment, where we found a telephone on the second floor. Pete rang

valiantly for several minutes, and finally his efforts found some dubious success. Shouting with the full power of his voice, he tried to make himself heard. He finally got three or four operators who seemed to be in constant conference on the other end of the line, but he wanted to contact the base switchboard. When the connection had been made and Pete triumphantly handed the receiver to me, I heard a jargon of voices jabbering incessantly.

"Apparently the operators were in deep discussion concerning the call. Finally, I managed to shout a commanding, 'Hello!' above the unintelligible din and was answered by a thin, wavery, far away rejoinder at the base end of the line. Encouraged, I stated my difficulties and Lieutenant Green, the owner of the thin, wavery voice, promised to bring in a vehicle.

"Soon after Pete and I returned to the obstinate car and I had optimistically but futilely turned the crank a few more times, help came around the corner in the form of a base weapons carrier. I'd had sufficient exposure to Chinese helpfulness and Chinese telephone systems for one afternoon, so I expressed silent gratitude when the car, at the end of the tow-line, finally produced a feeble sputter and then began to purr softly and steadily."

(June 16, 1944 - Kunming) "Having heard that there was a YMCA building in the city, I hunted up an information service sponsored by the Office of War Information here. I am curious to compare the Y in China with the Y I know in the States. I hiked over to the spot indicated by instructions.

"The Y building over here is one of the larger buildings downtown. Of course, the banks are the largest, most im-

posing and most modern buildings here, as in every other land. Someone has remarked that, although customs, architects and people may vary tremendously the world over, you can always recognize the bank as the one unchangeable, universal fixture. At any rate, the YMCA is four stories tall, with considerable space for all the various activities.

"When I first entered, I just casually walked about on the main floor, watching with a certain satisfaction as 12-year-old kids slammed impossible ping pong shots back and forth across the tables, or as they scampered among each others legs, often times colliding with the more moveable table legs--each enthusiastic youngster intent on retrieving an elusive ping pong ball.

"As I watched the scene of youthful recreation, absorbed in recollections and comparisons, a little Chinese man with large, rimless glasses and dressed in a long blue gown approached me and asked if I were looking for someone. Having been told by my friend Charlie Rockwood, who the head of the YMCA was, I mentioned his name but was informed he had returned to the States for a vacation. Then I was asked if I would like to see Mr. Wong, who was the secretary. Replying in the affirmative, I was led to a waiting room outside Mr. Wong's office, and after a few minutes he appeared, invited me in, and there I was--talking with the Y Secretary, as I had so many times before.

"Mr. Wong was exceedingly cordial, told me all about the work of the YMCA here and showed me most of the activities in full swing. At the time I was there, the YMCA was sponsoring an exhibit of Chinese paintings. The prices--explained the painter in charge of the exhibition--were

high so that half of the price paid could be donated to the Chinese Government Famine Relief Fund. That would have been, of course, the Kuomintang government.

" This painter, who was a delightful little old fellow and very eager to show me his work, had been with the YMCA for more than 25 years. He claimed proudly that he was the first YMCA Secretary in China; that is, the first Chinese Y Secretary, having been secretary of a YMCA of a large city in North China for a number of years. The various paintings were done on silk, as Chinese custom is, and many of them showed no scene at all, but merely a number of Chinese characters, probably recording some great Chinese proverb or poetry, or perhaps the impressions of the artist on viewing some particularly enchanting scenery.

" Calligraphy is really an art in China, as is painting itself, and once you can write characters in a beautiful manner, it is highly esteemed by people in the artistic circles. Actually, so one Chinese friend told me, 'Just as few of us are masters of penmanship, so few people can write characters in a pleasing way in China.' When you tell a Chinese person that he writes characters beautifully, he is profuse in his denial of your statement and deprecatory of his ability, for that is the accepted Chinese way.

" At the painting exhibition, my painter friend pointed out the various paintings that were his and he was obviously justifiably proud of his work. He remarked that even while he'd been a Y secretary, he'd spent all of his spare time painting; but now that he was retired, he could spend all of his time on painting.

" Feeling that one of his paintings would be a nice remembrance of China, through the years, I bought a picture of a cluster of typical Chinese buildings on a high cliff, surrounded by bamboo thickets and shrubs. The painter said that painting bamboo was his particular specialty, and that it had been the specialty of his family for four generations. 'Chinese,' he said, 'never paint by merely looking at an object and studying their visual impressions. They always draw their inspirations from their imagination, although the products from their imagination usually represent some scene that has impressed them at one time, or a combination of several memories.' My particular selection, as my guide pointed out to me, represents the fulfillment of the dreams of a man who builds his house among bamboo groves because he enjoyed the sound of the wind and rain in the bamboo.

"Leaving the YMCA yesterday, we went off to a crowded marketplace. As I elbowed my way through the milling crowd, I felt a small fellow brush against me, and I knew instinctively that he had intentions of no good. Immediately I felt into my pocket and realized that my roll of Chinese National currency was gone. I turned around and spotted the youngster, who was walking off triumphantly constantly counting the money with a fellow rascal looking over his shoulder. I imposed a fairly severe grip on his arm and looked at the little culprit with a stern countenance whereupon the poor kid tremembled as if he had the chills. He pushed the money into my hands and, realizing that I would quickly gather a crowd and probably do little good if I detained him, I released his arm and followed him with angry eyes. He scampered off in a hurry, holding up his thumb and muttering, "Ting hao, ting hao,' as he disappeared into the crowd."

(1944) "I am somewhere in China land of 'Ting hao,' as it is known among GI servicemen. ('Ting hao' is the Chinese expression for okay and the superlative of good.) From the viewpoint of being in interesting and educational surroundings and, because of the apparent energy and enthusiasm of its people, I'm mighty pleased to be in China, for there is so much of real interest to be learned here. From the standpoint of serving Uncle Sam and being vital to the weather service, I'm a little doubtful right now, for our disposition and assignment seem to be uncertain right now; but those things always seem to resolve into something clearer and more definite by and by.

"I think my letters told you how much I enjoyed and appreciated the pulse of life in India. Yet, in the brief time I have been in China, I have already grown to appreciate the land and its people. I suppose there is no single people who are more in sympathy with kindhearted Americans, and perhaps that is one reason I found the Chinese people so appealing from the beginning. They really don't look so very much more prosperous than the Indians, but they are so much more energetic and seemingly progressive. (Of course, I hadn't seen the mill stone system then.) You would enjoy the children, particularly, as they laugh, caper and chatter happily along the streets, in the shops and among the crowds as if all the world were theirs. As American soldiers pass along the street, they (the Chinese kids) call out 'ting hao, ting hao,' and smile. Everyone stops to talk with the shopkeeper or vendor in the streets, and an enthusiastic crowd gathers to watch and enjoy the proceedings.

"Prices of articles are far out of sight, so one finds it advisable to keep the greater portion of his money in his pocket. The people, most of whom are smaller than we, carry incredible loads for long hours, without seemingly tiring perceptibly. The peasants pulling their rickshas dogtrot about the streets of the cities without noticing anything, except the grunt of the people who cross their paths. These fellows who trot about the compound with a pail of water on each end of a flexible pole keep up their pace without slacking."

(September 24, 1944) "One of the most engrossing occupations, that is a treat available only once an evening, is to watch the wily little lizards stalk bugs on the dark screening that covers our windows. A moment ago a dainty little moth lighted on the screen to gaze fascinated at the light, little suspecting that impending doom was approaching, in the form of a diminutive lizard, stealthily creeping up from the window sill. When he had gotten within an inch of his prey, the lizard began to flick his tail in rapid beats, as he anticipated that he could capture his victim. Then while the moth tarried on the scene a second too long, the lizard's head darted forward, in a lightning-thrust fashion, and before the little lady moth could take wing to safety, she was securely locked in the greedy jaws of the little hunter. Triumphantly, he retreated to his lair, below the scene, to feast on his newly-won game.

"Once, when we had the floods in Nanning, we were out in a boat, surveying the flood scene. All around were snakes of various descriptions who were washed in by the flood, including a cobra or two--small, though."

I: Dr. Cavert, may we begin today by asking what training and what responsibilities you had during your initial month's stay in Kunming?

CAVERT: Kunming was the Chinese endpoint of the Hump, and the major location in China, at that time, for the weather forecasting organization--the Tenth Weather Squadron. Most of the weather officers and enlisted men in the weather service, who came from India over the Hump, waited at Kunming for their assignments.

In the meantime, we were frequently put on duty at the main weather base at Kunming. This would have been the base for the Fourteenth Air Force at their major headquarters in Kunming. While I was there, I served as a weather officer and weather forecaster, supervisor of weather observers, drawing daily weather maps, collecting the data, organizing the weather data--such as was available. I made daily forecasts for airplanes that were either going from Kunming to various bases in China, or going over the Hump back to India, as a large number of ships were doing daily.

I: Where were you getting your weather data in Kunming?

CAVERT: In China, the weather data came from a combination of sources. One source was the several bases we had, by that time, in China, on the Hump and the Hump route, and from the Assam Valley in India where there were American weather service people in the Tenth Weather Squadron. I don't recall the number of bases that had sent weather observations to Kunming at that time, but I suppose it would be in the neighborhood of 30 or 40 weather stations in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theatre, to Kunming.

The second source was this: There were a number of Chinese military weather stations scattered throughout China, especially, at least, in the portions that were not occupied. These weather stations had access to the data, especially from the Chinese army's own weather people. The deficiency was, though, that there were very few data coming from the northwest of China. That was a sparsely populated and mountainous area, and a fair amount of northern China was either occupied by the Japanese or in the hands of Chinese Communists. There was very little opportunity for even the Chinese to transmit good weather observations. Those were the main sources, then: The U.S. Fourteenth Air Force, the Tenth Weather Squadron, and the Chinese weather stations.

I: Were the Russians, at this time, sharing weather information with you?

CAVERT: I don't recall a thing about Russians being involved. I just don't have any recollection of ever hearing them mentioned, of any Russians in the picture. I suppose they were pretty well preoccupied on the European fronts and in their own backyard. I would have to look at the chronology, but at least we had no contact with the Russians either directly or by radio.

I: What kind of facilities and what kind of equipment did you have to work with in Kunming?

CAVERT: In Kunming it was essentially like the United States Air Force Weather stations--modern equipment. Essentially the same as I was accustomed to working with in Albany, Georgia, where I was stationed before I went

overseas and where there was a weather station for the Air Force. It was essentially the same type of weather equipment as we'd learned about in our nine months of training as cadets in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It was very good, modern equipment.

I: What did you find were the conditions in Kunming? What did you feel was the morale of the population--both civilian and military?

CAVERT: In the military, it was no different, really, from the morale of the military in the Assam Valley, where I'd been for six months before. It was the daily routine of Army life and, for me, of Air Force people and forecasting weather. There were the Air Force pilots themselves and their navigators who were living from day-to-day on their missions--fighter missions, mostly, figher airplanes--and they were fairly happy-go-lucky fellows most of the time. They were anxious to do their job, get it over with and get out of China.

About the civilian population--I guess, the most contact we had day-to-day with the civilian people were those who worked on the base, in the weather station, or as houseboys, or when we went into town. They were busy surviving and doing their daily things. The houseboys were learning English and trying to keep their favor with the American officers and enlisted men.

It was just a daily routine--quite different, though, in Kunming from most of the small towns where I was stationed later. Kunming was a fairly large city. It was pretty well engulfed, at that time, by American and Chinese military personnel and it had the characteristics of large military operations and bases, or at least from the standpoint of the support of the military, of a large

metropolitan community. Kunming was quite different from the bases I served at later on, where there were relatively small numbers of American personnel and large numbers of Chinese.

I: Where were you assigned after Kunming?

CAVERT: In June of 1944, I was sent to Nanning in southwest China, and I stayed there for about two to three months.

I: What was the military installation like in Nanning?

CAVERT: Nanning like most of the bases I was at subsequently for several months, and like most of the American military bases in China, was a fairly forward Air Force operational station, where there were two fighter airplane squadrons. That is, I believe they were mostly P-51 fighter planes, as they were called--Mustangs--and they carried small bombs and machine guns for strafing. They would go out daily, or every day when the weather was reasonable, or there was some intelligence report of useful information on Japanese military operations that they could attack. They would go out in groups of anywhere from one-half dozen to a dozen at the most, fighter planes at a time. They would strafe or drop small bombs on Japanese military operations, whether it was a bridge, a road, sometimes a railroad train, a convoy of trucks, or occasionally troops marching along the highway. They would carry their mission out with distances varying from, I suppose, 100 to 200 miles from the base at Nanning and then they would return to the base within a few hours. Usually they would be gone a couple of hours.

I remember one operation that was a little unusual, for that day we had forecast for a bombing mission to Hué in Vietnam, where the Japanese had a fairly large base and

port for their naval operations and air base, and supply depots of some magnitude, according to intelligence reports which came in. Our fighter squadrons could not reach that far--it was beyond the range of these P-51 Mustangs. For that purpose, then, Nanning served as a staging base for a number of B-25s--I don't recall the exact number but I suppose a couple dozen or so--sent from an Air Force base near Kunming. They stayed at Nanning overnight and then went on this longer bombing mission. I suppose that would have been in the neighborhood of 500 miles or so--1000 or 1500 miles round-trip. I don't remember the exact mileage from Nanning to Hué and back. That was the only operation of that type I can recall, which was other than the usual missions of a few hours of strafings by the fighters.

I: How much contact did you have with the Chinese population in Nanning?

CAVERT: That was mostly at the base, but we frequently went into town, especially to enjoy the very good food in the restaurants and to go around town. I usually engaged in some kind of conversation with some local people, but it was not extensive. It was maybe a couple of times a week that we would go into town; but there were a lot of Chinese working on the base, or near the base, with whom we had contact, one way or the other, several times a week.

I: What were the conditions that caused you to leave this particular area?

CAVERT: When I was sent to Nanning, I was the second weather officer, and Lieutenant John Green was the primary officer there. John was transferred after I had been there two or three weeks, I suppose, so I was the chief weather officer at Nanning for two or three months. Then I had a replacement sent in for me. I don't recall the exact reasons. Frequently, one didn't know the reasons why--orders just came in--in the Air Force, in the military. As it turned out, I was sent to some forward bases in Central and Northeast China, at least, that portion of Northeast China that was available to us. So I suppose the reason I was moved was to start up another weather station elsewhere.

I: What was the situation in the Laohokow area?

CAVERT: Laohokow was the first of two places to which I was assigned, where there was a newly established base, essentially for the same purpose as I have described about Nanning; that is, to support the fighter airplane squadrons which, at that time, were sent out from Central China to the northeast and the east to harass the Japanese troop movements, convoys, and supply operations in that area, just as they had done in the southeast and south in Nanning.

Whereas Nanning had been a fairly well-established base for a number of months, I was in the first group that went into Laohokow. It was a relatively small base. There had been no weather station there at all, so that was the first place we set up a rather well-constructed, compact, portable weather station, contained in three or four very large foot lockers. All of that equipment, including the generator, we set up from that portable system. We had been trained and briefed on how to put it together and how to

use that equipment in Chengtu, which was the research location for the Tenth Weather Squadron. I had been in Chengtu, as I recall, for a week to 10 days, learning how to use that equipment and put it together. Then we were flown with the equipment to Laohokow and set up a weather station there.

There was a group of three weather men with me at Laohokow . They were three people who had known each other very well and been in training in the United States together in the Air Force. In one way or another, they had managed to stick together during the whole time. We became very good friends rapidly because we were the only weather people--the four of us--at Laohokow.

We set up our equipment, did our work, gathering weather observations, got in contact with the local Chinese military weather poeple, such as they were and forecast the weather for the Air Force fighter planes in Laohokow for about (I think) the better part of a month or so. The Japanese lines, such as they were, were not very far away--I suppose 25, 30, 40 miles--and they (local Chinese) were very adept in spying. After about a month, we got a warning from the usual Chinese intelligence information which passed on to us reports of local Japanese military movements.

TAPE TWO-SIDE ONE

When that kind of information was obtained, it was standard practice by the U.S. Air Force to evacuate the whole base and just leave it. So we did that. We put our weather gear back into the foot lockers and suitcases, packed it up and onto the airplanes and left the whole base and everybody got out. The same thing happened more or less at the next base I was at in Laifeng, a relatively small town in Central China.

We were at Laifeng for about two or three months, I think, with the same group of three close friends--weather observers--and set up our same compact weather station. After the two or three months, we evacuated again.

I: When you were in the Laohokow area, did you have any contacts with the Norwegian missionaries?

CAVERT: No, because at Laohokow things were pretty isolated. We were pretty much confined to the U.S. Air Force base and the necessity for security was such that we went very little into the community.

I: In Laifeng what were the limitations of the air strip you had there?

CAVERT: The air strip at Laifeng was quite primitive. I don't recall the length of it; but it was relatively short so that it stretched the ability of the pilots to bring in a fighter plane to that air strip and land it accurately and to get to a stop before the end. As I recall, it either could not take B-25s, certainly not larger bombing aircraft, or if it took a B-25, it had the absolute limit of what that thing could handle on the strip. It was really just a grassy area, cleared away from the brush and the paddies.

I: What relationship did you have with the Chinese there?

CAVERT: In Laifeng, it was a much more free and easy kind of life. Of course, we'd gotten pretty well used to handling the weather station. Intermittently, there was not very much military activity, including when the weather shut things down. Frequently there were no supplies brought in, so the planes couldn't carry out their missions or

there was nothing for them to attack. We had a fair amount of time to visit the community, strike up conversations with Chinese, and get to know a number of people, including one who was an artist. Our weather fellows struck up friendships with local Chinese young men and boys and frequently we got into basketball games with that group, so we had a fair amount of social contact with the Chinese at Laifeng.

I: How common was it for U.S. military personnel to get involved with basketball games with the Chinese?

CAVERT: Not very common. There was so much movement back and forth from one base to another, that frequently you weren't there long enough to organize or get involved. The other thing was that, at bases like Kunming, it was such a large staging area and row on row of barracks, pretty well-established air base, that there weren't many contacts with Chinese. The Chinese that were there were working for the Air Force and American military, so there wasn't a great deal of contact in Kunming. I mentioned that at Laohokow we didn't really have time or possibility because of the security situation; we couldn't really establish much contact there. In a number of other bases, like Laifeng, it was a much more free, easy and open life. There was a lot of chance for contact with the local Chinese and a number of American military people participated in that. It varied a great deal with the base.

The same thing was true at Kanchow later on, and then finally, in the last six months or so that I was in China in Yungnan, where I was one of three or four Americans,

and was involved with supervising Chinese weather stations in southeast China--stations of the Chinese military people or both military and civilian--almost all the contact was with Chinese. They were there and that is with whom the work was.

I: When you were at the smaller stations, how, as an American military man, were you received by the majority of the Chinese?

CAVERT: At least, in the context I had, I was very cordially received. The Chinese, in general--at least the ones we met and talked with--were very happy to have the Americans there, especially in the small towns. Americans didn't overpower the local Chinese in the same way that they would have done in Kunming. Of course, the Chinese realized that the Americans were their safeguard and support, in large measure, against the invading Japanese, so they were very pleasant people. At least, so far as I recall, it was a very cordial kind ofrelationship.

I: Did you hear any kind of expressions from the Chinese that they wished the Americans would provide more personnel or matérial?

CAVERT: I don't recall anything specifically on that. By the time, of course, that I was in China for a few months, the fortunes of war were turning quite well for the Allies, so things began to look fairly optimistic. The Chinese, themselves, were rather a makeshift military in the early months that I was in China, and even more so before that. In many locations, they were a rag-tag kind of army, really. They were short of equipment and the bare necessities. What they had was pretty much shipped from the United States.

I: Why were you evacuated from the Laifeng area?

CAVERT: As I recall, at Laifeng about the same thing happened as did at Laohokow. Eventually, after this very pleasant time that we had there, the better part of two months or so (perhaps more than that), we got the word that the Japanese were going to move in on the base and so the simple solution was the same one: pick up the whole base and move on. The United States Air Force in China was just that--an air force. There were essentially no American ground troops in China. It was all air force and intelligence people. There were special kinds of detachments, but no infantry, no artillery, none of the useful ground work kinds of personnel. All of that was dependent upon the Chinese. The Japanese could pretty much move where they wanted to on the ground, when they wanted to. As soon as they began to move against an air base, the U.S. base personnel simply evacuated. It was a very fluid, non-descript kind of military operation.

I: From Laifeng, then you went where?

CAVERT: From Laifeng, I went back to Kunming, which was the usual staging area; but then very soon on to Kweilin, crossing the Japanese lines sometime during that period. The Japanese had established a very extensive corridor, actually before I got into China, from roughly Shanghai to Canton. The width of that corridor varied, I suppose, in the neighborhood of 200 to 300 miles. So, whatever went into Southeast China, where the Japanese did not occupy the area, went by air from Kunming or more advanced staging bases over that Japanese-occupied corridor, into the places like Kweilin. That was the main receiving and supply staging area for the U.S. Air Force in Southeast China.

So, I was flown in over that corridor, in about January of 1945, and was sent to the weather station at the fighter base at Kanchow. As I recall it, this was about 50 miles from Kweilin, not much more than that, south of Kweilin, I think it was. That was essentially the same type of operation as Laifeng had been, although a two to three times larger base, a much more established and a somewhat larger base than Laifeng had been, but not nearly as large as Kweilin was. It was essentially the same kind of fighter base as Laifeng, with three or four squadrons of fighter planes that went out on missions of a few hours, either into the Japanese-occupied corridor, or sometimes across to Taiwan.

I: How much hazard was there in flying across the Japanese corridor?

CAVERT: By that time, relatively little. There were fighter escorts for the transports and U.S. fighter planes were patrolling the corridor all the time. There was relatively little Japanese air activity at the corridor when we crossed at the time because the Japanese knew that the U.S. Air Force had the area pretty well in hand. To the north, south and southeast of the corridor area, but not where the U.S. Air Force had established routes across that corridor, there certainly were Japanese fighter planes active and frequently engaging in dog fights with our fighters. But on the actual route from Kunming and its advance bases to Kweilin, it was pretty safe, by the time early in 1945, when I went across the Japanese corridor.

I: When you were actually in the Kweilin area and Kanchow, what exposure did you have to Japanese activities?

CAVERT: The usual activity there was an occasional Japanese air raid; I remember several at Kanchow. I suppose two or three times a week there would be an air alert and there would be a few Japanese bombers or fighter planes that would drop bombs on the air strip. Their usual intention was to harass a little bit, but mostly just to put the air strip out of commission for a few days. What they would try to do was get in close enough that they could drop a few small bombs on the air strip and put some good craters in the strip, so that it would be out of operation and fighters couldn't carry out their missions for a few days.

It was essentially the same thing our fighters were doing to them in return. Of course, whenever that happened, there would be an air raid alert, or "chingbao," as the word was. There were a number of anti-aircraft batteries around the air strip and base, and all of us had some kind of assignment to get into one of those anti-aircraft stations and occasionally take a few potshots at Japanese air craft, or what we though were aircraft. It was very rare that anything was brought down. This was usually at night. Of course, our fighter planes had been scrambled before the Japanese airplanes arrived.

The Chinese had a very efficient, although informal, underground intelligence system throughout all of the Japanese-occupied area that we were involved with, that the Air Force was involved with. As soon as the Japanese fighter mission took off from any place in that area, the word was passed along by the Chinese underground system. We had pretty good advanced warning. Even though the distances may not have been very large, there was plenty of warning as to when the air raid would start. The large, Chinese intelligence was usually very accurate.

I: How did you actually receive word to evacuate? What was the information chain?

CAVERT: From Kanchow we did not evacuate, but the two that I did--we did evacuate from Laohokow and Laifeng. (Maybe we did leave Kanchow, too, but I can't recall.) The word would come from the base commanders that intelligence had received information on Japanese movements, and usually we'd have several days when those movements were reported, that things were stirring and we should be prepared to pack up our equipment and evacuate. Usually, there were three or four days of advance warning, and we were ready to go, since portable equipment was packed up in one-half day or so.

I: How effective was the portable equipment?

CAVERT: It was very good. It was essentially the usual weather equipment, stripped down to the bare essentials and just very compactly put together and very efficiently put together. It had essentially the same equipment for taking weather observations and radio equipment for receiving information transmitted from Kunming, so that it worked very well.

The deficiency was that in Central China--Laifeng, Laohokow, and to some extent in southeast China--there was very little in the way of weather observations from reporting stations to the north and west and northeast. The place where the weather systems came from, that is, usually from the west and northwest, we got only sparse reports or none at all. What reports we had were primarily from small Chinese weather observation groups in the Chinese military or underground and so were not from well-trained people. It was

only one of their functions to make the weather observations and to send them.

The problem was getting enough data and observations from the places where we really needed it to enable us to make reasonable forecasts. A lot of forecasting was done by simply each time an airplane came in--by talking with the pilot and getting a report on what had been seen in weather. That was frequent enough that during a good flying day, it was simply a matter of putting that information down on the weather map and then transmitting on to the next series of pilots the same information we'd gotten previously, organized in what we thought the weather patterns and weather fronts were.

I: Why were you next stationed in the Foochow area?

CAVERT: This was in the period roughly from April 1945 to the end of the war against Japan and beyond--to roughly November or December, 1945. During that period there was considerable speculation and, I guess, some grounds for it, that there might well be an attack by U.S. forces in the Pacific area on Japan or on Taiwan, and then using that as a staging area on to Japan, or as a place for sending air missions into Japan. The information from southeast China would be crucial for the landing or for advanced air operations against Japanese air bases held at Taiwan.

We had essentially no air force bases, as such, in that part of southeast China--not that far southeast--Kanchow and Kweilin were the closest we had, and it was important to get weather stations organized and weather

observations transmitted as usual, every six hours daily, from a network of stations right along the coast of southeast China in Fukien Province and nearby areas.

The Chinese army and also some civilians--they were intermingled--did have along the Southeast China coast about seven or eight weather stations or radio stations where Chinese people were trained also as weather observers and had some, at least rudimentary, weather observation equipment. Several months before, the Fourteenth Air Force and the Tenth Weather Squadron had sent one of the weather people I had known well, both on the ship coming over to India and to China, and again in China, as an advanced officer, to take charge of organizing that network of observation systems, which the Chinese had, and to supervise the transmission of their weather observations by radio back to Kunming. He actually had had some previous contact with Chinese. As I recall, he attended some Chinese language school in the United States.

He was then rotated out of China back to the United States and needed to be replaced, as he'd been there for a number of months, so I was sent in to replace him. By that time, that little unit had been fairly well-established. The radio transmitting system had been all set up. He had established the contact with division and liaison with the seven or eight Chinese weather stations and most of them had been reporting for two or three months.

By that time, the stations were actually in the employ--secondarily to the Chinese--of the U.S. military, the Fourteenth Air Force. So not only did we supervise

their weather observing, collect their data, and see that it was transmitted back to Kunming by radio; but we also were responsible for seeing that those Chinese weather and radio people were paid by the U.S. military. What it involved was traveling by jeep from the house in Yungnan that this previous officer had acquired. In the house where three, I think, Americans--two of whom were radio people. I was the weather officer and there were also interpreters who lived with us.

We traveled by jeep up and down through Fukien Province, north and south. The farthest north we went was somewhat south of Hanchow. We visited these seven or eight weather stations on a scheduled basis--on more or less of a schedule, when we could keep it--and talked with the observers and their radio people. We saw that they were paid and we dealt with any problems they had. We did a little bit of training and working with them on improving their weather observations and their technical skills.

I: What was this house like that you were living in?

CAVERT: It was a typical Chinese house, presumably formerly occupied by a very well-off or well-to-do Chinese person. I don't recall from whom it had been acquired, but obviously it would be one of the influential wealthy people in town. It had been bought, or taken over, then, by some of the military. As I recall, it had seven or eight rooms and two or three houseboys. There were rooms where each interpreter had his own bedroom and each of the Americans had his own room. There was a room that had been converted to a radio transmitting and receiving station for radio personnel.

An amah came with the house; that is, she took care of the laundry, and so forth. I think, as I recall, there was some kind of a hut in the back where the cook lived. They were essentially servants. They were paid by us, as the interpreters were paid by us, but the amah and houseboys and cook were employed servants.

I: Who was responsible for organizing and running the household?

CAVERT: Ultimately, I guess, I was, as my predecessor had been in that job, but most of it was done by the interpreters.

I: How well did you get to know your interpreters?

CAVERT: Very well indeed. We may have had three different people over a period of time, but two at any one time (Mike and Loo, I think their names were), and one or both of them traveled with us on these jeep trips, up and down the Fukien mountain areas and villages.

Of course, we were highly dependent upon them. The Chinese interpreters would stop over at a place and frequently sleep in the same room and always eat together.

The jeeps were very subject to breakdowns, especially the tires, because tires were very hard to come by in Southeast China. As I recall, we had flat tires on some of those trips two or three, maybe four, times a day. We got pretty good at patching them and finding local people who could patch those tubes. Frequently, we had to dicker with local people for replacements. I was going to say <u>new</u> tubes and tires, but mostly it was <u>used</u> tubes and tires that were only slightly better than the ones we had. We would have 14 to 20 patches on a tube. Anyway,

the interpreters were always involved in that situation with us. We had to deal, by interpretation, with the local Chinese people on negotiating those things. If the jeep broke down or there was a problem with the engine, they could find somebody who could give a hand with that. So the interpreters we lived with were essentially our colleagues and comrades and friends for those several months.

I: What did you know about the family or educational backgrounds of Mike and Loo?

CAVERT: I don't recall, after this many years in the past, but I don't recall that I knew very much about them. I do have some letters which may say a little bit about that. They were, of course, people who had been well-educated. They attended good schools in China and I think they had some university training. I can't recall if they finished at the university. Becoming an interpreter, since they had to learn English in school, was a common job for Chinese people with that kind of background. They were very bright young men and, as I recall, both of them were about 20 to 21, the age I was at the time.

I: When you were out making the circuit and had to stay overnight, where would you stay?

CAVERT: Sometimes we'd stay in a military compound where the weather observers had their station. Frequently we'd stay in the officers' quarters they had there, and those were fine. On the other hand, on a number of occasions when we were on the road and the jeep broke down, and so we didn't get to the next station, we'd stay in most any

thing we could find. Frequently this was a Chinese hotel which varied from nice--not great, but nice--to some pretty primitive kinds of places. Sometimes three or four of us were in a room where half a dozen others were also staying, in sort of barracks fashion. Each of us laid on a straw mat. The toilet facilities were of the outside variety--privy--and where there was a pretty good supply of bedbugs and similar kinds of entertainers.

I: What and where would you eat in a situation like that?

CAVERT: Usually we'd eat about two kinds of meals: frequently we'd eat at the officers' mess that was at that place. Sometimes we would eat with one of the local Chinese officials and sometimes in one of the restaurants, in which case Mike and Loo were always pretty careful to make sure that it was reasonably sanitary. Always we were with Chinese of one kind or another and frequently we ate in local restaurants or food shops. The other kind of meal was that which we always carried with us in the jeep, a good supply of food rations (K- or C-rations), a standard military package, coming in cans and packages. We ate a lot of C-rations and K-rations.

I: You mentioned your interactions with the Chinese in trying to get spare tires. What other kinds of interactions did you have with local shopkeepers, farmers, and people like that when you were there?

CAVERT: Quite a bit with restaurant people. And quite often we would visit local Chinese officials and magistrates whenever we would come to a town, as well as Chinese army

military officers and enlisted men. Sometimes we'd stop to ask directions. I guess also we would ask for gas; but I can't recall how we handled the gas thing--whether we got it at the army stations, or local supplies--so we talked to the people there. Frequently along the road, and whenever the jeep broke down with a flat tire or whatever the problem was, or anytime we stopped, a crowd of kids and curious onlookers would gather within a matter of a few minutes. There were always plenty of people around to chat with.

I: At this point, how much were you able to converse with them in Chinese?

CAVERT: Within a few weeks after I arrived in Yungan, I got so I could handle the rudiments--and I mean rudiments, not refinements--of conversational Chinese. I could order a meal in a restaurant and converse with the waiter. I knew something about asking directions and understanding directions that they gave, if they came in small enough packages; a little bit about food and roads and hotels, military personnel, a little bit, but I never got proficient or fluent in Chinese. For that purpose, we always had the interpreters with us.

When we were frequently entertained, especially in Yungan in between trips, and sometimes in some of these small communities, we were taken out to a Chinese dinner-banquet, with its numerous courses, and several people around a large round table. We frequently did some halting Chinese conversation at those affairs.

I: When you were on the circuit, did you, either through the interpreters or perhaps on your own, get a feeling for what the populace felt about Kuomintang and the Communists at this time?

CAVERT: Of course, our contacts were almost entirely with people who were either in the Kuomintang, that is, the local government people were under the Kuomintang or the military, which, of course, were Kuomintang partisans or supporters. Of necessity, almost everybody whom we saw was supporting the Kuomintang, whether actively and enthusiastically is another matter; but at least that was the prevailing government and it prevailed very strongly--the Kuomintang had the military force in that section of China.

I had no contact, although some of my weather squadron colleagues did, with Communist China. We had some people who were sent in to Sian and I think Yenan on occasion. We had a base established at Sian; a weather base and intelligence base; but I was not involved directly with any of those, so that I don't recall any extensive conversation with anybody about the Communist China of that day, or with Communist Chinese leaders.

I: Were you getting any intelligence reports?

CAVERT: We were aware of the struggles and where the Chinese Communists were doing their own things against the Japanese and in and around the Sian area. Also around Northcentral China, where the Communists had some pockets, we heard, via intelligence, what was going on there; but we heard it through the American military, not through the Chinese, particularly. We probably knew more and had access to more reports of what was going on in the Communist-controlled pockets of northern China than the local military or the local governmental officials, at least that they let on.

I: What was the countryside like in the area where you were making the circuit?

CAVERT: It was a very pretty area, low mountains, a lot of mountain driving, but not sheer nor severe mountains. It was gentle, low mountains and foothills, usually with a river flowing in the valley between the mountain ridges, terraced with intensive terrace farming right up the side of the mountains and foothills. Chinese farmers on their paddies and the terraced hillsides, and water buffalo, which can be seen all over China, of course, were doing most of the animal labor. Masses of human labor, which was most of the labor--practically no machinery of any kind. Lots of children playing and occasionally working. Very busy and pleasant scene.

I: Were you in the tea growing area at all?

CAVERT: I think so, but I've forgotten. Of course, rice was growing there, but I think there was tea. I was fairly well-accustomed to tea in a different sense, because of the Assam Valley in northeastern India, there are extensive tea plantations, but I don't recall how much tea I saw in China. I drank a lot of tea.

I: How did you learn about victory in the east?

CAVERT: We had this radio transmitting and receiving system in the Yungnan house, so we had extensive radio contact all the time, mostly with the U.S. military base radio stations. They were extensive and on the air all the time, so we got that kind of news immediately. I recall we were sitting in the radio room, receiving the usual radio daily weather reports from our Chinese transmitting system, and the radio fellows had the U.S. base stations on, as they usually did, simultaneously. It came over the air on that. I recall also by the same method hearing of President Roosevelt's death and Truman's inauguration, so the radio room really was the communication with the outside world for us.

I: What was the response when you heard about Roosevelt's death?

CAVERT: I remember I was feeling rather that it was an end of an era and rather apprehensive, as most people at home were, about whether Truman was able to take over with the same kind of leadership that Roosevelt gave. By that time, the war in Europe was pretty well decided--and so it was a feeling of an end of an era.

TAPE TWO-SIDE TWO

I: What was the response when you learned that the atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima?

CAVERT: I don't recall any particular response, except we thought that was a point toward our own CBI Theatre in China finally being liberated and we were about ready to go home.

I: Had you anticipated this kind of action at all?

CAVERT: No. We had no inclination at all of the atomic bomb. I don't recall that we had very extensive reports other than that it had been dropped and it was a major new weapon.

I: How did the Chinese respond to the news that the war was over in the east?

CAVERT: They were very heartened by that and, as I recall, we had some banquets with our friends there. I would have to look back at the letters a little more to be specific. I did find some letters on that period of my stay in southeast China.

I: How did you conclude your work in this area?

CAVERT: We knew, of course, after we heard the announcement that the war was over, that we would be wrapping up, hopefully, within the next few weeks and going home. We got the notice, oh, within two or three weeks, I guess, from the Tenth Weather Squadron - Fourteenth Air Force that we should close down our end of the Chinese weather reporting service and turn it back to the local Chinese military. We made, as I recall, final visits to the personnel and thanked them and had sort of a final parting. Then we closed up the house.

We had known, in the meantime, that we would be picked up at a nearby community where the Catholic mission, which we'd visited once or twice before, was sort of the local focal point for activities.

After our communications with the rest of the world, we packed our gear and drove our jeep to this community. I can't recall how the other fellows left; but they left before I did and I stayed in the Catholic mission about three weeks or more, the better part of a month, waiting for an Air Force transport that would come in and take me out. I think I was there after the other people had left, so I had quite a long period, then, with the fathers at the mission and in that mission community. I enjoyed their hospitality and mostly lounged around and read; but there was a lot of conversation with them and visiting with the fathers and local Chinese.

I: What Catholic order were they?

CAVERT: I think they were Maryknoll, as were most of the Chinese missions in that area.

I: What had been their experience during the war?

CAVERT: They had not been directly touched very much because the Japanese never got directly into that area, as I recall. At least, I don't recall any comments by them about Japanese occupation or contact, but the isolation of Southeast China from the rest of China made things rather hard for the people. They did a lot of work with the local Chinese people, providing them with shelter and seeing that their needs were met at that time.

I am sure there were a lot of air raids in that area, one way or the other, particularly after the American military were there or when the Chinese military were there at various points. We had some air raids, as I recall, warnings but relatively little. I'm sure there had been air raids before that.

I: How were these Catholic missionaries viewing the future at that point?

CAVERT: I think they were reasonably optimistic about China after the war. They were very devoted people. I don't recall how long; but they had spent most of their careers in China and they looked on it as their home and their life and mission.

I: Did they have any opportunity for furloughs in the United States, or did they, once in China, stay there?

CAVERT: I don't recall. Certainly, during the war period I don't think they had any chance for furloughs. They were really pretty well bound to their mission locations for that period. They would travel back and forth from one mission to another at times, and be visited by, I

suppose, by their superiors and other Maryknoll fathers. There were Maryknoll missions, or Catholic missions, in almost every small community in southeastern and eastern China. They would walk, as they did on most of their journeys, or they might travel in a dilapidated local bus, if there was one. They could stay, they said, in a mission every night without any difficulty, and probably in a Maryknoll mission, as they moved up the coast. Before the war, they said, they could do that in going from Shanghai or Peking to Canton. They could stay in a mission every night, even though they were walking.

I: What kind of residential set up did they have there?

CAVERT: The mission was a fairly large compound with mud-plaster walls around it and several buildings. There was one large building, where the fathers lived and had their dining room, their library and studies, and so on. There were several buildings around it within the walls and around the periphery, where Chinese people lived, some of their associates and some of their employees. They had a number of Chinese who were essentially students of theirs in the compound, and they had associations with the local officials and their church, of course, so it was a fairly large and extensive compound. There were lots of mission activities. I can't recall the number of the fathers exactly, but as I believe there were four or five at any one time.

I: In these various places that you were, did you have any exposure to Protestant mission work?

CAVERT: Not so much contact with Protestant missions, but we had a lot of exposure to Protestant chaplains. Some of them had been in China before as missionaries. I don't recall--my memory may be short on it--but I don't recall a lot of association with Protestant missionaries. But I had a fair amount of contact with Catholic missionaries in Southeast China.

I: What was your route upon leaving China?

CAVERT: A transport took us from Chungking to Canton. I spent a day or two in Canton, waiting for transportation to Shanghai. There we awaited transport by boat--troop transport. Of course, everyone was being moved out of China and Shanghai was where they would leave by boat from, so there was a lot of American military personnel waiting for transportation home. I think I was in Shanghai about three weeks or so.

I: What were your experiences while you were in Shanghai? How did you occupy your time?

CAVERT: I spent a lot of time just plain sightseeing and walking around, visiting with people, both American military and local Chinese, and visiting restaurants. We thought we were going to be able to visit Peking because that could be done then. A couple of friends and I had made arrangements to get a flight to Peking and spend several days there. The day before we were scheduled to leave, we got notice that we were going to be shipped out, so we never did get to Peking. We did a lot of sightseeing in Shanghai while we were there.

I: How do you feel Shanghai differed from most of the rest of the places you had been?

CAVERT: Even at that time, in spite of the fact that it had not been liberated from Japanese occupation very long, it was a pretty metropolitan, thriving city--a lot of local commerce and a lot of commerce by sea. I suppose at that time it was mostly down the Chinese coast. Of course, there was a tremendous amount of American military naval vessels in the harbor. I recall walking along the bund, which was a large commercial street where there was a lot of international flavor. Even at that time, Shanghai was a cosmopolitan, international city.

I: In general, how did U.S. military personnel respond to the Chinese?

CAVERT: That varied--reactions cover the spectrum. A number of GIs had very little to do with the Chinese, whether by lack of interest or intention, or the fact that they were stationed mostly on bases that were on the outskirts of town. In any event, there were a number of GIs who had very little contact with Chinese. On the other hand, there were a number of people who had frequent contact with Chinese. I was involved mostly with weather stations in places like Laohokow and Laifeng and in Southeast China, where, at the American bases, I was associated with enlisted weather personnel. They were very interested in establishing some contact with Chinese, including things like playing volleyball and basketball, eating at local restaurants and meeting some of the local people in town. They were cordial and it was a very fine reciprocal relationship. In Southeast China, where there were just the two or three of us Americans, we had so much daily contact with the Chinese, those were very cordial relationships. It was very pleasant and lots of sociability.

Then there were certainly some American personnel who regrettably looked down on the Chinese, and especially on the mobs of them along the roads who were doing the work--the labor of carrying the gravel and pebbles and "honey" buckets and produce over the yoke sticks on their backs--and who sometimes would clog the roads. There were certainly Americans driving jeeps, weapons carriers, and trucks, who looked on them, the Chinese peasants, as something of a nuisance, and I heard more than one American

epithet called to a group of Chinese who were blocking the road. I wouldn't repeat some of the language. It varied over the whole spectrum, from Americans who were very appreciative and interested in the Chinese over to the other end of the spectrum, of Americans who considered their time there in China a burden and couldn't wait to get out and who looked on the Chinse as sometimes less than human.

I: What did you know about Joseph Stilwell at this time?

CAVERT: It was mostly stories that one heard. Stilwell--you heard about him from the military personnel and sometimes from the local gossip of the Chinese officials, that he was looked on as a sort of a leader of the American saviors of China. He was mentioned as a commanding figure, a powerful one; he was well-known to be very strongly supportive of the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek. We'd read about him occasionally in the CBI edition of the Stars and Stripes--the military paper. Personal contacts, I had none.

I: Did you witness any corruption towards the end of the war when there was supposed to be a great deal of corruption?

CAVERT: Only on a small scale. It was well-known, and was frequently commented upon by Americans that the Chinese "squeeze," as it was called, was everywhere. If you wanted to get something done, if you wanted to get your houseboy to get something for you, or do something, and it involved contact with a Chinese merchant or individual, the "squeeze" occurred along the line, with money taken off at each stage of the transaction. This was accepted as the Chinese way of doing business, at least with American personnel, and presumably among themselves, too.

The black market, of course, was extensive at that time, and the houseboys were adept at finding the best price for exchanging American currency on the black market. When we went into town, there were people along the streets who would exchange money, saying, "Change your money. Change your money." They would strike up a conversation of what their going currency conversion rate was for the day; it would vary from one entrepreneur to another. They would vie with each other for getting the business of American personnel to change their money. You would see fairly expensive American goods in their shops along the streets, which had been obtained from PXs (post exchanges) or some kind of illegal smuggling. So those were the kinds of evidences we saw. We didn't have much contact, directly, with large-scale graft or corruption.

I: Did American military personnel do quite a bit of exchanging of money?

CAVERT: Yes. The black market was so open it was hardly a black market.

I: After you left Shanghai, what was your route back to the United States?

CAVERT: Through the Ryukyu Islands, or near them, and the North Pacific and then to Hawaii and from Hawaii to Panama, through the Panama Canal and up the Gulf of Mexico to Mobile, Alabama, where we landed.

I: What kind of impact, if any, do you think your experience in China has had on you?

CAVERT: I had really a very enjoyable time, mostly, during that period and I treasured that experience a great deal. I think it certainly broadened my horizons on the contrast between American life, American wealth and our standard of living, compared with much of the rest of the world. I had a great admiration for the people who had lived in China, including missionaries and chaplains, that I knew and I certainly gained a warm feeling for a lot of Chinese people, with whom I came in contact, particularly in Southeast China, including interpreters.

I: How have you maintained your interest in China over the years?

CAVERT: There hasn't been much of tangible contact. I've always enjoyed keeping up with the news of China and I'd love to go back some day, but I haven't had a great deal of contact.

(Here's one from December 7, 1945, that you might be interested in. I had access to a typewriter in the Catholic mission in Fukien and a lot of time to write and read, so I typed off a number of letters there.) "In the last news broadcast I heard from San Francisco, I heard that General Marshall was to stop at Pearl Harbor, en route to China, to present his viewpoint before a group investigating the Pearl Harbor tragedy. It is certainly reassuring to note the vast progress made since this date four years ago, and I suspect the newspaper editorials and comments are reviewing frequently today the course of world events for four years ago today to the present.

"Last evening, Father Yang, a young Catholic priest who is studying law at Amoy University, mentioned some facts concerning financial support of some students in Chinese colleges. At Amoy University, located temporarily

here during the wartime occupation of Amoy by the Japanese, 80 percent of the students in the law college were receiving 'scholarship support' from the Central government during wartime.

"Now, says Father Yang, credit has been cut to some 40 percent who are receiving aid from the government. In the engineering college, better than 40 percent of the students were also receiving aid. If the student receiving such assistance can live on the food available from his allotment, his only university expenses are his clothes and his study books and materials. The 'if' clause is rather important to one of my epicurian tendencies, for the food allowance is humble, at best.

"A rice portion is provided by the government on a monthly basis. Although I am uncertain as to the exact quantity, undoubtedly it is far more rice than either you or I could possibly consume, but I am not so certain that is sufficient for the students' needs. I recall that Mr. Howard Yung, of the Fukien Provincial Livestock and Experimental Farm, which I visited, once remarked that he had been accustomed to eating an average of five bowls of rice per meal when he was a middle school student.

"Supplementary to the rice ration, an Amoy University student received 1500 dollars Chinese national currency per month for meat and vegetables. This allotment is equivalent, at current black market rates of monetary exchange, to approximately one American dollar. Since this money is necessary for only the last two meals of the day, Father Yang explained that this sum provided 25 dollars Chinese national currency (C.N.) per meal. He says that the student can purchase one small piece of pork for 15 dollars C.N. and a small serving of vegetables for the remaining 10 dollars C.N.

"For breakfast, the government provides for every student a large bowl of chih fan, a sort of gruel, consisting of boiled rice and an egg. Here it is the custom of several students to contract for a caterer to serve them their food in one of the university halls for a fixed monthly rate. Most students undoubtedly supplement the meager 15 dollars C.N. with their own funds; but it it equally true that some students depend entirely on this ration to satisfy their nutritional requirements.

"When a student is fostered in a university by the government, he is required to live in the college dormitories and to eat on the college grounds. Father Yang remarked that in such cases there is some little power on the part of the government to demand services of the student after he has graduated. Although the student has signed no contract to work as a government employee, after he has completed his course, the university can withhold his diploma and records, which, in a country where written documents and written recommendations are absolutely essential for all transactions, constitutes a very strong, persuasive force.

"Actually, the true certificate of graduation is not issued by the university. When a student graduates from a national university, or even from a private college, including mission schools, I understand for that matter, he may be issued a temporary diploma; but actually the only diploma recognized is that subsequently issued by the Ministry of Education of the Central government.

"Because of the current sad state of communications, plus the usual snail's pace of action customary in the Chinese governmental bureaus, it frequently requires some time to obtain the official Chinese governmental

documents. Mike Loo, our interpreter at Yungan, graduated from Amoy University more than a year ago. When I last saw him, he had not yet received his official diploma from the Ministry of Education. (I have more information about the interpreter.)

"Bachelor's degrees as well as advanced degrees are bestowed directly from the Minister of Education, although I believe Mr. Lin, of Yunnan, indicated that this process is recent, having been inaugurated in the past few months. (I think Mr. Lin was the local weather expert and scientific person in Yunnan.) A special committee of the Ministry of Education is responsible for granting higher degrees.

"Father Yang mentioned that he had studied and received instructions in San Min Chu I, the three people's principles of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, from the time he first entered primary school until he became a sophomore in college. The complete writings and lectures of Dr. Sun, which explain thoroughly his philosophies and system for the national organization of China, fill several volumes. I can imagine that by the time one has been continually exposed to that material for some 13 formative years, he should be quite thoroughly oriented and indoctrinated.

"Of course, Amoy University, like any institution of any type, has Monday meetings whose order of ritual is firmly fixed by the Central government. The purpose of the weekly meetings is to keep the participants continuously conscious of the purpose of the Central government and the party, which, of course, for all practical purposes are complementary. I have with me a complete copy of all the ceremonies and rules of a Monday meeting, a book which can be purchased as a full set at almost any stationery shop. I think you'll find the explanation of how this system of orientation and education works quite interesting, as I have." (I must have sent that along, but I don't recall seeing it later.)

(From Yungan where I must have also had a typewriter in our little house. 21 August, 1945) "Yesterday afternoon we took a walk to a nearby government livestock experiemental farm. I think you might be interested in some of the details of our visit. The farmers finance and are supervised by the Reconstruction Bureau of the provincial government, with a very meager annual grant from the Central government. How inconsequential this federal grant is was emphasized by the manager when he remarked that, this year the Central government had contributed only one million dollars C.N. to the farm. Having over five million C.N. as funds for our own little projects here in the weather business in Southeast China, I can readily see that one million would amount to very little for farm's purposes.

"The farm is managed by Mr. Da-yang, a very likeable chap, who received at least part of his agricultural education at Berea College, in Berea, Kentucky. He had preferred to major in education, he said; but his advisors at Oberlin, after he studied for a few months, suggested that all of the Chinese studying in the States were majoring in education at that time. They asked him what other fields interested him and he replied that he had been a farm boy most of his life. They suggested agriculture for his major and would have sent him to Cornell Agricultural College, in Ithaca, New York; but he was a trifle frightened by the size of that school, feeling he might be lost in the maze of students there. So he went to Berea, hoping he would be able to receive more personal direction. He worked and studied at Berea for two and one-half years before returning to this part of China.

"Possibly the entrance to the farm constitutes one of the most pleasing aspects of the visit. The large lawn was well-stocked with large green shade trees, a welcome relief after a two kilometer walk under an exceedingly warm afternoon sun. Shade trees are all too scarce in most of the heavily populated areas of China and this province is no exception. This lawn might have been that of any well-kept farm in the Midwest of the United States, flanked on both sides by green gardens and rows of young trees.

"In the rear of the house, we walked through the cattle barns, where several cows and heifers were confined to the stanchions. All were grades (that is, not pure-bred cows), since Mr. Yang emphasized that it has been impossible to obtain any pure-bred cattle for breeding since the outbreak of the war in 1937. He has one very old Holstein bull, which came from the United States, but which has long since been practically useless for any service. The animal was 20 years old and was to be butchered this week. (Rather tough beef, I should think.) He looks as if he might have been quite a guy in his day, though, full and deep with a straight top line. I imagine that 15 years ago he was the prize exhibit of the farm. Mr. Yang opened the bull's mouth to show how his teeth had become practically nothing and he certainly had the general appearance of an undernourished animal.

"Most of the cows in the 50-head herd are bred from this pure-bred Holstein and they, too, could stand considerable fattening. The manager says he averages 14 pounds of milk from them with an average of 4.5 percent butter fat. The butter fat percentage sounds surprisingly high for the conditons, doesn't it?

"Principal feed is wheat bran mixed with rice bran, although, I note the cows were munching on some wild hay while we were in the barn. Practically no field corn is grown in this part of China and the manager says that they have not enough land to grow their own feed. Even the pastures, I imagine, offer little feed and nutrient value, although we didn't see where the herd was grazing. Mr. Yang says that soy bean is far too expensive to allow him to feed it to his cattle. Apparently soy beans are for human consumption only, since they are used fairly extensively for that among the middle class people.

"The barn was spotlessly clean with several energetic attendants on the job to keep it so. Probably the farm will move back to the coast when the provincial government returns to its pre-war location. Then the manager hopes to obtain more American pure-bred cattle and build up a superior herd again.

"Back of the barn were some 20 head of cattle, which had just been brought from one of the coastal cities. They looked much healthier and bigger than the animals in the barn, but like the others, their udders were slight and hard--none of the heavy udders so characteristic of Mr. Scholljegerdes' cows, just before milking. (That's a dairy farm I worked on in southern Minnesota that my dad knows about.)

"Mr. Yang showed us his two "stateside" pure-bred boars, one a Duroc Jersey and the other a Berkshire. Both have been used with local nondescript sows and the results are much more favorable with the Duroc, he claims. One sow has farrowed the night before and was surrounded by 12 little fellows, exploring the new world. Mr. Yang said he has never had any trouble with sows stepping on or smothering the very young pigs. It seems to me that I recall that used to be a frequent problem at home.

"The pigs are fed largely wheat and rice bran, like the cattle--no milk, since milk is considered too valuable for pigs. Mr. Yang claims the calcium sources are very scarce here. He said he thinks the reason that the typical pig of China is so outlandishly sway-back and underslung is the excessive lack of nourishment in the dry, heavy feed. I wonder if the lack of calcium he mentioned may not be a factor. Like the cattle, his pigs were in need of considerably more fattening, although the boars, thin and mangy as they seemed, were certainly big enough brutes.

"Although we didn't see any of his poultry, the manager mentioned that they have very few breeds and that the Leghorns don't seem to produce too well, averaging only 160 eggs per year. Besides the customary wheat and rice bran, they are fed shells, shrimp and blood. To me, ground shrimp was a new diet for chickens..

"Along the path, Mr. Yang indicated a patch of corn, one of two small plots of corn on the farm. He said that corn, which stood some two to three feet high, was the second crop this year. There are only two months of frost, so there is plenty of growing season.

"In his building and office, there is a small laboratory, where milk is tested and vaccines are prepared. The milk is not pasturized and must surely be high in bacteria count, since there are practically no provisions for cooling it. When the farm moves back closer to the coastal city, the milk will be pasturized. Our interesting tour completed, Mr. Yang treated us to a couple of cups of hot milk--just as well that it had been boiled. We thanked him for showing us about and proceeded on our way."

(August 20th--this must have been in Yungan.) "I mentioned how your birthday (this is to my mother) always holds a double meaning in the limelight of the occasion of your wedding anniversary. The situation is somewhat similar to the double holidays that seem to be so numerous in China. I learned about two more today. Practically every month seems to have a double holiday, beginning with the western New Year, on January 1, followed by Children's day on April 4. In quick succession come the Double Fifth on May 5, commemorating Hsu Yuan's birthday, a famous Chinese poet, the Double Sixth on June 6, designated as Teachers' Day and the Double Seventh on July 7th, the date of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which set off the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Last, but not least, of the double holidays was the Chinese Independence Day on October 10th, on which date the republic was founded in 1911.

"Mike, one of our interpreters, a very fine boy from Malaya who graduated from Amoy University in political science last year, has been explaining to me the method by which one often meets his fiancee in China. Mike met his own girl friend through this rather vicarious system, so he thinks it is commendable, but I am a trifle doubtful how confident it would make one. Here's the way it goes: One of Mike's friends knows of a very nice girl in some other city, and asks Mike if he is interested in knowing her. Mike answers in the affirmative, so this friend writes to the girl, asking her if she would care to correspond with a nice fellow--Mike, for example. It would never do for the girl to say she would like nothing better than to correspond with him. She merely replys to Mike's friend, more or less diffidently, that she always enjoys making new friends.

"That is the affirmative 'go ahead' signal, however, so Mike's friend tells him that the red tape is cleared. Mike writes to her for several months, during which they discuss everything from Shakespere to the merits of Shanghai. Finally, they have become so buddy-buddy that they have reached the stage of snapshot exchange. If they are really highly aggressive, they may arrange a personal meeting after a year to so. That's the big test. If they live up to the expectations, the friendship is secured and soon ripens into something a little more romantic, although still by way of letters. Finally, Mike visits his correspondent in her parent's home and if that ordeal succeeds without a hitch, marital possibilities are bright. If not, there is always a possibility of another recommendation from another friend."

(16 October 1945) "Censorship of locations in this theatre have been lifted for several weeks, but because we are a trifle off the air routes and consequently get official and home news only occasionally. Actually, my place of business is Yungan, Fukien, as the card I am enclosing indicates. You probably think it strange, to say the least, that some insignificant lieutenant should have such a fancy card (my calling card) printed. So did I also, but when I first took over this South China project, my predecessor and everyone else told me it was absolutely necessary to have a card in both Chinese and English. I rather laughed at the idea, but since the old timers should know far better than I, I did as suggested. As I suspected, I had practically no use for the calling cards during the first few weeks. Then, some three weeks ago, I began a long duty trip to the adjacent provinces to the north in order to straighten out the affairs of some of our out-of-the-way weather recording stations in Fukien and Anhwei provinces.

TAPE THREE-SIDE ONE

"During the trip, on numerous different occasions it was necessary to consult various governmental officials in order to facilitate our work in those regions. I had started the trip with some 25 of my calling cards, feeling quite confident that I would return with the same number; but by the time the trip was little more than half complete, I had already exhausted my supply. The signs seemed to be very, very encouraging suddenly. On arriving at Changting, I find that the officer in charge of the large weather units here is being returned to the States, as soon as his station here has completed its transfer to Canton. Since he has only some 19 months overseas, I feel fairly confident that as soon as I can complete the odds and ends of this project I have been supervising, my next orders will direct me home.

"My only task now is to close up the rather complicated affairs of this Southeast China weather project and, since some six million dollars of Chinese National currency is involved, it will undoubtedly take another month before I have paid all the Chinese personnel to whom we owe salaries and collected all the monies and vouchers due us from the Fukien Weather Bureau, which jointly sponsors this project with the Tenth Weather Squadron. It means another two weeks trip by jeep to the outlying substations in Fujien and Anhwei, a trip which I do not anticipate, really, for several reasons; but which is entirely necessary, if all our radio operators and weather observers at those stations are to receive the money due them.

"Even so, I should be back in Kunming by the 15th of November, and after I have settled with the finance disbursing officer there, I'm quite confident my orders home

will be forthcoming immediately. Quite obviously, my main interest now is to take care of the numerous affairs yet to be completed concerning the project in Southeast China, report to headquarters, then receive my orders for the Promised Land."

(Here's one from September 22, 1945): "It was a pleasant surprise this evening to be staying in an American hostel with rope-spring beds and showers. You see, Mike, our best interpreter, and I have been traveling for some six days now, making a visit to most of the Chinese stations in this weather network. At most of the places, we stayed at Chinese hotels or so-called service clubs, and, in general, the accommodations for restful sleeping, while they certainly could have been much worse, left a few minor conveniences to be desired.

"Night fell just as we were waiting for the river ferry to come from the other side of the river to carry our jeep across, and another American jeep stopped along side ours. In it was a staff sergeant who manages this hostel and station and he assured us there was plenty of room for weary travelers. We really didn't refuse very insistently, because we knew we might fare far better here than in the town hotels or service clubs.

"Anyway, here we are and enjoying the luxury. Most of the local hotels, even those which enjoy American and Chinese of high ranking patronage, boast only the typical Chinese board bed. While one soon becomes accustomed to paralyzing one's crazy bone every time you roll over, it makes a nice contrast to sleep on the rope-spring bed, as it gives a little beneath one's weight.

"Actually, the board beds are eventually restful enough, after a day on bumpy roads, but the bugs and mosquitoes that seem to be aboriginal to the boards are a trifle annoying. Last night, after quickly sprinkling 'anti-crawling insect' powder all over the bed clothes, and after bathing myself in mosquito repellent, I congratulated myself on the prospect of a bugless night. Then I thought I had spent one, too, since I did not awaken at all until the appointed hour. However, upon closer personal examination, I discovered my right eye had been almost swollen closed from a sizeable bug bite above it, and, to make my facial features more presentable, some seven bugs had left their calling cards on my forehead.

"This jeep trip through portions of four Chinese provinces has proved extremely interesting, as a trip of this nature most certainly should. It looks as if I will be able to accomplish the ends of the weather project, which was the original object of our travels, so in every respect, it seems successful. In one portion, we followed a beautiful swift running river for more than 100 kilometers. Since we had plenty of time to make our next destination by evening, I enjoyed the scenery to the fullest, snapping a number of pictures whenever a new scene of interest captured my attention."

(Here's one,November 22, 1945): "For the past four days we have been staying in a Catholic mission in Changting, waiting patiently for the airplane that is scheduled to come here to pick us up and return to Kunming, probably then to Shanghai. (Actually we never got back to Kunming; it was Canton and Shanghai.) Earlier the weather was far too unfavorable to risk sending an airplane into an isolated field, far from our radio aid, for navigation. Not that this spot is exactly isolated; but it has practically no com-

munication with West or North China, now that the last Americans have left the larger coastal cities.

"The Tenth Weather Station, which was really large a few months ago, moved from Changtin to Canton. Two days ago I received a message from the Chinese navy's radio station stating that an airplane would arrive today; but since it is already mid-afternoon, I am doubtful whether we will leave today.

"In the meantime, we are enjoying a forced vacation. Besides Corporal Hank Kinman and Pat, our interpreter, there are four Navy fellows who came down to repair the Chinese radio station and drive away the jeep, which I am turning over to the Navy unit in this area.

"Of course, a few days with no specific details to be attended to, are pleasant, though somewhat lazy. I've gone through all the vouchers and bank accounts, which I must present to the finance officer on my return to headquarters and have worked somewhat doggedly at my personal correspondence. Two days ago I was rather delighted to find that the Catholic fathers here have a very fine copy of Pearl Buck's translation of Shui Fu in their library. Shui Fu is one of the most classical Chinese stories, consisting of some 70 chapters and 1,300 pages of English type. This tale is not nearly so formidable as its length would indicate, however, since it reads very much like Robin Hood or Ivanhoe. The literal translation of the title is Water Margin, which I understand is a reference to much of the action--the location--in Shantung Province.

"Pearl Buck, however, claims in her introduction to derive no particular significance from the literal translation, so she renamed the book All Men Are Brothers, feeling

that the context supports her title. Her title stems from one of the most famous statements of Confucius: "Within the four seas, all men are brothers." The four seas refers to the Chinese belief that there are only four seas rather than the present day generally accepted seven seas. This Confucian saying has been quoted several times already in just a comparatively small portion of the book I have read thus far. While the tales are largely a jumble of the exploits of wine guzzlers, bandits and swashbuckling heroes, a million and one odd Chinese customs, traditions and saying of centuries past appear in every story, so it is very enjoyable and no little revelation of the forces which have been so influential in molding Chinese ways of life.

"Speaking of Chinese customs, here is an interesting one that came to my attention today: One of the Catholic fathers here was invited to a feast to celebrate the engagement of the daughter of one of his friends. The feast was to take place this afternoon. About 1:00 the priest said that he had received for invitations so far, but he was still waiting for the rest of them. It seems that, for a truly important occasion and for a really honored guest, some seven invitations are sent. The first four invitations are delivered early, while the last three are urgent.

"The early invitations are written, but the urgent requests are orally delivered by one of the trusted servants or one of the hosts' family. At each of the urgent invitations, the bearer is very insistent, tugging at the guest's arm, insiting that he must hurry to the fesitval. When he comes with the second or third urgent call, he complains that the guests have already arrived and all are waiting for the honored guest, the feast is being served already and the guest must come without further delay.

The father wryly commented that if one were foolish enough to accept the second invitation, he would arrive at the festival only to find himself the first guest and the cooking fire had not even been laid. He would probably wait an hour or two before anyone else arrived to share in the celebration.

"While we were discussing this very old custom, the father of the girl to be betrothed came to the mission with an urgent invitation that the Catholic father come at once to the festival, announcing that he would not leave the mission without being accompanied by the priest. The Catholic father seemed to feel that this was the invitation that he was waiting for and he followed the host to the home of the festival.

"Today, after several days of no news directly from the United States, I heard a news broadcast which announced that General Marshall has been appointed to succeed General Hurley as envoy to China. I judge the foremost conclusion that might be drawn from that appointment is that the administration considers the Far East problem dangerously critical; else why would the highest man in the Army be transferred to such a post? Here in China, I believe that General Hurley was highly regarded by the Chinese Central government for his efforts in its behalf. He was very prominent in attempting to foster conciliation between the Central government and the Communistic element. It is very obvious, from the very critical state of affairs in China today, that his efforts were fruitless. Hurley was quoted as denouncing the career diplomats in the Far East as being from 'imperialism his Communism' and it is apparently largely because of the differences with the career diplomatic element that he tendered his resignation.

"Today, after hearing of General Marshall's appointment, I tried to recall any time during the entire war that he was strongly opposed or critized for any period, yet I could not recollect any such occasion. Few other generals of such great responsibility and high position can boast such a record. It seems to me if General Marshall, with all of his prestige, experience and backing, cannot accomplish something in stablizing the Far East and, therefore, China, the problem of conflicting interests and restless Asia is well-nigh insoluble.

"I do not yet recall how specifically I have mentioned to you my friendship with Mr. Lin. Mr. Lin is in charge of one of the research laboratories at the Academy of Research's Institute of Chemical and Industrial Research--a project of the Fukien provincial government. He completed his master of science degree in chemistry and soils in 1938, or thereabouts, having spent one term at the University of California previously. I visited the laboratories of his department several times and talked frequently with the fellows working there. At the same time, I met his friend, a Dr. C.C. Tang, a parasitologist working on the very terrible malaria problem in Fukien. He showed me several specimens and slides in his laboratory. Both men were exceedingly cordial and more than willing to answer the questions of an interested science student from the other side of the ocean. I considered both friendships quite valuable, since it would be most worthwhile, I think, in following scientific lines to have a few contacts in the same field in another corner of the world."

(Here's one from September 10, 1945) "It has been a few days from my last brief and disappointing letter to you, and since tomorrow I'm making a trip to the nearest air base, from which letters can be sent out frequently, I wanted to put another envelope in the mail. It is a very hilly, winding stretch of more than 100 miles and since I'd like to return tomorrow evening if possible, I'd like to start early in the morning.

"The social whirl in this little provincial capital, Yangnan, has been leading a merry pace these past few days. Most of the few Americans in this city, all of them serving liaison functions, are leaving, I believe within a week, and in particular the captain, who originally organized the project and who had been in this city as the supervisor the past year, is also leaving with me tomorrow. He has won quite a place in the hearts of the various fine people here. Of course, they wanted to have all of their victory and farewell affairs while he was still here. Two evenings ago, we attended a very large and long supper dance-concert party, sponsored by the provincial government, but really presented, more or less, by the townspeople. We were really the honored guests at this affair, each of us receiving small presents--all too kind of the people here. My gift was a set of ivory chops, which will probably be engraved with June's and my Chinese names."

(February 3, 1945, to my father): "I would reply that your estimate concerning relative agricultural production of your North Dakota farmer friends, compared with Chinese farm production, is conservative. Probably a selected 5,000 acres of cultivated land in China would yield almost as much--possibly more food--than that pro-

duced by the North Dakota farmer, due to the intensity of Chinee farming. But I doubt if 100, 200 or even 300 Chinese would produce from the land nearly the quantity of produce which you itemized.

"My group of weather observers is turning out the last group of weather reports to be transmitted for today, so we're just about ready to close shop and call it another day at the weather station. This gang working with me at this station is just about tops. I don't know where one could find a more willing bunch or one that works together with less friction and more congeniality. Just between us, I'm as proud as punch in the way this station has taken form and the way it is functioning now. It really is the first station where I have had complete charge since its very inception. (This would be Laohokow.) So, I've had pretty much my own way in setting it up the way I wanted it. Add to that the fact that we have had a wonderful assortment of the newest instruments and weather equipment--a portable compact system--and you can partially understand why I'm so enthusiastic about the set up here at this base. I only hope I'll be left to work out my own ideas on how the entire organization should be handled, so to me it is just about the ultimate in a weather man's dream.

"Of course, I have been busy from dawn to dusk practically every day since we have been here, and then after supper I've found something I wanted to do to keep me occupied until 11:00 or after. The time has flown by and I recall that we've been here for two weeks. I'm first amazed that time has gone by so rapidly and then as I look about and realize how rapidly we have swung into the routine, a full-time operation, I conclude we must have been here

for several months. Anyway, I'm certainly getting a big kick out of supervising this station and its operation. It has been enjoyable and worthwile."

(April 18, 1945, from Laifeng): "At our last base, Laohokow, we quite definitely got a touch of Chinese winter and now we are just as definitely experiencing a sample of Chinese spring. A very lovely spring, too, in many respects, although not really so sudden nor spectacular as the lovely spring time in Minnesota. There are fewer trees and flowers to burst forth in this locality and, since there was very little snow to remind one of winter, the contrast of spring is not nearly so striking. Just a few lines should suffice on what can be legally mentioned concerning my movements and occupation, since I last wrote.

"At my last station, I had charge of one of the finest weather set ups I've been associated with in China. It was not large, but it was fairly important, both from the nature of the work and the location. It did have those certain elements, which individually may not be so decisive in the performance of the station; but which, when they all break together simultaneously produce the type of cummulative results that are good. Every thing was convenient; the work which we were doing was interesting; the equipment was new in type and model and the men working with me constituted the finest weather team I've had in China. That same group is here with me now.

"So far, at this base, I've found that our job has been only to install the weather station, begin training the Chinese in the work of receiving their weather network for us and begin limited operations. Now that that comparatively simple task has been completed, we are more or

less enjoying a welcome rest. There is little else we can do until the base becomes more fully occupied. With this group of fellows the time never drags, though, and we always find something constructive to do concerning new ideas in running a weather station, or new methods for enjoying ourselves while we play.

"We've just taken time out to listen to the news summary for the day. The most important item for the American soldier, probably, was the announcement of the death of Ernie Pyle, the world-famous columnist for the GI. The deaths of two great war figures in the past week--President Roosevelt's death came to us in the far away places as a most startling surprise as well as a great shock. I think that unconsciously, perhaps even with previous reflection, all of us had begn to associate him unmistakably with our highest hopes for a new and lasting security that now hangs in the balance.

"In reply to your queries as to the malaria rate of the Chinese, I have no exact statistics and at the moment, do not know how prevalent malaria is in the various sections of China. However, there is no doubt that the rate is exceedingly high by our standards. It is a common disease among the people of this community, I know. For example, of the dozen or so people I know well at the Chinese radio and weather station nearby, one, the station master's wife, has had frequent recurrences this summer already, and at least two others are bothered with recurrent malaria attacks several times each summer. Some of the wealthier may have easier access to a supply of quinine occasionally; but on the average there is practically no medication for thousands or millions stricken with malaria in China. On the contrary, our own military forces have

a commendably light malaria count in China, largely attributable to preventive measures which are stressed repeatedly and forcefully in all the military units.

"You also asked about the recent trends in Chinese inflation. Recently one of our men bought Chinese National currency (C.N.) in a city near the capital. (That would be Chungking at this time.) He exchanged his money at the rate of 1 to 1,000. In the capital itself, the current rate was 1 to 1,300. There seems to be little information as to the reason for this recent rise in the rate of exchange, unless American goods are becoming more accessible on the black market. All last year and early this year, one of the primary criteria for forecasting the future rate of exchange was the relative confidence in the ability of the national government of China to hold control of China, which seemed to be reflected by the seasonal success or failure of the Chinese armies in the field.

"When the Japanese were driving through Central China, with little or no effective opposition, the exchange rate was steadily climbing. But when the Chinese army held, momentarily, or even seemed to be gaining a bit, the rate was steady and frequently fell. During the last month or two, the Chinese army has been steadily pushing forward after the retreating or withdrawing Japanese, and yet, the rate has risen steadily to the highest it has been since I've been in China. Perhaps there is some factor of which I'm not aware, or perhaps this is some indication of future developments on the political and military front.

"There are three pictures of a Chinese city taken from the main building of the university in one of China's larger cities. (That's probably Kunming.) The first shot

looks out over the courtyard, behind the main structure, looking toward the dormitories. A lone student can be seen walking toward the steps. The next picture looks out over a small lake, toward the residential district, and another surveys the same area, from behind the stone pillars of the university building. Another shows a typical street scene in a busy Chinese city, (probably Kunming, too) with a gate over the street, standing forth as a reminder that Chinese architecture still favors the upcurved roof.

"In the midst of the scrambled confusion, stands an unperturbed, helpless, impotent policeman, unenthusiastically making directed motions with his hands, but, in general, being passionately ignored by scurrying feet and wheeled traffic. Behind him stands a neglected, useless stop and go semaphore signal--mute testimony to the current gullibility of the 20th century-minded Chamber of Commerce to some loquacious, flower-lipped high pressure salesman. At any rate, an ineffective sort of mechanism it is with almost all of the street traffic consisting of pedestrians, coolies carrying heavy loads of water, vegetables and wood slung over their hardened shoulders, rickshas jogging back and forth and an occasional speed-maddened jeep. (This might have been Shanghai.)

Another picture gives a study of the seething masses of humanity that crowds the city streets and waysides. Here is an auction sale in progress and, as is the case wherever there is the slightest attraction in a Chinese city, a clammering congregation of impartial and uninvolved on-lookers has assembled. Youngsters scrap and argue in small, localized groups. Mothers nurse their babies as they sit along the curbs, curious spectators climb over

the fence work that separates the sale from the street, and the auction itself is jampacked with people. As at any auction, very few indeed seem to have come with any intention of making purchases. The main reason for taking this picture is an attempt, though inadequately, to point out how much the life of Chinese cities seems to teem with people and their activities. There are masses of people everywhere. A soldier cannot stand looking into a shop window for more than a few seconds, before a sizeable crowd of passers-by collects. Street urchins and beggars assemble near him, gathered in a semi-circle with almost expressionless faces, staring curiously at this specimen of humanity from the West.

"There are several more pictures of the same episode. The next one was snapped so hurriedly that it proved unsuccessful. This particular sorry creature, ridden with all manner of disease, filth and insect pests, was somewhat representative of the depressing beggars who are so frequently seen in the city. The sight is absolutely nauseating, for these poor fellows present as depraved a position as I ever hope to see. In this study, for example, the beggar lies down outside the gate to the Methodist mission. Always apparently asleep, sometimes apparently dead, miserably diseased, one-quarter clad--an example of the 'living dead.' I've never seen him with his eyes open. Always he lies at my feet--insects clinging about his framework of skin and bones. His tattered clothes cover a bit of ragged garment that he has undoubtedly been wearing for months--possibly wears without a bath. Before him lies a bit of newspaper weighed down by rocks in which sympathetic passers-by may throw

down their contributions of currency. It is as much a matter of what section of China that one finds himself in, as to how much of this sort of thing he encounters. Of course, the years of war have added immeasurably to the years of hardship and degradation of these unfortunates; yet this type of sight was not uncommon in this particular city.

"One case that always brought a slight loss of appetite to me, upon reviewing the subject, was a leper--a beggar--who used to inch himself along the board sidewalks of the narrow streets. A warped specimen of humanity--physicially, presenting a heart-rending appearance and calling out with doleful cries for 'alms.' Such sights set one's ears to ringing as he dwells constantly upon the many blessings throughout his own life and that of his associates. When I took these two pictures, I set the camera under my shirt and snapped the shutter rapidly, as I walked past the prone beggars, for I did not wish to attrack any undue attention or hostility from the Chinese, who certainly could not be blamed for wanting to have the better side of their life photographed and not this--one of the worst. But these beggar scenes are a part of China, so I did take pictures.

"Next to this is a poor photograph of a corner food market, where oranges and bananas lay in their baskets for public scrutiny and purchase. Naturally, the flies, mosquitoes and other insects have a field day among the open-air markets.

"Here is a story in pictures of one of the most enjoyable sights I've seen in the city. An amusing commonplace is part and parcel of the city's wayside commercial life. Near the public circle, where lies the intersection

of two important thoroughfares and much of the wayside business, smallware peddlers settle their equipment for the day and begin their trade. Many of these small scale entrepreneurs are street urchins, early learning the work-a-day ways of the business world.

"One in particular who attracted my interest from the first moment I saw him and his wares, was a young peddler about 15 years old, who sold snacks from his amazing open-air counter. The counter was amazing, too, for it contained no less than 15 separate bowls, each containing a separate delicacy, and yet this gentleman had but one single product for sale--the dish he produced was a conglomerate of all, set before him in the 15 bowls. Having set a small table with accessory utensils, all of which could easily be packed together and slung over his shoulder on the traditional Chinese toting pole, he settled down in his place of small business, located in one of the dirtiest places in the city. To him, there seemed to be no significant relationship whatsoever, between the fact that he was peddling food for human consumption in the open air and the fact that filth of every kind was completely surrounding him.

"Before long, a sketchily-clothed mother, carrying a semi-clothed child, stepped before our hero and indicated interest in a snack. The salesman, businessman through and through, spread out before him a spongy roll of pastelike dough, produced a knife from his assortment, dipped it in a cupful of water, and slashed this starch compound into small noodle-like strips--with his paws he picked up a portion of this mess and deposited some in an empty bowl. Before him, arranged in two long lines on the table were some 10 assorted flavorings, sauces, spices, garnishes and seasonings.

"In each bowl of assortment, there was a medium-sized teaspoon, and with deftness acquired from long practice and with the crafty eyes which prevents any spoon from overflowing into the bowl of noodles, he rapidly traveled the length of both rolls. With the bowls of noodles placed in one hand, with his other hand he scooped up teaspoonfuls from the other dish and deposited this on the rapidly growing mess. Now and then he grabbed the pile of garnish from one of the dishes, with a tiny cloth, as well as his fingers.

"One thing concerning this process is sure--he'd never pass by a sauce dish or relish, unless the customer issued specific instructions to omit this or that constituent. Since most of the sauces have a pepperish brownish-red hue, the garnishes are green and yellow, and the rice noodles are a sickly white, the resulting color combination is almost as striking as the flavor itself must be. Our businessman triumphantly handed the complete concoction over to the eager customer, who obviously considered this brew of a rare delicacy, indeed. He drew a pair of greasy chopsticks from a glass container, where a number of them were soaking in rinse water. As a final gesture of the excellence of his service, he wiped off the stools with an even more greasy wet rag. The lady dabbed vigorously at the nourishment to distribute the seasonsings over the noodles, took the chopsticks with a ball of mustard at the end and poked the stuff into the eager mouth of her frail and diseased baby. Occasionally, she intercepted a bite herself, but chiefly used it to subdue the hunger of the youngster. When, between them, they had completely emptied the bowl of its contents,

reluctantly she returned it to the vendor, who doused it into a pail of cold, greasy water reserved for the purpose, wiped out the dish with his rag, and having returned the dish to its pile, went back to await the next enthusiastic customer. He had little rest, for within a minute, a grinning young urchin approached and told him of his desire to sample. How much he enjoyed the bowlful of nourishing delicacies was evident from his rapturous smile over a bowl and chopsticks. The price required from each customer was 10.00 dollars C.N., or at the black market rate, approximately five cents in American money.

The next picture shows a group of our Chinese allies reading a newspaper--a public document of some type--posted on the gate wall. It is quite common to see entire walls in the squares covered with newspapers or official writings and it was seldom, indeed, that a large crowd has not gathered attentively around each poster.

"The next picture we have shows rickshas in China drawn at a dogtrot through the streets of the city by the incredible and tireless coolies. Ricksha-pulling is rather profitable in these days, for the man seems to be able to get the price he demands and, due to the results of drastic inflation, many ricksha coolies earn as much as an experienced school teacher. Rickshas are not particularly uncomfortable to ride in and it is surprising how rapidly one is brought to his destination by coolies, running at a steady pace. The puller never slackens his speed, unless a reckless GI vehicle forces him to the side of the road. The ricksha men run down the middle of the road, shouting warnings to persons in the way. Frequently, they almost run the trace poles into some unsuspecting old ladies or a water bearer, before the person dodges nimbly from the path of the trotting, shouting coolie.

"Picture of a coolie carrying a load through the streets of the city in the traditional, universal manner--at the ends of his yoke pole, supported on his shoulders. Practically every type of burden in China is transported in this primitive fashion. For carrying water, which is constantly being moved from one place to another, a large wooden bucket is suspended from each end of the yoke. Surprisingly, small children can frequently be seen struggling under the weight of these loads, and it is too often that it is all the little fellow can do to budge the basket from the ground."

I: Dr. Cavert, we are at the end of our tape, so I'm afraid we must end. We thank you for your willingness to be a part of this project.