



Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Hale Francis Burge

Part of the Illinois Public Media ([WILL radio.tv.online](http://WILL.radio.tv.online))
Central Illinois World War II Stories project

Interview # VR2-V-D-2007-044

Hale Francis Burge, an airplane mechanic in the Army Air Force during World War II, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Illinois Public Media – WILL AM-FM-TV Central Illinois World War II Stories project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: 8 November 2007

Location: Hoopeston Public Library, Hoopeston, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Nancy B. Rotzoll, Illinois Public Media affiliate

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Henry Radcliffe, Videographer, Illinois Public Media ([WILL radio.tv.online](http://WILL.radio.tv.online))

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 60 min/ 1 hr

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on November 26, 2014.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Hale Francis Burge, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-V-D-2007-044

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Hale Francis Burge was born on May 21, 1922 in Boswell, Indiana. Burge was inducted into the Army on October 1942. He trained at Camp Grant in Rockford, Illinois; Jefferson Barracks, Missouri; and Fort Lawton, Washington. Burge was stationed in the Aleutian Island chain, after the Japanese occupied the islands of Kiska and Attu. His purpose in the Aleutian Islands was to prevent Japanese military expansion. In Adak, he was responsible for hauling bombs and unloading barges. Burge traveled to the Attu Island, where Japan executed few airplane raids.

On the Shemya Island Air Force Base, Burge became an airplane mechanic, working on numerous planes, including P-40 fighter planes. The airplanes leaving Shemya were sent to North Japan and Korean Islands. Burge witnessed various explosions as a mechanic. He oversaw the crash crew, which required removing crash debris, even including dismembered body parts. He would also fight fires and disarm airplanes. Burge would sometimes use a wrecker truck to discard crashed planes into the Bering Sea.

After receiving a mainland leave in 1944, he returned to airplane mechanics. In May 1945, with the end of the war, Burge recounted how a Japanese soldier was found with a hand crank radio, sending reports about their runway activity. Later, from Alaska, across Canada, and after a final stint in Camp Grant, Burge returned home to Hoopeston, Illinois. Burge passed away on April 1, 2015.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Camp Grant, Illinois; Jefferson Barracks, Missouri; Fort Lawton, Washington; Seattle, Washington; Alaska; Aleutian Island chain; Adak Island; Attu Island; Shemya Island; P-40 Warhawk; B-24 Liberator; B-45 Tornado; Kiska Island; P-38 Lightning; Martin B-26; Bering Sea.

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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