

Hale Burge: I rotated in 1945 so that was my start. Aircraft maintenance was short of people at that time and Lieutenant Taylor, our Maintenance Officer, was there and I talked to him. He'd been a lawyer out of Tennessee, but he was a Maintenance Officer in the Army Air Corp. I told him I was supposed to be working on automobiles and what have you and he checked my records and put me on the flight line. And I worked OJT, on the job, with the other guys that had been ... knew more than I did. Because I didn't know anything about airplanes other than they flew in the air.

So eventually I got working on the P-40s, P-38s, B-24s, B-26s, UC-64. I put a tail wheel on a B-17 [and] changed engines on a C-47 in transit; a civilian had been using synthetic oil but it was plugging up the oil coolers and so they had to change engines down there one day. That was an experience that I ... first time changing an engine on a C-47.

My training was all ... everyday on the job training with other guys in charge. They knew quite a bit. Eventually I thought I knew as much as them without too many years in the Service and overseas. In fact, I found out I knew more than a lot of them before I ever became an aircraft mechanic.