Veterans' Memoirs

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Col. Robert Ellis Jones

Clarksville, TN -
Korean War Veteran of the United States Army

"The Marines gave very little recognition to the Army's significance at the Chosin Reservoir. They still don't. However, the Marines finally agreed to recognize the Army and give them the Presidential Unit Citation that they received for the whole operation. They finally acknowledged the importance of the Army element that was east of Chosin."

- Robert Jones

[The following interview is the result of an in-person interview with Col. Robert Jones that was conducted by Lynnita (Sommer) Brown at his home in Clarksville, TN. Colonel Jones took Don Faith's place at the Chosin Reservoir. Jones died September 13, 2007.]

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Pre-Military

My name is Robert Ellis Jones of Clarksville, Tennessee. I was born on July 19, 1917 in Montreal, Canada, the son of Harry and Eva Gilbert Ellis. My father was Irish-English, born in Dublin, Ireland. He migrated to Canada, but I have no idea if he came by himself or with his parents. I'm assuming that he and his family migrated, because I later met one of his brothers (my uncle). My mother was from Massachusetts. Apparently she and my father were married in Montreal and had their children there. They had one boy, then three girls, and then me. The oldest boy was killed in Montreal. I was told he was run over by a truck. I never knew him.

We immigrated to San Francisco, California, but I don't know for what reason. It might have been for business purposes or social purposes. I have no idea. My father worked in a large department store as credit manager. I think the company was the Midwest Ellis Brothers, which sold cutlery and that type of thing. My father's brother migrated to the States and I met him as a child. I understand that he lived in Vancouver, but I haven't seen or heard of him for years. His name was Stewart Ellis.

After we moved to the States my parents had two more sons, Ray and Jack. They were both born in San Francisco. My sisters from oldest to youngest are Reta, Muriel and Anita. My brother Ray and I are the only two of us children that are still living. Our mother died of heart trouble when I was about four years old, I think about six months after my youngest brother was born.

When my mother died we stayed in San Francisco for a period of time and my father tried to keep us together. But my oldest sister, who was about 16 or 17, went out on her own. She ended up marrying a man in the Air Force at Nichols Field at Rizal, outside the capitol of Manila. He and my sister made their way afoot across Bataan to Corregidor, where they were captured. He was sent off to Kobe, Japan, and spent the rest of the war as a POW there. My sister was sent to Santo Tomas University in Manila. She stayed there from 1942 until about April of 1945.

To go back to the family, around 1926 my sister Anita (one year older than me) and I went to Canada to stay with my father's brother, Ernest Ellis, in Winnipeg. I don't know the motivation as to why our father agreed to send us to Canada, but our Uncle Ernest subsequently sent us up to a little town called Mackinac in the wheat country of Central Canada. We stayed up there a year or two with my uncle's wife's mother, and then we returned to San Francisco.

After about a year and a half in Mackinac, Canada, my sister and I returned to San Francisco. What little I knew of my natural parents, they were good parents. I lived with my father for six years after my mother died. He was very conscientious and very loving. But with six children, not making the kind of money that was needed to set up a house or home, and then becoming ill, it wasn't exactly a happy time. Anita, my two brothers and I were together for a while and separated for a while. We moved quite rapidly many different places. We were in a couple of homes, a small orphanage, and a larger orphanage. The four of us were staying at a foster home in Coeur Adair, California, when our father died in 1927. I was ten years old. I'm not sure what he died from--stomach trouble, as I remember. He and my mother are both buried in San Francisco in Rolling Gates Cemetery, I think.

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Adopted

When Father died, my sister and my brothers and I became wards of the state and we were put up for adoption. Anita was adopted by a couple in San Francisco, and I was adopted by Dr. and Mrs. Burke Jones, who had a daughter named Elizabeth. My sister Muriel was with relatives in Southern California, and our two brothers were adopted by a family down in Central California named Peterson. My living brother's name is Ray Peterson. Both he and Jack went to Norte Cruz High School, and then one went into the Navy and one joined the Marines in the 1938-39 time frame. I was adopted by a family that lived in Arizona.

Dr. Burke Jones was an old Army doctor stationed at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona outside of Tucson. He was in California on some sort of a medical sabbatical, and he and his wife were looking for a family for his daughter. I don't know the procedure they went through, but when they queried the adoption agency they were steered to the foster home where I was. They visited and apparently I passed their initial inspection. They went on back to Arizona, and at a later time I was taken by Katherine Moriarty, an official of this adoption agency, down there to meet with the family. The adoption agency was not a governmental agency. It was more like a church-type entity.

I spent a year with the Jones family to see if the relationship would work, and then I was officially adopted. Elizabeth Jones, my stepsister, was one year younger than I was. They wanted to have a companion for her so really, in my estimation, they should have gotten a girl. Their way of life and my way of life was quite different. Theirs was a very orchestrated, close knit, religious life; whereas, I had been to various homes. I had been in various environments. I was not afforded the privilege of having close parental relationships. I had had no mother since the age of four. I was an orphan kid.

I didn't consistently keep in touch with my brothers after I moved to Arizona. I pretty much lost contact because they were younger and in a different environment. We lost tack of each other. Then in about 1932, my sister Anita came to Prescott, Arizona, and visited for a week. She then went back to California, got married, and went on with her life. After we all went our separate ways, we never were able to get together as a family again.

My foster mother was a daughter of a Presbyterian preacher, brought up in a very, very religious environment. We did not believe in a lot of the social activities such as parties and dancing, and certainly not drinking or anything like that. The Jones felt that the family environment was sufficient, whereas I was more oriented towards sports, mingling with other people, and wanting to be out. The restrictions that they had were very difficult for me. For instance, on Sunday morning we didn't read the funny papers. We had to wait until Monday. We were expected to go to church on Sunday, and that was it. We did not visit anybody.

I felt at times that I disappointed my father and mother, but I wasn't a bad kid. I didn't get in trouble too often, although sometimes I got in trouble over things that they thought was pretty outrageous. I never got in trouble skipping school for an hour or two or being somewhere where I hadn't told them that I was going to be. Nothing major. I was never in any trouble. I never got in trouble with the police or anything li ke that. But it was a hard change in a young person's life who had lived with many families under many different disciplines to suddenly be restricted. I think that was the thing I found to be most difficult. I never caused them any trouble. They were my family. Even today I keep in touch with my sister Elizabeth. She lives at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and we get together every once in a while. I visited her when she got married and she and her husband lived in Iowa.

When my father, Dr. Jones, was transferred to Ft. Whipple, Arizona, I went through most of high school in Prescott. My senior year was going to be a great year because I had been elected president of the student body. This period of time was the only time in my life that I was in one place, and I was very much involved. I was into track and basketball. I wasn't in football because I was too small and my parents wouldn't agree to it, but I was involved in a lot of dramatics, school organizations, scouts, summer camps, riding clubs, and all the stuff that young people do.

Unfortunately my father got transferred from Arizona to a VA hospital in Ft. Bayard, New Mexico, which was about ten miles out of Silver City. VA doctors treated all the global war patients from the Army and they took over the hospitals. The doctors merely changed uniforms from an Army uniform to a public service health uniform, which consisted of a blue serge suit and a campaign-type hat or a military-type cap. Public service was much the same as military service in that every three or four years they would transfer him to different place.

There was no way I could stay in Arizona and finish out my senior year. I would have done it in a minute if I could, because that is where I wanted to be. I wanted to go to the University of Arizona because all of my friends were there. I played basketball in Prescott, and continued at Silver City, but I wasn't as involved in activities at Silver City as when I was at Prescott. I was only there a year and I did not get that involved because we were at Ft. Bayard, ten miles from Silver City.

In those days we went to school by bus. I opted to stay after school and practice basketball rather than ride the bus home. When practice was over, I walked the ten miles home. I finally lettered in basketball. That, to me, was a great success.

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Scouting Experience

I attended Boy Scout meetings in the congregational church. I reached the rank of Tenderfoot when I was in Boy Scouts. We had a very fine scout executive who taught us a lot of things like ceramics and leather and things like that. But the scoutmaster we had was a single man that worked in Paradise Ranch. he was a very nice young man. We went out on hikes, going out into the forest and up in the valley to other units.

Prescott was the only town of any size back in the 1860s when Abraham Lincoln was President and there was a war between the States. Lincoln did not want Arizona to fall under the influence of the Confederates in the South. There was a strong movement in southern Arizona for the confederacy rather than the union, so Lincoln sent a group of politicians to pick a site for the capital of Arizona. They picked Prescott. Pauline Weaver was a well-known scout for the Army during all this period of time. When he died, Weaver was buried in some godforsaken place in the wilds. When I was a tenderfoot scout, approximately 1928, they decided to rebury Pauline Weaver on the grounds of the original capital. They brought his remains back and I was one of the pallbearers as a scout. I was 12 or 13 years old at the time. We carried the casket and it was quite an honor. Charlotte Hall, who became a poet laureate of Arizona, was still living in those days. I remember meeting and talking to her that day and other times. The capital of Arizona was moved to Phoenix, but the old capital building was still kept at Prescott and Charlotte Hall was caretaker of that area. It was big copper country and Charlotte Hall had a dress made of copper links and cloth that she wore on great occasions. It was very interesting and I have always remembered Charlotte Hall and her copper.

My time in the Boy Scouts ended when our scoutmaster was declared persona non grata for reasons unknown and the troop was dissolved.

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National Guard

I tried to find a job before I became 18 and joined the National Guard, but jobs were very, very scarce in that area since it was right in the middle of the Depression. Besides, at the time I walked home, was in high school, finishing school, and practicing basketball afterwards. Afterward, the bus had already left so I started to walk home. I was usually picked up, but there were several times that I walked the full ten miles. In the summertime I went to Silver City almost every day to try to find a job. I didn't find anything. I graduated from high school in 1935, and at the age of 18 years, I joined the 111th Cavalry of the New Mexico National Guard, in July of that year.

At the time, the National Guard was a horse cavalry. All the young men at that time during the Depression liked to ride horses. They also liked the extra money. We got a dollar or two every time we drilled. When we were called to active duty in the summer and spent two weeks at camp, we got whatever was the going rate for our rank. Private, I guess, was $21 a month. Silver City was in mountainous country. When an emergency came up, such as a child was lost in the mountains, they mobilized their guards and we went out to comb the hills until we found the child. That lasted two or three days and we got paid for it. This actually happened to our unit. We got paid to search for the child, and we were successful.

In those days New Mexico only had a quarter of a million people living there. It was a big state and the towns were disbursed. They didn't have the population of young men enough to be able to have more than a company or a troop, as we called them, in the cavalry, s the 111th Cavalry Regiment was scattered all over the state. Silver City had enough men for Troop F, and Troop E in Downing was 60 miles away. Cruces had another troop. We never got together except once a year, when we went to national camp or state camp in Las Vegas, New Mexico. The National Guard was sort of a club at that time. In the summertime we all went by train with our troop horses and our remounts and our pack animals, and went to Las Vegas for two weeks.

Any time the regiment got together it trained as a unit and exercised our horses and used remounts. Remounts were untrained horses. They were broke, but they were not trained in military ways. We never had enough troop horses for everybody, so we had to get some remounts and train them. It was quite an adventure. The horses ere regular troop horses with a certain size and a certain color. There were a lot of Indian ponies in Arizona and New Mexico that ran wild. I don't know what element did it--maybe the Quartermaster, but they went out and bought horses for the Army that met certain standards. I think ours came from Ft. Reno, Oklahoma. The horses were trained up to a point, and then they were farmed out to the Army. The 1st Cavalry, and old, established cavalry, was active duty with the US Army, and stationed at Ft. Bliss. It had its own horses, and then they were augmented by the remounts when they came to camp.

I was a private, so I took care of all of the horses rather than just one that belonged to me. I fed one end and cleaned up on the other end. That was the fate of the private. The sergeants and corporals and officers did not have stable duty shoveling and feeding. The privates did. We took care of the horses and the stables at Silver City, and also at camp. That was our job. We were also required to do KP and so forth.

I was with the New Mexican National Guard for about two months, and then I went off to college. My father was a doctor. He had two children. He was able to afford to send us to college. There was never a question of whether we would or wouldn't go to college. I went to college. I didn't make the grades that I should have, I guess, but I graduated from New Mexico State in 1939.

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ROTC

Back in those days, ROTC was in the high school before I got there. There was a lot of VA and military personnel in the area and their children attended Prescott Junior-Senior High School. We intermingled socially. Many of the military personnel on the post where we lived went down to church in Prescott since there wasn't a church at the post. The post was a very important part of the economy, as well as the social structure of the area because all of the doctors were ex-Army officers. Though their uniforms were different, the medical personnel on the post had a military structure of commanding officers and others.

When I attended New Mexico State, I was in the university's ROTC program. At that time, it was a requirement. Every male who went to a land grant college had to spend two years in the ROTC. Then we could sign up for a full four years to get a commission. In the fourth year we were a senior NCO or an officer.

The first year I was a private and the second year I was a buck sergeant. I wore a uniform on the days that the ROTC met in a gymnasium armory on campus. I was in the ROTC for four years, at the end of which I got a commission as a reserve officer. Then I was sent to Ft. Huachuca, Arizona, for a two-week tour. We also went every summer for a two-week tour.

I always liked the military. I was introduced to all of the Army veterans in the hospitals where my father worked. I visited them in the big posts, buildings and hospitals. I met a lot of them in occupational therapy, which was set up for people to learn how to do ceramics or work in leather and wood. We lived on the post. I wanted to learn how to make leather billfolds and so forth, and the veterans welcomed me and let me use the facilities. I mingled with the Army veterans. Some of them were very flamboyant and told me about World War II. They told me and the other children tales and stories. We were very close. This was only seven or ten years after World War II ended, and there were even a lot of veterans of World War I as well, not only at Fort Whipple but all over Fort Bayard. Prescott, Arizona was a very military-oriented area. One of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders was Bucky O'Neil. There was a great big statue of Bucky in the middle of Prescott.

Also, there was a certain amount of pay that came in each month and I was living on a shoestring. My folks did not believe in giving me very much money. They gave me room and board at $5.00 a month. Even in the days, it was difficult to live very well on just $5.00 a month, considering the cost of laundry, other necessities, as well as social life. ROTC paid us and gave us our uniforms. I've forgotten the details about how often we got paid.

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Civilian Conservation Corps

My goal in life was to be a forest ranger and to be outdoors. After my first year out of college, I joined the Civilian Conservation Corps or CCC. It was very, very dominant in the southwest, and there were lots of camps up in the forests and the desert. There were a lot of camps all over. The CCC was for poor folks, but in 1936/37, they made an opportunity for college individuals to become technical students in the forest service. Students who joined the CCC could get $30 a month. My roommate and I decided that we would like to do that for one summer.

We joined the forest section of the Civilian Conservation Corps. As an enrollee of the CCC, we were blue denims--ugly things. They shipped us to a little town in northern New Mexico called Espanola. The Soil Conservation Service camp there was located in the Walapai Valley south of Kingman, Arizona. We lived in big tents with cots and all of that. I stayed with them for a while, cutting down trees, building telephone lines, and that type of stuff.

In that particular period, the forest service picked their students from the State of New Mexico. Some of us were pulled out of the main CCC to go on a range survey. The forest land was open for grazing and the state leased some of its land to cattle, sheep and horse owners and so forth so their animals could graze. Before they leased the land, the forest service had to make a range survey for each particular section of land.

There was a big problem in those areas where the cattle were out on the range until they cropped it down to nothing and then erosion set in. Weeds would come in and all that. In order to prevent lessees from over-graving the land, the forest service preserved the value of the land by making maps of each section, which was one square mile of land.

The maps showed all of the foliage and all the trees and bushes. They defined and identified the individual grasses, using arithmetic to create a table that showed the palatability factor. They had different values put on them; some grasses were 100 percent of value. Some were 80. Some were 70. And then there were several weeds that had no value at all. The maps determined how many head of cattle could be handled by a section of land. With them, the forest service could tell the lessees that they could run 300 head of cattle for six months, or maybe half that amount for the year round. That way the lessees did not over-grave the land and the forest service could preserve the value of the land.

Those of us on the range survey had a section, drew up maps, and turned them in for recording in the national headquarters. When ranchers came in and wanted to lease "x" amount of federal land, they could tell them how many cattle could be grazed for a certain period of time.

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Soil Conservation Service

When the summer was over, I left the CCC and returned to college. The next summer, because of my CCC training and experience in range survey, there was an opportunity for college kids to be technical foremen for the Soil Conservation Service, doing pretty much the same thing in Arizona. The Soil Conservation Service was operated by the Department of the Interior, whereas the foresters had all the forest land.

I went to Arizona to foreman with the CCC again, but not as an enrollee. It was sort of an upper grade. We did a lot of preservation work in the desert, such as making gully plugs to keep the water from washing out. When rains came, the water charged down the gullies five, six or eight feet deep. We learned very quickly to alway looked to the mountains to see if there were dark clouds. If it was raining we knew that the water up in the mountains was going to get down downstream sooner or later. We didn't go down in the canyons because we would be swept away. The roads and main US highways across New Mexico and Arizona dipped through gullies (arroyos) in order to save the cost of building a bridge. In Arizona they didn't put any bridges across the gullies except on the big riverbeds. When the rains came down, vehicles caught in the arroyos or canyons were swept away.

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ROTC Advanced

Since I chose to be a member of the ROTC in my third year of college, I went to a six-week summer camp near San Antonio, Texas. We were at a pit camp called Camp Bullis, Texas. We were formed up in a company and so forth, integrated with other small schools that had ROTC. We spent six weeks training.

During this period of time they also had national rifle matches at Camp Perry, Ohio. It was a great national event. National Guard, Army, regular army, and others joined up at Camp Perry. The ROTC elements throughout the United States formed up into teams, so there was an opportunity to be a rifle club member. If we did well enough, they would send us to the competition, paying our way there and paying our expenses while we were there. It was a big incentive for those of us in the boondocks to go across the Mississippi River--where none of us had ever been, go to a new area, and go as a sharpshooter or marksman.

Everybody out in the Arizona/New Mexico area had rifles. There were a lot of coyotes, prairie dogs, and deer in the wide open country, and there weren't many fences. Shooting was just part of the environment and culture. I had a Benjamin air rifle for a period of time, but I didn't have a gun for shooting. A lot of my friends did, however. It was very common then for people to carry rifles in their cars as they went from Prescott to Winslow or Prescott or Flagstaff or wherever they were going. The distances were quite a bit further between towns in those days. It was a small town, but everybody carried weapons. Not hand weapons to shoot, but rifles. It was not too far removed from the days of the Old West. There were still people that were cowboys and outlaws and all the other things that were back in the early 1900s. These fellows were still around. We had a big place at Prescott that I think was called Pioneer Home. All the old folks were allowed to go there and live out their life and we used to go up and visit with them and talk to them, especially when we were scouts. We visited them as one of our projects.

Out of several hundred, 13 of us were picked to attend the rifle competition, and I happened to be one of them. I thought that was great. I loved to shoot. While all the others were out getting picks and in the

cactus and the heat and so forth, I went out to shoot every day. This was really detrimental as far as our military training was concerned, but that wasn't one of our worries at that time.

We were given travel money and four of us got in a car and drove all the way across to Ohio. The car belonged to our fraternity housekeeper, whose son was one of the Guardsmen. Not having any money, we slept in the car. We stopped in Dwight, Illinois on the way, where we visited with my father and my sister and had dinner with them. By then my mother, Mrs. Jones, had died and my father was at the veteran's hospital in Dwight. I went from Ft. Bayard, New Mexico to Dwight. That's where my sister went to college.

In the shooting competition in Ohio, I won a few little medals for firing expert. We didn't win any national championships, but it was a great, great experience. During that period of time, the 1930s, this was an occasion. Thousands of people were up there--both participants and spectators. Here we were, a little school of 900 people, and we had a team. There were ROTC teams from little schools all over the United States; then there were all the active duty National Guard teams. There were also teams from the Marines and the Navy. This was the National Rifle Match, and it attracted civilians because it was a tremendous, tremendous thing. The structure was provided by the government, so the individuals didn't have to put out much money except to eat.

We stayed in tents for the two weeks of the event. They put up a tremendous number of them. And they fed us. I don't remember any women in the competition, but there were lots of daughters of military families who worked in the mess halls. It was a big social military extravaganza. If there were nighttime social events, we weren't invited. Instead, we went to Toledo. We had never been east of the Mississippi. We had been paid our travel pay and it was an awful lot of money for us at one time. So one night we went to Sandusky and we went over to an island where they had various entertainment. We were pretty risque at that time. We bought a bottle of something that I don't remember and we got on a rollercoaster and the Ferris wheel. We'd take a drink. Oh, we just had the greatest time in the world. We ended up missing the last boat back to the mainland, so there were were out on this high land, smashed. Sooner or later we rented a boat to take us back to Toledo. That was our night out. We didn't do much drinking. We didn't have the money. But that was our wild night.

Then another time one of the big orchestra leaders was at one of the local dance halls in Toledo. So we all went to see Glenn Miller. It cost a dollar or so to get in, which was pretty high for us. We didn't know any women, and there weren't that many around that were available to dance with, so we just gathered around and listened. That was the thing that surprised me so much. You normally go to a dance to dance, but everybody there was standing around the orchestra just listening to them.

Another night we were free so we went and bought school clothes with our travel pay. Since all of our other expenses (food, lodging and so forth) were paid, we had some extra money to spend. It was about 6:00 p.m. and we found a little store and pounded on the door. The shop owner said, "What do you want?" We told him that we wanted to buy some clothes. There were four of us. He let us in and locked the door, and then we spent the next two hours in there. It made his day. In those days you could buy a suit for $5 and you could buy pants for two or three dollars. The store also sold shoes and socks. Everything except underwear. So we outfitted ourselves and each one of us spent at least $25 or $30, which was a tremendous amount of money. He made more in that one day than he made all week. I bought a white suit for $5, which he altered and mailed to me later on. I bought clothes there that I wore for the next ten years. I only had one suit when I went to college.

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Marriage

During my fourth year of college I married a girl from Texas whose name was Dorothy Milner. She was going to New Mexico State when I met her. She was attending school to graduate, not to prepare for any particular career. Women in those days didn't really have careers. They were teachers perhaps, but this wasn't a teachers college. Dorothy had an aunt and uncle who lived in the town of Anthony right close to the college. We were married on January 19, 1939. [LYNNITA, CHECK THE YEAR ON THIS. HE SAID 1940, BUT SHOULDN'T IT BE 1939?] Every year my daughter and her family and I still go back to have a family reunion. We have been doing it since 1939.

By 1940 I had a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army Infantry Reserves. I went two weeks active duty in Huachuca, Arizona, and then I went to East Texas where my wife's family was from. My daughter Reta (named after my oldest sister in Columbia, Missouri) was born there, and I taught school there. I taught sixth grade. I had a temporary teacher's certificate because I had the hours but not some of the right courses. I took extension courses at the same time I was teaching. The school was La Poynor Consolidated School in La Poynor, Texas.

When my six month temporary certificate ran out, I had not completed all the courses necessary so I had to stop teaching and started raising tomatoes on ten acres. That was an ungodly number of tomatoes, because in those days I had to prune and stake them. A black man who worked for my father-in-law and I raised the tomatoes. We put the seed in a box and grew it until time to transfer the box to a cold frame. Then we planted that in the ground. All of my neighbors and friends came to help. We planted the tomatoes individually, then the rains came and washed them all out. So we got them together again, planting them all again. Cutworms came in, chewed, and wiped them all out a second time. So we planted them a third time. This should have told us that raising tomatoes was not going to be a very good operation.

When everybody left, it was up to me and the black fellow that worked for me to take care of those tomatoes, stake and tie them up, and do all the things that we had to do. Then harvest time came. This was before the days of big trucks, so the big canning companies who bought the tomatoes transported them out of town on railroad cars. We had a big tomato shed right on the railroad in those days, so the farmers brought their tomatoes, graded them, and sorted them. The price they were getting was 90 cents a hundred or nine-tenths of a cent a pound. I went $75 for the whole, working the whole summer. It was the worst time in my life--working like mad from dawn to dusk and then ending up in the hole.

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Start of World War II

In the summer of 1940 I went to another two-week military camp, again in Camp Bullis, Texas. I was a reserve officer assigned to the Second Infantry Division, Ninth Infantry Regiment, at Fort Sam Houston. That was the active Second Division of the Army. It was my mobilization assignment. During the summer of 1940, the military expanded in great lengths and the Air Force was recruiting reserve officers to come in on a non-flying status, extended active duty for one year. The United States was not involved in World War II yet, but in 1940 we realized that we were going to have to become involved somehow. The military had to be enlarged since we had only a small military at that time.

So they started building up the nation's military forces. The Air Force started recruiting reserve officers. The Army started expanding and started new divisions, calling in reserve officers. On the way back from camp, I stopped in the headquarters of the reserve in Austin, Texas and volunteered to go on active duty. My wife was happy about it. I made more money as a 2nd Lieutenant than I ever did raising tomatoes. I owned a grocery store with just the basics, so I was very happy to get orders and draw $125 or $183 a month with my housing allowance.

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Ft. Bragg

On August 20, 1940, I was called to active duty to start a new division--the 9th Division at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. I traveled by train as a 2nd Lieutenant, Infantry Reserve, to Ft. Bragg. My first tour of duty was with the 9th Infantry Division, 47th Infantry Regiment. They were starting the new division that cadred all of their military units, active duty units, cadre, and then they flooded it with reserve types--CMT, C types. National Guardsmen came on active duty, and then volunteers.

Initially, Dorothy and Reta did not go with me to Ft. Bragg. I went there in August and then in September I went back to Texas and picked them up. We went by train to a little town called Southern Pines, close to Pinehurst right outside of Ft. Bragg and about 30 miles from where we were working. When they formed the 9th Division, they brought in all the cavalry and they had no quarters on base for them. Housing was at a premium in the towns around the base. We had enlisted people living in refurbished chicken coops because there just wasn't anything there. Whatever the local people had they turned into housing because all of these troops came in all of a sudden. Dorothy and I were there early on. I happened to talk to a person who had a big house. He had a small house in back of it where his secretary lived. She was moving out, so I got this two-bedroom house for $45 a month, including water. The rent was a big part of my paycheck, but it was a real fine house and was more than comfortable. As the years went by, the rent on that particular house went up to around $150 a month, which in those days was just astronomical.

In December of 1941, of course, was Pearl Harbor. War was declared. I was en route going from Point A to Point B somewhere in North Carolina. I remember that it was on a weekend. I don't remember where we were going that day--down to the Carolina beaches or where, but the news was all through the country. Of course, everybody said, "Whoops. We've got to go back to our units and check in." We turned around and went back. Everybody was sort of edgy for a while, but then it sort of went down to routine. A period of activation was in order and Roosevelt initiated the draft to expand all of the military. They were bringing in new people and draftees and training and so forth. We were very, very busy. By 1945 there were 16 million people in uniform.

Dorothy had our daughter to take care of. My wife was kind of fragile at times and her health went up and down. She had asthma and she smoked (we both smoked at that time), which didn't help any. But she enjoyed it there in Southern Pines. We were there from 1939 to 1942. During the Carolina maneuvers in 1941, Dorothy went back to Texas with Reta. She was having a lot of physical problems and I was out in the field and all over, so I couldn't really take care of her.

The Carolina Maneuvers was the first big maneuvers that they had for the military. They were big training exercises. We did small unit training, outpost training, vehicle training at Ft. Bragg, but even though it was a big place, it wasn't big enough to train big units. So the Carolina Maneuvers were the first ones that we got involved in where we had divisions from the divisions from there and corps headquarters et up. We had the Blue Army and we were all over North and South Carolina on federally-owned and privately-owned land. The We made courses with road blocks and things like that. We used primarily government land as much as we could to make courses with road blocks and things like that, but there was some encroaching on private land. A lot of people allowed it, but a lot of people also put in claims because of the damage done by vehicles and so forth. We didn't have any tanks. We didn't have anything to tear up the land with at that time. We had mostly foot soldiers, so we didn't tear things up as much as we did later on.

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Airborne School

After the Carolina Maneuvers, I went to airborne school at Fort Benning, Georgia. I went by choice. It was something "extra." I wanted to be in a training environment. I had been trying to get in the airborne since 1940, when the first unit was started. It was a place to go--a new adventure, and it was $100 more a month. There was also the prestige of being airborne.

For the first two or three weeks it was primarily physical conditioning using barbells and doing calisthenics. There was a lot of running. We double-timed everywhere. The four weeks of physical training were very, very strenuous and was a period of time to eliminate those who were not physically able or who had a fear of heights or who didn't have the will to jump out of the space of heights.

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Trenasium

We went through various stages of training. It was climbing, various training in the gymnasiums, jumping off a platform and learning how to roll to simulate what to do when you hit the ground after a jump. We initially jumped onto wrestling mats. Then we did away with them and just jumped on the ground. From that we went to the "trenasium". It was made of pipes and had incline ladders where we had to go up by hand. On top they separated by about 30 inches and we had to walk across them 30 or 40 feet in the air without using our hands. It was a real exercise.

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34-foot Tower

Right outside of the gymnasium at Fort Benning was a 34-foot tower. On the top there was a structure that resembled an airplane with a door. We had to climb up the ladder and put a harness on. There was a big cable running from the 34-foot tower up to a big telephone pole. We had to hook our harness to this cable, put our foot in the door of the airplane-type area, and then jump. We then rode down the cable. It simulated jumping out of an airplane.

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250-foot Tower

The third stage of our training was the 250-foot tower. It was derived from a ride at the World's Fair in New Jersey in which they had 250-foot towers with cross rings. There were cables on each of the arms and four guy wires that came down. The tower had a platform and a strapped seat. You had to go up the 250 tower in the seat, and then they let it go and the seat slid down the cables. It was a big drop and a big hit at the World's Fair. When the parachute troops started, they determined that this would be a good training device. They built four of these towers at Fort Benning and we trained on them in our third week of training. I have pictures of these towers somewhere.

First was orientation. In the orientation, we rode the seat. Then the next thing they did was make us lie down flat on the ground with our harness on. They lifted us up in the middle of our back and raised us up 150 feet. There we were in the air, looking around. Then they said, "Okay. Get ready. Pull your reserve." So we pulled it and they dropped us 14 feet. We were still attached to the cable, put it was a pretty exhilarating experience. This orientation didn't last too long before they did away with it.

The next part of the training was putting on a webbed harness with a cable that fastened right in the middle of our back. We wore a parachute within a frame. Then they hauled us up 250 and released us from the cable. When we were released, the parachute dropped out and we rode it right down to the ground just like coming out of an airplane. That was known as "parachuting land." We jumped off the platform and came down 21 feet per second. That was the equivalent of jumping off a five or six platform and hitting the ground. If there was a wind blowing from the rear, it pushed us forward so that our rate of descent and our direction brought us into the ground. If the wind was in our face we were blown backwards and it was hard to judge the distance to the ground. Or, if the wind was on each side, it had an influence on how we landed. It was very important in a parachute jump to put the wind to our face. That way we could pull our front risers down and that would decrease the force of the wind pushing us in one direction.

Some people got injured during this training. Because we weren't attached to a cable and were coming down free, they had to watch the wind. If the wind was blowing the wrong way, it could blow us into the tower. That's why they had four towers and four arms--so it could be down wind. Also, if someone didn't make the right parachute landing fall when they hit the ground, they could hurt their ankles or their legs.

I liked the tower training. Sure, I had moments of trepidation--it wasn't normal to be jumping out of an airplane or to be jumping off of a tower. But I was young. I could climb ropes and do all those things because I was physically fit. It was a new thing. I knew it worked because I had seen it work.

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Wind Factor

There was also a wind machine. Because of wind, after you're on the ground you can either recover by turning around and digging in your feet and running, or it will give you time to unsnap your parachute from your body harness and keep you from being dragged. But on a regular parachute jump, once your parachute is open and you ascertain that it is open, you determine which way the wind is blowing and you turn to face the wind to decrease your forward speed. If there is wind anywhere up to 15 mines an hour, it increases your chances of hurting yourself. So you slow that down. You try and go against the wind. By pulling on the front risers, air spilled out of the back of the parachute and, if there is no wind, gives you a forward motion. If there is a wind, that counteracts the speed. You try to face the wind.

Part of the training was parachute packing in which we took a parachute and learned all the elements, how to pack it, how to close it up, how to arrange the static line so that it was ready for jumping, etc. I don't know if they still do it now, but when I was in jump school, the first five jumps we made we had to pack our own parachutes so we had full confidence in the parachute. We had to know what was happening to know how it worked. Accidents happen even with parachutes packed by professional riggers, but we packed it under very close supervision. Every step was watched by an instructor to make sure we didn't leave a lead weight in there or whatever to prevent it from functioning properly.

In spite of all the training, there were factors that we couldn't do anything about. For instance, the speed of the airplane. The faster it goes, the probability of malfunctioning increases with the speed over a certain speed where your parachute functions the best. The normal speed in the old C-47 was 125 knots. Now with the new jet aircraft it may even be higher. I'm sure it is. But there is a certain speed that the airplane is supposed to be traveling. And, of course, it's up to the pilot and the drop master (the jump master) to make sure that that speed is not being excessive for the safety of jumping.

Also, a man might fall down in front of us and we could stumble over him. We could get our static lines wrapped around each other. Many things could happen. In the early stages, they used to have parachutes that hung up on the tails of airplanes because of various reasons. Some of them had to be cut loose from the airplane or cut loose from their own suspension lines. That's why we used to carry a jump knife on our uniform--so we would have a knife to cut the line in case we got hung up on the airplane somewhere and we could activate our chute. You didn't want to cut loose before you activated your chute because if you tried to activate your emergency chute first, there was a chance of it wrapping around the suspension line of your main chute. Speed and movement caused opportunities for malfunction. If it was raining we didn't jump.

I've jumped in cold weather. I was at Fort Campbell in 1957/58 when the ground was frozen and there was snow all over. As long as there was wind the cold didn't matter. Wind is the factor. If it was over 12 or 15 knots, we didn't jump. In all of our mass jumps there was a ground controller that determined whether it was safe to jump or not. He had air communication with the airplane. If the ground wind was over 15 knots, he called off the jump.

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Five Jumps to Graduation

When I went through Jump School, it was four weeks long. During the fourth week we did practice chuting and then we actually jumped it. We did that for five days. Five days. Five jumps. We practiced with our parachute, went up in an airplane to jump, came down, and then packed our chute for the next day. That was the routine.

I graduated from Class 18A Parachute School on the 23rd of May 1942. Up until that time, this was the largest class that had gone through as a group of officers and enlisted men. Out of the 300 that started airborne school, only 150 graduated. It had been an elimination process. A lot of people just couldn't make it.

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502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment

The Russians and the Germans started parachuting troops in World War II. It was a very strategic way of getting troops behind front lines, getting them in an area far back from the front lines, farther back of the front line troops. The Germans used it for going into Crete, which was an island occupied. They used it as a means for going from point A to point B. There was only one way to do that other than airborne, and that was going by ship by sea. That could be very disastrous and very dangerous. It was done throughout World War II all during the Pacific and the Mediterranean. It was used as another way to get troops into an area to conduct the fighting.

I became a member of the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) on May 23, 1942. Initially there was supposed to be one parachute infantry regiment and two glider infantry regiments in an airborne division. As far as the 101st was concerned, we had three parachute infantry regiments and one glider regiment because it was determined that parachute infantry regiments had a higher opportunity to be successful in landing a great number of troops with the least casualties. So early on, the 82nd Airborne and the 101st had more parachute regiments than any other glider.

On the 15th day of August 1942, orders were issued forming two airborne divisions. As of midnight that day, the 82nd Infantry Division, which was a square infantry division from way back, split. Part of those troops went to the 82nd Airborne. The other part went to the 101st. The glider troops or the troops that were to be glider trained did not have parachute people within that division. The parachute people came from the school by the regiment. The 502nd Regiment was assigned to the 101st as a Parachute Infantry Regiment. The 82nd was formed the same way; their parachute infantry regiments were formed, trained, and assigned to the division.

The other regiments in the 101st, the 501st and the 506th, went through as regiments, training as regiments; whereas we went through as individuals. They were assigned to the division at a later time. The 506th was the first one after we had gone to Fort Bragg in the fall of 1942. I was there. The 327th Infantry, which was part of the original 82nd that had two elements but later formed into the 327, were the three major regiments of the division at that time. The 501 Parachute Infantry Regiment joined us later in 1944. When we went into Normandy, we had three parachute infantry regiments and a glider regiment.

We stayed at Fort Bragg for the remainder of 1942 and up to the fall of 1943. In the fall of 1943, the United States sent big convoys over to Europe, primarily to England. We were alerted in what must have been October and boarded ships for Europe. I don't have the exact dates. My wife and daughter went back to Texas.

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Life on the Strathnaver

My particular unit, the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 326 Engineers, the 377 Field Artillery Battalion, and other elements, were loaded onto a ship called the Strathnaver. It was a British P&O ship that used to go down to India. It had an all Hindu crew. In making up those big convoys, they had to get ships from all over--from all different countries. The Strathnaver was one of the ones that was brought in for the British and made up part of this convoy. As I remember, the 300-ship convoy was the biggest ship convoy.

Going to Europe and a new environment was a big adventure as far as we were concerned. We got bored pretty quickly just doing training in any place. Evansville, Indiana was our base camp. We jumped into Tennessee on a big maneuver between the Blues and the Reds and so forth. We did a lot of training, a lot of running and so forth. But it got boring after a while, so we looked forward to going overseas. We were all a bunch of young bucks. We had had some adventures going up to Massachusetts and jumping on Martha's

Vineyard. Now going overseas would be a great experience. A great, great opportunity. We had a great deal of pride in ourselves and our units. Going to Europe was going to be something new and different.

So we got on this ship for New York. Being on the high seas was another adventure because I had never been on a big ship before. I had been on a ferryboat between Seattle and Vancouver, but never on a big ship. I don't remember getting sick. I might have felt a little queasy, but I was not sick sick.

That 300-ship convoy was a tremendous convoy. We started out across the Atlantic but our ship broke down when we got two or three days out. We had to turn around and go to St. John's Newfoundland. The rest of the convoy went off with destroyers and all protecting them.

Going to Newfoundland was yet another adventure. It was a new country we had never been to before. It was a very narrow way to get up to St. Johns, which was a capitol. The banks were very steep. It was a new thing to do. We went up on deck in the daytime. When we pulled up to the dock everybody was on the deck looking a the new country, its people, the skyline, and so forth. Everyone was trying to figure out how they could get off the ship, too.

They had people trying to repair the trip. In the meantime, we decided we had to get a little exercise. We had 7,000 troops on there with 500 WACs. That made a tremendous strain right there to have that many females onboard a ship with 7,000 soldiers. To make it even worse, the WACs were on the rear deck of the ship and it was open. The WACs would go out there and sunbathe in various clothing. That became somewhat of a distraction.

A barber shop had to be set up so the troops could get their hair cut. Well, when you have 500 WACs, what are you going to do with them? They had to set up a place for them to get their haircut too. There were certain people within their group that could do hair and all that stuff so we had to set up a combo barbershop for both the WACs and the male troops. This increased the amount of contact between the two sexes. We had them stationed on the upper floors or upper decks and we had guards at each edge. Our troops were not going to get past the guards--we thought. Then suddenly we realized that there was an elevator that ran to all the ship decks for the laundry. The guys found out that they could go to the bottom of the deck or all of these landings, get in that elevator, and go up to the WAC floors. They used that so much they burned it up. I'm sure that some of the WACs probably got pregnant, but we weren't on board ship to know. They were separated from the male troops once we got to England. The WACs were sent to London, but a lot of these soldiers went to London and had dates with the WACs. As I mentioned, one lieutenant colonel ended up marrying one of the WACs.

They tried to fix the ship. Then they went out several miles--eight, ten, fifteen miles, but it would break down again and we came back in. That became routine and it looked like it was not going to be a short period. The motor or engine or whatever it was kept breaking down. We had all these people on board and they wondered what to do with us. We had 500 WACs and 7,000 guys. They knew they had to get us off the ship and do something with all of us--even if it was running around the mountain. The tension was too high and the troops needed the exercise.

There was a small Army post on Fort Pepperill so we went there. They said, "You think we're going to let your 7500 young airborne troops take over? You are kidding." They put St. Johns off limits, but while we were tied up to a dock some of the soldiers were caught going down into town. The MPs brought them back. The Pepperill people said, "We're not about to take 7,500 people on this post. We can't handle them. We can't house them." Instead, they said they would take 1,000 a day. At the very least it would get them off the ship and they could run around the thing. They finally agreed to that.

Now, in our particular unit, the 502nd, we had a tremendous 28-piece band. We were the only regiment that had its own band to my knowledge, especially in the airborne. They were from Evansville, Indiana. The band members had all gone through high school together. They were just an entity. They were a military band, but they were an entity from Evansville. The regimental commander got them inside our regiment, and they were great. They not only could play martial music, they had a 14-piece band that played just like Glenn Miller. Down in the hold they had little trombones that three or four guys played for things like private parties. This 14-piece band was a real asset. We had used them in Fort Bragg to a great extent.

The Old Man called me up. I had been made a special service man also, which I didn't really like but I didn't have any choice. He said to me, "Jones, we're going to have a thousand troops to shore every night. We're going to put all the WACs on shore and we're going to have a dance every night. You're going down in the hold to find all those instruments for that band.

Now, can you imagine a ship loaded to go overseas with weapons and vehicles and all that other stuff--and we were supposed to find band instruments? Well, we went down there and found all of those band instruments for the dance band. In Fort Pepperill, they gave us quarters for 500 WACs, 1000 men, and the band. We had a dance every night. Those 500 WACs were in their heyday. They had a new group every night--7,000 people and seven nights of new partners. They lasted for a long, long time. In fact, our 377th Artillery Brigade commander married one of the WAC officers who was on that ship later on and they were my neighbors up in Washington State 40 years later. She still comes to our reunions.

We spent 30 days in Newfoundland. They wouldn't let us into the country, although a lot of people wanted to. Basically we were restricted to that post. We had seven to fifteen miles to try and wear these guys out. Well, after a period of time when you get a bunch of soldiers together, there was one thing that we knew was going to happen. They were going to gamble. The other thing that was going to happen after about a week, if you're with the same people, is that all the money was going to go to their officer or enlisted men because you didn't gamble with them. Their officer would get all the money that the officers had and the enlisted me and that's what happened there. We had enlisted men that won all the money on the ship. They could go to the PX or anything else. We had to figure out how to pay the troops so that they could all go to the PX and go to the clubs and all the other stuff. That was one of the minor problems. We had other activities and so forth.

It was almost 30 days before they finally decided that our ship wasn't going to be seaworthy. So they called in an American troop ship. In the meantime, we ate food that had been prepared for foreigners or British

military down in the tropics. There were 18-man tables in every compartment. Two of them. We had 36 people in a compartment that was designed for 18 people. There were 18 men in hammocks and 18 men on mats. That worked out all right except for when the men in the hammocks got sick. The men on the mats were the subject of all of their problems. In the daytime they got up, took all the hammocks down, picked all the mats up, put them against the wall, pulled down the tables, and they all ate at the 18-man tables.

There were two containers. One was for the cold food. They had 18 for that container. Another man took a container and brought back 18 portions of hot food. Eighteen people dished the food out, which wasn't a very good way to feed troops, especially when the food (rice and stuff like that) was all conglomerated together. It came pretty close to being a disaster.

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On to Nova Scotia

Later they told us to go down to Nova Scotia and pick up our new troop ship, the John Erickson. It was an American military ship run by the American military. This one was big enough to hold us. They had American food and American organization. It was just so great. Unfortunately, we had 600 people more than they had beds or bunks so they said 600 would have to stay on deck. We thought, "Hey, what do you mean by that? We don't want to be out there in the weather and the rain and all of that stuff." Then they got a little smart. They realized that they could be down in the hole, still crowded with all those compartments with so many people in them, stuffy, hot, cold, or whatever it would be. They decided that the great advantage would be on deck. That got to be the place where most of them wanted to stay. When it was time to transfer over, a lot of people hid in the corners so they could be one of the 600 on deck.

When we got to Nova Scotia, a band was playing. They had a big officers' dining room, a sergeants' dining room, and then the enlisted people had their own. The officers had big tables with beautiful white table clothes. They even had a bad playing there. I was a captain by then, so I decided that wasn't very good. We went up to the convoy and during the trip we had the band go down in the compartments and play for the guys. Of course, the guys on dockside really enjoyed it because they listened to the music. They would look into the dining room, looking around in our uniforms eating off of nice china and so forth.

In those days (I guess they still do it), if you were in a theater for so long a period of time, you got a little ribbon showing that you were in a certain theater--European, African, Asian. Because we were in Newfoundland for 30 days, we got an American theater ribbon. We were outside of the United States, but we were in the northern/southern hemisphere and we got a theater ribbon before we even got overseas. That's a decoration we don't talk much about. We were one of the few to get the American theater ribbon.

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English Adventure

It took us 44 days to get to England after leaving Nova Scotia. We disembarked in Liverpool and then were sent to the midlands via train to the estate of Lady Ward. It was known as Chilton Foliat, and it became the headquarters of the 502nd. Lady Ward was married to the publisher of one of the big London papers and this was their shooting chateau. It had beautiful grounds, a lot of pheasant and all that when we got there. They didn't last long. They put up Quonset huts for the troops and the officers were in the big manor. They walled off part of the manor where the owner stayed and the rest of it, the servants' quarters, we took over for the officers and the servants quarters. There were two other locations where our troops were based. One was a school complex named Benford School for Girls. I can't recall the name of the other place, but it was also a school of some type. It had dormitories and other buildings that we used as barracks. The 506th was a few miles away. The rest of the division was scattered all over the midlands of England.

We were able to train, but in the wintertime it got light about 11:00 and dark at 2:00, so for about 20 hours out of 24 we were in darkness. We weren't used to that. We were used to getting up at 6:00 in the morning to go to training in daylight. During the summertime it was different. We had about four hours of darkness and the rest of the time was daylight. We had to get ourselves accustomed to that type of routine for our training period.

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D-Day

We stayed there from the Fall of 1943, leaving in May of 1944 to go to Normandy for D-Day. The 502nd put into Normandy on the 6th of June 1944. There was a lot going on that we didn't know anything about to confuse the enemy and so forth. Everything was very, very hush hush. When we got to the area it was closed down. Nobody came in except a very few individuals. Nobody got out once they were in.

My particular job was departure air control officer for H Company, 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment. I didn't go into Normandy. I was in England. Every airport had its own marshaling area. I had supervision of five departure airfields for all the different units that were staged out of southern England. We had to build tent cities. We had to build training areas, mess halls, briefing areas, and so forth. We had tables for briefing of the target area where we were going. People didn't know where we were going or what the target area or the mission was until they got in the area and were sealed. Then they were briefed individually and down to the last man. Then they knew where they were going and what they were going to do. They were given books to tell them exactly how to do it.

What the 502nd was going to do was pretty complicated, but our primary job was to jump behind the lines in Normandy and go east to take control of the causeways that came off Utah Beach. The 4th Infantry Division made an amphibious landing at that beach and used these causeways to get from the beach to the interior. The drop was not the most coordinated. The First Army Air Force and the troop carrier command were involved. It was at night and not daytime. A lot of the airplanes diverted from their flight paths and some of

them dropped troops into the Channel. They dropped them too early. Very, very few of the people that were in the whole division got to their correct dropoffs.

After 33 days, the remnants of the unit returned to England to refit and get ready for another. It had been a very successful 33 days. We stayed in England and were alerted four or five times for more operations, but General Patton and his army were doing so well that we were not called upon to be deployed again in France.

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Operation Market Garden

This operation took place in September of 1944. It was General Montgomery's idea to form a corridor through Belgium and Holland, go to Ormond, and go around the mountains to get into the Ruhr Valley, which was the heart of Germany. It would have permitted the allies to go right down the valley and would certainly have hastened the end of the war. However, it didn't work out quite that way.

The 82nd and 101st were given the job of providing a corridor from the southern border of Holland to Germany, form a corridor for the British Second Army to come out of France to go up that corridor where they would turn around in the valley. Now, when airborne troops get on the ground, they have no vehicles, or at least very few vehicles. Those who came in by parachute were pretty much ground bound.

We did form a corridor, but the British were quite slow in getting their troops up to us. In the meantime, the British troops that jumped all jumped too far away from their target area. They were never able to take it. That's where the term of "ridge too far" originated. They were finally driven out of harm, or at least the remnants of it were, and joined us in Holland. But we held that area until the war was over the following May. We were never able to get around that point through Arnold. It was a successful operation except that it wasn't completed.

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Evacuated

The Battle of the Bulge then came up, but I got hurt on the 8th day of November. I hit a tank with a Jeep. I ran into it. I got a broken knee and was evacuated by Jeep and ambulance to England. I was out of action, really. I went back to the hospital in England and stayed until February of 1945. At that time, the system was if you were incapacitated for a period of time (if I remember correctly, it was 90 days), you were sent back to the States. So I was evacuated back to the States in the early part of 1945.

We were suddenly put on a hospital ship out of southern England one night. We didn't even have time to change our money from pounds to anything else, and that's all we had--English money. We sailed away toward the big USA. Around the Azores they had trouble with a hospital ship from World War I. There were 500 hundred patients or whatever it was. Psycho patients and everything. The ship was a French ship named St. Mihiel. They decided they would it in at the Azores and get it fixed. It was about six o'clock in the morning. I don't know what the navigator was doing--talking to somebody aboard or somewhere on land. I guess he was working out what he was going to do that night. Anyway, he ran that ship right up on the docks. There we had a hospital ship full of patients up there on the rocks. He missed the channel somehow.

That was a new adventure. They had tugs and hooked lines on it. They tried to do everything but couldn't do anything. The ship was 150 feet up on top of this thing and it tore a gash in the bottom of the ship. The only thing that kept it from sinking was the reef that it was on.

They finally got the ship off the rocks. They had to take all of the patients off the ship. They brought liners and boats and all that stuff and they loaded all these various patients on them. Some of them were in casts, including body casts with their leg or arm extended. They put them on pulleys and loaded them down off of the ship to get them on the little liners. They evacuated us and put us into a military organization, the hospital, and we could see lights. It was a town on an island of the Azores.

They said they would have to wait there until they got the ship off or until they got a new hospital ship. We were there for four or five days and realized it was going to take them a while. Since we had liberty until they got the ship off the rocks, we decided, "Let's go to town. We're in the Azores." It was beautiful highlands and so were the lights of the Azores at night. We hadn't seen lights in a couple of years, and it was great realizing we could go into a bar and buy a drink or dinner.

We did have a problem with the currency exchange. We hadn't been able to exchange our pounds before leaving England. During the war, the Germans and their associates passed a lot of counterfeit pounds so the businesses on the Azores wouldn't take pounds anymore. There we had four hundred dollars in pounds. That was an awful lot of money in those days. I couldn't go to town and get a drink or meal or do anything because I didn't have the right kind of money. So I went down to one of the ships on the dock and explained my problem to the purser. He was very, very nice. He said, "Well, I'm not supposed to do this, but I'll cash five pounds, which is $25." So I had $25 so I could go to town. That was a great time to go in. I just sat there and looked at the sky and the lights and the people in a non-war atmosphere. I could eat and drink whatever I wanted to so I had a very, very pleasant time.

I didn't have a cast on my leg, but I had to rehabilitate my leg to get it to where I could move it. My leg had been operated on and tied together with wire and then my leg was stiff. So I spent ten minutes an hour ten hours a day doing leg exercises with towels in bed. I grabbed the side of the bed until I could finally get 85 percent movement in my leg. I still have 85 percent. It never really bothered me except once or twice.

They sent us a new hospital ship, diverting it from somewhere else. That ship took us into Charleston, and I went to a hospital in Longview, Texas, because that was close to where my wife was. I was ambulatory and I was able to go home for a week or whatever.

I don't think the war created any particular hardships for my wife Dorothy. She had her family and her family's support. They all moved to Los Angeles sometime while I was overseas, but they came back to east

Texas and were there when I got home. Her father and mother worked and the money was good. The boys in her family were all in the service. They came back to east Texas. Dorothy was a seamstress. She had her own tailoring ship while she was there so she had that do to keep her busy and to give her some income. Her family helped to take care of Reta. When I came back from Europe Reta was six or seven years old.

The way the system worked back then, they figured anybody that had been in combat should be rehabilitated to the extent that they could get along with civilians again. I said okay. I knew I was going back to Benning because that was the only airborne facility they had around Texas. I told them that I wanted to go to the one out of Santa Barbara, California. So we got in the car and drove all the way from East Texas to Santa Barbara. I checked us into one of the hotels at $1.35 a night. They had a week's course for us. They had deep sea fishing and all recreational things that were supposed to bring us back into the fold. Needing to be brought back into the fold was the least of my worries. I thoroughly enjoyed the environment and what we were doing. The reason I picked California was because my second sister, Muriel, was living in Culver City and had a family. I had been up there in 1938 to visit, and wanted to go again. We got together and had a family reunion.

Strangely enough, when my younger brother was in the Navy and was sailing around in the Pacific, my youngest brother, who had been in the Marines and got thrown out of that for fighting with the Japanese in the international settlement of China before the war, had joined the merchant marines. He had been in the merchant marines in the Pacific.

My older sister Reta, as I mentioned earlier, was in Manila. As things would have it, I was out in Santa Barbara one week when my sister Muriel was notified by the Red Cross that the first ship of repatriates from the Philippines was coming into Los Angeles that week and Reta was on it. Wowee! She called me and we all went down to the ship to meet her. If you will recall, Reta had been captured at Corregidor. This period of time was pretty tough on her in Manila.

Civilian attorneys ran the POW camp where she was imprisoned and the Japanese guarded the gates. They learned real quickly, especially the young men, not to get too close to the gates where the Japanese guards could get to them. The whole system of governing was done by civilians, so my sister was not really mistreated. They had adequate food and drink. But she did have a half dozen checks that her husband had drawn, so they had a system. They got a list of things they wanted or needed, and they tied the list and a check around a rock and threw it over the back wall around from the gate. Chinese merchants would come by, pick it up, fill it, and toss it back over the wall with the change. It was clandestine. The Japanese didn't see it or they would have killed them both, but this went on whether the Japanese knew it or not. It looks like they should have.

Reta was imprisoned in the Santa Marco University, which was walled in. After the Americans came into Manila, they liberated the university, but they said, "Don't get out of here. Stay inside until we get all of the Japs out of town." War was still going on. There was still fighting going on in Manila and they were driving the Japanese out. As they left, the Japanese turned around and fired into the city. One of the .75 shells landed in a room where Reta was. She was standing in a doorway between two rooms, talking to someone when the shell lit in one room. It shattered some of her facial bones and cut off her nose, but didn't affect her eye. She did get beriberi, and she was malnourished.

When we met her at the dock, it was the first time that I had seen her in 25 years, I guess. It was a tearful reunion. Everybody cried, but Reta was in great spirits. She had a great, bubbly personality. I remember that she had a Band-aid across where her nose used to be. We had a great together and then I had to take off and go back to Benning and go to work.

Reta's husband was sent to Kobe, Japan. He was repatriated about the same time that she was. Reta went through 70 operations. The big hospital then for burn patients and other people who had drastic plastic surgery needs was in Palo Alto, California, so she went up there. I visited her there a couple of years later. They had grafted skin from her thighs and skin from her back, and they had taken other skin and rolled it up, cut it off, and pushed it on her nose. Her system just wouldn't take it. Eight or ten years of this and she said, "To hell with this." She got a prosthesis with glasses and a lot of time she just wore a Band-Aid. She got where she just didn't care.

My younger brother who was in the merchant marines had a lot of problems, too. They got together and lived in the same building. Both of them were drinkers. They spent their years going to baseball games in Los Angeles and having a hell of a good time. They took their bottles and sat up there and watched the games. Both were pretty much disabled. She later died and he got progressively worse. He married a Mexican gal but finally ended up dying. I went out to see him and his wife when my sister died and he wrote occasionally. He was a painter by trade, but he couldn't work for any length of time. He was a heavy drinker in those days.

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Life in Japan

I went back to Fort Benning later in 1945. I was unit commander in the airborne school. I had a company of trainees and took care of them. I went to Cook and Baker School so I could run a mess hall. And I went to glider school so I could be a glider rider. They had a regular course of instruction from a glider. Mostly it was loading and classing of weapons and vehicles and so forth in the glider, but it was also riding it ourselves. I got a glider certificate for loading and classing and making five glides.

At that time the only overseas airborne outfit was the 11th Airborne, so I volunteered to go to that in 1948. I was tired of Fort Benning. They had started to integrate a lot of people in the Army and I did not make it. I decided then that these fellows were getting the priority for higher schooling. So I decided I would go overseas. The 11th Airborne was an occupation force in Japan.

I went over individually first. I was S-3, Third Battalion, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment. An S-3 was an operations officer. My family joined me in November of 1948 and in February of 1949 they decided the 11th

Airborne would come to Fort Campbell. I did not have any desire to go there and be part of that rat race, so I went to Japan in place of it. I was reassigned to the 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, with the rank of Captain. My pay went down because I went out of the 101st Airborne into the 7th Division. I lost $100 a month, but it was worth it not to have to go to Fort Campbell.

At that time, they pulled all of the American units out of Korea to Japan. The 7th Infantry Division was pulled out of Korea and occupied the area that the 11th had occupied in northern Japan in Hokkaido, the northern part of the country. A lot of airborne people had stayed back. There were replacements that had come into the airborne. There were people that came from Korea to Japan that didn't have enough time left in their stint of service to go back home, so we found the different regiments of the 7th Division in Japan made up of all those. In addition, they brought a complete battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Don Faith up from the First Cavalry and turned them into infantry. We had a conglomeration of cavalry, infantry, airborne, replacements, people from Korea, and people from Japan.

My wife joined me in Japan. She had a lot of friends there and we had good quarters. We had our own post. We had our own commissary. If you wanted a seamstress you called up the neighbor. As I mentioned earlier, my wife was a seamstress, but she got sick. We wanted a hospital nearby, and there was. She liked to garden so we called up and got a garden. It was just a pleasant place. My daughter loved it there. She was about 12 or 13 years of age, and she became very proficient in Japanese. She was our interpreter, and she would talk to the house girl all day. When we went into the little seaport town right outside of our post, she helped us with our dickering with the natives and so forth. We had our own school and had scout troops. You know, all that stuff.

We worked from 6:00 in the morning until noon, and then we played. We went to the beach and we went for boat rides. "Work" was training new troops, although there wasn't much training since we were in occupation mode. We had certain posts that we had to maintain at other little towns, but we also did training. And we ran an NCO school. We followed a regular training schedule.

As an intern they made me a club officer. They took those that were leaving to set up things and handle the post so that the post structure would work. I was picked to run the officers club because I had been a club officer before. The club was the 511th Club, later renamed the 32nd Infantry Regiment club. It was located in Camp Haugen in Japan. I was club officer there until the battalion commander, Colonel Faith, came up and asked me to be a company commander in one of the companies in his battalion. He had met me there in Japan and knew that I was a leftover from the airborne group. I had been there since 1948--almost a year at that time. I don't know whether he had talked to anybody about me. He just asked me. He knew that I had been in World War II as a company commander. He said that he had a company that was commanded by a lieutenant colonel and that was having problems, so he wanted someone to go down and take it over. They figured I could do it, so I did. I became company commander of C Company, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. Company C was a regular line company.

We trained recruits. We trained replacements. We trained in the field. We went out for a week or two weeks or three days or whatever to an isolated post. There were only two trains a day from the south to the north. One came north and one came south. The roads were not passable. We had cars, but it was mostly on post. We couldn't take them off post because it was no place to drive. So we were an isolated community when we left, although we were pretty self-contained. Self-sustaining. We had a commissary. We had a PX. We had all the help we needed. We had all the security we needed. We had a very active club program, and that's what our social life centered on--around the club program.

We did extensive training under Colonel Faith clear up until the time we deployed to Korea in September of 1950. Colonel Faith was a very nice young man whose father was a brigadier general. He was a little older than me, but not much. I was a little older than most. In 1950 I was 33 years old, and Colonel Faith was a little older by maybe a couple of years. He had been in World War II and then in China on a liaison job. He came back to the 1st Cavalry and was battalion commander down there. At the time, the regiment had only two battalions instead of three because of peace time. There were five companies. When we got alerted to go to Korea, they brought up a battalion company from the 32nd Regiment at Fort Benning. Then we had three battalions, which was normal for a regiment.

Don Faith was a very young, very forceful, intelligent, dedicated soldier. I think he regretted the fact that he was working for Ridgway as headquarters commandant aide because he never really got down with the troops in World war II. He was very dedicated to having his troops trained and realized exactly that he was very short on experience with using the artillery support battalion that was assigned to us.

In Japan we were scattered all over many, many miles and we never got together in any division to do anything. All of the artillery was out at a place called Camp Zama, [NOT SURE OF THIS CAMP'S NAME] so he went down there for a week with the 48th Field Artillery just to learn how to use artillery. That was the type of person he was.

We trained hard and we trained day and night. We trained on the ground up in the mountains. It was not that we anticipated anything, but that was just his nature to be a well-trained human. And it paid off so that when we had our test we ranked very high in the company tests. Every unit was tested in their proficiency of maneuvering and undertaking certain tasks by higher headquarters. We were tested for wartime capability. Our job was occupation, but we had to be a military unit. We had to in case the Japanese decided to become difficult. Knowing the Japanese, it was a possibility. By the same token, as long as we were there as occupiers, the Japanese were very docile. We had very, very few problems because we were in a very rural area. We weren't in Tokyo or Yokohama. They had more problems down there.

I was back there in the US Army Pacific and talked to many people who were hospitalized after 1951. This was after hey had gotten their independence from occupation. The attitude of the Japanese was entirely different then. They were not docile anymore. They had an element that was very antagonistic, especially the communist type or the communist element of the Japanese culture. They were very arrogant, and they were very assertive.

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War Breaks Out

When the Korean War broke out, there was no warning whatsoever that this was about to happen. We knew, of course, that the communists had taken over. That's when the 7th Division was moved out of South Korea. We didn't anticipate any problem. The contact we had with the outside world was radio, and most of us didn't pay much attention.

The troops down in Kyushu, Japan were the first ones to go to Korea after North Korea invaded South Korea. Part of this group made up Task Force Smith, but it was really sent to Korea without even this help. When they were there in Korea and having so much trouble, they were drawn back into the Pusan Perimeter. That's when the rest of the 8th Army was trying to gear up and sent in the 25th, 24th, the 2nd Division, and all those. I lost all of my NCOs except my first sergeant, supply sergeant and my mess sergeant. They took all the platoon sergeants and all the squad leaders to the units down south that were initially leaving for Korea.

The whole unit was alerted and we were then moved south in Japan after the 1st Cavalry moved out. We were down there without our NCOs. This was about the middle of August, I guess. We trained down there a while and then we went to Camp Fuji. When we moved to Fuji, we found a bunch of NCOs--some from the Philippines and some from the States.

I figured we would go to Korea. There was no doubt in my mind. I wasn't really looking forward to it. Having been through combat in World War II, I wasn't desirous of going into combat in Korea, but that was the mission and we did the best we could. I knew there were going to be problems.

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Move toward Seoul

We were sent to Korea by troop ship for the Inchon Landing on the 15th of September. I used to know, but I've now forgotten the name of the ship. We were on several of those ships moving from Japan to Korea initially. Then from Pusan to Iwon and then later back from Iwon. There were several troop ships and I've forgotten all their names now.

We were briefed before we started out for Korea. I remember that we arrived at Inchon at high tide because they had 30-foot tides there. If a ship didn't get in there at high tide it got stuck in the mud flats. I know it was daylight when we got there, but not too early in the morning. I would say it was probably the middle of the morning whenever the tide was out. We went in uncontested because the Marines had moved ahead of us. After we got in, we moved to the south and west. We were with the Marines who liberated Seoul, and once we got to Seoul we were attached to them. The Marines came into Seoul from the west and we came in from the south.

The south was high ground. We had to fight our way east toward Suwon in order to get to Seoul. Enemy resistance wasn't heavy. It was just foot troops up in the mountains. We were attacking them more than they were attacking us, meeting them at the successive ridgelines. We kept moving on to the east and driving them off one ridgeline after another. We got directly south of Suwon and turned north. They took us to the river and we crossed it. The Han River had but one bridge.

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Leadership Qualities

I had experience from World War II when I jumped into Holland as company commander and was given a very tough mission in a little town. We had all sorts of casualties there. And, when you're doing your job, you don't have time to worry about yourself. You're worrying about your troops. As unit commander, my biggest concern always was, "Am I doing the right thing by sending them to do this, that and the other thing?" There were times when I felt that I did not tell my men the right thing. Any time we didn't take an objective and we had a lot of casualties I wondered, even though I had been told that was my mission. I wondered how I could have done it differently or how I could have reduced the casualties. It was not something I dwelled on. I just had to do the best I could, use my proper judgment, use my training, and not expose my troops unnecessarily. That's very difficult. I mean, when the bullets are flying and the mortars and artillery are coming in, there was not an awful lot I could do as an individual. Once I was given my orders, I knew what my mission was.

Unfortunately, I had to be behind my men. If I was out front, I was going to get shot. I was going to be the first guy. The first casualty. I had to be back there to see what was going on and to see that they were doing their job. I had to see how we could use our resources--call in our mortars, call in our artillery. Know when to take in my reserve element. I had to keep my seniors informed about what's going on and how things are going. I had an awful lot of things to do. A unit commander was a leader to an extent, but he did not normally lead the front line troops in an attack. That's not his place. I had my leaders down there to do it. And sometimes it was very hard not to go out there and say, "Follow me." Because you don't have to think You just hope that you're going to overcome the enemy. That doesn't happen. That's something made in fiction that doesn't happen in combat. Rambos just don't last very long in combat.

I could become more of a problem for them, a liability, if I tried to over control from where I sat. That's why there were lieutenants out there. That's why there were sergeants. They didn't want to have to be looking back at their leader saying, "What do I do next?" Combat is a teamwork effort. There's no question about that. It's a cooperative. It's a very, very complicated, very dangerous, team effort. It's not like losing a ball game or going in and you're attacking at a basketball game that isn't working out because the defenses are too strong. It's a life-and-death thing. You've got to rely on your training and your judgment and the people under you that are leading. You are trained to know them--know their weaknesses, and try to help them out.

The men underneath me relied on me. I think during training and during life on an isolated post the enlisted men get to know their officers. They know the phonies. They know the braggarts. They know the people they can depend on. They know the people that are easy to get along with. They're quick. They'll serve you, but they will build a state of confidence in their commander. If their commander tells them to jump over that

wall, they'll jump over that wall. We were fortunate in that we were together for quite some time before we went into the war. So we got to know our NCOs and our soldiers. When in training, sooner or later they depend on you. They find out whether you're a capable officer. Whether you have a heart or whether you understand what a soldier does and what he doesn't do. They know if you have a heard because of the way you treat people. When they do wrong, you correct them. You tell them, "You did wrong, you're corrected, but I'm not going to hold it against you. You can straighten out. You can accept this punishment." I had sergeants who came to me and said, "Sir, I screwed up." I said, "Okay. As long as you realize it." I had others that no matter what happened, they didn't realize they did wrong. So, I reprimanded them or corrected them. Some of them accepted it. Some of them didn't. That was personality. When you get where it's life threatening, people are more liable to listen to you and do what you say because they feel confident in your ability and your background and your training or your experience.

I had one young lieutenant who came in who thought that once he made lieutenant he knew everything there was. I counseled him time after time that the way he treated those young soldiers was very bad manners and that they would classify him as an egotist who wouldn't listen to them--who felt that he was superior in every way, and they wouldn't have confidence in him. We had trained in Japan before we went into Inchon. It wasn't until he got shot that he finally realized what I tried to tell him. He came to me and said, "You know, what you said is true. You've got to listen to your NCOs. You've got to listen to your soldiers." When you get into combat and you don't have the confidence of your soldiers, they're not going to move. They're not going to do what you tell them to do. Some people don't realize the importance of their position. They think, "I'm better than you. I'm smarter than you. And I have authority over you." The reaction from the troops is, "Hey, we're in this together. You have your job and I have my job. Let's get it done."

All people have their breaking point, I don't care how good they are. Some breaking points are higher than others. In World War II I learned that we did not have anybody in our flanks. We had put our unit out and the troops had to stay awake all night after soldier all day. They did that to the best of their ability, but sooner or later they reached a point where they were going to fall asleep. They were going to do something wrong. They got so jittery that there was no telling what they were going to do. I could tell it by watching their eyes.

I remember one particular case when I had an officer getting ready to do something in particular. We had had two to four days of being exposed. He was very stable and very good, but I saw his eyes. They were moving back and forth and he was not listening. He was about at the breaking point but he wouldn't say anything about it. So I called him back and sent him to battalion. I didn't tell him that I saw his eyes jiggling or that I was worried he was about to break. I just told him to go back and take a break. It was like R&R. We were a front line company. It wasn't very far back, but to a front line infantryman, he could go back there and get some sleep and feel that somebody was going to protect him. I sent him back there and he spent the night sleeping and eating. He was fine when he came back.

I was very close to my platoon leaders. I knew the strong ones and I knew the weak ones. I knew the ones I could rely on to make the right decisions and the ones who were laid back. Everybody has their own abilities, and you've got to do with what you're given. You can't say, "You're a poor leader", and get rid of them. You've got to keep the presence there of the leader. You've got to earn your stripes. If they don't have the capability of doing their job, they ought to be relieved and not just given an easy job.

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Hit in the Heart

Around September 19, we went down in the valley and up the next one. We were going up one of these without vehicles. We had a 300-man company and when you get that many men in single file in the mountains they extend for an awful long way. We didn't have control. I managed to obtain an extra 300 radio which had a longer range than normal communications. Within the company we were still using 11th Airborne hand-held 536 radios that had very little range. The 300 radio was the one that we used to communicate from the battalion to the company and the company to the battalion. With this extended length, I was able to get another place column of troops and advance forward.

As we were going to meet in this meeting engagement and met resistance and fire, I deployed the first platoon. I was waiting for the second platoon to come up to deploy them along this ridgeline. I stood there waiting for the troops to come up. As I turned around to look back and see where the troops were, a bullet hit me on the button of the jacket and knocked me down. I think it was a bullet from a long-range machine gun because it was at the end of its trajectory. It was coming down. When bullets are going at full velocity, you can hear them pop over your head. These were pop. I shouldn't have been standing up, but I was.

I thought I was mortally wounded and waited for the pain to subside a little and waited to succumb entirely. It didn't happen. So I started looking around. I looked down my shirt and saw the bullet sticking out of my chest. I said, "Major, look here. I've got a bullet sticking out of my chest." I reached in and pulled it out. The bullet was hot. The button had a plate on the back of it and that plate was driven flatways through a notebook and a roster that I had folded four times. The force of it was a terrible impact. Then the bullet skidded off of the metal and penetrated my chest. I thought that was it.

I had to continue this attack so I called the Major over and he came up. I said, "This hurts like hell." I pulled up my shirt and stood there waiting for him to do something. He kept looking at it and then he looked at me. I thought, "What's the matter with this guy?" He was supposed to help me and there I was bleeding. I said, "Well, do something." He said, "Do what?" I said, "What do you mean, 'do what'?" I took the bullet out of my chest and thought the blood would come streaming out. But the bullet had only gone into my chest about a half inch. There was just a little dot of blood and that was it. I saw that there was no great amount of blood rushing out of my body but I said, "Do something about it." He said that all he had was an aspirin and a Band-Aid. I said okay and told him to put the Band-Aid on and give me the aspirin. By that time the second platoon came up and we went into the attack. This was about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. Later I was black and blue from the middle of my chest up to my shoulder. I still have the bullet today. I carry it on a key chain.

Besides myself there were some other casualties. The aid station was so far away that we had to use litter bearers. We had injuries but we didn't have so many deaths at that time. We never really got that close to the enemy yet. They would get on the ridgeline and shoot at us and we would shoot them.

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Shallow Foxholes

That afternoon about four o'clock we were three more ridgelines away. The aid station was behind us and I wasn't about to walk all the way back there. The troops were on the final ridge and they were pretty complacent about the whole thing. I thought they were going to jeopardize themselves by sitting around instead of digging foxholes. For one thing, they had gotten tired of digging holes and not being able to occupy them. Our troops were trained well, but maybe when it came to digging foxholes they thought there wasn't much training value to it. Since we had limited training time, there was a tradeoff. Do you teach them to dig foxholes and then fill them up, or do you teach them to partially dig them and then use the remainder of the time for other training. When we moved south in Japan, we didn't have an area where we could build and effective position in which to train. There were other things that we worked on rather than digging holes. We marked our position and knew what formation, but mainly we worried about drawing up our diagrams for intersecting fire so that we had our whole front covered by our machine guns and rifles. That type of thing.

I got a little bit irate about the fact that they were sitting around, so I started to go up and down the line telling these guys what they should do. They had just got through climbing I don't know how many ridgelines. They were exhausted and tired and didn't know why I was coming in telling them to dig in, but they were very, very responsive to me. We had a good relationship and I had no dissention. So they dug foxholes about four or five inches deep and were sort of staying down there and resting and relaxing. I attributed this later on to the fact that in Japan we were not training stages. They didn't want us wasting time digging holes because they would have to fill the holes back up again. So we sort of simulated. They would dig a foxhole about two, three, four inches deep and say, "Okay. That's what we do in combat." Well, the did the same thing in combat that they did in training. They dug a two, three, four, five-inch foxhole and sat down and ate rations or whatever they were going to do. About this time the enemy turned around and started putting some mortars in there. Well, the first mortar lit and all you could see was shovels flying and dirt flying and holes being dug. They changed real quickly and realized that a five or six-inch foxhole was not very good.

As I mentioned before, one of the problems was that we had lost our NCOs. We had lost our corporals and the sergeants that really did this type of thing. Then we were filled up just before we went into Inchon with all of the NCOs that had been on occupation duty in the Philippines and did nothing as far as training was concerned. They didn't know the troops. They didn't have much time to be retrained before we were committed to Korea.

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Quality Leaders

There was a period of time when we were able to judge the new NCOs that came in just by their manner of doing things, their background, their experience. Some of them had been in the jungles in World War II in the Philippines as guerillas for months and months. Some of them made the grade in Korea and some of them didn't. Some of the officers didn't. It was an individual thing, but it didn't take long to figure out who they were. I recall one of them, Corporal Piercefield from Rockford, Illinois, who ended up a Master Sergeant, was sent to infantry school, and ended up as the commanding officer of Fort Sheridan outside of Chicago. He was a good, good soldier and an outstanding young squad leader and platoon sergeant. He was a smart, forceful, brave and good leader who established confidence with his young troops and taught them military skills even though he himself was very young.

We had a good mess sergeant named John M. McGuire from Sherman, Missouri, who was also a good all-around soldier. He ended up getting a commission and retiring as a major. He was in the war, but not fighting as an infantry type. You know, there's an awful lot that goes on in war besides shooting rifles. Probably in all of your time in combat, one percent is shooting and 99 percent is existing or training or preparing or planning. One of the most important things was to keep the soldiers healthy, fed and happy, and he did that. Unless you have a good group of people, cadre of people and supply and administration and your mess, the organization will suffer. Individuals will suffer. We had the finest mess hall and garrison. We had the finest food in the field. McGuire was an outstanding leader. In those instances when we were fighting, he was a good leader and demonstrated leadership. He was a great, great asset, and I was very proud of him. We had first prizes for mess hall and food and out in the field we always had proper food. he was always thinking about how to do it and get it to the troops. he was always available. He was an outstanding person. He got a commission and retired. We're still good friends.

The people we had in Japan before going in were well trained, but some troops were liable to be lax unless they had someone to remind them and encourage them to do what they were supposed to do. In this case, we were in the early phases of combat. We had been there three days and we hadn't run into much. Then suddenly we did. so it was really a learning experience. Now you're in combat. Bullets are coming, and being exposed is not the way to go. It was a good lesson. We really profited by the fact that they gave us mortar fire. Fortunately we didn't have any casualties that time.

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Taking Seoul

We spent the night there and the next morning we moved out. We were ferried across the Han River to the south of Seoul. There was the city and the land around it went far into the mountains. We occupied the high ground there. (In combat, one always took the high ground.) Seoul had the river, the banks and the high

ground. Our job was to hold that front. There were some positions that were occupied--already dug ditches and foxholes, so we just moved in there and moved the North Koreans back.

Seoul was in a valley. There was a big horse racetrack on the northeast corner of Seoul and we were just south of that. We had all of the houses in the area and all of the civilians that were still there. They weren't moving. They were staying there. It was very difficult to keep from killing civilians. In recent years I have read newspaper articles about what they did to the civilians in Korea at Nogun-ri. That incident happened later. Among the civilians they found women who came in wearing long skirts and who had mortar tubes and mortar shells stuck to their legs. They also had radios.

Anyway, there was a mob of people, refugees, who came down to Seoul because the North Koreans were pushing all of them. We couldn't afford to allow a mob of people to come through our lines or we would lose all control, all contact, and our own safety. The civilians did not try to come through the lines of C Company. We had no fire from the housing area because we were on the high ground. Other elements of the battalion were to my east and they were in a big fire fight, but out where I was there wasn't anything happening.

We went right on through the town, got up to the edge of the racetrack, and waited to see what was going on. It was a circular area and it had barns and things like that. The North Koreans were on the other side and we could hear all the fire, but we hadn't run into anything except a bunch of civilians in their homes. Their homes were mostly little mud huts. We saw a lot of children and they were both excited and afraid. They saw all the troops coming down and we all were ready to shoot if we saw something to shoot at. I think we were naive in thinking that we could walk into a built-up area and not have some opposition to the land and not have somebody try to shoot at us. We were lucky. We would probably have stayed right there because it wasn't too bad a place to stay, but the executive officer, the same one that was up there when I got hit, came wandering up and said, "You know, you're way ahead of your front lines. All those other people are back there fighting and you're out here all by yourself. Pull back to the high ground." They pulled me back because I was out there exposed. I didn't know it because I couldn't make contact with people on the right. There was nobody on my right.

So we extricated ourselves and moved back. We got up on the high ground again overlooking all this. The Marines had come in from the west and they were attacking Seoul. They were firing a lot of artillery--they had artillery, we didn't. There were artillery shells landing down there and there were civilian casualties. We weren't in any danger from the artillery shells because we were south of them, but they were hitting the built-up area. In typical Marine fashion they were trying to go right through. They didn't care about who was in the way. They felt that the civilians knew that somebody was coming in with artillery and weapons and they should have evacuated the best they could.

The city of Seoul was infiltrated by North Korean troops, so the Marines met resistance. The people who had been occupying the high ground that we took moved back into the city and they were the people that the Marines ran into on the left. There was high ground in part of Seoul called South Mountain. That's where the big fighting took place. Over where I was, the high ground was pretty level and we didn't meet resistance.

After the North Koreans were driven out of Seoul, we went right on through it and we occupied all of Seoul. Things sort of went static. The UN set up their headquarters and the Marines set up a hospital. That's where I went to because my chest had started getting infected. It healed on the top but then it squirted out the side because it was all infected. I went to the Marine hospital and they treated it for me. I didn't get it fully corrected until after we left the Chosin Reservoir and we moved down to Pusan. A regimental doctor in Pusan cut it all out aboard a ship and then it healed up. Actually, it never did heal. It didn't incapacitate me, but it bothered me.

I went back to Seoul in 1993. It was all built up and it was hard to determine exactly where we were back in 1950. During the Korean War, Seoul was a typical oriental city that had been at peace for quite some time since World War II. Of course, the Americans had helped out a lot in Seoul, and the peasants were back to their normal way of living. But when the Marines came in, their artillery did a lot of damage.

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Keeping Clean

It was very hot when we were in Korea in September. The government had a bunch of people who didn't really understand combat too much at first. They sent the troops in to Korea with two barracks bags--one with all summers and the other with all the winters. Our regimental commander, who was with the 27th Field in World War II, said, "This is stupid. I'm turning in all of this excess stuff, and when I need it, I'll call for it and you send it to me." Everyone turned in their field boots, parkas, and all that stuff. When winter came, they had a shower unit set up so that a man went in one door, took all his clothes off, threw them in a bin, went through the shower, and came out and drew all new stuff. They sewed the stripes on and everything. This way we didn't have all that tremendous amount of barrage and things to carry around. This all changed later at the Chosin Reservoir.

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Meals in Korea

We generally ate C-rations. In Seoul, we ate kimchi (fermented cabbage) and things like that, but a lot of the Korean food wasn't safe to eat for our system. We just didn't have the antibodies to take care of getting diarrhea or whatever it was, so we had to rely mostly on issue.

In the summertime we had to make everybody doctor up the water with halidone tablets so it would be safe to drink. As soon as the cold weather came, we didn't have any problems.

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Chosin Reservoir Campaign

After we left Seoul, we went back to Inchon. All of the troops from the south broke out of the perimeter and came up to join us. We were pulled out as, I guess, Army reserve, because we all went down to Pusan. We stayed there for a while and the troops were on the shore, running around to get back in shape and organizing and so forth. Then they decided they would lead an attack up in the Hamhung area and try to cross to the west and join the 8th Army. We were in the 10th Army, which was pulled out to go up to Iwon and go west to tie in with the 8th Army.

Under General MacArthur, who should have known better, 10th Corps was never under the 8th Army. 10th Corps was right under Tokyo and General MacArthur. The commander of the 10th Corps, all of them, had been MacArthur's chief of staff, so he reported to MacArthur. When the Marines and the 7th Division cleared Seoul, they moved out and these units, the 38th, Second Division--all these other units of the 8th Army, moved up to Seoul and up to the north. Tenth Corps was pulled out as a reserve element. We boarded ships down in Pusan and we sailed around to Iwon. The Marines went on up to the Chosin Reservoir.

When we got to Iwon, we immediately landed and got on a train. We had some trouble getting the engineer to get his train moving to take us to Hamhung. We got on the train and tried to convince the engineer to move us out. We had a little difficulty there, and had to shoot up in the air a couple of times to get his attention. Then we got on the train and motored down to Hungnam and Hamhung, meeting no resistance along the way that I can remember. This was October and it hadn't gotten really cold yet. We went into the Chosin with 775 men and officers, starting at Hill 1221. That's where the tanks went back. Colonel Don Faith was the commander. We had three majors. I was personnel officer, an S-1 in the battalion.

On October 22, 1950, when we were on our way up to the Chosin Reservoir, I received my promotion to Major. My contemporaries ended World War II as Lieutenant Colonels, but I was still a Captain because I was hurt, hospitalized and evacuated. After 1945, when they were demobilizing, there were no promotions. So I captained quite a few years--seven years, before I was promoted. I read about my promotion to Major in *Stars & Stripes*.

Somewhere around the third day we were in this very rugged terrain which I refer to as ridgelines. We were going into a battalion attack against a high ground where the enemy was, leaving the line of departure to advance on a ridgeline. There was a company commander who was a World War II type on my right. He refused to move. He just couldn't move. Some people can't stand the tension and the pressure of war. They can't stand the reality. That particular company commander couldn't move because he had psychological problems. The troops were three waiting for him to lead the way, but he couldn't move. The battalion commander Don Faith said that he couldn't get him to move so he told me to go ahead. We went across a rice field and took the objective.

The guy on my right stayed in his departure area with his troops. Of course, I didn't know at the time what was going on. I had my own problems. We did have resistance. We were fighting. We were taking casualties and finally had gotten to the place where I had to hit my reserve platoon and send it to the others because they had casualties and so forth. I found out later that this other fellow on the right was relieved by the battalion commander. Another example of a leader freezing for psychological reasons happened later on in the Korean War. I remember that a second lieutenant was assigned to be a platoon leader and froze in the attack going up a mountain and wouldn't move. I found him later on. He was just standing there. So I called the sergeant over and said, "Get this platoon moving and move up the hill." He took off and moved on, but we evacuated him medically.

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Mail Call

We got mail in the Chosin Reservoir. We got packages. A lot of people sent cookies and candies and stuff. The cookies were all crumbs and the candy was stuck together. One of the trucks that came in was loaded up with packages in the latter part of November. The postal service had encouraged people to start sending packages to their loved ones in Korea by August. A lot of Christmas presents were delivered to the troops up there. In fact, I had a pair of fur-lined boots that belonged to First Sergeant Leo Paul Russavage. He was killed on November 28, 1950 in Chosin. I kept his boots. He was First Sergeant of Headquarters Company. When the Chinese broke through, he led a little task force up to the Chosin and got killed. His remains were recovered in December of 1993 and he is now buried in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri.

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Keeping Clean

While in the Chosin Reservoir area, there weren't any shower plugs. We had to wash out our own underwear or not wear underwear after a while. Very seldom did we get a place to bathe. There were shower units with the Marines and we could go in there sometimes. They had buildings that they took over that had showers in them.

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Native Huts

Sometimes going down a valley we came across native huts. If we were spending the night in that area, we stayed in these mud buildings. At the end of the house there was a fireplace. Underneath the hut was a device like a chimney that went all the way through the house under the floor and out the other end of the building. The Koreans built a fire on one end and it went all through, heating all the floors.

We thought that was just great. All we had was our feather sleeping bags and what we wore to keep warm. So the first night we stayed in one of these huts we built a big fire and laid down on the floor. About an hour later we all jumped up, grabbed our bags, and ran out and jumped in the snow. Those feathers pressed against the hot floor and they were burning us. We found out that feather winter sleeping bags and floors

that got heated up were not the answer. So we slept in the snow with our sleeping bags. But the huts gave us the occasional opportunity to bathe and cook a little inside if we had food.

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Cold Weather at Chosin

Water was no great problem at Chosin. Fortunately, for a period of time I had a quart of whiskey in my footlocker and I retrieved that. On the way out, especially after we got to the Marines and we were afoot, I mixed half water and half whiskey in my canteen. It was like putting alcohol in a radiator. It kept the water from freezing. There was an Army quartermaster outfit that supplied us with things by air-dropping things like a bunch of PX rations. I got a great big box of Tootsie Rolls. We had water and Tootsie Rolls for four or five days. As long as we had snow and ice we could melt it.

Where we were, we were in deep snow in the passes. There was snow around the Chosin Reservoir along Hill 1221. The snow was so deep it was hard to walk in it. Hard to maneuver in it. And that slowed everything down. We couldn't move a unit very fast when they were trying to go across a valley with snow that deep. Some of the hilltops were windswept, and the snow was four or five feet deep from then on up.

It got to be 30 degrees below zero, but we also had a 40-knot wind. That put the wind chill factor at 70 below zero. That meant that any exposed skin was going to freeze. Any time we got our feet or hands wet, if we couldn't put on dry clothing, there were a lot of frozen casualties--especially those people who were wounded. We had people come out that ended up with no fingers--all of them frozen off. Some had no toes. I know one guy who walked out with no fingers. He stayed in the military and retired as a full colonel. Another young kid from my home town in Arizona came out with no feet and no fingers. That was from freezing. It was bitter, bitter, cold winter weather.

The Marines had warming tents where they had heaters. They rotated their troops into those heating units and then back out. They could dry their clothing. We didn't have any of that. Those few of us who made it out were able to utilize some of those Marine tents.

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Casualty Numbers Unknown

The Marines were clear up at Yudam-ni, which was quite a bit farther north. As far as to the right side of the reservoir, we were the farthest away. We had other people at the alley over to the right. I think there were over 3,000 Army troops. There were elements of three Chinese divisions over a period of five or eight days. The different divisions in the Chinese army were different sizes, but there were thousands of Chinese. They had tanks and artillery and they far outnumbered us. We went all through this debacle, and the Chinese had us. We fought our way back and formed a provisional unit--I think the 128th or something left of the battalion at that time.

I don't know how many of our people were captured. I really just don't know the breakdown. Somewhere I'm sure there are figures as to how many came out, but there were a great many captured and a great many wounded and evacuated. There were some that were wounded and died of exposure. We have no record really of how many people were evacuated because they later brought airplanes in and evacuated them. I don't think there were any records kept. There might have been records in medical, but I just don't see them having the time to write down all the medical information under the circumstances. So, of the 3,000, I would venture to guess maybe a thousand got out. Even in my battalion I have no idea. Two weeks later when I walked out of there, I took count of how many got back to the Marines. I had 18 men, one officer--myself, not a whole battalion of 775 people. A lot of them were wounded and evacuated and a lot of them maybe got mixed up with other vehicles somewhere along the line. But when I walked out of there, I had 18 men and myself. That didn't mean that that was all that came out of there. That was all that were under my supervision. I have a copy of the report that I sent in for the period 6 December-13 December 1950. The text of my statement to headquarters follows.

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Statement to Headquarters - 29 December 1950

> "The 31st RCT under the command of Lt. Colonel Anderson, 31st Infantry was composed of all members of the 7th Infantry Division who had joined the 1st Marine Division at Hagaru-ri, Korea. The units of which the 31st RCT consisted of were the remnants of the 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry, 3rd Battalion 31st Infantry and the 57th Field Artillery Battalion. Lt. Colonel Anderson organizes the RCT into two battalions by splitting the 57th Field Artillery equally and integrating them into the 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry and the 34d Battalion 31st Infantry. Major R.E. Jones commanded the complete 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry and Major Witte commanded the 3rd Battalion 31st Infantry.
>
> The RCT was given the mission of extending the left flank of the point of the 1st Marine Division on the march to Kotori. The plan was to have the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Marines to form the point of the column, the 1st Battalion of the 7th Marines echelon to the right rear extending the flank of the point 1000 yards to the right of the road and the 31st RCT to echelon to the left rear extending the flank of the point a 1000 yards to the left of the road. The motor column followed these units on the road with the 3rd Battalion of the 7th Marines protecting the Division motor column. The 5th Marines followed the column as the rear guard.
>
> The attack to the south commenced at 0630 on 6 December 1950. The column was halted at approximately 0730 by enemy action approximately one mile south of Hagaru-ri. The column continued on south at approximately 1100 hours. After proceeding south for approximately two miles, Lt. Colonel Anderson committed units of the 3rd Battalion 31st Infantry to the left flank and held the 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry on the road with the motor column.

At approximately 1600 the motor column was stopped by a roadblock on the left flank consisting of an enemy machine gun emplacement and a number of enemy riflemen. The point of the Marines was held up by heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire from the left flank. Lt. Colonel Anderson instructed Major Jones to take his battalion and build up the left flank of the point and reduce the roadblock which was holding up the column. Major Jones instructed Lt. C.G. Smith to take his company and attack the above mentioned positions and to build up on the left of the Marines, with Captain Thackus company to follow and build up on the left of Lieutenant Smith's company. The enemy machine gun emplacement was knocked out by Lieutenant Smith and Lieutenant Barnes and the enemy positions were overrun. Approximately 30 prisoners were taken and the buildup was successfully made on the left flank of the Marine point and the motor column was able to proceed. The 1st Battalion remained on the left flank throughout the night and closed into Kotori at 0547 on 7 December 1950.

Lt. Colonel Anderson had instructed Major Witte to bring in his battalion as their missions were completed and to stay in the motor column in readiness to be committed if the occasion demanded it. The column was attacked by the enemy who had allowed the point and flank troops to bypass them. The RCT CP vehicle was hit and the S-3 Sergeant and Major Witte were wounded.

At approximately 0700 on 7 December 1950, Lt. Colonel Anderson alerted the RCT to move out approximately 2 1/2 miles back toward Hagaru-ri and protect the left flank of the 5th Marine Regiment which was having considerable trouble. The RCT moved out and met the 5th Marines approximately 3 miles north of Kotori and held left flank positions until relieved by elements of the 5th Marine Regiment, at which time it returned to Kotori and stayed in the 2nd Battalion 31st Infantry area that night.

Due to the great n umber of cold casualties, Lt. Colonel Anderson decided to form the remaining men into two companies. The "31st Company" under Capt. George Rasula and the "32nd Company" under Capt. Robert J. Kitz. The RCT jumped off in the attack at 0730 on 8 December 1950 and took objective "A" which was the high ground one mile south of Kotori and about six hundred yards east of the main road. This was taken without resistance and the two companies went into a defensive position.

At approximately 1300 hours the two companies were instructed to move approximately 1500 yards south of objective "D" which was the high ground overlooking the pass and closed in about 1600. (The facts on this movement and attack on the enemy positions on objective "D" will have to be obtained from Lt. Smith, Capt. Kitz or Capt. Rasula as this officer was not present.) There was one KIA and 2 WIA from the 57th Field Artillery Battalion which were evacuated by Sergeant Luna, "B" Company 32nd, Sergeant Piercefield, HQ 32nd Infantry.

The RCT remained in position throughout the night and Lt. Colonel Anderson issued instructions for "31st Company" to advance to high ground overlooking the power plant at 0730 on 9 December 1950 and for the "32nd Company" to hold high ground overlooking the pass. This was accomplished and the night was spent in these positions. At approximately 0730 on 10 December the head of the 1st Marine Division column started down the pass with the 7th Marine Regiment leading. The 31st RCT closed in behind the last elements of the Seventh Marines. The march down the pass was uneventful and at the 3rd Division position the 31st RCT mounted their trucks and proceeded to Hamhung. They closed into the 31st assembly area in the 7th Division area in Hamhung at approximately 2400 hours on 10 December 1950. There were three officers, Major Jones, Lieutenant Smith, and Lieutenant Barnes 49th Field Artillery (forward observer with the 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry), eighteen men and four ROK's from the 1st Battalion, 32nd Ing that closed into the Assembly area. The unit moved to Service Company 32nd Infantry area on the afternoon of the 11th, where 29 more men and 3 ROK's of the battalion joined in small groups. The Battalion moved out to Pusan on 13 December 1950."

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Out of Chosin

When we were coming back to Hill 1221, which was back where we had started, we crossed a little inlet and there were trucks bogged down because of the ice and so forth. We had to use our tracked vehicles to pull them out. There was a roadblock, and that's where Faith got hit. He and I went over the mountain a different way when a line of trucks was held up. They were loaded with wounded. We went up over the hill and came down the other side to some little village. We gathered up people along the road, got on each side of it, and attacked toward an area. It was just about dark. I was on the right of the road and Don Faith was on the left. We went into what was called fire--just everybody firing in a general direction. We knew the fire was down there and we silenced it. Colonel Faith got hit, but I didn't know that he got hit because I was on the right. I came back to the road and he had gone somewhere. I didn't know where he was because I was so busy trying to get the column started again so we could get back to the Marines. We had a truck knocked out so we unloaded the wounded and pushed the truck over the side of Hill 1221. We pushed a couple of them over the side because the second one wouldn't run either.

We put the others on the remaining trucks. That was just throwing the men on top of others. It must have been a terrible thing, but there was no other recourse. Then we started the trucks back down and they got as far as a railroad bridge. That's as far as we ever got. The Marines were clear up in Yudam-ni, which was quite a bit farther north. On the right side of the reservoir, we were the farthest away. We had other people at the alley over to the right. I think there were over 3,000 of us in the Army troops. There were elements of three Chinese divisions over a period of five or eight days. I'm not sure what that made the odds because in different Chinese army divisions there were different numbers of troops, but I will tell you that there were thousands of Chinese. And they had tanks and artillery. They far outnumbered us.

I don't know how many Americans were captured, but a great many were. A great many were also wounded and evacuated. Some were wounded and died of exposure, so we have no record really of how many people

were evacuated. Airplanes came in, they were loaded up, and they took off. I don't think records were kept. There might have been some medical records, but I just don't see them having the time to write down all the medical information under the circumstances. So, of the 3,000, I venture to guess maybe a thousand got out.

When my unit got back to the Marines, there were only 18. A lot of the others were casualties on the way out of the Chosin Reservoir. A lot were wounded and evacuated, and a lot of them might have hitched a ride somewhere along the line and could have been mixed up in other vehicles. But when I walked out of there, I had 18 men and myself out of 775 people. That didn't mean that that was all that came out of there. That was just all that were under my supervision.

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Holding Them Off

If it hadn't been for the Army in the Chosin that held off elements of three Chinese divisions, the Marines would never have gotten out of Chosin. We were able to hold them off in time for the Marines at Yudam-ni to get back to Hagaru-ri and give them the opportunity to attack south. Our job was basically to protect the Marines from being annihilated and cut off. If the supply lines had been cut off, they would have been sitting ducks. We had an Army element that was supposed to be up there with us, but it was held out to keep the Main Supply Route open. The Marines only had one small element, the First Marines, down there to protect that line of supply and to get out.

The Marines gave very little recognition to the Army's significance at the Chosin Reservoir. They still don't. However, the Marines finally agreed to recognize the Army and give them the Presidential Unit Citation that they received for the whole operation. They finally acknowledged the importance of the Army element that was east of Chosin. Those of us who got to the Marines got the Presidential Unit Citation, but they did not recognize the other Army units up there until decades later. It means a lot to those people that were eliminated from the Presidential Unit Citation because they didn't go out with the Marines.

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Heroes

I'm not a great believer in heroes personally. A lot of them are self-made. Heroism was commonplace in Korea, just like it was during World War II. But when everybody's doing it, is it "hero" or is it just doing what you're supposed to do? The definition of heroism? I've seen people pull soldiers out of the water and see that they get evacuated on a truck. To me, that's being a hero. I saw that in Korea the time when we lost all of our trucks. I saw it in World War II when Gerald Mann got the Medal of Honor when a grenade was tossed in a foxhole where he and six or eight other people were. He hollered, "Grenade!" and leaned back on it to save his friends. Now to me, that's true heroism.

There were more heroic deeds in the Chosin Reservoir. We had 15,000 Marines and 3,000 Army soldiers. The Army got one Medal of Honor. The Marines got fourteen. Don Faith got the Medal of Honor in the Army for his leadership and for leading an attack against a roadblock himself with remnants of people after all of our officers and NCOs had been wounded or out of action. It was just a question of us picking people off the road, lining them up, and telling them, "Hey, we've got to knock this out" and then get them to do it. Leading them.

Faith absolutely deserved the Medal of Honor. I was in a particularly tough position when I went out. We had all these people coming back from various places and the problem was how to get those people recognized who really should be recognized. There were maybe 25 to 50 who came back from hospital or came back from here or there or the other place, and we wanted to put people in for decorations--bronze stars, silver stars, or whatever it was. But the majority of these fellows could only tell us what they did. They couldn't tell us what other people did under any other circumstances but their own because everybody was doing everything they could to get out or to help or get trucks moving, and get wounded off there beyond themselves. By regulations and requirements, there have to be at least two witnesses that corroborate an act of heroism. The higher the decoration, the more corroboration is needed. That was why it was so difficult to get Faith's in. It had to be written a half dozen times because everybody along the line felt that the award wasn't enough.

I saw what Faith did. I was there with him. And then a guy came out of a ditch and threw a grenade and killed him. Faith was leading the troops as battalion commander at the time. There was a roadblock. It was dark. People were trying to get back to the Marine line--some of them individually. There was no organization left. It was a question of just sheer leadership to go out and pick those people up and say, "Okay. We're going for this." And Faith led them. He had to.

When he got killed I had to take over. I was the only senior officer left. I didn't know until later that he had been killed. I knew he was hurt and that somebody loaded him in the front of one of the trucks that we got moving, but I didn't know that he was dead. He just wasn't there. So, being the senior officer in the area, I had to take over. We knocked out that roadblock. We unloaded the trucks, got them thrown over the side, and started moving them back on the road. I heard later what happened to Faith--that he was put in the truck cab. I don't know that I ever even talked to the driver. It was just a report that I got on how he had died in the cab of the truck.

Being a senior officer was more than a job for me. How do you adjust to seeing 10, 15, 20, 25 and 50 of your friends--personal friends, lost in a war? All of the officers and the enlisted men were close in Japan because of that environment. The officers were close friends. At the time I took over for Faith, I felt there had to be somebody to take over and get out as many people as we could. As the senior officer, I had to assume the responsibility that he had.

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Distinguished Service Cross

The people that got out put me in for a Distinguished Service Cross. I had nothing to do with it. They put it in for me. I don't really believe in all the write-ups that go in for decorations and so forth. I feel that there were an awful lot of people that should have got decorations that couldn't. We tried to get as many as we could, but the system just doesn't allow unsubstantiated write-ups. The Distinguished Service Cross is an award that I am proud of, although I didn't seek it. I didn't try to influence it. It was my contemporaries who felt that I deserved it, and I appreciated it.

Quite a few of the men have since gotten back in touch with me. We get together quite often, but we don't talk about decoration. We don't talk an awful lot about what happened in Korea. It's just, "How you doing?" and enjoying being around each other. It can get very morbid if you start saying, "Well, so and so, and so and so, and start to list all the people that were killed. There's so many of them that I don't say you get numb, but you lose the shock. Not like when you lose a mother or brother or father in an environment where you don't see many people die. In war, you see hundreds of them die--close friends. It's a shock, but it's something you've got to adjust to.

Most of the people who got out of the Chosin were evacuated, but I wasn't. I was never hurt at the Chosin and so it was my job to rebuild the battalion when nobody was left. They gave me replacements from within the regiment and the division. I knew many of the replacement officers. In fact, one of them just died recently in South Carolina. He took over C Company, my old company, after Chosin because Dale Sievers had been killed. He and I were in 502 together in World War II, and he came in as a replacement officer after the Chosin Reservoir campaign. He was a reserve officer who stayed in inactive service after World War II. Those were the first ones that were called in when the Korean War broke out. He was called in as First Lieutenant and they gave him that company. There was also Ted Walsh. He was the first president of the Army Chapter of the Chosin Few.

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Christmas 1950

After we got out of the Chosin Reservoir, we went to a port city where we were evacuated on a troop ship down to Pusan, clean down to the end of southern Korea. We then went back up to Taegu, right close to Taegu Air Force Base. We were put in a schoolhouse complex. Everything we had down there was so much better. The Army postal system was still functioning so when we came out of Chosin and got to Taegu, they knew we were there. We gradually got our mail, but there was an awful lot of mail addressed to people that weren't there.

There was a wrecking unit there led by Lt. Col. Nathan McNalley. He went to school in New Mexico in the same school where I went and we knew each other. I went up to him and said, "You know, Christmas is coming, and we don't have beer to drink. We don't have candy. We don't have a lot. I don't even have a radio. I don't know what's happening in the world." He got on the phone, called Tachikawa Air Force Base in Japan, and said, "I've got a captain there coming back with a load of stuff. This is what I want you to bring back." I don't know how many cases of beer he ordered, as well as a radio and various other items. He wouldn't let that captain leave Japan until he went out on his own, paid for all this stuff out of his own pocket, and brought it all back to Korea. I paid him for it when he got there. If it hadn't been for him, we would never have had a Christmas in that old school building. Our regiment was somewhere else. We were attached to another regiment that hardly knew what we were doing. We had just moved back to South Korea. The supply system was not adequate to give us anything, and we didn't expect too much. But we had beer, we had a radio, and we could talk to some people. That was our Christmas in 1950.

Later we got filled up with people and officers from all of the active duty personnel--people who had been with the 31st and people who had been with the 187th. They hated like hell to leave their unit to come to Korea, but a lot of them were my friends so I knew them. We were able to equip. This was probably about the sixth or eighth of December. We didn't even have any lights at that time. When dark came what do you do? We went to bed. There was a big black market in Korea where you could get brand new US Coleman Army lamps for $10. I immediately bought a half dozen of them. We had to buy some of this stuff on the black market because we couldn't get it through regular channels there. It had been ordered, but it wasn't available or it was in the pipeline somewhere. We had to order stoves, but they got there in time for our Christmas meal.

We didn't have any vehicles yet because of all the problems they were having up in North Korea. The Second Division was having trouble with the Eighth Army. The Chinese were coming in. We saw truck after truck, US Army trucks, coming by there going south toward Pusan, loaded with natives, loaded with families, loaded with everything. They were Army trucks that had been abandoned or isolated or whatever, and the South Koreans went in there and picked them up. I watched that for a while. I said, "You know, that's a little silly. We're here afoot. We can't get around. We can't do anything. And these people are riding in our trucks." So I put up a roadblock, stopped every vehicle, and threw all the people off and took the vehicles in. We painted the bumpers. I was only challenged by one chief. A marshal came down and said, "This isn't your authorized vehicle." Those South Koreans were agents or something, so I gave them their Jeep back. But all the rest of them I used for our vehicles. Otherwise we would have been sitting there yet, I guess.

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Back in the Attack

I asked this same friend that I had at Taegu Air Force Base about planes going back and forth from Korea to Japan. I thought it would be nice if a lot of us could fly back to Japan for the holiday. A lot of the guys who came out of Chosin had families stationed in Japan. I went to my regimental commander and he thought that would be a good idea. He, himself, had a wife back there. So we picked those people who still had wives left in Japan and took a C-47 back for Christmas. Then over New Year's we took another one. We got most of the people that still had family there, as well as some of us who didn't. I spent three days in Japan and I had a great time. A lot of people didn't recognize me because I had lost 23 pounds or so in Chosin. After we got replacements and equipment, we were back in the attack going north by February. It was a very hectic time.

During the remainder of my time in Korea, nothing was as bad as what I experienced in the Chosin Reservoir, even though we went back in the attack and starting in February we went on up to the 38th parallel. We were coordinated. We were shoulder to shoulder and under a General. Whenever the line was penetrated, everything stopped until they reduced the penetration. They moved up to the 38th parallel, and then the peace talks started.

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Killing Civilians

Many years after the Korean War, a guy named Ed Daley went to Korea at the expense of the Associated Press. He testified about the killing of civilians at a place called Nogun-ri. I think he was wrong for what he did. What he said put the military in a very bad light. He got people excited. What they don't realize is that when you're in a military operation, your whole area has got to be secure. You cannot maneuver and you cannot safeguard your people if it isn't. To have a million or 500 or 200 or whatever civilians come into your line is just not acceptable. So you stop them and then divert them. You do not open your line and let them come right in the middle of it.

After the Chosin Reservoir, the Chinese and North Koreans came in from north of the 38th parallel. They drove a lot of civilians in front of them. This was attributed to them trying to keep the Americans from firing on them as they came in. Some of them wore civilian clothing. Some of the women were found with mortar tubes and ammunition strapped to their legs. This might have been forced on them, and maybe they didn't agree to it, but to allow a mob of civilians to come in to your area was just not feasible. You would be jeopardizing your whole command. Your whole mission. A lot of those civilians were also not on our side. They were on the other side and they were taking advantage of that. So I don't see any justification for this attack on the military for not allowing civilians to come through our line.

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Last Months in Korea

I was in Korea for eight months. Those who had been in theater the earliest--the longest, were put on the schedule to leave first. I came back in the first echelon because I had been in Japan since 1948. I had been overseas for over two years.

You're always sorry to leave the unit regardless of the circumstances. I was the exec of the battalion. I turned over command maybe in February or March to a fellow who had just been promoted the same time that I was promoted to major. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, and his name was Goodwin. I then stayed with the battalion as the exec officer. I was with them, but they were all new people. Either the old ones had been evacuated, been wounded, been rotated, or whatever. There weren't too many of what I considered my "old" friends left. And, in a combat situation, especially when you're in an executive or staff position, you don't get to know the people as well as you do when you're in a combat unit.

Lt. Colonel Goodwin had a heart problem. On the first attack that we went on after he took over, he was climbing up the top of a mountain when he had a heart attack. I had to take over again from him after he was evacuated. Then they sent another Lieutenant Colonel.

There were no promotions in the Army from 1945 to 1950. World War II was over. A lot of people were getting out of the military, but a lot of people stayed in. Some of them were busted back in rank. Some Generals went back to Colonels and so forth because of the rules and regulations. In 1950, war broke loose and so did promotions. As I said, I was in Iwon when I got a copy of Stars & Stripes and read a promotion list. I was on it. I had been a Captain since 1943, which was a very, very long time. The promotion list said that I had made Major. There were Majors who were now promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. There were battalions that now had three Lieutenant Colonels in them. Battalions only needed one. When a Lieutenant Colonel got killed in one battalion, they pulled one over from another battalion that had more than one.

I stayed in Korea for another three months. As Executive Officer, I handled all the things that the Colonel was too busy to do. The Exec stayed with the unit while the Colonel was out at meetings or working with the G-3 plans. An Exec does everything to run the unit--re-supply when the rest of the unit is up in the mountains and they need weapons, ammunitions, rations and all. I did the best job I could.

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Going Home

When it was time to leave Korea, I went to Pusan and spent about a week there. I then got on a ship around the first of June and spent two weeks going to San Francisco. My sister, brother, and foster father were there. When I landed in San Francisco, they gave us our orders and I spent about a week visiting my relatives there before I went home. I remained in the military service.

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Post-Korea

By this time I had served in two wars--World War II and Korea. Even the Marines say that the Chosin Reservoir campaign in the Korean War was the worst battle since Tarawa. From an overall campaign, Chosin was very, very difficult. The Marines still say it was their second most terrible campaign. A lot of that may be publicity, too, but it was remarkable that many got out. Weather was definitely with us in the Chosin 24 hours a day. The Chinese weren't.

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Cold Weather Injury

Ten, twelve, and fifteen years after the Korean War, veterans of the Chosin Reservoir started going to the VA saying they had difficulties from being in Korea. The VA staff would ask for a report from the aid station in Korea. The reply was, "We didn't have any aid station." The VA would not accept it. And there are many, many, many documents that were outside of the cold weather area that don't recognize cold weather casualties. They don't realize that cold weather injuries can appear years later.

A fellow in the Marine Corps called Gary something-or-other has been working on this for years. He had finally got the attention of everybody in the VA that cold weather injuries are another breed of casualty. You've got to recognize the fact that they can reoccur many, many years later, and then they put it in the hands of the VA. Depending on where the VA is located and where it originated from, those in the northern part of the state can say, "Yeh, you have a cold weather injury or this is a result of a cold weather injury. But a lot of them say, "Well, how do I know where you were or what happened?" They want paperwork.

I help the guys when I can. I try to get paperwork showing the man's name, the unit he was in, the record of where each unit was at such and such time and the fact that he was exposed to cold weather 40 degrees below zero, 70 degrees below zero wind chill factor, and the guy suffered from frozen extremities. And the VA accepts that and will give a guy disability for that. One man that I helped, Paul Forestfall, just got a 100 percent. He had been suffering for years and his wife had to work because he didn't have enough retirement or whatever. He was a truck driver. He didn't have enough income. Suddenly he got a 100 percent disability and got 60 some thousand dollars back money. It changed his whole life. She quit work and now she can take of him. He feels better now. He's up walking around.

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The Fifties & Sixties

From 1951 to 1954 I served a tour as an Airborne instructor at the Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth. This was followed by a three-year tour in Hawaii as a National Guard Advisor, G3 Staff Officer, and as G5 U.S. Army Pacific. My next assignments were with the 1st Airborne Battle Group, 327th Infantry 1957-1960, and as Executive Officer, Deputy Commander and Group Commander at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky.

I spent 13 months in Turkey in 1960/61, serving as Infantry Unit Advisor of the Third Turkish Army out in the Russian border. I was selected to attend the U.S. Army War College in 1961/62. As a student there, I was in the military education system for officers. There are several levels of education in the military system, and the final one is the war college. I could have worked on a master's degree after war college hours, but I opted not to do that while I was in war college.

From there I went to the Pentagon and was in Special Operations for the Army for two years, assigned to Special Warfare Directorate, Office of the Chief of Staff for Operations, Department of the Army from 1962 to 1964. I went to classes after hours and on weekends to get my Master's in Foreign Affairs out of George Washington University. I got it in a couple of years.

I went to the Joints Chiefs of staff J3, Pacific division, where I was actively engaged in planning and operations of the Vietnam War. In 1966 I left on another overseas tour, first assigned to USAEUR Heidelberg, and then assuming command of the 10th Special Forces Group in Bad Toetz, Germany. Our main job there was training replacements for the Special Forces in Vietnam. I brought the group back to Colorado Springs in 1968.

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Vietnam

From 1968 to 1970, I served in Vietnam as the Deputy Chief of the Phoenix Program. The Phoenix Program was started by the CIA. It was a program that assisted the South Vietnamese in identifying and apprehending the underground political structure. They got this idea from World War II when they found out years after the war that Germany had a complete political structure that was ready to take over all through Hitler's regime and surfaced at the right time. During the war, they had the same political structure and ideals to surface and take over the civilian government and national and provincial governments.

Take Germany. I think World War II helped them a lot because of the rebuilding of it and encouraging them and all of that stuff. I don't know why we still have people over there yet. We found out in Vietnam that there were actually underground political people. When the fall of Saigon came, these people surfaced in every village and every district. Every province of South Vietnam had a political structure that had been laying dormant there since the war started and finally came out and took over.

It is debatable whether the Phoenix Program was successful. We think it was because, during the time I was there, American support for the South Vietnamese gave them the means to identify these people through Vietnamese military, capture them, try them, and incarcerate them. Sometimes Orientals are especially a little bit more prone to use violence. They killed some of these people and they were criticized by Americans and others in the media that this was an assassination program.

I went over there when the CIA had it. Ambassador Colby was a great CIA guy. He was the fellow over there that ran all the surveillance in South Vietnam. As long as the CIA had it, they didn't publicize so there wasn't an awful lot of criticism. But then the Army decided to take it over after I'd been there about six or eight months in 1968. After that we had CIA representation, but the Army ran it and it was not really an intelligence program. During this time, it got some criticism because some Vietnamese killed other Vietnamese in an attack like that at Nogun-ri in South Korea. They blamed it on the Phoenix Program. They called it assassination.

About the time that Congress got into it, I left. They called Ambassador Colby back and interrogated him. I wasn't part of that. I think the Phoenix Program was a good intelligence program. A lot of things in the intelligence field are not acceptable to a lot of people because it's kind of dirty warfare. But if you can

identify, which they did in many cases, those people who were the underground, that's a good thing. As soon as an NVA came in and took over an area, all these politicians would pop up, kill the people that were in charge, and take over. No one ever challenged them about that. Nobody ever questioned whether that was unethical. There were probably valid criticisms, but I think that, as a whole, it was a good program. I don't think that the Army was the type that could run it, however. They have too many rules and regulations.

I traveled all over Vietnam. The most danger I had came from the pilots who were with the CIA. They were paid tremendous salaries, but some of those pilots were real bums as far as piloting. We flew with them up to various towns. We landed on the roads because there were no airfields. So it got pretty hairy. After Vietnam I became the Chief of Staff and Deputy Installation Commander at Fort Lewis, Washington. I retired from active duty in 1973.

My first wife Dorothy died in 1957 and I remarried to one of the ladies that I met at the reunion in 1958. Martha Edmundson and I married in 1960 and she died in 1987. Her brother was one of the mayors in the town where she was born and raised. I now live in Clarksville, Tennessee, and I'm so busy I don't have time to play golf. That's terrible.

I'm on call for a lot of boards. A lot of people write to me and ask for information for VA claims. I'm chairman of the board of the 101st Airborne Division Association. I'm chairman of the board of the 32nd Infantry Regiment, which is another group of people that I have some responsibility for. I don't have an office to hold, but I'm one of the few 32nd Infantry people in that because we only had a battalion. The rest of them are all 31st Infantry and so forth. I'm also honorary colonel of a regiment out here, and I'm invited to their social events and promotions and seminars. I'm very involved in the museum at Fort Campbell. I'm chairman of the board of the museum foundation. We're trying to raise $15 million and that takes a lot of time. There isn't a museum yet, but they're trying to create one. There is one already in a converted military classroom-type building, but it's only got about 20 percent of the artifacts that they have. They don't have room to display much, so we're building a $15 million museum.

My daughter and her husband and I went to Holland for the 55th anniversary of our jump into Holland during World War II. There is a museum in Holland that is our sister museum. A friend of mine heads up the one in Holland. It is called the Wings of Liberation Museum. We call ours the Wings of Liberty Museum.

I contribute to veterans organizations like the DAV and the PVA, but I don't belong to them because I am a member of just so many other organizations. I belong to the Purple Heart Association, the Retired Officers Association, and The Chosin Few, survivors of the Chosin Reservoir action. I am a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International, a past Worthy Patron of Eastern Star, 32nd Degree Mason for more than 50 years, and a Sojourner and a Knights Templar.

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End of Military Career

In times of non-combat, I had a great time during my military career. I thoroughly enjoyed Japan. I enjoyed Germany. I didn't enjoy Turkey that much, but I did appreciate being there in that part of the world. Just like going to Bosnia, Sinai and Jerusalem, I've never been there and I love to travel. I love to see these places. I liked being in Vietnam because every time I extended six months I got a seven-day leave in a different country. I could pick Australia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan. My wife didn't understand that, but I said, "You know, I'll never be there again probably." So I took a tour of Australia, spent a week down there and had a great time. Went to Thailand. Went down there on the river and looked at the way the people lived and ate and drank. I went to Taiwan. I went to Taipei and one of the national army's museums where Chiang Kai-Shek brought all that stuff out of China. It was educational. New areas. New people. I went to Hong Kong, which I had never been to before. On my final one, I got 30 days leave n the States where I met Martha in Hawaii. Then we came back here and I went back to Vietnam. To me, that was an opportunity to see a part of the world that I had never seen before.

By this time Reta was grown up and married when we left Hawaii. To some degree I missed out on Reta's youth. She was born in 1933 and went with me when I went to Bragg in 1940. I left to go overseas in 1943. They stayed back and I came back in 1945. Reta was with me at Ft. Leavenworth for three years until I was transferred to Hawaii. Reta went to high school on the big island of Hawaii. She was the only haole girl--the only non-native girl in the high school. At age 18, Reta met a boy from Missouri and they got married and had two children. She is remarried now and has an extended family. She is a computer whiz who lives in Missouri and has her own business.

I never talked to Reta about Korea. She was an Army brat. She understood what the Army was. She understood war as far as knowing a lot of our friends that were killed. I think the whole environment in the Army is entirely different than civilian life because you're around people who have been through wars of one type or another or have been deployed. Just like now. We have people in I don't know how many different places in the world today. We've got them in Haiti. We've got them in several countries in South America. In fact, one just was decorated. His memory was decorated. He was heading up a helicopter outfit down in South America, crashed and was captured by guerrillas and killed. They just had a ceremony awarding him some sort of a decoration. So we have people in Bosnia. We have people in Africa when we had the 160th out there, the most powerful helicopter operation in the world. Their division is the most powerful division in the military right now. And we have people in Bosnia. All over. We've got special forces in every country in the world practically.

My last year in Hawaii, I was at US Army headquarters in Ft. Shafter on Oahu where I was G-5. I didn't even know what a G-5 was in those days. It was a new thing to be in charge and have contact with all the civilians--everything outside of the military. That was great because the first thing I had to do was go to Okinawa and visit the people there. I had never been to Okinawa.

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Final Reflections

I don't really think we should have been in Korea. We shouldn't have been in Vietnam either. We had no business to go into that environment because there was no way we could win. The Koreans are a different breed of cat. They're a different culture. We had no business going over there trying to impose our will upon them. Japan was a different culture, but that was World War II--and they attacked us. Going into Korea was voluntary.

North Korea attacked South Korea. In our wisdom, we said, "We're going to protect our friends, the South Koreans." We're still there now, how many years later? Also, we went into Korea because we were signed up with the UN. When the UN says to go, you've got to either go or get out of the UN. We chose to stay in. We went. It is the same way now in Kosovo. Why did we go to Kosovo? Because we're part of the UN, and the UN calls on us to do our part. People say, "Well, why do we do it?" It's because we have signed up to do it. You either do what you have to do or you get out. Whether or not we should get out is a good question. I think the UN has been a great force worldwide in protecting countries, but look at Africa. Africa is now in worse shape than ever it was under colonial rule. All those people are killing each other and AIDS has gone up out of sight. It's a terrible mess. Yugoslavia is a terrible mess. We found out in World War II. Servo Yevo was the start of World War I, and that was a big mistake. The only way we ever kept people's sovereignty together was that communist leader Tito. When he died, everything went to pot.

When to get in and when to stay out is the part you want to play at a national level. Gather, decide whether we're going to play on a world level or a strictly national level. I think we have obligations, but I think we've got to be a little judicious. Challenging China is not the way to go, just through sheer manpower. Asia is not to go with China being as dominant, and now they've taken over Hong Kong, one of the financial centers of the world. Japan is back on its feet. I think we've done well by Japan. That was World War II, not the UN.

I don't think we won the war in Korea. With the stalemate, China came in. There was no way we could win that war. I think we did great things for South Korea. We certainly helped them. They became the 11th most powerful nation in the world business-wise. Now they're having a hard time. I think that was a success, but we're still there. We've still got troop there. And that's not a very pleasant place to be. I think we helped Korea just like we did Japan. Japan was an enemy and we rehabilitated Japan. Their success today is based upon our occupation and our help and encouragement. And we still have people in Japan. We still have people in the southern part, but they want us to get out.

I think we can feel good about what we did in Korea, but I'm not too sure politically that we should stay there. I'm not too sure the UN should stay there. North Korea can't take over South Korea unless China helps them. And if China gets in it, then we would be faced with the thing that we should do, which would be the humanitarian point of view--and political, too--to go back to help South Korea. A very good friend of mine is over there commanding the Second Division right now. They've been there now for 55 years. South Korea has really become an economic power.

As I said, we joined the UN for one purpose, and that was for world peace and to take care of things. When Korea came up, the UN acted and we did our part. The fact that it was an undeclared war is semantics. I don't know why it was not declared a war, for there were as many casualties over there as they had in Vietnam. I think it was a travesty that we didn't go all out to win the war in Korea. Because it wasn't declared a war, we were restricted in a lot of things we could do. Various countries in the UN all put in a certain number of troops. I think we put in more than the others.

Whether or not to take on China was a political decision. Did we want to take on China? No. But Douglas MacArthur did want to take on china--and everybody else. he advocated going into Manchuria. that would have undoubtedly brought China right down on us, and they had the manpower to smother us. We would have been a threat to them, as we still are, and yet they're doing pretty good politically. It comes back to the same question that I mentioned a while ago. If we're going to be part of the UN, we've got to be prepared to influence their decisions. And if they don't do something that we think is right for us, then we have to face up to the fact: do we stay or do we get out?

If we stay in, we've got to commit just like we did in Kosovo. That's no place for us to be. They've been fighting there for hundreds and hundreds of years. They fought there ever since Genghis Khan came over. What defeated Genghis Khan? He was going to conquer the world. You know what defeated him? they traveled by ponies. They ran out of grass and hay and weren't able to feed their ponies, so they became immobilized and were defeated. Then the Ottomans took over and they were a power for 600 years until they finally ran out of steam. The Romans. Everybody. For a while they do real well and then through inter workings, they start to crumble.

I worry about the UN crumbling because they're getting too disbursed. They're taking up too many causes that are not winnable. One of them is to challenge china. the other is to challenge Russia, even though Russia is certainly less than they used to be. I'm not too sure that our UN participations is that important for our own benefit. In fact, I'm surprised they keep us in there because they're six billion dollars or something in arrears. They won't get rid of us because they need our power and our rule-making capability.

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Toughest Job in the World

I've always thought that the toughest job in the world is command because whatever you do affects all the people that are working for you or people that are on each side of you. If you don't do the right thing at the right time, you're jeopardizing them. I felt that way in Korea, and I felt that same way in World War II. Not so much in Vietnam because I wasn't in a position of authority to have troops dependent upon my decisions. I think it's a matter of responsibility. A feeling of inadequacy at times of not being able to make the right decision or maybe making decisions that you didn't really feel right about because you were afraid they would be failures.

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Epilogue

Col. Robert Ellis Jones died on Thursday, September 13, 2007, at his residence in Clarksville, Tennessee, just weeks after celebrating his 90th birthday on July 19. In 2007, his daughter Reta Jones Nicholson wrote:

> "My father has remained robust, and recovered remarkably well from the few serious health issues he's had. A year ago, however, he had "an unexplained fall" so the ER docs did a complete scan and noticed an occlusion near his heart. His body had created branches around it some time ago, however, and he had great heart function, so the cardiac specialists were mystified as to its cause --until I told them about his gunshot wound.
>
> Father was shot in the left chest in North Korea in November of 1950. He says it dropped him to his knees and knocked the breath out of him. His CO, standing with him when he was hit, checked him for wounds and found a ROC (Chinese) bullet protruding from his chest about 1/4 inch. The CO removed the bullet and handed it to him, saying, "Must have been meant for some OTHER Bob Jones…" The CO put a field patch on him and they continued with the fire fight. Later that day he dropped by a field hospital station where the medic dug out a metal fatigue jacket button (with a perfectly round dent in its center) and a wad of paper under the button that had been stopped by a rib. My dad had been carrying a small 50-page notebook and a 20-page roster of the men in their unit in his jacket pocket when he was shot.
>
> He received a Purple Heart for this injury (as well as the Silver Star for his other actions that day). This vet of 33 years, three wars (World War II, Korea and Vietnam), paratrooper, Chosin Reservoir survivor, 10th Special Forces (Green Berets) commandant, injured three times and highly decorated for valor by five countries plus our own--including the second highest US military award and having a building named after him--seems proudest of that bullet! The notebook and roster were lost, but he had the bullet engraved with "Robert E. Jones" and the button wrapped around it. It hangs in a glass dome on his living room mantel while his other awards are in his den.
>
> The doctors said it was as good an explanation as any that they could think of, and there have been no more falls since a simple adjustment to his blood pressure medication."

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