Scott Lark Interview Transcription
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Ok… it's recording. Okay, um… where were you before American involvement in World War II?

Before… where was I at before… uh... and what was my involvement in life before World War II? I was a poor… up brought-- up-start of the great depression. [*ahm*] I came from a family of twelve with eleven brothers and sisters many of-- all much older than me, ah, in dire straits of finding jobs and taking in medial tasks of any kind that came along. Brothers were on… hobo trains, if you will, going from city to city looking for work and of course, as you know this was during the Great Depression. I'm only old enough to know all these things without fully understanding them. Since the time I was… in the early teens-- twelve, thriteen years old. This was during the time that President Roosevelt was trying to come up with all sorts of ways to make work for the young people who were out of work and forming places like the, the WPA and the, the 3C's, which was referred to as the Civilian Conservation Corp which was make work, but would give the people… some incentive to you know… find, make a little money like which was $30 a month that they could return home to the families to support the rest of the people. But, again I was old enough to know what was going on and uh… at an age that was just as I say-- ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen during these times in the early 30s… 1930s. [*ahm*] So I don't know whether that fully answers that question but, that's the status of where I was at, at the time.

Okay… were you living at home?

Well yes… I was living at home in a rural environment which was as I say, uh not in the city but close enough to know the city was seven miles away uh what was happening there as well as in a rural environment which was a you know close enough to understand both city life and rural area life.

Ahm. Did you go into the city often?

Oh yeah, most of the time I would be walking. We had no transportation, uh, it would be nothing to go with an older brother and walk seven miles from the country into the city where some of the older sibling brothers and sisters now lived and to visit and or to you know… be with them, but it wouldn't necessarily, it wouldn't necessarily mean that you got a ride in because there were no cars and uh no transportation so it was walk.

Ahm. So you were living with, with your mother and father?

Well, by this time my father, this was when I was seventeen years old that was a little later downstream my father had passed away and of course, uh, uh at the time oh yes between the ages of, you know uh six and seventeen, I was living with my father and mother.

And were you still in school?

Well yes, I was still in school and of course school meant in those days to get a bus and ride six or seven miles to wherever the district school was that you were going to such as you probably remember the Reisterstown [*Ahm*] which was a little, our rural address and this entitled getting on a bus and going all over the area of whatever twenty or thirty miles to

collect all the students, kids that lived in the surrounding area that went to that particular school.

Ahm. Um, what was the general asses—asses-- sentiment….. what was the general sentiment of the war and American involvement prior to Pearl Harbor?

Prior to Pearl Harbor we had a civilian minded population nobody wanted to get in the war. The war had started, was already raging throughout Europe. Of course we had word of Hitler, uh… invading Poland and, and it seemed so far away that it was of little consequences to people of my age though, we knew there was a war going on. We didn't have the television and newspapers and nothing more than a radio that would give you what little information you got so it wasn't blaring at you all the time, uh there's a war that did this with so many people killed and so many bombs were none of that was going on in the news media and or uh newspapers were you just didn't hardly ever saw any. So it was only that you were aware of it. It was not nothing that uh was of any major concern because again as I say, the war was far away. And at that time we think of Europe as, you know, on a plane and two hours later you're there, but back then all you know, it was a boat ride of seven to ten days in order to even begin to get to Europe. And news traveled slowly but it was, we were aware of it, but again as I say, the people in the United States wasn't concerned. We, we had, we had to have… felt like it was not our war. [*Ahm*] And it was it was somewhere that belonged over there, not we shouldn't get involved and we weren't necessarily even, uh, giving it a whole lot of thought.

So it wasn't something that your parents or your brothers and sisters talked about?

Not really. Not really, not, not before, uh, not before the War. Not only my brothers and sisters, neighbors and or people in general. It was very little discussion because it was so infrequent that you had any news about it, it was only… it was only as I say, something that was happening far away that came to you only in bits and piece and, and you weren't even knowledgeable this, all this sort of stuff was going on as far as of being of a major concern.

Ok. Um… What… where you were when Pearl Harbor happened?

When Pearl Harbor happened… now I guess it was probably, uh… I think on a Sunday and I had become involved with motorcycles and I had a friend that I had gone to school with that he and I were always you know interested in the same thing and since you, you had to almost become self-sufficient and almost had to become a man at a child's age we had progressed into finding enough work; $2 a week or whatever we could get to save a little money and we bought motorcycles. And we were both, he and I, were very much enthused about riding motorcycles and cycles, and showing demonstrating our skills in handling of them etc., etc. But we had gone to a place called York, Pennsylvania which was at that time, was a center for the… pre- showing our good... what you could do with these motorcycles so they had what they called a Hill Climber raise up there. The hills was very steep and we would all try to conquer getting up the steep grade with these motorcycles without them falling back over on us and loosing our control of the things. And we went up, had gone up there this particular day to a… participate in the hill climbing events. And of course we managed to get make the hill and show our, do our thing and, and uh prove how brave and how tough we were with the handling and the maintaining control of these motorcycles. And had completed the performance and started back home which was about twenty miles

back uh from where we were at on our back home. And we came through a little town called Reisterstown, Maryland on our way back home and I had a flat tire on the back wheel of one of my motorcycles from all that rough terrain riding up in the up in uh… in uh, in uh Pennsylvania. And we stopped because I couldn't drive my uh bike, on my motorcycle with a flat tire. So we looked around and there was a gas station a half mile up the road (or less) from where we were at, we could see (it was evening) and I said to him, "Well may be we can push my motorcycle up there and umm… get some help fixing the tire up there."

"So yea, ok that's a good idea." So we did, we pushed the motorcycle up the hill uh from where we were at and went in and asked the guy if we could use his facilities to change the tire because you had to pull the wheel off the motorcycle and so forth.

And he, "Yeah, okay."

So he and I were tempting to pull the wheel off the motorcycle and we heard this blasting on the radio, "Pearl Harbor, Pearl Harbor has been bombed" blah, blah, blah and all this kind of talk.

And we thought, "Where the hell is Pearl Harbor? Who- who. What's that?" We didn't know what it was. We didn't even know where Pearl was at! And didn't even realize it was a possession of the United States. Didn't know who the Japanese were let alone uh… let alone… uh what they were doing. But we, we knew there was something bad happening.

We asked the guy at the gas station, "What are they talking about?" He really didn't know either. Something about, somebody bombed someplace. So…we proceeded and got to wheel and the tire fixed, patched the tube on, on the motorcycle and got the wheel back on and air in everything was fine.

We came on into Baltimore at home and went into the house and everyone was talking about, "Hey did you know the Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor?"

"No… we heard something, but what was that all about?"

Then as a group we got together started talking and still listening to the radio. As I say there was no television then. All you had was a radio, a little radio sitting back there in the corner with garbally uh noise coming out of with these on you know continuous reports about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor. So we, you know became self-educated then to as where Pearl Harbor was, and who it was, and what had to happen through discussions and, but life went on the same. The next day we came out and nobody talked much about it. About the second day uh you see, look around and these guys say, "Well, you know, I'm going to go down and enlist," in this or that or whatever.

"I'm going to go join the Navy."

And the other guy would say, "I'm goin' to go join the Army."

Draft was in effect, but it was for only like people like twenty-six years of age and over that you had to register for the draft and people were being drafted, you know, so infrequently that you seldom ever, you know, you seldom saw anybody that you knew was being drafted. But now things were starting change. So as you know, immediately after Pearl Harbor is when Roosevelt sign- says this is it we are at war and so everybody becomes conscience of the fact that now maybe we shoulda been a little smarter and shoulda been thinking long ago that when Hitler was invading Europe that it was going to come our shores too. Then our whole attitude about wars changed because it had hit home. This was this was the first time the United States had actually had, you know, really a feel of war because it got to us finally that that it was our country when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. And of course there was more talk of them coming ashore at, uh, in California coming; it was only the beginning when they started at Hawaii and it would only be a matter of time till they would be coming ashore at California. And everybody of any uh integ- you know of any age such as fifteen to twenty was become patriotic. He wanted to do his thing.

And there was no more talk about you know, there was no talk at that time about, "I ain't gonna go, I ain't gonna go." It seemed everybody, everybody had that attitude if we are war we gotta, we gotta get involved in this thing.

So as time went by, you know, day after day, you saw less and less of your people of your age, and school friends, and so forth going or coming back with their, you know, uniforms on. And so, you just felt like you had no choice in the matter, you had to do the same thing. [*Ahm*] So it wasn't just me or it wasn't the kid next door, it was everybody. All young people that, that had that attitude that it's, it's our country we, we have to go, we have to volunteer to do what we can [*Ahm*]. And so it went.

So you enlisted?

So, yes, as I say, it was one of those times when ah you felt like you know, you, you couldn't be called ah a draft dodger or a slacker… ah, you, it was the only honorable thing to do so down you went to the recruiting office and so the guy with millions or tens of thousands of others that, that did the same thing and consequently, uh immediately, thirty days after Pearl Harbor down to the recruiting office I went. And then of course, I went down to enlist in the Marine Corps, and… passed the whole physical and those suckers says to me, "Hey, you know you missed a letter on your eye exam, so we can't take you."

I said, "What?!"

He says, "Yeah, that's the story."

I said, "Well, what am I going to do? I already told my mother I was gonna leave so…"

He says, "Sorry we can't take you."

So I said, "Well… there was nothing I could do but go across the street and join the Army." Well, the Marines had given me a piece a paper saying that ah you know, all I needed to pass was my eye exam and your mother's signature and you're in. Well anyhow, I still wasn't sworn in yet so because of the eye failure and uh, I went across the street and enlisted in the Army. [*Ahuh*] Army says, "You're in. Flying colors. Passed the exam," all that stuff. I went home and told my mother I enlisted in the Army and I needed their signature too because I was just eighteen years old. And as I say, wasn't drafted, I didn't have to go, but me like thousands of others we I didn't want to be drafted, we wanted to go now.

And she said, "Well I thought you were going in the Marines?"

I said, "I was, but I couldn't make it. So I said I, before I go in the Army though, I have to be sworn in, you have to sign that."

So… I said, she says, "Okay," So signed the papers for me to go in the Army and I went back down to the recruiting office which was right across the street the Army vs. the Marine Corps at the Federal Building. And I walked past the barbershop and the barbershop had a sign that says, "Murine For Your Eyes." And I thought well, maybe I'll go in there and have them put a couple drops of Murine (it's just like an eye drop in your eye) and clear the eye up. So I walked in the barbershop and I think it was a quarter, whatever. I said, "I need a couple drops of Murine in my eye."

"Okay!" And uh he did. So then I went instead of going to the Army with the both sets of papers; I had the Marine and uh the Army papers. I went back to the Marine office, recruiting office.

And some sergeant or some, somebody says, "You back again?"

I said, "Yeah!"

He says, well he says, "You must want to get in the Marines badly." He says, "What can we, what can you, what do you want?"

I said I want to take the eye exam over again." [*Ahuh*]

He says. "Okay." Tells the guy, "Take him back and give him the eye exam." Which, which was ah… you know young PFC or corporal or somebody so I went back there and the guy… uh put the… gave me the test… it was the one eye I forget the right eye and I read every one of those letters. [*Both chuckle.*] Down to the bottom one.

He said, "Well, well why were you turned out?

I said, "I don't know." I said, "The guy said I missed the letter yesterday and I didn't have 20/20 vision."

He said, "You're in, you passed, go back." [*Both chuckle.*] This is true.

So I go back and um …the, the guy says, says to me, he says, "Well what happened yest-,"

I said, "I don't know."

He said, "Well this is fine, you are in. Hold up your hand." Sworn in right there. [*Huh*] "Where's your papers?

"Here they are; my mother signed them too." I said…

He says, well he says, "You're it." He says, "You report back here and whatever uh, and with… catch a train to, to, to Parris Island and… you're finished." So I tore the Army papers up and threw them in the trashcan there in the Marine office and went back home; waited until whatever the time I was to report back and then I got the train out, went down and met the train. I had paperwork and all with, you know, didn't have to pay nothing for the train ride to D.C. and then in D.C. I uh formed up with some sixty or eighty other people from Boston, New York, uh, you name it all throughout the northeast and then we took the troop train to Parris Island and that was the beginning of my career.

Oh. What did your, were you the first one in your family, did, had any of your brothers enlisted?

No, I had, I had had… uh… before, before the War, I had brothers that were uh caught in the draft.

Ahuh, for World War I or for World War II?

No, for World War II. [*Okay*] But World War II hadn't started but the draft had started cuz as I mentioned before, Roosevelt wanted to get us in the war long before Pearl Harbor came along [*Ahuh*] but we had a civilian minded population that says, "No, that war in Europe does not, doesn't belong to us. It's that's, that's, that's for them over there." But Roosevelt knew that it was going to eventually come to our shores so therefore he started the draft program way back in the late 30s—'39, or 1939 or 1940. So I had a brother that got caught up in the, in the draft. And he was in the Army at Fort Meade. Uh,… never went anywhere but you know, had gone though the basic training and all and was stationed at Fort Meade. And then when Pearl- by the time Pearl Harbor had come along [*Ahuh*] he had gotten out of the Army. You see you only needed to do like a two-year tour of duty in the Army. And of course, I had brother-in-laws that were involved in the same way. [*Ahm*] Not, that were, from the older sister's husbands. Two of them uh, [*Ahmm*] that were also in the army prior to World War II. That had gotten, one of them had gotten out, and one of them had stayed in. So I had representation in the Army only, not in the Marine Corps. [*Ahmm*] But uh that was, ah you know, that was how it went with everybody back then. It seems that you had older brother or older, or your- you know, brothers-in-law or somebody was involved in the

military you know. Not World War I, I am talking about pre World War II [*Okay*] because of the draft.

Ahuh. So what did your mother and your sister think of you enlisting; were they for it or against it?

Well I don't think they really uh was against it. Then again, you know, when your seventeen, eighteen years old and you know you have brothers and sisters that are old enough to be your father or mother, which I did, uh they thought more of it as like a son leaving which, they were they were… you know not happy but then again, they welcomed what seeing you do what you wanted to do. And accomplish whatever it was the goals that you were setting out to seek. And I don't think there was any resentment about it and no speaking out like you know, "You are committing suicide or you don't want to go you don't have to go you shouldn't go," because they in turn you know were just as patriotic about the whole thing as I was. [*Ahm*] They wanted you to do your part.

Did anybody did any of your classmates enlist with you?

Well, not that particular day, no. But the motorcycle buddy of mine that I spoke of, yes he did. [*Ahm*] But he came a month or two after I did. At first he didn't want to go. I tried to get him to go with me but he was from a German descent. His father and mother were from Germany. [*Ahm*] Their name was Hundermark. And he was, they were from actually from Germany. And he had some sort of a feeling, I think that that you know, he was against Hitler… from what little appearance told him and knew about uh Germany you know as it was then. Uh I think they encouraged him you it's just don't worry, don't run, jump into anything yet. And he was a little bit behind and reluctant to go but he did finally realize that, you know, whatever his parents their decision was not his; he wanted to go so he did come and enlist in the Marine Corps. Never with me in the same organization, but yes. He was my schoolmate that I had gone to school with him from first grade up until we finished; uh, left high school together. [*Ahuh*] But other than that, no, no other close friend or relative ever accompanied me or anyway went in the Marine Corps because you know when I did.

Was there any anti- or you know looked down, you know negative look- affect for people who waited in the draft? You know, your peers who waited for the draft?

Well the biggest thing about any of my peers who did not go and enlist and waited until they got drafted was that they were categorized as SS after their soc- uh their, serial number. See back then, now the military uses the your social security number as your what they call your file number. [*Ahm*] Back then they were given a serial number, like for an example when you enlisted- when I enlisted my serial number was 350694 [360794]. That was my serial number and of course uh that's the was the way it continued until people started getting drafted. Then when they started getting drafted they were referred to as if their serial number or whatever their serial number was, at the end it was added SS. SS meant you know uh… meant that you were drafted [*Okay.*] and of course uh, uh I don't know what… why it was uh it was a dead ringer to show that they weren't didn't enlist and therefore we as a, as a unit of people that were identified by our social secur- or our serial number being minus the SS we knew those people that were drafted and we had a feeling that many of 'em came into the military particularly the Marine Corps not because they wanted to but because they elected to be in the Marine Corps rather than the Army. But

were they were identifiers as SS meaning… they were drafted not enlisted. [*Ahuh*] And came because they had to, you see? [*Ahuh*] So they were they were, they were good Marines. I don't mean to say that any of them were slackers or, or was there just to, you know goof off and play around; many of them died just like… uh, those before 'em did.

But, but it was, uh it was a comedy to, "Oh, you're an SS man?" meaning you know which was what you called the, the shock troops in Germany-- that Hitler [*Right.*] crowd, you see. But uh, um, I think that as I say we were all the same. It was just they waited and elected then when you are drafted when you are first drafted…you… depending on the needs of the services, if you, if you wanted to go in the Army, you went in the Army, or if you wanted to go in the Marine Corps you went into the Marine Corps. If, if the need was there, you were placed where the need… existed. If the Marine Corps was filled up, then they pushed you into the Army. [*Ahm*] And many tried to avoid the Army and many tried to avoid the Marine Corps, I am sure. Because, they just … maybe their fathers were in World War I or one reason or another, uh, they had the choice of most times of going you know, either way you know. If they were uh Marine Corps, you know, they wanted to go in the Marine Corps and the Marine Corps had openings, that's where they went … but even if they were being drafted. If they wanted to go in the Army and if they had openings, they went in the Army. Or they went in the Navy you know.

Ahm. What was basic training like?

Well, basic training was hell on wheels. [*Laughs*] The best examples that I can give you is uh… basic training was the beginning of the time… when you first arrived. You, you ended up getting off a train, a troop train, that backed right into a little burg called Yemassee, South Carolina. That's, that's in the case of my training. Other people went other places. But if you enlisted in the Marine Corps east of the Mississippi River, you all went to Parris Island, South Carolina. If you enlisted in the Marine Corps west of the Mississippi River you went to San Diego, California. We had two basic training uh schools; one was in Parris Island, South Carolina like I say for everybody east of the Mississippi the other one was, was uh San Diego west of the Mississippi, as I said. So my, mine was naturally um, Parris Island, South Carolina which had been an old Isle base uh that had been uh constructed in started during World War I. And of course at that time it was an island that set off the coast of California [South Carolina] so as I say the when the war was starting we went from, I don't know, twenty thousand or forty thousand troops in the Marine Corps to we went ultimately to six hundred thousand [*Ahm*] before the war ended so it took a massive amount of training to bring these people in and prepare 'em for you know to build up the build up that we needed for in the Marine Corps for World War II. So the train loads were backing in to Parris Island it seemed like every other day filled up with recruits like myself and it was, it was a dead end there at the Yemassee was, right on the edge of the water in South Carolina.

You got off, you ultimately it was later changed. But you got off the train… in big groups and then they had a ferry boat that they boarded you put you on this ferry boat, took you across the island to um, Parris Island and you were just like a bunch of cattle. You, you had nothing but your little bag that you took with you or toilet articles and whatever else; toothbrush and that have you. And they pushed you on this ferry boat and across to Parris Island then they had these what they called cattle wagons, big old long trucks that were just like great big hollow shells that they would push you on there like two or three hundred; there was no place to sit down you just stood up you were like cattle in this thing. They took you, when you got ashore on the other side at Parris Island to the respective areas wherever you were gonna start your training. And it was, it was uh, uh, strictly a shuttle bus

with, with all these hundreds of guys coming where they offloaded you then there and of course then you, then you were had uh area that you fell in uh, training…area… what they called uh, uh, uh, I guess mustering area where the you were assigned a couple or three uh supposedly… prior com- Marines who had completed basic training on three levels like maybe a newly guy who had just finished boot camp training and was now referred to as a Marine and then you would have maybe a little higher up guy who may have one stripe like a PFC [*mhm*] (uh private first class) who might have been in the Marine Corps now for six months. Then you had another guy what we would call old Salt, he may have been a China Marine or he may have been in for five, six years before the war started would be the so called uh senior drill instructor and then they became your so called guardians; your father, your mother, your keeper. They were responsible for you and you were assigned into a group of ninety-two people, made up a platoon. And you would be platoon number 290 or whatever. And the next group behind you would be 291. And that would be assigned groups. And then you get about four platoons then you were all referred to as a battalion. And you became under the command of another guy.

But anyhow through the training at Parris Island that's how you were assigned, and you would have as I say three drill instructors that was responsible for you as a platoon which would consist of ninety-two people and then… you, you would start your… these guys would be your sole- you know sole uh respons- have sole responsibility for you. Except, there would be an officer (which you never saw. Or two over you and they would be an officer over that officer for a whole battalion.) But nevertheless then, you would start by first thing: take off all your civilian clothes; either throw them away, burn them, or put 'em in a package and send 'em home [*ahuh*] because you were never again allowed to wear those civilian clothes. [*ahuh*] And then you were issued the so called uh, uh, uniforms that were needed for boot camp which was nothing more than primarily your utilities and your… green underwear, socks, and green undershirt, and field shoes, and, and a pith helmet. And that was your basic uh tools for to start training. [*ahuh*]

The next thing you were to do is you would get in form your get in your formation of your particular platoon and you would head in for a barber- a haircut. And you would you would be lined up according to your position in your platoon and they would yell, "Okay first, first squad… forward right. Second squad forwar-," and then you would go in line in the barbershop and you would, you would go they would have half a dozen barbershops and one guy go in this one, that one, that one, that one and then when you come out you go back and fall back in your respective position. And I distinctly remember I had made friends with a guy who was my height because you fell in according to height. [*ahuh*] From uh, I think he was from Worcester, Mass. Nice guy, he and I had met in D.C. and we uh, you know, kinda buddied up together, [*ahuh*] became friends. Uh, even though I had never known him before, everybody was strange you know, there were no buddies that were two together or three that knew each other before [*ahuh*] so that's the way you sort of teamed up. Anyhow, this guy's name was Sharpie and he had black, wavy hair; nice looking guy and you know, and of course we did look the same but we went out and we uh… So we went out and we like I say, we were formed together in our platoon and, and we went in the barbershop; he went in one way and we went in another. And when you come out of the barbershop you had to come… and fall back in the same spot. So, I looked around… as time a few minutes- it only takes thirty seconds: zip, zip, you are bald [*Laughs*] and you are out you go, you see. So I looked around for Sharpie. "Sharpie, I can't where is Sharpie at?" Some guy standing beside me, I don't know who the hell he is, [mockingly yells:] "Hey Sharpie!" You weren't supposed to talk much I was kinda, [mockingly whispers:] "Sharpie, where ya at, Sharpie?"

Some guy looks at me says, "Here I am you damn fool, standing [*Laughs*] right beside you."

I said, "You must be out of your mind, I said, that's not- you aren't Sharp!"

"Yeah I am." I never seen such a change in a person in my life. And I am sure I looked the same to him. [*Laughs*] But any- he didn't say nothing. I thought how can anybody change so much? A young, ugly looking bull headed guy standing here beside me before it was a nice looking [*Both laugh*] he he- but this is a true story. This is the way it was.

So then the hell began. You've now you got your skinhead; you are bald headed. You don't know how to drill, you don't know how to do nothing. So then the drill instructor starts yelling at you: [speaks in stricter tone:] "You people may as well consider yourself dead. Whatever life you had here before, forget it! You no longer have your mommies and your poppas to take care of you. I will be your mama. I will be your papa. I will be your guide. I will do, I will tell you when to crap and when I tell you to crap, squat. You are as far as I am concerned the lowest down scum of the earth. You are nothing. You think you guys are Mar- You are not Marines and you will half of you will never be Marines. You guys don't- wouldn't even make a scab on a good- on a Marine's butt." He says, "So forget whatever you thought you were you are nothing done but low down."

Aw, he, he had names that I wouldn't repeat and couldn't repeat. Not only one of the DIs but they were all the same. Just as ornery and as mean. Not brutal but just tried to degrade you and break you and tell you, [speaks in a stricter tone:] "You guys will never be Marines. You guys wouldn't- you guys are mommies boys. Go home and listen to your mommy. What are you doing here? You don't belong here. Now get in get in there and get at attention and give me" well in the meantime we had drawn rifles, "and give me, give me uh this and give me that." Meaning you know push-ups with the rifle over your head and blah, blah, blah.

I remember once we were in sands. Parris Island is nothing but a, but a mass of at that time a mass of field of sand. Sand as deep. And you know what its like to run along a beach in water [*Ahuh*] just with nothing but you there, right?. [*Ahuh*] So he would say, "Okay fall in." This is just pre-training stuff. "Get your rifle over your head. Put your rifle over your head. Okay, now give quick time around here five times." So you run around this sand with this rifle over your head and you think oh my god I am gonna fall and: [speaks in stricter tone:] "If one of you guys fall and get that rifle dirty your ass is mine. Your, you will be in trouble. You will sleep with that rifle blah, blah." All this stuff to degrade you. Make you, make you say I, I give up; I quit, I can't handle it, I can't take it. I just got--

That's what they wanted you to do. They wanted the weak ones to come forward and say, "I can't handle it, I can't handle it." And they would send you to a psychiatric area where they guy would examine you and you would either say, "That guy is too hard on me I wanna go back," or you would say "I quit." But they wanted to break you down. Do everything they could to get you to say I can't handle it. Cuz they don't want to weakling. They didn't want someone that you know that come from mommy and mommy's little child and say or baby and say you know this stuff is crazy. This is too much for me. So it took, it was a few that didn't make it, a few that didn't make it. But it was, it was many of them were just like me. They said, "I will show these turkeys." And… this went on for 12 weeks. 12 weeks, 3 months. And of course as, as you went along you progressed farther and farther and farther and they became a little more human, you know. But they were doing their job. That was part of being a drill instructor. Uh, and at that time they were, they were um they were kinda excused from abuse and harassment and that. And uh they got away

with a lot of stuff they now can't or even now even later, [*ahm*] later in the war they couldn't.

But sometimes they would have the most abusive, you know. I call them you know southern rednecks [*ahm*] that would… there were no, there were no blacks then; we had no black in the Marine Corps [*ahm*] in my time [*ahm*]. I mean in basic training going though boot camp. And um, but they had these redneck southerners, just as ornery. And they loved to… ride people from up this way. If you were north of the Mason-Dixon line, you were a Yankee [*ahm*]. And of course a lot of racial discrimination of that type. I don't mean black versus white; [*Right*] southern vs. northern, you see [*ahm*]. You know uh rebel versus Yankee, is the expression [*ahm*]. And it seemed that most of them were; now the senior drill instructor, he was not. He was from I think somewhere West Virginia or somewhere like that. He wasn't one of them but the other two guys were. They were both from Georgia or Alabama or somewhere like that. And the senior one- the middle one, um… I don't even remember the middle one's name. But he was he was a really a really nasty guy. He would go to the slop shoot (what the beer joint which they could go to, but we couldn't) and get beer and get drunk [*ahm*] and then he would come back at- in the evening say at 10 o'clock at night and when we were supposed to be in bed yelling, [speaks in a stricter tone:] "Okay you shitbirds get out of those sacks and lets fall in," and go out and run you though drill at night. And stuff like that to try and wear you down because you got up at 5 o'clock in the morning you know. You had to get to bed early [*ahm*] or you, you just couldn't go through that strenuous type training without sleep. But uh he was the only one who did that. The other, the sergeant, who as I say was, he was fair and, and right kinda guy. He was alright. But the private, the young, youngest, or the junior one of the three was alright. But the middle one, who was a PFC if remember right, he was a horse's butt like that. But he was, he was still doing his job [*ahm*] you know what I mean?

So I guess to go farther in the training… when you finish with all your all your primary basic training such as the drill mastering, the drill, knowing left from right, and the rifle manual of the rifle you know order arms and blah, blah all this stuff you go through with the rifle, then you go to the rifle range which is another three or four miles down a road away from the main base where the drilling is going on. [*ahuh*] So you go to the rifle range. You take your matchbox with whatever you own and move out there. You stay out there. The rifle range and you go through the firing range. And you know first you go through what they call the dry run. Meaning you go through the laying down with your rife in prone position and you shoot but you don't have no bullets. [*ahuh*] But you learn and the, and you get to try the recoiling of the rifle and what the rifle will do. How your gonna uh get black eyes and if you don't squeeze the trigger. You know all the stuff that goes with shooting before you start actually shooting. [*ahuh*] That takes another week or two right? [*ahuh*]

So when you finish the rifle range you come out with some sort of a, a score. You're either what they call a marksmen, or you're a sharp shooter or you're an expert shooter. [*ahuh*] Well, many of the guys had been- not many a number of 'em had been in what they call the 3C's before, even in my platoon. [*ahuh*] Like older guys- twenty-one or two years old. They had been in the 3Cs. [*ahuh*] The 3Cs was as I mentioned to you before one of the make programs that was slightly military oriented but wasn't military. [*ahuh*] But you did have the opportunity to handle weapons, rifles particularly and shoot. And knew fairly well what you were getting into as far as shooting a weapon and how good you could shoot. Many of them would pipe up and say "Well, that wasn't the way- what I learned in the 3Cs." Well that was the biggest mistake they ever made in their life. That frickin' drill instructor would get on their cases, [speaks in a stricter tone:] "You aren't in the G-D 3Cs. Now you're

in the Marine Corps you don't listen to that BS. You do it the way I'm tell you to do it." [*Ahuh*] And they just made it hard on themselves. But they soon learned to shut their mouth and forget they had ever been in the 3Cs [*Chuckles*].

So when we came out of there now we were not longer recruits we were just SB they called it- shitbirds or recruits up until the time we finished the rifle range. [*Okay*] We were now just one day away from graduation. Meaning you had finished your basic boot camp training. So we went back to the base to our tent areas where we lived in when we finished the rifle range getting ready for the big day. [*Ahuh*] The big day would be ah you fall in with about fifty other platoons and do what they'd call a passing parade [*ahm*] uh where you would have the… big colonel up there, lieutenant colonel who would be the, who would be the base or the, the division commander. And then you would have uh the battalion commander who might be a major. And they would have the company commander would be a captain. And they, we would all form and battalions and do around this great big field with all our, now we have also our green uniform [*ahuh*] on, issued uniform. That'd been supposedly fitted for you and everything with your high, high dress shoes-- [*ahuh*] you had high dress shoes then. Not , not low ones and you had to be shined. And this, this field was paved, it wasn't sand. And you would go around and do this uh passing review. [*ahuh*] And in front of this stand where, where, where, where anybody that was anybody would be including the officers with their wives and all that. And that was your graduation ceremony. [*Ahuh*] So you do a passing review, and you know, in formation, you know everybody was just right on the money. You would, you could look down through the… as horizontally at the troops as they went by. Everybody would be in perfect alignment. Nobody would be out of step. If you were, you were in big trouble cuz somebody would see you and you would get called out. Then you would finish that up and then they would they would dismiss you, [*ahuh*] go back to your units. Then they ole', uh the old sergeant the senior sergeant of the platoon, he would he would address you. [*ahuh*] You know, and he would say, "Okay you,"… what would he say? He would say, [speaks in stricter tone:] "Okay you men, you can now call yourself Marines. You are, you can put the emble- the Marine Corps emblem on your cap and on your lapels because you are no longer recruits, you are no longer SBs (shit birds). You are now marines. You've earned it, you got it." And that was it. Then you were told given orders saying where you will be… most of you and your platoon will be going, here or there or here or there. And I had orders to Quantico [*Okay.*] and with a bunch of other guys. And that ended basic training.

Okay. What did you do with your clothes? Did you send them back home?

Oh I did that way back. [*Ahuh*] Yeah, I didn't have but I think a pair of maybe two shirts, and one pair of pants that I wore. And a pair, a pair of shoes. I, I never, never did see 'em again. [*Both chuckle*] So I, I guess my sister or somebody threw 'em away. 'Cause I sent them back to my-- to where I was living with my sister, Irene. But you know you, you took you had didn't even, even, even though I didn't take many clothes with me, I didn't have many clothes to take. [*ahuh*] I didn't have a suit or nothing like that then. Uh, so, uh whatever, whatever clothes they were, they took care of them for you. You just wrapped 'em up in a package and put your name and address and someone sent them back home. [*Okay. Um*] But you had no other possessions, you know.

A huh. So you never, never once thought about washing out or going back home. You were stubborn enough to sick with basic training?

Oh yeah, you thought about it but you know you-- your, your ego would tell you these jerks will never, they will never, never break me down. Oh man, you just, you had to fight it tooth and nail and many, many were too weak. Many, many a mommy's boys couldn't, they just, they just couldn't. I have seen men cry honestly. [*ahuh*] I mean, they just couldn't, they just couldn't bear the thought they would have to go through this. But, but basically things were different with young people then. You see, I think television and all this nonsense electronics communications uh apparatuses that we have today. I think it, I think it, it you know, it over, it over educates young people. You know I think, I think sometimes it's better not to know so much. [*ahuh*] As, as, as, you know as, such as we didn't know, we didn't have the news media. We didn't have all this, all this stuff that you have today like I told you. You know, even in television I think it's been the ruination of the way a lot of young people think. And you know if you don't know something is bad, you know, you don't care about it. It doesn't bother you. If you think that we have- you have nothing, except enough food to eat, that's all; that's good enough. If you don't have enough money to buy uh a hundred or at that time, I'd say $5 pair of shoes. So what? Wear the pair, put a piece of cardboard on the bottom its good enough. You don't worry about that kind of stuff. [*Both chuckle*] If you don't have long pants to wear to school when you're six, eight years old and you have to wear short pants, wear short pants. If you don't have any good pants other than a pair of ole blue jeans that cost fifty cents so be it, who cares? You know, but try that today you see and, and young people will say, "I ain't going to school with that ole raggedy clothes on," this old stuff. I can remember friends that I went to school with that I used to be ashamed of myself to go to school with them. They would have the whole crotch of their pants and their butts hanging out. But that's all they had. [*ahuh*] They didn't care. [*Right.*] Nobody cared. [*Okay.*] They were accepted. Teachers didn't say you look like a tramp, go home and change your clothes. He didn't have no clothes to change. That's it.

My friend was one of them. I used to day, "Hey man are you going to wear those pants. I ain't got no more clothes, I ain't got no more pants."

"Well your mother can sew them up and patch em."

"Yeah, but I ain't got no pair to wear while she is doing that." [*Both chuckle.*] I am telling you the truth. It was entirely different world then. But you have got to remember this was the great depression era. The great depression: they talk about depressions today but even today, you know, no facsimile to the era of the times when I lived. I mean you, you just can't compare to what we had back then. The only think I can say is, we always, as a family and living where we lived we never went hungry. But we went to bed, and this is no lie: we would have many a night, cornbread and milk… and take the milk and the bowl of milk and um take a piece of cornbread whatever big, however big it was, crumble it up in that milk and that's what you had for dinner. [*ahuh*] I mean it was plenty all you could eat but you didn't go hungry.

Ahuh. But it was milk and cornbread?

That's right. Many a time that's what I had for dinner. I can remember a sister-in-law (one of my older brothers) that came from a little better family I guess, than we had but my brother married her and brought her home. She came from Radford, Virginia—Bluefield, near that area Virginia. He brought her home; she was going to live at home, right. And I can remember, I thought "What an ungrateful bitch!" We would have plenty to eat now, but just like I am telling you we would have cornbread, beans and potatoes maybe especially during the summer months when you would grow potatoes and beans. [*ahuh*] But it was good. I liked it. It was plenty. And one day she was- we was starting to eat and she says, [in

a whiney sounding voice:] "When are we going to have something different to eat? All we have is bean and potatoes and potatoes and beans, beans and potatoes, potatoes and beans. I am so tires of beans and potatoes I could throw up." I didn't say nothing because I would have gotten my ears boxed [*Both chuckle*] but I thought you grateful what you know. But that's the way people, you know, that's the way we lived then.

You appreciated what you had and you sure as hell didn't complain about it. But she was a complainer and I thought, you know, here she is living with my mother and father for free- don't have no money, don't pay no rent, I mean no for their food and she has got enough to eat, but she wants something better. Not appreciative of what she's getting. But that's just an example of way things were versus…

All am I am telling you is true, of course there is a lot more that I guess could be added to it. But, you know. But the whole, the whole philosophy of life was you know was uh you know then accept what you got and be glad you got it. And as I have told many people: me, personally my age group lived in the worst of times, yet in the best of times. But we had no problems like they have today with drugs and you know and, and uh all this nonsense you know of pre… pregnancy sixteen, seventeen year old girls uh having kids, no fathers or you know or some- everybody screaming and yelling for unemployment insurance when they had no jobs. There was none. You didn't get any. Or so nobody complained. [*ahuh*] Or welfare- there was no welfare. You had, you didn't-- someone didn't give or you couldn't have a friend that had enough to feed you. You just, you just accepted, took what you could get and that was it. And, and there was, there was no downtrodden attitude about, "Oh, the world coming to an end" because of it…. It's unbelievable what you can live and what you can do just you know by, by not having you can… without demanding somebody you know do it for you or somebody give you a handout. It's life will go on. I don't think there was this many people starving then with nothing as there is now with everything. [*Ahuh*] And Honestly, [*ahuh*] I mean that's the way it was and I think when I say it was, it was the best of times and yet the worst of times. [*ahuh*] So, what- you got any more questions?

Uh I do, but we don't have to go through them now.

That's alright.

Um, well, so was Parris Island, was that the farthest you have been away from home?

Uh, yes. Yes. Except I had been, I had been close to that uh distance. I had been a couple times I had made trips down to my ole… the Appalachians where I was born. [*ahuh*] But if you remember, I was only uh just turning six years [*ahuh*] old when I left Southwestern Virginia as a young kid. So I remember not a whole lot about it. But I do remember- did remember the names of the coalmining areas where I was, where I was a kid until, until we left there but uh I made, I was fifteen, maybe sixteen, I made two trips down there with my older sister and brother-in-law. [*ahuh*] So to… answer your questions, that would've been the furthest. And it was the same distance there as it was, maybe a little less to Southwest Virginia where I had been as it was Parris Island. So to answer your question, I had never been any distance farther than that until I went- you know before I went to Parris Island.

Was it exiting to be that far away from home?

You mean Paris Island or Sou-

Yeah

Oh, I gu-, yeah I guess it was. Sorta, yeah. It was sorta exciting. But, you didn't have time to think about it, to tell you the truth. There was no times to sit around and, "Oh, I miss my mommy, Oh I miss my father. Oh." Well, you know my father was already gone. So I didn't you know. When I left for the Marine Corps, he was, he was already gone. [*Okay.*] And my mother was uh you know was… she was in the process of starting her new life. She got married again. So, I mean wasn't family and home wasn't any, any burden on my mind. I really never gave it any thought much. You know, you just missed… family, relatives more so than you think of as mommy and daddy, you know. But I didn't sit around dwelling.

Oh, I take that back. I take that back. I said I was never as far away except down in Appalachia. When I was uh sixteen years old. If you- I think I told you about it. [*ahuh*] This friend of mine and I- the guy who went in the Marine Corps was killed on Guam. He and I rented this so called farm. That was a lady that lived near us that had, not the farm, a field. [*Right*] Quite a field, thirty something like thirty acres of field. He and I plowed (we used my family's equipment) plowed the field, harrowed the field, planted corn on it. [*ahuh*] And on a half -half share basis, [*ahuh*] we would end up getting paid for half of the profit we made and we had to give the tenant the women who owed the place the other half. [*Right.*] So we worked the field, plowed the field, planted corn on it then when the corn harvested… we picked the corn, took the corn to Hampstead which was the town closest to us [*ahuh*] sold it and we got- we made $35. [*ahuh*] Well we made more than that but we bought a car of the- for $35 the money we got from that that and bought us an old car. A 1930 Model A Ford. [*uh huh*]

And then we went- we were going to go to Florida and make a fortune pickin' oranges. Because we had heard that's where you wanted to go to work, there was no work then. But harvesting, I mean Oranges was grow- now coming now being picking time in Florida so we get in this old Model A Ford, he and I alone and we tell our families, "Good-bye we are gone we might be back one day but don't know when." [*Chuckles*] So we, like I say this Ford was a 1930 Model A Ford. We were- he was I think he was one year older than me and I was sixteen. [*uh huh*] And we set out for Florida we picked out tooth- our matchboxes you know little suitcase 'bout this big, put everything we owned in it threw these matchboxes in the rumble seat and away we went. We spend about three days I think it was about three days stopping at $1 motels: cost $1 for two of us to stay in a motel at night. [*Uh huh*] Well, they didn't call them motels then, they called 'em cabins. [*Okay*] You still see facsimiles of them along the road when you're going down through La Plata down that way. [*Okay, yeah, yeah*] That's the way they were; they were called cabins. And, and we met a lot of people, we had a lot of fun and we finally arrived in uh Ft. Lauderdale [*mhm*] after I don't remember whether it was three, four days- five days, something like that. Now by this time we, we were ready for picking oranges.

Well we went in, we did everything we knew what- how to do. We didn't know where to go or what to do. We tried to find us a job picking oranges. In the meantime our ol' Model A Ford the valves were starting to stick on it. Because they were, they were good old cars but you couldn't drive them thirty-five miles per hour. If you drove them any faster than that the valves would start burning and the engine would start, you know. The valves would start sticking and the engine would [makes sputtering sound]. You know it didn't wanna- had no more power. So we knew we were going to lose our automobile very soon. So between not finding any oranges to pick right away and figuring out how we are going to get enough money to get back home on a bus we better sell that old car, cuz it wasn't gonna

get us back and we had no money to buy tickets back and we had no job; couldn't find a job picking oranges.

So within a week, we were completely at that point at that stage we got there. So we sold the old car for whatever we got for it- $20 or something like that to somebody there and gets our we get ourselves a greyhound bus which was bout $5 each back we came. So we were back home in less than two weeks. [*Both chuckle*] And that was the end of our fortune. [In a mocking tone:] "What are you all doing back home? I thought you were gonna go to Florida to make your fortune?'

"We couldn't make it." [*Both chuckle*] So that was a longer trip that we made and, and a short period of time, but we did have, we did learn our lesson: it ain't that easy to pack up and leave home with no money and nothing positive, about and, and being sixteen years old or seventeen years old. Nobody wanted to hire you anyhow at that age. So that was that was my longest trip away from home really before the war. [*mm kay*] In addition to the two trips I was telling you about

Did you see your family between when you left on the and were stationed at Quantico?

Oh yeah, when I came back from Quant- when I came up from Quantico. You- big liberty. Once every month you got a weekend, what they call a 71-hour pass. Meaning you could leave on, on Friday evening and you didn't have to be back until Monday morning. So, man I would hitchhike, take- get a bus or train whatever, you know twenty cents you could probably get a train from that-- at that time from, from un Quantico, you catch the Atlantic Coastline coming up from the south in Quantico-- stop right in Quantico come into DC and then you can catch another train from DC over to Baltimore. So yeah, I came home a couple times. However one of those trips was a disaster. I think I told you about this before, but I am not sure.

When you are in boot camp when you enlist in the Marine Corps rather you get our pay was $21 a month; [*Okay*] $21 a day, once a month; that's how we referred to it as $21 a day, once a month that's how much you got paid and that was it. That $21 was for your total month's pay but you only got paid one time. Well the $21 that you got paid, whether you liked it or not, they wanted to make sure you weren't a crumb bum. They issued you a razor, they issued you a couple towels, they issued you a little ole first aid kit, a little ole sewing kit and a bucket. [*Uh huh*] And the bucket held all the contents of this stuff in it. [*ahuh*] That was your sole property that belonged to you. [*Okay.*] That cost you $7 so that left you with $14 that you could spend anyway you wanted. But you better keep that bucket because if you didn't keep that bucket then you would be issued another one and you would pay another $7 for it. [*Okay*] So you were brainwashed in Parris- in boot camp you don't throw that bucket away, don't let somebody steal it, don't let somebody uh talk- talk you into getting rid of it. You will… wash your face in that bucket, you will shave in that bucket, and if necessary you'll take a shower in that bucket, and you will wash your clothes in that bucket. That bucket is your sole survival. [*Chuckles*] There's one downstairs if you wanna see one like it right now. [*Both laugh*] I got one later; it's not the same bucket. [*Okay.*] So anyhow, you always was told to keep that bucket at the foot of your bed. [*Okay.*] With, with-- that's your contents so don't, don't, don't walk away and leave it. So when I left Parris Island I did just exactly what the man said. I put the bucket in the bottom of the sea bag packed the stuff in it that would fit in it and surrounded with my other clothes and what have you, put my sea bag on my shoulder got on the train whatever left Parris Island went to Quantico.

When I got to Quantico the first thing I did was unpack that sea bag in a locker there now you had a locker, [*ahuh*] you know like they have in school. Put my clothes in the locker, empty my bucket and set that empty bucket at the foot of my bunk. That was, that was what I was told to do and everyone else was the same. Ain't gonna pay no $7 for another bucket. [*Chuckles*] So… I guess, one weekend I came home, came home from… Quantico to Baltimore, went back, went back the first weekend probably I had. Because I was only down at Quantico for only a couple months. [*ahuh*] So, I went back and some guy comes yelling at me, "Hey Lark, First Sergeant wants to see you."

I said, "What for?"

He says, "I don't know." So I- you go in, tap on the door.

First Sergeant, "Come in!"

"Yes, sir!"

He says, "Stand at attention." He says uh, "You gotta go in see the, see the Adjutant.

I says, "Okay."

He says, "Okay. And when you walk in there, you stand at attention and, and spoke only when you are spoken to.

I said, "Okay." I says, "What is he going to—"

He says, "Never mind, you'll find out." So I march into the, into the little ole' Warrant Officer. Warrant Officer, rates with and below a 2nd Lieutenant. [*Okay.*] He's the lowest kind of officer you can get between enlisted and officer, right? He's called, a Gunner he's got bursting bombs, gold bar with a little red strip in the middle of it. That makes him the warrant officer. He's usually an old guy who has been and enlisted man. He was probably in World War I. He's now old enough to retire so they don't know what to do with him. They make him a warrant officer because he's got experience and he's an old timer. Anyhow, he's the big dog; he's the Adjutant. So anyway, I walk in there I stand at attention. The guy says, "Your name Lark?"

I say, "Yes, sir."

"Did you know that you left a damn bucket," or some words to that effect "in your in your uh room or in your quarters at your bunk."

I said, "Yes, sir."

He says, "You know we don't allow, we have regulations around here we don't allow buckets to be sitting in fro—in our squad base," blah blah, blah. And before I can open my mouth he says, "You've got one month's restriction." [*Uh oh*]

"One month's restriction?"

He says, "That's right!"

I didn't say that; I just, "Yes, sir!" I didn't say nothing back to him. You don't talk back to superior officer you know except I wanted to say, "but I, but- but- but. But, I didn't say nothing, so. Anyhow, that's it about face, out I went. Oh I was instructed get rid of that damn bucket, throw it away and don't ever let us catch it in there again. So I went and got rid of the bucket, pitched it, and started my thirty day restriction. About, I guess it was about a week later, maybe not even a week, a big ole notice went up on the board there at Quantico saying we are looking for volunteers for a new base to be opened in North Carolina. Volunteers… encouraged- requested. So I says, Oh my god, I don't know where the hell this place is at but I got to get away from this chicken outfit. So I went up and I say- "Who do I sign-- Where do I sign up?"

Some PFC or Corporal- he says, "Yeah, what do you want?"

I said "I want to sign up for whatever the vacancy is for the place in North Carolina."

"Okay." So I sign up. About another three or four days I was handed a set of orders. Got on another troop train. A whole bunch of us went to North Carolina. That was the last I

ever saw of Quantico. Except been back there years later for visits but never again stationed there. That's what I think of Quantico and I still think that way about it today. [*Both laugh*] So that's my true story about Quantico.

Okay. Okay. Um, so, how long were you stateside before they sent you overseas?

About a year total. [*Okay*] About a year. Of course you start training immediately. You know. Preparation and.... Uh, those uh you know there were others that went earlier. But, That was, that was about routine. But Marine Corps had a had a positive uh attitude about overseas. You-- 99% of everybody was- had to do duty overseas. [*ahuh*] You, you didn't have people that did stateside duty like here at the Air Force. Some of these guys retirees been here for 30 years and never left. But uh the Marine Corps they didn't they didn't see even those who might have been specialists in some particular area. They found a replacement for you one way or another. But uh, it was about a year.

What were you trained to do?

Well, I was- Marine Corps has a philosophy you're trained as an O-3 riflemen. That is your primary and your trained as a Marine, an infantry men first; that's first. No matter whether you are a cook, baker, or, or whatever, you are a marine riflemen. Now, that doesn't mean to say you don't serve in other billets, other jobs, other MOS's. But you are- the Marine Corps don't believe and everybody being trained exactly the same way as an O-3 infantrymen; that is your primary objective. There objective is to make sure you are a warrior, a fighting Marine. Know how you know use a weapon. [*ahuh*] And then they-- secondary you are in whatever duties you are. And as you know, I ended up as an aircraft maintenance officer which, which followed the trade of being an aircraft mechanic. [*ahuh*] But you see like in almost all of the in games the Marine Corps was ever involved in, the frigging uh aviation Marines at Midway uh, um… uh, Pearl, uh even Pearl Harbor. When the aircraft was shot up the frickin' Marines were pulled out their weapons they...

You are assigned a weapon. They have what they call a TO weapon that is a Table of Organization weapon. If you are enlisted from 1-E, 1 at that time, through say E-4 you were issued a uh O-3 rifle. [*ahuh*] If you were a staff sergeant or above you were issued a .45 or carbine so that's your TO weapon that you carry with you regardless of what job you do even if you were a frickin' cook and baker. [*mm hmm*] I remember on this one particular island that I was on we had the worst frickin' cooks and bakers that the world has ever seen. We was hoping they would… [*Both chuckle*] we was hoping somehow or another they would disappear and the frigging Japs came over with their, with their Mitsubishis and, and hit the area where the cooks lived and wiped every one of those suckers out. And they came out with their rifles and did what they could. But, we, we thought, "God, we got rid of the frickin' cooks and bakers but actually did miss them but some of them were the worst. You know, under the conditions you can understand they can't prepare gourmet meals out in the fricking jungles and the fields. You know you have them big ole, big ole iron pots and you know build fires under them and cook and. And you like, like you seen in movies where this guy I think it's Patton where this guy had uh a big pot of [*ahuh*] what looked like soup. No, it was aboard ship, I think it was uh… Ensign Pulver, or… yeah, [*Oh, Mr. Roberts.*] yeah. Remember he was trying to show the nurses off, [*Yeah, yeah.*] and he picked, he took [*The ladle*] a drink it was dishwasher. Yeah it was dishwash. [*Both chuckle*] That was the kind of stuff that went on. And uh, I guess they did the best they could with what they had. But it was a lot of comedy mixed in with it.

Okay. Well I think that's all the questions I had.

Yeah, I can just summarize, like I say: The difference between the days and of, of you know when I was a youngster verses the days now. It's so, it's so hard for I guess for young people to understand, and I can understand it. Why, how things were then verses why how they are now. We, we really we really didn't expect nothing and never got nothing but didn't care. Didn't bother us. As I say it didn't bother me to have to walk from my house to, to uh, uh 36th street where all the activity was and the drugstore cowboys hung out. Where you know where if you had a quarter or fifteen cents to get in the movie either did or didn't have it. You know, you were perfect tentative. And, and, and didn't at all sit around and weep and mope because you didn't have no money to buy this or that. You just made do with what there was to do with and if you had, had an pair of pants that was peg legged rather than bell bottoms and bell bottoms was, was the style, who cared, you know no one made fun of you. You did accept what you have and nobody laughed at you if you had on uh twenty-five cent tennis shoes instead of $10 you know running shoes and that sort of thing. It was just, it was just the attitude was so different. And again, I have to say that I think much of it on the boob tube and the communications that we have today; cell phones, your iPads and all that stuff. So uh anyhow I guess we can talk all day on different areas and this and that. But, that's about the best conclusion I can come to. We lived in the best of times and the worst of times.

Okay. Well, thank you.

Okay.