

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

THE NIMITZ MUSEUM

PRESENTS

AN ORAL HISTORY BY

JUNE BRANDENBERGER

INTERVIEWER - CLARENCE BRYK

TAPE NUMBER 1313

MEMORIES OF WWII OF A TEENAGE GIRL

THIS IS CLARENCE BYRK, A VOLUNTEER AT THE NIMITZ MUSEUM. TODAY IS FEBRUARY 17, 2005. THE EVENT IS THE IWO JIMA CONFERENCE AND SYMPOSIUM. WE ARE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TODAY TO HAVE MRS. JUNE BRANDENBERGER WHO IS GOING TO GIVE US HER INTERPRETATIONS OF WHAT SHE SAW DURING WORLD WAR II. HERE SHE IS TO TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHERE SHE WAS BORN AND WHERE SHE WENT TO SCHOOL AND WHAT SHE SAW WHEN THE WAR STARTED AND GIVE HER EXPERIENCES ON THE HOME FRONT HERE IN SOUTHERN TEXAS.

JUNE

I WAS BORN IN MASON, TEXAS AND WENT TO SCHOOL, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN MASON, TEXAS.

I REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR VERY CLEARLY, THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR. WE WERE HAVING SUNDAY DINNER WITH MY GRANDPARENTS. IT CREATED QUITE A STIR AND CONCERN AMONG THE OLDER PEOPLE. I WAS VERY YOUNG AT THE TIME AND DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND.

WHEN THE WAR STARTED IN 1941, I WAS FIFTEEN. I WAS BORN IN 1926. DOES THAT WORK OUT? FIFTEEN. I WAS BORN IN JUNE. I DO REMEMBER THAT IT WAS AN AWESOME DAY BUT, I BEING VERY YOUNG DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN OUR WORLD.

I WENT AHEAD AND FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL, THINGS DID CHANGE CONSIDERABLY. WE SOON HAD GAS RATIONING AND I REMEMBER THE BOYS IN MY SENIOR CLASS COULDN'T WAIT TO GRADUATE AND A LOT OF THEM ENLISTED IN THE MILITARY RIGHT AWAY.

CLARENCE

(UNABLE TO HEAR THE QUESTION)

JUNE

NO, NO. THEY DIDN'T. SOME WERE DRAFTED OF COURSE. A LOT OF THEM WERE RARING TO GO. MY HUSBAND AND I WERE DATING WHILE I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL AND I GRADUATED IN 1943 FROM MASON HIGH SCHOOL AND WENT TO SAN ANTONIO AND STARTED TO WORK IN THE TELEPHONE OFFICE. IN THE MEANTIME, MY HUSBAND GOT INTO CADETS. HE HAD BEEN AT A & M UP UNTIL THAT TIME. HE WENT THROUGH FLYING SCHOOL AND WE BECAME ENGAGED MUCH TO THE CONCERN OF MY PARENTS AND HIS PARENTS IN JULY, 1943. I WAS ONLY SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD AT THE TIME. WE PLANNED TO MARRY THE FOLLOWING FEBRUARY. WHICH WE DID.

HORACE RECEIVED HIS WINGS AT FOSTER FIELD, VICTORIA, TEXAS ON FEBRUARY 8, 1944. HE WAS ALSO COMMISSIONED A 2ND LIEUTENANT IN THE ARMY AIR CORPS AS IT WAS CALLED AT THAT TIME.

WE MARRIED FEBRUARY 12, 1944. BELIEVE ME, EVERYBODY SAID IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK.

THERE WAS A WAR ON, WE WERE TOO YOUNG BUT, HE WAS GOING OVERSEAS AND THERE WAS NOTHING THAT WAS GOING TO STOP US FROM BEING TOGETHER. WE MARRIED FEBRUARY 12, 1944, SIXTY ONE YEARS AGO.

CLARENCE

(UNABLE TO HEAR QUESTION)

JUNE

IN MASON, TEXAS AT ST. PAULS LUTHERAN CHURCH.

CLARENCE

STILL THERE?

JUNE

STILL THERE. THE CHURCH IS STILL THERE, YES. MY PARENTS HAD MOVED TO SAN ANTONIO BECAUSE MY FATHER GOT A JOB AT KELLY FIELD IN A DEFENSE PLANT. AFTER HORACE, AND WE MARRIED, WE SPENT A MONTH IN CALIFORNIA, HE WENT OVERSEAS IN JUNE OF '44. I WAS EXPECTING A BABY BY THEN SO I CAME BACK HOME AND STAYED WITH MY PARENTS IN SAN ANTONIO. I STAYED THERE UNTIL OUR DAUGHTER WAS BORN THE FOLLOWING DECEMBER. HORACE WAS TRAINING IN HAWAII AT THIS TIME BEFORE GOING TO IWO AND I REMEMBER HE CALLED ME ON THE TELEPHONE AFTER OUR BABY WAS BORN AND I HAD TO PINCH HER TO MAKE HER CRY SO HE COULD HEAR HIS DAUGHTER'S VOICE.

AT THAT TIME, A LONG DISTANCE CALL WAS A BIG DEAL, AND EXPENSIVE. IN FACT, IT HAD TO BE PRE-ARANGED AND OK'D BY THE PERSONS IN CHARGE.

CLARENCE

HOW MUCH WAS IT A MINUTE? HE WAS CALLING FROM HAWAII TO SAN ANTONIO?

JUNE

YES. HOW MUCH WAS IT? I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT COSTS.

CLARENCE

IT WAS A BIG DEAL?

JUNE

IT WAS A BIG DEAL. I REMEMBER WE HAD TO PRE-ARRANGE IT AND GET AN OK TO DO THIS. TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT, I STAYED IN SAN ANTONIO UNTIL HORACE CAME HOME FROM IWO. HE WENT TO IWO JIMA SOMETIME IN THE SPRING OF 1945. HE FLEW MISSIONS OFF IWO OVER JAPAN. I'M SURE HE IS TELLING ALL OF THIS IN HIS INTERVIEW. I THINK WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW IS WHAT WENT ON IN MY LIFE WHILE HE WAS GONE.

I LIVED WITH MY PARENTS, ACTUALLY, NOT A WHOLE LOT WAS GOING ON WITH ME. I HAD A BABY TO TAKE CARE OF. THE RATIONING WAS PRETTY SEVERE. GAS WAS RATIONED, FOOD WAS RATIONED, SUGAR WAS RATIONED, SHOES WERE RATIONED. I DON'T KNOW, IT WAS JUST A WAY OF LIFE. WE DIDN'T THINK IT WAS ALL THAT UNUSUAL.

CLARENCE

PEOPLE DIDN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT THAT?

JUNE

OH, SOME DID AND THERE WAS A VERY ACTIVE BLACK MARKET ON FOOD STAMPS IN SAN ANTONIO, I REMEMBER. IN FACT, I HAD AN AUNT WHO WAS INVOLVED IN IT. ANY WAY, THAT'S ANOTHER STORY. I WANT TO MAKE CLEAR HERE, I CERTAINLY DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN BLACK MARKET BUYING DURING THE WAR.

IT WAS A WAY OF LIFE. THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF YOUNG WOMEN IN MY SHOES. I DON'T THINK WE QUITE UNDERSTOOD AT THE TIME OF THE SEVERITY OF WHAT WAS GOING ON. IT WAS A GLORIOUS TIME. EVERYONE WAS VERY PATRIOTIC. THE COUNTRY CAME TOGETHER, ALMOST OVERNIGHT AFTER PEARL HARBOR. IT WAS AMAZING. NO DESSENSATION, NO MARCHES PROTESTING WAR, NOTHING LIKE THAT. THE COUNTRY WAS BEHIND THIS WAR ONE HUNDRED PER CENT. I KNOW MY HUSBAND WAS AFRAID THE WAR WOULD END BEFORE HE GOT A CHANCE TO FLY MISSIONS.

THIS IS ABOUT ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT RIGHT NOW UNLESS YOU WOULD HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR ME.

CLARENCE

DID YOU COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR HUSBAND QUITE OFTEN? DID YOU WRITE LETTERS THAT GOT THROUGH OK?

JUNE

EVERY ONE WAS READ.

CLARENCE

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO GET A LETTER FROM HIM?

JUNE

DAYS. MAYBE WEEKS SOME TIMES, ESPECIALLY HIS LETTERS TO ME. WE WROTE WHAT WAS CALLED "V-MAIL" AT THE TIME. THEY WERE READ, EVERY WORD WAS READ BY A CENSOR.

CLARENCE

DID YOU KEEP THEM?

JUNE

NO, I DIDN'T AND I REGRET IT TO THIS DAY. I WOULD GET LETTERS FROM HORACE THAT WERE NOTHING BUT HOLES, STUFF HAD BEEN CUT OUT.

CLARENCE

DID THEY CUT IT OUT OR BLACK IT OUT?

JUNE

NO, THEY CUT IT OUT. LITTLE NEAT SQUARES.

CLARNECE

HOW DID THEY KEEP THE PAPER TOGETHER?

JUNE

WELL, SOMETIMES, IT WAS JUST LIKE A LACE DOILY. HE DID TELL ME WHEN HE WAS ON HIS WAY TO IWO BECAUSE HE SAID, "I CROSSED THE INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE ON OUR ANNIVERSARY." SO, I KNEW HE WAS ON HIS WAY ON FEBRUARY 12.

CLARENCE

DID HE HAVE ANY KIND OF CODE OR ANYTHING TO LET YOU KNOW WHERE HE WAS? I KNOW MY FATHER IN LAW DID. HE WAS ABLE TO BEAT THE CENSORS BY EVERY 15TH WORD HAS THE FIRST LETTER OF ---- YOU KNOW.

JUNE

WELL, NOT REALLY. THAT'S THE ONLY THING, CLUE HE GAVE ME THAT HE WAS ON HIS WAY. ONCE THEY GOT TO IWO JIMA AND ALL, I KNEW HE WAS THERE.

CLARENCE

HE COULD TELL YOU HE WAS THERE?

JUNE

YES. IT TOOK SOMETIMES TWO WEEKS TO GET A V-MAIL FROM IWO JIMA.

CLARENCE

DID HE DESCRIBE PRETTY MUCH HOW HE LIVED WHILE HE WAS THERE?

JUNE

YES. IT WAS A VERY SMALL ISLAND, NOTHING BUT SAND AND ASHES. THEY HAD RUNWAYS. HE'S TELLING ALL THIS BETTER THAN I AM, I'M SURE.

CLARENCE

I MANAGED TO SEE WHAT HE TOLD YOU AND HOW HE WAS ABLE TO CONVEY IT BACK HOME.

JUNE

HE FLEW P-51s OFF IWO AND HE NAMED HIS PLANE AFTER OUR LITTLE DAUGHTER THAT WAS BORN, PAMELA. THE PLANE'S NAME WAS MISS PAMELA. THE FIRST MISS PAMELA CRASHED BUT HE MANAGED TO SAVE THE PANEL THAT HER NAME WAS PAINTED ON AND I HOPE I AM TELLING YOU THIS CORRECTLY, AND PUT IT ON THE NEXT PLANE THAT HE GOT.

CLARENCE

HE LEFT YOU RIGHT AFTER YOU GOT MARRIED. YOU ALL WENT TO CALIFORNIA AFTER THAT. AND HE WENT TO HAWAII. AND YOU WENT TO SAN ANTONIO. HAWAII JUNE, 1944.

JUNE

HE DID NOT LEAVE RIGHT AFTER WE MARRIED. WE WENT TO CALIFORNIA TOGETHER AFTER OUR FIVE DAY HONEYMOON..HE LEFT FOR HAWAII JUNE, 1944.

CLARENCE

WHEN WAS THE NEXT TIME YOU SAW HIM? WHAT WAS THE DATE HE LEFT FOR HAWAII?

JUNE

I DIDN'T SEE HIM ALL THE TIME HE WAS IN HAWAII. WHEN HE LEFT ME IN CALIFORNIA WAS I JUNE OF 1944. I DIDN'T SEE HIM AGAIN UNTIL THE FIRST OF OCTOBER OF '45 WHEN THE WAR ENDED.

CLARENCE

(MISSED QUESTION)

JUNE

YES. FOR THE TIME WE DID.

7

CLARENCE

DO YOU REMEMBER DID THEY HAVE AIR RAID WARDENS IN SAN ANTONIO?

JUNE

WE HAD AIR RAIDS DRILLS. YES, BLACKOUTS. IT WAS JUST A WAY OF LIFE. IT WENT ALL RIGHT. PEOPLE DID IT. WE HAD BLACKOUT CURTAINS THAT WE PUT OVER THE WINDOWS WHEN THE SIRENS WOULD BLOW. WE WOULD DO THIS.

CLARENCE

DID YOU EVER HAVE ANYONE COME IN AND SAY THEY COULD SEE A LIGHT THROUGH YOUR--
--? DID YOU EVER HAVE A THOUGHT THAT THERE COULD BE A REAL AIR ATTACK EVEN THERE?

JUNE

BEING IN SAN ANTONIO, I THINK THERE WAS A GOOD POSSIBILITY. NO, NO ONE EVER CAME TO OUR HOUSE AND SAID THEY COULD SEE A LIGHT SHINING THROUGH.

CLARENCE

HOW ABOUT THE SECURITY PEOPLE? YOUR DAD WORKED AT KELLY. WAS HE TOLD HE COULDN'T SAY WHAT HE WAS DOING AT ANY TIME DURING THE WAR? EVERYTHING WAS SECRET.

JUNE

CORRECT. ACTUALLY, HE WAS PAINTING AND I DON'T RECALL THAT IT WAS THAT SECRET THAT HE WAS PAINTING AIRPLANES AND PUTTING LETTERING ON THEM. I CAN'T REMEMBER THAT IT WAS ALL THAT SECRET, WHAT HE WAS DOING.

CLARENCE

MY RECOLLECTION (ABOUT SAN ANTONIO)

JUNE

OH, IT WAS.

7

CLARENCE

WHAT WAS IT LIKE WITH ALL THESE SOLDIERS ALL OVER THE PLACE? I'M SURE THEY WERE BEHAVING THEMSELVES AND SO FORTH TO A DEGREE. EVERYWHERE YOU WENT, THERE HAD TO BE A (??????).

JUNE

OH, THERE WERE. THE DOWNTOWN WAS JUST THICK WITH YOUNG MEN IN UNIFORM. BEFORE WE MARRIED, I WOULD GO TO THE U.S.O. AND DANCE. FUN, FUN.

CLARENCE

THEY WERE GENTLEMEN, WERE THEY?

JUNE

YES. I AM LOOKING FORWARD-----

CLARENCE

WAS THERE ANYBODY PARTICULAR FAMOUS PERSON THAT CAME TO THE U.S.O.?

JUNE

NO. NOT WHEN I WAS THERE. LOCAL PEOPLE. ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS, I WOULD GO TO A TEA DANCE, THEY CALLED IT, AT THE GUNTER HOTEL IN SAN ANTONIO.

CLARENCE

YOU WERE ABOUT EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD. THOSE GUYS MUST HAVE BEEN LINING UP TEN DEEP.

JUNE

I WAS IN LOVE. I WENT FOR THE FUN OF IT. THERE WERE JUST ARMY AIR CORPS CADETS THAT CAME TO THESE TEA DANCES.

CLARENCE

I SEE. SO THEY WERE EITHER COLLEGE GRADUATES AND THEY WERE TRAINING AT RANDOLPH?

JUNE

AT LACKLAND AND RANDOLPH, BROOKS AND KELLY. THEY WERE ALL TRAINING BASES AT THE TIME.

CLARENCE

WHEN YOU VISIT SAN ANTONIO NOW AND YOU DRIVE PAST ONE OF THOSE OLD BASES, WHAT DO YOU THINK? WHAT COMES TO MIND?

JUNE

WELL, I THINK OF RIDING OUT TO KELLY FIELD TO SEE MY HUSBAND, MY BOY FRIEND AT THE TIME ON A BUS AND IT WAS SO HOT ON THOSE BUSES. THIS WAS IN THE SUMMER TIME. I WOULD THINK AT THE TIME, HERE I WAS WITH ALL THIS MAKEUP ON AND HAD HAD A BATH AND BY THE TIME I GET OUT THERE, I AM GOING TO BE A WRECK. BUT, IT DIDN'T SEEM TO MATTER TO HORACE.

CLARENCE

HE WASN'T ALLOWED OFF THE BASE?

JUNE

NOT MUCH. AFTER A WHILE, HE DID GET OFF LIKE MAYBE ONCE A MONTH, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

CLARENCE

WHAT DID YOU DO WHEN YOU WENT OUT? WHERE DID YOU GO?

JUNE

WE WOULD GO TO THE MOVIES. WE WOULD GO EAT. ONE TIME, WE WENT TO BRACKENRIDGE PARK AND SAT ON THE RIVER AND JUST SMOOCHED AS WE CALLED IT THEN.

CLARENCE

I FIND THAT HARD TO IMAGINE. HOW ABOUT GOING TO A RESTAURANT? DID THEY HAVE FULL MEALS AND NO PROBLEM WITH RATIONING?

JUNE

WELL, I'M SURE THERE WAS TO SOME EXTENT BUT, IT DIDN'T SEEM TO AFFECT THE RESTAURANTS THAT WE NOTICED.

CLARENCE

DID YOU FIND PEOPLE WERE A LOT FRIENDLIER TO EACH OTHER WITH THIS COMMON WAR GOING?

JUNE

YES. THERE WAS A COMARADERY BETWEEN EVERYBODY, A HANGING TOGETHER. EVEN THOUGH WAR IS NOT GLORIOUS, AND I NEVER WANT TO SAY THAT IT IS, BUT, THERE WAS A FEELING OF GLORY.

CLARENCE

SOMETHING BIG WAS GOING ON AND YOU WERE PART OF IT.

JUNE

YES, AND IT WAS REAL HUNG TOGETHER, A JOB HAD TO BE DONE HERE, A BIG JOB AND WE WERE DETERMINED TO DO IT.

CLARENCE

SORT OF INFECTED EVERYBODY. NOW, THE QUESTION I ALWAYS ASK PEOPLE IS, HOW DID YOU COME BACK DOWN TO NORMAL ACTIVITY? HOW WAS THAT TRANSITION? WERE YOU SO BUSY YOU DIDN'T HAVE TIME?

JUNE

NOT EASY.

CLARENCE

TELL ME ABOUT THAT. I ALWAYS THINK ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE; THESE WERE HUGE EXCITING YEARS, THEN YOU COME DOWN TO, BACK TO REGULAR LIVING. TELL ME ABOUT IT.

JUNE

HORACE CAME HOME IN OCTOBER, 1945. I DON'T REMEMBER THE EXACT DATE, BUT AFTER THE WAR, AROUND THE FIRST OF OCTOBER OF '45. HE WAS BORN AND RAISED IN MASON ALSO ON A RANCH. HIS FAMILY HAD A RANCH IN MASON COUNTY. WE CAME BACK TO MASON. HE GOT OUT OF THE SERVICE AT THE TIME AND WAS DISCHARGED. WE, FOR A PERIOD OF TIME LIVED WITH HIS MOTHER AND FATHER UNTIL THEY COULD BUILD A HOUSE AND WE INHERITED THE FAMILY HOME THERE AND LIVED THERE WITH OUR LITTLE DAUGHTER. EVENTUALLY, WE HAD ANOTHER DAUGHTER.

CLARENCE

LET ME JUST STOP HERE. (PAUSE IN TAPE) TALK ABOUT THAT IF YOU DON'T MIND.

JUNE

NO, I DON'T MIND. AS I SAID, IT WAS QUITE A CHANGE IN OUR LIVES TO COME BACK TO THE RANCH. WE WERE VERY POOR. NOT TOO LONG AFTER WE CAME HOME, THEY ORGANIZED A G.I. SCHOOL, WHICH THE YOUNG G.I.'s COULD GO TO, TO LEARN A TRADE, SO TO SPEAK. OF COURSE, HORACE HAD BEEN TO A & M AND HE KNEW RANCHING. THEY PAID NINETY DOLLARS A MONTH TO GO TO THIS SCHOOL. WE GRABED THAT.

CLARENCE

WAS THE SCHOOL IN MASON?

JUNE

ACTUALLY, IT WAS OUT IN THE COMMUNITY WHERE WE LIVED. THEY HAD DIFFERENT SCHOOLS AROUND THE COUNTY. THEY DID HAVE ONE IN THE TOWN OF MASON BUT WE WERE LIVING ON THE RANCH IN THE HILDA COMMUNITY. IT'S CLOSE TO DOSS. THERE WAS A SCHOOL HOUSE OUT THERE. THIS IS WHERE THEY HAD THE G.I. SCHOOL. IT TWO OR THREE TIMES A WEEK IN THE EVENING.

CLARENCE

DID, FROM YOUR OBSERVATION OF YOUR HUSBAND, COMING FROM THIS REAL INTENSE WORLD, WAS THERE A PERIOD OF TIME THAT HE JUST SORT OF LAPSED AND THINK ABOUT THAT? IF IT'S ENTIRELY PERSONAL, DON'T TALK ABOUT THAT. I THINK ABOUT THAT.

JUNE

IT WAS DIFFICULT BECAUSE AND HE WAS A LITTLE DISSATISFIED WITH OUR SITUATION. NOT TOO LONG AFTER WE WERE HOME, HE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET BACK INTO THE AIR FORCE AS A RESERVIST. HE WAS VERY ACTIVE IN THE RESERVES. HE COULD GO AND FLY SOME, AND IT HELPED. WHEN WE WERE ABLE TO LIVE BY OURSELVES. HIS PARENTS WERE WONDERFUL PEOPLE. TWO FAMILIES DON'T--- IT ISN'T GOOD, EVER. THEY WERE DEAR TO ME ALL THEIR LIVES. ONCE WE WERE ABLE TO HAVE OUR OWN HOME, THAT WAS BETTER AND HE WAS FLYING. THAT BROUGHT IN A LITTLE INCOME. WE STAYED THERE UNTIL HE WAS RECALLED INTO THE KOREAN WAR IN '51.

CLARENCE

WHEN WAS THAT?

JUNE

APRIL, 1951. WE WERE EXCITED ABOUT THAT GOING TO THAT TOO. HE DIDN'T HAVE TO GO

OVERSEAS. HE WAS AN INSTRUCTOR AT GOODFELLOW AIR FORCE BASE.

CLARENCE

IN ALL HONESTY, HE WAS PRETTY EXCITED ABOUT THIS. AND HOW ABOUT YOU.

JUNE

YEAH. WELL, YES AND NO. I HAD KIND OF PUT MY ROOTS DOWN. IT WAS HARDER FOR ME TO LEAVE AGAIN THAN IT WAS FOR HIM.

CLARENCE

SAN ANGELO?

JUNE

GOODFELLOW AT SAN ANGELO. WE STAYED THERE THE WHOLE TIME UNTIL HE GOT OUT IN '53.

CLARENCE

HAD HE CONSIDERED STAYING IN FOR THE FULL TWENTY AT THAT TIME?

JUNE

AT THE TIME, HE CERTAINLY DID. WE HASHED THIS OVER AND OVER AND WOULD YOU BELIEVE HE GOT OUT, RESIGNED HIS COMMISSION AGAIN BECAUSE WE HAD TWO SMALL CHILDREN AND WE KIND OF FELT AT THE TIME THAT MAYBE THE MILITARY LIFE WASN'T A GOOD FAMILY LIFE. SO, HE RESIGNED HIS COMMISSION. ABOUT A YEAR OR LESS LATER, WE WENT BACK HOME AND THINGS WERE A LITTLE TOUGH. IT WAS 1953, A TERRIBLE DROUGHT IN TEXAS. RANCHING WAS AT THE BOTTOM.

CLARENCE

I STILL HEAR PEOPLE TALK ABOUT IT.

JUNE

WE BOUGHT A LITTLE GROCERY STORE, A LITTLE COUNTRY GROCERY STORE.

CLARENCE

IN MASON?

JUNE

WELL, OUT ON HIGHWAY 87 BETWEEN MASON AND OUR HILDA COMMUNITY.

CLARENCE

ON THE LLANO RIVER? IS THAT BUILDING STILL THERE?

JUNE

THE BUILDING IS NOW KELLER'S RESTAURANT.

CLARENCE

ON THE RIGHT HAND SIDE GOING OUT OF MASON. WHERE THE OVERHEAD BRIDGE IS. STILL THERE. YOU OWNED THAT AT ONE TIME?

JUNE

WE DID.

CLARENCE

HOW DID THAT GO?

JUNE

FINE. HORACE ----- I WAS GOING TO SAY, HE ALSO BY A STRUCK OF LUCK, AND MAYBE HIS GOOD RECORD, I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY, BUT HE GOT BACK IN THE AIR FORCE RESERVES, GOT HIS COMMISSION BACK AND BECAME A MEMBER OF THE ALAMO WING, WHICH WAS A VERY ACTIVE RESERVE UNIT IN SAN ANTONIO, LACKLAND.

CLARENCE

WAS HE ACTIVATED AGAIN AFTER THAT?

JUNE

NO.

CLARENCE

BUT, HE GOT TO FLY AGAIN. THEY CHANGED AIRPLANES THOUGH?

JUNE

HE FLEW TRANSPORTS AND HE DID A LOT OF FLYING AND RETIRED FROM THE AIR FORCE RESERVES IN 1983.

CLARENCE

WHY DID HE.

JUNE

HE WAS 60 YEARS OLD AND IT WAS COMPULSAARY TO RETIRE AT THAT AGE. WE WERE PRETTY STABLE AND SECURE BY THEN AND RANCHING PICKED UP. HE ALSO WORKED AS A PROBATION OFFICER IN THE 33RD JUDICIAL DISTRICT.

CLARENCE

WHAT WAS THE MOOD OF THE COUNTRY IN THE KOREAN WAR VERSUS THE WORLD WAR II?

JUNE

DIFFERENT, VERY DIFFERENT. THERE WAS A LOT OF PROTEST AGAINST THE KOREAN WAR. MAYBE NOT AS MUCH AS WHEN VIETNAM CAME ALONG.

CLARENCE

HOW DID PEOPLE OF YOUR GENERATION LOOK AT THESE PROTESTS AFTER THE KOREAN WAR AND SO FORTH? WAS THAT A LITTLE DIFFICULT TO-----

JUNE

YES, KOREA. IT WASN'T AS BAD AS VIETNAM BECAUSE I THINK WE WERE OLDER AND MAYBE WE COULD SEE THAT MAYBE THERE WERE SOME POINTS, GOOD POINTS, ABOUT THE VIETNAM WAR THAT IT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THE WAR. NEVER, NEVER HAVE WE BEEN NON-SUPPORTIVE OF THE YOUNG MEN THAT FIGHT IN THESE WARS, NEVER.

CLARENCE

OF COURSE, IN THE KOREAN WAR, WE DIDN'T HAVE RATIONING.

JUNE

NO RATIONING, NO.

CLARENCE

DID YOU HAVE A PRETTY GOOD LIFE THEN?

JUNE

ACTUALLY, YOU KNOW, DURING KOREA AND VIETNAM, YOU HARDLY KNEW THERE WAS A WAR GOING ONE EXCEPT FOR THE YOUNG MEN THAT DID GO, AND LOST. ABSOLUTELY.

CLARENCE

TELL ME ABOUT SAY, THE GOLD STAR MOTHERS AND SOMETHING DURING WORLD WAR II. DID YOU HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE WITH THAT, CLOSE TO PEOPLE WHO HAD LOST A CHILD OR SOMEBODY?

JUNE

YES.

CLARENCE

HOW WAS THAT PERSONALLY? WAS IT SOMEBODY YOU KNEW WELL?

JUNE

ACTUALLY, I KNEW SOME OF THE YOUNG MEN BETTER THAN I KNEW THEIR PARENTS.

CLARENCE

WAS THERE SHOCK AND SO FORTH THAT REALLY BROUGHT THE WAR HOME?

JUNE

YES.

CLARENCE

WERE YOU TERRIBLY WORRIED ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND?

JUNE

YES, I WAS AND STILL, WHEN YOU ARE THAT YOUNG, YOU THINK, NOTHING IS GOING TO EVER HAPPEN TO US. THAT WON'T HAPPEN TO US. THANK GOD, IT DIDN'T. HORACE SAID HE FELT THE SAME WAY GOING ON THESE MISSIONS AND GETTING SHOT AT. IT'S OK. THIS WON'T HAPPEN TO ME. WE LIVED IN THE FEAR OF THAT KNOCK ON THE DOOR AND THE TELEGRAM. WE DID DO THAT.

CLARENCE

DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT THE ATOM BOMB FALLING? ON THE HOME FRONT WERE PEOPLE REALLY AWARE OF WHAT IT WAS AND WHAT IT MEANT?

JUNE

YES. ABSOLUTELY.

CLARENCE

AND YOU KNEW ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, THAT SAME DAY?

JUNE

I CAN'T TELL YOU. I DON'T REMEMBER. IT HAS BEEN SIXTY PLUS YEARS.. WE KNEW OF IT PRETTY SOON, MAYBE NOT LIKE YOU WOULD KNOW NOW AS QUICKLY. WE ALL, OUR FIRST THOUGHT, THE WAR IS GOING TO END.

CLARENCE

SO IT WAS SOMETHING-----EVERYONE I HAVE TALKED TO ALWAYS SAY, IN REGARDS TO THE WAS, SAY JUST WHAT YOU DID.

JUNE

IT WAS A TERRIBLE THING, THE BOMB, IT WAS. NOBODY IS GOING TO DENY THAT BUT, EVERYTHING IN WAR IS TERRIBLE. THIS WAR HAD TO END AND THAT ENDED IT.

CLARENCE

PEOPLE REALLY REALIZED THIS AT THE TIME.

JUNE

THAT IS CERTAINLY MY FEELING THAT IT HAD TO BE.

CLARENCE

DID YOU HAVE ANY WIVES GROUP OR SUPPORT GROUP OR ANYTHING WE SORT OF COMMISURATED WITH EACH OTHER. TODAY, THERE IS A SUPPORT GROUP FOR RIGHT EAR ACHE, LEFT EAR ACHE, NOSE PROBLEMS.

JUNE

NO REALLY. WE HAD FRIENDS. I HAD FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO THAT WERE----- THEIR HUSBANDS WERE GONE. WE HAD THIS IN COMMON. TO SIT AROUND AND HAVE SUPPORT GROUPS AND BE NUTURED OR SOMETHING, NO. I GUESS WE JUST DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER. SOME OF US NOW, THE OLDER WIVES, WE TALK ABOUT THESE YOUNG WOMEN THAT HAVE THE SUPPORT AND I GUESS IT'S ALL RIGHT.

CLARENCE

YOU ARE OBVIOUSLY FROM THE GREATEST GENERATION AND THAT IS VERY, VERY TRUE. DO

YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ON THE DEPRESSION. HOW DID THAT AFFECT PEOPLE IN THESE THINGS? THEN WHEN THE WAR CAME, MANY PEOPLE SAID, "THANK GOD, I HAVE A JOB."

JUNE

THAT'S ABSOUTELY RIGHT.

CLARENCE

TELL ME ABOUT HOW YOU SAW THAT?

JUNE

WELL, GROWING UP IN MASON, I WAS JUST A CHILD DURING THE DEPRESSION. I WAS BORN IN '26. MY FAMILY WAS VERY POOR. MY FATHER WAS A PAINTER. HE PAINTED SIGNS AND HE PAINTED HOUSES. HE WAS ALSO A LICENSED UNDERTAKER. THAT DIDN'T PAY MUCH EITHER. I CAN REMEMBER MY MOTHER WAS PROBABLY THE MOST FRUGAL WOMAN, PERSON I'VE EVER KNOWN. I ALWAYS SAID IF SHE WERE IN CHARGE OF THE NATIONAL BUDGET, WE WOULD HAVE A SURPLUS.

CLARENCE

A SURPLUS EVERY YEAR.

JUNE

ABSOLUTELY.

CLARENCE

YOU WERE ONLY FIFTEEN WHEN THE WAR STARTED, DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS WAR WAS COMING AND DID PEOPLE SORT OF SAY, "THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN?"

JUNE

THERE WAS TALK ABOUT IT, YES. AMONG THE GROWN UPS, NOT AMONG THE -----

CLARENCE

WHEN YOU WERE A YOUNG GIRL AND DATING THIS GUY. PEOPLE TALKED ABOUT IT. I'M SURE PEARL HARBOR WAS A SHOCK. IN REALITY, WERE THEY ALL THAT SURPRISED THAT THE WAR STARTED?

JUNE

I DON'T THINK SO. I CAN REMEMBER DISTINCLY IN SEPTMEBER OF 1939, MY PARENTS AND MY

SISTER AND I WENT ON A LITTLE VACTION TO BUCHANAN DAM. WE HEARD ON THE RADIO THAT HITLER HAD INVADED POLAND.

CLARENCE

SOMETHING AT YOUR AGE GROUP MEANT SOMETHING?

JUNE

I CAN REMEMBER MY FATHER SAYING, "WE CAN'T STAY OUT OF THIS WAR ANY LONGER. IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN. WE ARE GOING TO BE AT WAR BEFORE SUCH AND SUCH A TIME." THE ADULTS TALKING. WE DIDN'T TALK ABOUT IT, THE KIDS.

CLARENCE

BACK IN THE DAYS, YOU WERE QUIET. YOU LISTENED TO THE ADULTS.

JUNE

YEAH, AND WAS WASN'T----- I DON'T KNOW IF WE UNDERSTOOD WHAT WAR WAS ALL ABOUT AT THAT TIME.

CLARENCE

PEOPLE WERE TALKING ABOUT EUROPE AS SOON AS HITLER WENT INTO POLAND. WHAT WERE THEY SAYING?

JUNE

IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.

CLARENCE

WERE THERE ANY THOUGHTS-----DID THEY TALK ABOUT BRITAIN? DID THEY THINK HITLER MIGHT TAKE OVER BRITAIN?

JUNE

I THINK THERE WAS A REAL FEAR.

CLARENCE

IN MASON, PEOPLE TALKED ABOUT IT?

JUNE

HE WAS JUST TROMPING THROUGH EUROPE, JUST GOBBLING UP EUROPE.

CLARENCE

EVEN AS TEENAGERS, YOU KNEW THIS WAS GOING DOWN.

JUNE

OH, YEAH. HITLER WAS A BAD, BAD PERSON. NEEDED TO BE STOPPED.

CLARENCE

AND THE IDIOLOGY?

JUNE

MUSSOLINI, YOU KNOW-----

CLARENCE

YOU WERE VERY AWARE OF THIS?

JUNE

OH, YES, WE WERE AWARE.

CLARENCE

DO YOU THINK THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF YOUR AGE WERE MORE AWARE OF THE BIG PICTURE THAN THE YOUNG KIDS OF TODAY? YOU KNOW, YOU TALK TO A 14 YEAR OLD TODAY----- DO YOU THINK YOU WERE MORE ATTUNED TO WHAT WAS HAPPENING WORLDWIDE?

JUNE

I REALLY CAN'T SAY MR. BYRCK BECAUSE COMMUNICATION IS SO MUCH BETTER NOW. YOU SEE THE WAR IN YOUR LIVING ROOM EVERY NIGHT. I'M NOT IN CONTACT WITH THAT AGE GROUP. MY CHILDREN ARE GROWN AND MY GRANDCHILDREN ARE GROWN. MY CHILDREN, I KNOW, ARE AWARE OF WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD NOW.

CLARENCE

DID YOU GET MOST OF YOUR INFORMATION FROM THE RADIO?

JUNE

FROM THE RADIO, YES. THE NEWSREELS AT THE MOVIES.

CLARNCE

YOU SAW THOSE AT THE MASON THEATER? THE SAME ONE THAT IS STILL THERE?

JUNE

THE SAME ONE THAT IS STILL THERE.

CLARENCE

DO YOU REMEMBER GOING THERE AS A TEENAGER/ AND THE NEWSREELS?

JUNE

ABOUT THE WAR, YES. SEEING HITLER. THAT'S WHERE WE SAW HITLER SCREECHING.

CLARENCE

WHAT WAS THE DAILY LIFE IN MASON? IT PROBABLY STILL WENT ON, PEOPLE STILL RANCHED.

JUNE

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS STARTED. I REMEMBER THAT. I GUESS IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IT EVER HAPPENED. OF COURSE, YOUNG MEN WERE BEING DRAFTED AND LEAVING. I GUESS THAT WAS THE BIGGEST, ALSO THE RATIONING.

CLARENCE

DID IT LEAVE THE RANCHES SHORT HANDED?

JUNE

YES. BECAUSE SOMETIMES, ON CERTAIN OCCASIONS, UNDER CERTAIN SITUATIONS, A YOUNG MAN WAS DEFERRED BECAUSE HE WAS NEEDED AT HOME FOR SPECIFIC REASONS. NOT TOO MANY OF THEM WANTED TO BE DEFERRED. THEY WANTED TO GO.

CLARENCE

THEY WERE PROBABLY ONES WHOSE DADS WERE WORLD WAR I VETERANS.

JUNE

MOST OF THEM, YES. HORACE'S DAD WAS,

CLARENCE

SO, THIS WAS JUST A GENERATION LATER. HORACE'S DAD WAS A VETERAN?

JUNE

YES. OF WORLD WAR I. SO WAS MY FATHER.

CLARENCE

DID HE EVER TALK ABOUT THAT WHEN HE SAW THIS WAR COMING ON?

JUNE

I CAN REMEMBER MY PARENTS. I DIDN'T HEAR HORACE'S PARENTS TALK ABOUT THAT BECAUSE WE WEREN'T MARRIED YET. YEAH, I CAN REMEMBER MY PARENTS TALKING, MY FATHER TALKING ABOUT GOING TO FRANCE.

CLARENCE

(COULDN'T HEAR THE QUESTION)

JUNE

ACTUALLY, HE WAS IN THE NAVY AND HE WAS IN PORT IN FRANCE FOR A WHILE.

CLARENCE

SO, THE WORLD WARS AFFECTED MASON QUITE A BIT.

JUNE

MY FAMILY, I HAVE A GRANDSON NOW WHO IS IN THE NAVY, A GRADUATE OF THE NAVAL ACADEMY. WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL GENERATIONS OF SERVING IN THE MILITARY.

CLARENCE

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THAT PERIOD OF TIME, WHAT COMES TO MIND FIRST? SOMETIMES, THEY WILL PLAY A SONG FROM THAT TIME.

JUNE

AS I WAS GOING TO SAY, YOU'RE PROBABLY EXPECTING SOMETHING ELSE FROM ME BUT, DO YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK OF? GLENN MILLER'S "IN THE MOOD". THE MUSIC AND THE AMBIANCE OF THE TIME.

CLARENCE

DID THE BOYS KNOW HOW TO DANCE BACK THEN?

JUNE

YES.

CLARENCE

TODAY, THEY -----

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JANE

NOT LIKE THEY DANCE, JITTER BUGGING, YOU KNOW. I WAS QUITE A JITTER BUG. HORACE WASN'T BECAUSE HE WAS RAISED OUT IN THE COUNTRY. HE ACTUALLY DIDN'T DANCE A WHOLE LOT. I SAID, "IF YOU WANT ME, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LEARN TO DANCE." AND HE DID AND WE LOVED TO DANCE UP UNTIL ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO.

CLARENCE

JUST ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT THE MUSIC WAS. I LIVED NEAR A BIG DANCE (??????). THE PARAGON BALLROOM. I CAN REMEMBER DURING THE WAR, (COULD NOT HEAR THIS PASSAGE) THE FRONT DOORS WERE OPEN AND I COULD HEAR THOSE BANDS. YOU REMEMBER THAT QUITE WELL.

JUNE

OH, YEAH. YOU KNOW, YOU SEE OLD MOVIES WITH THE GUYS IN THE UNIFORMS WITH THE WINGS AND THE AIR CORP IT WAS THEN.

CLARENCE

AND YOU WERE MARRIED TO ONE.

JUNE

OUR SONG WAS, "HE WEARS A PAIR OF SILVER WINGS". DO YOU REMEMBER THAT SONG?

CLARENCE

YES, I DO. DO YOU THINK OF THAT ERA OTHER THAN THE MUSIC THAT COMES TO MIND OR IS IT SO FAR BACK THAT IT IS SORT OF SLIPPING OUT THERE OR DO THINGS REMIND YOU OF IT. IF I WOULD ASK YOU, "GRANDMA, WHAT DID YOU DO?"

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JUNE

I REMEMBER LIVING WITH MY PARENTS, YOU MEAN DURING THE WAR? I REMEMBER LIVING WITH MY PARENTS, THE RATIONING, THE WAITING, AS YOU SAY, DOORS AND WINDOWS WERE ALWAYS OPEN AND EVERY DAY I COULD HEAR WHEN THE LETTERS DROPPED IN THE MAIL BOX. SOMETIMES I WOULDN'T GET ONE FOR WEEKS AND THEN I WOULD GET 5 OR 6 AT A TIME. WHAT A GOOD FEELING THAT WAS WHEN THOSE LETTERS CAME.

CLARENCE

A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T EVER ADMIT IT TO THIS DAY, IT WAS AN EXCITING TIME.

JUNE

IT WAS EXCITING, IT WAS.

CLARENCE

(QUESTION ABOUT FAMILY LIFE NOT UNDERSTOOD)

JUNE

ABSOLUTELY. I DON'T KNOW THAT I COULD DO IT NOW AT THIS AGE BUT, WHEN YOU ARE 18 YEARS OLD AND HORACE WAS 21, AND WAS A FIGHTER PILOT. HE WAS SO GOOD LOOKING. HE STILL IS. IT WAS JUST AN EXCITING TIME, A GLORIOUS TIME.

CLARENCE

GLAD YOU DID IT.

JUNE

GLAD I MARRIED?

CLARENCE

NO, NO, GLAD YOU ?????

JUNE

YES. I'M ——

CLARENCE

I FEEL LIKE I MISSED SOMETHING. TO THIS DAY, I WOULD NOT QUITE ??????. I STILL THINK IT WAS A MAJOR EVENT OF THE 20TH CENTURY. I REALLY DO. I DON'T THINK THERE IS ANYTHING THAT COMPARES WITH IT.

JUNE

WE WERE'NT COMPLAINERS OR WHINERS. IT WAS SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED TO US. THERE WAS A JOB THAT HAD TO BE DONE. WE DID IT.

CLARENCE

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I HAVE TALKED TO A LOT OF PEOPLE BUT, IT IS ONLY NOW THAT PEOPLE SAY, "NOBODY TALKED ABOUT IT." THEY ARE STARTING NOW.

JUNE

I DON'T WANT TO DIMINISH THE YOUNG MEN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES, ABSOLUTELY. WAR IS NEVER A GOOD THING. THIS WAS A WAR THAT HAD TO BE DONE.

CLARENCE

THOSE PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCED THAT EMOTION, THAT EVENT, WAS SOMETHING, WASN'T IT?

JUNE

YES, BUT THERE ARE STILL SOME WORLD WAR II VETERANS, NOT MANY LEFT ANY MORE, THEY ARE GETTING OLD, THAT DO NOT WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE WAR.

CLARENCE

WHY DO ???????

JUNE

I THINK IT WAS REALLY A HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE FOR THEM. THEY WERE YOUNG MEN WHO WERE TAKEN OFF THE FARM, THEY WERE G.I.'s IN THE MUD, THE BLOOD, THE GORE OF IT. THEY REALLY BAD. MARINES-----

CLARENCE

ANY LAST THOUGHTS TO TELL THE PEOPLE WHO ARE READING THIS SOME DAY?

JUNE

I THINK THE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN TODAY ARE DOING WHAT WE DID. AND MAYBE BETTER. NO, I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING. I KNOW I AM VERY PROUD OF THE YOUNG MEN THAT HAVE TO GO AND FIGHT IN THIS WAR

CLARENCE

(COULD NOT HEAR THE QUESTION)

JUNE

WOULD YOU BELIEVE I MAKE SANDWICHES. I MAKE THE BEST SANDWICH SPREAD OUT OF SPAM. HORACE WON'T EAT IT. YOU KNOW S O S , DO YOU KNOW ABOUT S O S? HE CAN'T LOOK AT IT. I USE SPAM TO MAKE A SANDWICH SPREAD AND IT'S GOOD AND HE WILL EAT THAT. HE DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS SPAM.

CLARENCE

THANK YOU SO MUCH.

JUNE

I HOPE I HAVE GIVEN YOU WHAT----- THIS KIND OF SURPRISED ME. I DIDN'T REALIZE I WAS GOING TO GET TO DO THIS.

CLARENCE

WE HAVE PEOPLE HERE THAT WANT TO HEAR YOUR STORY.

JUNE

WELL, IT WAS NOT UNIQUE BUT, IT WAS WHAT I DID. THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF YOUNG WOMEN WHO HAD BABIES, BY THEMSELVES. MY BABY WAS NINE MONTHS OLD BEFORE HORACE SAW HER. IT WAS QUITE AN EXPERIENCE.

CLARENCE

CAN YOU DESCRIBE HOW IT WAS?

JUNE

WE MET HIM. WE HAD A HOTEL ROOM IN SAN ANTONIO AND I HAD PAM THERE WITH ME WHEN HE CAME.

CLARENCE.

IS THE HOTEL STILL THERE?

JUNE

I DON'T THINK SO. IT'S GONE.

CLARENCE

HE CAME IN BY PLANE. TRAIN?

JUNE

I THINK HE CAME IN BY TRAIN AND THEN, HOW DID HE GET TO THE HOTEL? I CAN'T REMEMBER., PERHAPS TOOK A CAB.

CLARENCE

MAYBE IT WAS NOT FAR FROM THE RAILROAD STATION. MAYBE HE RAN ALL THE WAY.

JUNE

I CAN REMEMBER OPENING THE DOOR AND SEEING HIM STAND THERE.

CLARENCE

HOW WAS THAT?

JUNE

OH, IT WAS UNBELIEVABLE.

CLARENCE

DID THE MOVIES CAPTURE THAT?

JUNE

I DON'T KNOW WHAT WAS ON MY FACE. I KNOW WHAT WAS ON HIS. OUR LITTLE GIRL WAS THERE. SHE WAS JUST TODDLING, TRYING TO WALK. WE SPENT JUST HOURS TOGETHER.

CLARENCE

ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS?

JUNE

OH, ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR LIVES, I GUESS. THE WAR WAS OVER AND HE WAS HOME SAFE.

CLARENCE

WELL, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR GIVING US THE INSIGHT THAT HOPEFULLY SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO KNOW WHAT IT WAS LIKE AND WRITE SOME KIND OF BOOK. THEY MAY JUST WANT TO

REFER TO THESE EXPERIENCES. I THINK THEY WILL OCCUR TIME AND TIME AGAIN. THANK YOU SO MUCH.

END OF TAPE

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