

Lloyd Bailey Oral History Interview

JOHN FARGO: Today is March the 6th, 2015. My name is John Fargo, and I'm a volunteer at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas. Today, I am interviewing Lloyd Bailey concerning his experiences during World War II. This interview is taking place in Mr. Bailey's home in Austin, Texas. This interview is in support of the Educational and Research Center for the National Museum of the Pacific War Texas Historical Commission for the preservation of historical information related to World War II. So, that out of the way. Lloyd, let's get started. Tell me a little bit about your early years. When were you born and where?

LLOYD BAILEY: Well, I was born February the 16th, 1922, and the only member of my family for three generations that wasn't born in Central Texas. And my father was a CPA for the Katy Railroad. And I was born in Kansas City, Missouri when he was on special assignments there, but I was back in Waco when three months old. So, I consider myself a native Texan.

JF: Very good.

LB: Which I am for all practical purposes.

JF: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

LB: I have two sisters and a brother. My oldest sister and my younger brother are both deceased. And my second sister, who is about 18 months older than I am is still in reasonably good health and lives in Colorado.

JF: Did you go to school in Waco?

LB: Yes. I graduated from Waco High. And --

JF: What year was that?

LB: In 1940.

JF: Nineteen-forty. Then you went right on into (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

LB: Then I went -- from there, I was given an academic scholarship to Texas A&M. And I entered Texas A&M in 1940, and completed year. And when I was due to go back for my sophomore year, I was in the hospital getting my appendix out. And then that was back in the days when they kept you in the hospital for -- or, kept you in bed for two weeks. Nowadays, it's two hours, I think. And I discussed with my counselor at A&M, and we both agreed even though I was an A-B student that coming in two to three weeks late -- and engineering was not a good idea. And the school agreed to give -- keep my scholarship open for me. And if I would come back in January, but --

JF: January of what year would that --

LB: That would have been January of '42. But in December of '41, the Pearl Harbor was attacked, and I was already old enough to be called up. And so I chose not to go back to school, but to enlist in the Army. And so I enlisted in Waco on the 4th of April, 1942. And I was given a very distinct enlisted number, 18082468. Impossible to forget. And I was assigned to Camp Wolters for basic training.

JF: Where is that?

LB: That's in Mineral Wells, Texas. And they did my IQ, and my IQ was 167. And so I received some rather special treatment. For one thing, about two weeks after I had enlisted, I was called up to battalion headquarters, and two FBI men were there. And they talked me to me a little bit, and explained to me about Army intern security, and asked me if I would be -- participate in that. And I agreed. And over the -- and it required me to write a letter at least once a month and send it to a candy store, which of course was just a cover in Fort Worth. And I did report one man who was a German from Milwaukee and in his 30s. And he was very, very vocally anti-American, and I reported him. And about three or four days later, he was no longer in camp with us. And I --

JF: So, what was -- what was your assignment as --

LB: Well, as I was -- because of my experience at A&M, I probably was better at close-order drill than the -- than the noncoms, and so they made me an acting corporal. And I participated in teaching close-ordered drill. And of course, I also went through rifle training and the other things. But I was assigned as an acting corporal. And as a consequence of that -- and I never pulled (inaudible), and I was in the Army.

JF: There we go.

LB: So then I was assigned to the 335th Engineers on the 12th July, 1942 at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. And I was promoted to corporal on the 15th of August, 1942. And then I was promoted to sergeant on the 6th of October, 1942.

JF: Tell me a little bit about that engineering --

LB: Well, what we were doing, the Army was setting up an artillery range up in the mountains in Eastern Oklahoma. And what we did during the time that I was there, we were building the roads up into the -- I think they're called the Cookson Hills. And we were building the roads up so that they could get the artillery pieces up there. And also, it was a new camp and they didn't have foot bridges

over the little drainage ditches and stuff. And we also put in some foot bridges over those.

JF: So, it was a construction battalion of some sort.

LB: It was a construction battalion. And so then on the 6th of October, I was promoted to sergeant, and that's 1942. And then I was -- on the 15th of November, I was assigned to the Corps of Engineer OCS at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. And I went -- successfully completed that, and commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers on the 3rd of February, 1943. And again, I got an unforgettable serial number, 01109797.

JF: So, tell me a little bit about OCS. How long of a period was it?

LB: Well, I was in there from the middle of November until the first week of February. Because of my year at Texas A&M as a freshman and my other training -- interim training after I came in the Army -- I found OCS to be easy.

JF: Were you in the Corps of Cadets at A&M? Did they have that? You were.

LB: Oh yeah. That was back in the days when everybody was in the Corps of Cadets.

JF: Everybody was in it. OK.

LB: And it was all male.

JF: Yes.

LB: And so, OCS --

JF: Whatever happened?

LB: -- was not a problem for me at all.

JF: Let me ask you, you indicated that these FBI people interviewed you at the -- did you ever hear from them again? Did you ever do anymore work for them?

LB: Well, I reported once a month.

JF: You continued.

LB: I sent them a letter once a month, and gave them a report, which normally was that I hadn't seen or heard anything. Except that one time that I did report this man, this soldier. And he did disappear from our unit pretty quickly. And so out of -- my MOS coming out of OCS was officer -- Combat Corps Engineer Officer. However, I wound up being assigned to a big general construction battalion.

JF: What was that? The three --

LB: The 386th Engineer Battalion and Camp Sutton, North Carolina. And it was almost 1,200 men; it was colored, and it was a construction battalion.

JF: All black?

LB: All black, except for the officers and one warrant officer and one black chaplain. And we were large, we had had two

physicians and a dental officer. We had a very large battalion. And we were simply not assigned to anything but the Army. For instance, in Italy -- in North Africa and Italy, we simply were 5th Army Troops. And so we were sent up to Boston -- in the vicinity of Boston in April of -- that would have been '42.

JF: Forty-three.

LB: Huh?

JF: You were commissioned in '43.

LB: Forty-three, yeah. All right, '43. And yeah, had to be '43. And we were in a holding camp there waiting for our ship to come in. And our ship that were assigned to was torpedoed 200 miles of the coast. And so we then stayed several more weeks at the -- in the holding area there in Massachusetts. And then we were sent down to New York City, and went aboard a very large British troop ship, the Louis Pasteur, which was a very unique ship. It had -- the French has been building the Louis Pasteur to be in contest in the Atlantic crossings with the SS America and the Queen Mary. And it was only partially completed when the Germans attacked France. And so the British had used tugs, tugboats to get it over to Scotland, and had completed it as a very large troop ship. And as we went aboard, the

officers of the ship were greeting us, and here was one who was -- Henderson Bailey. And so I introduced myself. I said, well, I think I found a cousin. And so he said, now, Lieutenant, let me -- "Cuz," he says, "let me tell you, every Army officer is going to get an assignment on this ship. Every one of them. And since when they ask for the sunset watch," he said, "if you volunteer for that" -- he said, because what that is, is that throughout the day, is we go along at a relatively slow speed so that we don't put any smoke out the stack. We also collect every bit of garbage or paper or whatever, nothing is allowed overboard. And then an hour before sunset, all of that is brought down to a deck that's just below the -- on the aft of the troop ship. And it is all dumped overboard, and the cans are cleaned. And says, that's the best job on the ship because you will not have any -- the rest of the day, you're free. You don't have to do anything. Most of the officers are tied up most of their waking hours, supervising troops and so forth. And that turned out to be a real boon because we had two general hospitals aboard, and so I spent days playing bridge with the nurses. And we went down off of Brazil, and it took us four days to get down there because we went slowly during the day time. And then a night, we

would go -- and this ship could do -- it was over 30 knots. It was quite fast. And then we got down off of Brazil, and then we made a mad dash to Casablanca.

JF: Did you have a convoy of ships, or were --

LB: No. We were all alone. We were all alone.

JF: You had the whole battalion on the ship?

LB: Oh yeah, the battalion and a lot of the other people. It was a very, very large troop ship. There were probably four or five thousand people aboard it. It was a very large troop ship.

JF: Were you a platoon leader at that time?

LB: At that time, I was a platoon leader. And I was a -- so we get to Casablanca, and our battleship had about half a mile better range than the big French battleship that was in port there. And so our battleships lay off an extra half a mile, and they chewed up the harbor there pretty good in Casablanca. Plus, (inaudible). But when we came in, the port area where you would unload cargo and so forth was a mess. And my very first job I was assigned with my platoon, and started cleaning up the port of Casablanca so that we could land cargo -- our cargo there. And then that went on for several weeks. And then I was -- completed that work, and I was sent to the French Foreign Legion

Post, Sidi Bel Abbès, that was in the northwestern part of Morocco in the Sahara Desert. And I spent three weeks there in special training. When they had trained our troops for World War II, the infantry had had zero training. And mines of any type, anti-personnel mines, booby traps, they had zero training in that. And so that was a camp set up to train people in those facets. And some of it I just participated as a trainee, and some of it I participated as a trainer -- as Corps of Engineer Officer. And it was very, very, very helpful. And I spent two three-week terms -- the normal term was three weeks there, and I spent two of them. The first one, I was part trainee and part trainer. And the second one, I was trainer. And --

JF: What'd your platoon do all that time?

LB: My platoon was not there.

JF: Oh, they weren't there.

LB: No. I was there simply as an officer assigned to go through this, and so I had a unique experience. After we left, we went to -- these two officers that was with -- we went up to Fizz on our way back to Casablanca. And Fizz has the third, fourth largest central plaza in the whole world. And we were in there, and we were looking for

something to eat. And we saw these people lined up, and a guy had a little brazier, and these people getting things that looked like they were little nuts. And so we went up and got some, and they were really very tasty. And we learned later that we had been eating grasshopper tails. Anyway, so then I got back to Casablanca, and we were enlarging a prisoner of war camp because we were capturing -- had begun to capture quite a few Germans then. And we were enlarging this prisoner of war camp, and I learned that many of the German officers spoke English quite well. In fact, some of them spoke it with a British accent. And so we were working there, and this truck full of German prisoners goes by. And one of these German officers stood up and said, Lieutenant, ha-ha. You're going to be here in Africa, and I'm gonna be in the United States. And he was right, we were shipping prisoners back to the states so that we didn't have to send food over there for them. Because, you know, that limited -- that gave us more ship space for our own supplies and all. And so then after that --

JF: You rejoin your platoon at that time.

LB: Yeah. At that point, I had rejoined by outfit in Casablanca. Then we were preparing roads and the streets

in Casablanca. And roads were -- these heavy US Army vehicles were chewing up some of the roads pretty good. And there was a lot of traffic, of course, coming in through Casablanca, and heading on out to the East. And that was what we were doing then when we were sent to (inaudible) in preparation for moving up into Italy. And that was a unique experience -- our railroad trip. We were put on a train, and the men were putting in Forty-and-eights, and we were put in this real plush car. And the damn thing was loaded with lice. And they had to take us, the officers, off the train and delouse us and delouse the car that we were in. And then we made this trip across Africa by railroad. We had an interesting experience way out in the middle of nowhere in the desert. Something happened to one of the drive rods on the train, and so they jacked the guys that were -- the engineer and his two people he had with them. Jacked it up, and actually repaired train right there in the middle of the desert, and then we proceeded onto Iran.

JF: How long did that take them?

LB: Most of it about close to 24 hours. Yeah, they didn't do real quickly. And our men were in Forty-and-eights.

JF: What do you mean Forty-and-eights?

LB: That's a car that the French have that will hold 40 men or eight horses. Very famous from World War II, as well. The Forty-and-eights. And we actually -- that's what our 1,200 men traveled in.

JF: Did they have seats in there or any bunks?

LB: No.

JF: Nothing like that?

LB: They had whatever -- they had their bed rolls, and their canned things and so forth. And --

JF: So, it was just an empty car?

LB: It was just an empty car. That's all. And --

JF: You know, while we're talking about that, Lloyd, how did you get on managing a whole platoon of black men? You have any problems, racial problems?

LB: Well, not at all. In fact, I should discuss that a little bit. The Army found in World War II that the officers who had gone to school in the North and had some education, some of their fellow students were black. But the blacks and the officers from the North had more problems dealing together. And the officers from the South and from the Southwest, who had worked with blacks working for them and for their families, they didn't have anywhere near the same problems. And so most of our officers wound up being from

the South, and our Colonel was Colonel John R. Baird from Baird City, Mississippi or something like that. But I will say this, that the finest soldier I ever met was our black First Sergeant. He was regular Army, and his name was Pinkston. Sergeant Pinkston. And he was well over six foot, he weighed about 280 pounds. And he was in charge of our company, and he was in charge of anything that was required discipline that was not a court martial level. And he was in charge of the discipline of that company, and I guarantee that he was the finest soldier I ever met. He was just top grade all the way. And he ran that company with very tight discipline.

JF: So, he didn't have any kind of problem --

LB: Racially, no. We had very, very few. Our biggest problem was simply that until we took measures to reduce it, we were frozen in grade because the VD rate was high above our troops. But we got that straightened out. So, anyway, then we sat in Iran for a short time. Then we went aboard ship in Iran. And we stayed about two weeks aboard a ship in Iran, and then we sailed for Italy. And after Naples was taken -- three days after Naples was taken, we waded ashore --

JF: Waded ashore?

LB: Waded ashore --

JF: From how far up?

LB: Well, we probably were about maybe 50 yards off, and we waded to shore from (inaudible).

JF: Were you under fire at that time?

LB: And the reason that we waded ashore -- and we were west down of the harbor in Naples about a mile and a half. And the reason we waded ashore was because the port of Naples was a total disaster. Between what we had done and what the Germans had done, it was a total disaster. You could not land a single ship there. And as a consequence, my platoon and I, our first assignment in Naples was to help clean up the dock. And I was assigned with my platoon, the area that was adjacent to the passenger terminal, and had number of reinforced concrete storage buildings. There weren't too many of those, but they were pretty well concentrated in the area where we were. And our job was to clear the dock side. Our job was to clear the dock side so that we could have cargo -- put cargo aboard. And the Navy, the Seabees, their job was to go in and take out the ships that the Germans had sunk there. And in 33 days, we accomplished it. And in 33 days, they could begin land ships and bring ships to dock. Anyway, and I had -- we

were tearing down those buildings and reducing the concrete to rubble, and sending it out to the airfield, [Campesino?] Airfield. And in order to speed it up, I used my demolition expert and blew stuff apart to get it off the -- and then did some -- we had welding cutting torches and so forth. And we cleaned up that mess.

JF: Was there any enemy activity during that time?

LB: Yes. We were bombed several times. We didn't --

JF: By airplane?

LB: Yeah. We did not yet have air superiority, but it didn't last long. But at that point, we didn't have any air superiority at all, and so the Germans did bomb us every night for a while. About 10 days, actually, I think as I recall now.

JF: Did it cause any damage?

LB: Yeah, they caused damage.

JF: Did you have any casualties?

LB: Not in my outfit. We didn't have any casualties. Well, I cut my head when I dove down. (laughter) But that about the extent of my casualty. And so then after we had done that, then we went up and we were at Campesino Airfield. And some of the guys -- some of the platoons were putting pierce planked landing mat down. And we were taking the

rubble that we had sent up from the harbor, and we were extending -- putting hard stands and the taxi strips and stuff with that. And we had both the (inaudible) and the Americans were using that field simultaneously. And so after we had got done doing that, I had a very unique experience. I had a number of unique experiences during the war.

JF: Tell me about them.

LB: You know, my brother, for instance, was a B-17 pilot, who completed -- he flew out of Italy where the B-17s flew 50 missions in (inaudible). And he completed his entire 50 missions and went home. And so he -- what we he did was duplicate by quite a number other people. But I did things that were simply not duplicated by very many people. And so --

JF: Can he tell me about some of them?

LB: -- after -- yeah. I'm getting ready to tell you about something. After we had done this job at the airfield there, the regular general who was -- Airforce General, who was in charge of what was happening there, he was so impressed with what a great job that my guys had done, that he insisted that -- oh. The Airforce had taken over the Isle of Capri as an R&R. And the reason it was taken over

-- because before World War II, that was a very, very fancy place that many of the actors and actresses from England and the United States had built villas there. And so Germans had used it as an R&R, and then the Airforce took it over as an R&R. And so he insisted that my Colonel give me 10 days on Capri, and so I went up to Capri. And we were in a villa that was owned by a famous actress, Gertrude Niesen, who was a both a stage and movie actress, both in the United States and England. She was an English woman. And it had five bedrooms, and it was a beautiful place. And the Germans had used it for R&R, and when they left, they left behind the women that had been there with them. And so we wound up with Gertrude Niesen's great place. And I was there with four Airforce officers and five women the Germans had left behind.

JF: Is that right?

LB: So, we had a very pleasant 10 days.

JF: I can imagine.

LB: And some of the women were German. But, you know, they had to eat and so forth. They were very cooperative.

JF: Very nice.

LB: Yeah. They were (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). So then we had a dual assignment for our outfit. Our

headquarters and service company and one company maintained a big engineering [depot?] right there in the Naples area. Where the stuff would come up from the docks, and come into this engineering [depot?]. And the other three companies went out and did other things. I would be given assignment to rebuild a section of railroad or rebuild a bridge or repair highways and so forth. And so I could have been doing that in Kansas.

JF: No sign of the Germans?

LB: Not at that point, no. Then when the Anzio Beach had -- have to break through out of Anzio, then I was sent up with my platoon for a rather unique thing. There were still bodies out in the battlefield, and there were still vehicles and tanks that were very little damaged. But that whole area, both from Americans and the Germans, was very heavily mined. And so I provided service for the graves registration, and for the ordinance to bring out bodies, and bring out vehicles and so for forth.

JF: So, you cleared the mines?

LB: Cleared the mines.

JF: So, your training a while back came in handy.

LB: Well, I trained my men to be able to do that, and we did a great job. And I did have three casualties.

JF: You did have?

LB: Yeah. And so then after that, well, then the same thing repeated itself. The headquarters and service company never left Naples, because that was our primary supply port for the whole operation in Italy. And so they never left there, but I got as far north of Rome with some of my assignments. And so then the war was over in Italy, and we were back in -- all of us were back in Naples, and we were getting ready to be shipped home.

JF: Getting ready to be shipped home?

LB: Shipped home. Except, I wasn't getting -- I was assigned to a special force that was being developed to resurrect Kobe Harbor in Japan, and that was gonna be a main supply port for us. And I and several other officers who had been involved in port clearance and so forth were in Naples.

JF: That early in the war, and they were planning on doing --

LB: Well, it wasn't that early in the war.

JF: What was it? Nineteen-forty-four?

LB: This is 1940 --

JF: Italy was still being --

LB: This was in 1945.

JF: Oh, it was '45.

LB: It was 1945. Oh yeah. Not only that, I missed something. I came back, and I was in charge of putting up the largest butler building that had ever been put up. And it was a 130-foot-wide and 600-foot-long with a concrete floor -- and with pits. And I put that up, and it was being used to refurbish Corps of Engineer equipment that was gonna supposedly be shipped to the Far East. Bulldozers and graders and air compressors and so forth. And my workforce was very, very unique. Oh, the cover for this was canvas.

JF: Canvas?

LB: Canvas. One-hundred-and-thirty foot by 600 feet. And my workforce was consisted of Italian soldiers, Italian civilians, American soldiers, and German PWs. And I had a unique experience with the German PWs. One day, they came to work, and this captain says to me, he said, Lieutenant, we don't have to do this work. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JF: What, you mean their captain?

LB: -- we're prisoners of war. We don't have to do this work. And I said, that's fine, just bring them to attention. And so I had them hold at attention about 30 minutes, and then I'd give them 15 minutes of parade rest, and then another 30 minutes up. And when they came back after lunch, they

went to work. They found it a hell a lot easier working than it was --

JF: Standing at attention.

LB: -- standing at attention. And then they would work, and they were good workers. And so it was really a very, very, very unique experience. It was at that time -- was the largest butler structure that had ever been put up anyway in the world.

JF: Why a canvas top?

LB: Well, because it was cheaper.

JF: OK.

LB: Rather than put all metal on that, it was a lot cheaper. We put all those canvas panels out over that concrete floor, laced them together. I don't remember exactly how the lacing on it. But I remember the steel work, because I would get up and show them how to put the steel work up there. And that was back in the -- and I would be up about 50 feet off that concrete floor, and that was back when I was young and, you know, nothing could hurt me. You know the old feeling, probably.

JF: I know the feeling.

LB: And so then I was in Italy, I had been there now a long time, and I knew all kinds of little crossroads and so

forth. And so I took four other officers, and we went over to an old German castle. I mean, a big Italian castle, where there were two general hospitals there. And on weekends, the nurses would hold dances. And so we went over and we were at a dance. And then when we started home, most of the guys -- three of the guys and me were still back out at our old place at the depot. And so I took a side road and came in through the Naples-Rome highway just south of Campesino Airfield, and started up the road. And there was a guy with a flashlight out in the middle of the road, and I slowed down to see what was going on. Suddenly, there was a P-47 airplane all covered with dark green paper being carried down to the harbor for deck loading. And the highways there had curbs, and I saw I couldn't avoid hitting the airplane if I didn't turn sharply. And so I turn sharply, and I was going slow enough, so one of the guys actually jumped out of the jeep and never even lost his footing. But the jeep flipped and landed on my pelvis, and broke my pelvis in seven places.

JF: Wow.

LB: And so I was in the hospital in Naples there for a while -- and that happened in May. And then August, they were shipping me home on a hospital ship.

JF: Which one?

LB: Huh?

JF: Which hospital ship, do you remember?

LB: I don't remember the hospital ship, but it was very interesting. We went right past the -- as we were passing the Straits of Gibraltar, they announced that the Americans had dropped a huge bomb in Japan. And then we had landed, and we landed in South Carolina on the (inaudible).

JF: Really.

LB: And they put us in the ambulances, and they ask us what would we like. And this one guy who was with us -- there was two of us in the ambulance. Two or three, and I think just two. And this guy said, well, I want a hamburger. So they drove us into the drive-in, and, you know, they just came out and were all over us. And then we went to the hospital, and this --

JF: In South Carolina?

LB: Yeah, in Charleston. And this nurse captain -- and I was in this body cast -- and I had a nurse that I had known real well when I was in the hospital. And she told me, "now whatever you do, Lloyd, do not get one of these scratching sticks like these other guys do to start scratching down there." Said, "if you'll just not scratch,

in about three weeks, you'll get a coat of dead skin on there and you won't itch anymore." And so I followed her instructions -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

JF: How tough was that?

LB: Huh?

LB: How tough was that not to scratch?

LB: Well, it was tough the first -- before the itching stopped. But I another interesting experience in the hospital there. I'm a bridge player. And so I was in the hospital there for May until August. And the guy in the bed next to me had been an OSS operator, and his name was Kermit Roosevelt.

JF: Is that right?

LB: And so he and I became bridge partners, and so he was my bridge partner. We played bridge every day for those several months. And I got the guy who headed the OSS, Donovan, he came by to see -- one of his (inaudible) said Kermit had been hurt in Northern Italy, and had been rescued out of Northern Italy. And we didn't have helicopters in those days either. And I'm not sure exactly how he was rescued, but I know he was rescued, but I didn't lean any details about that. But he was a great guy, and

we had a lot of good bridge days together. And he was very good, he taught me some stuff.

JF: And Donovan actually came by to visit.

LB: Came by to visit Kermit, yeah. Not me. To visit Kermit. But I did get to meet him.

JF: And this was a hospital in Charleston, South Carolina?

LB: No, this is a hospital in Naples, Italy.

JF: Oh, this was back in --

LB: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) second general hospital, which had been one of the hospital groups that I'd come overseas with. And so I knew the nurses, they knew me and so forth. And so then we landed, and it was real funny. This nurse captain came up to me and she said, "my goodness, Lieutenant, how long have you been in the cast?" And I told her fourth months at that point. (inaudible) May, June, July, August -- three months. And she says, "Well, I'm gonna bathe you. Anything that is inside that cast" -- and boy she didn't miss a spot. She cleaned every bit of my private parts and everything. She really cleaned me up good.

JF: How did she get inside the cast?

LB: She didn't.

JF: Oh, she didn't.

LB: Well, you know, the -- I (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) and so forth. And she really did a fantastic job. Then they put us on a troop train -- I mean, a hospital train. And we came across, and I was carried to Longview, Texas to an Army hospital they had there. And it took us about a week because we traveled very, very slowly. And then we would pull into a town and go on a sidetrack so that the regular trains could go past us. And I had one -- and people would come aboard and thank us, and very gracious and all this, you know. And I was just inside the bunk that was just about chest high for a person standing. And this little old man came in -- now, this was August and it was hot. And he came in, and he had on a suit and a coat. You know, a suitcoat. And he went up to me, and he said, Lieutenant, would you like a little drink? And he took out this -- I'm telling you right now, that was moonshine. And I took a sip of that moonshine, and I had a tough time keeping it down. I'm gonna tell you. But he was being as gracious as he knew how. So then I got to Longview in the hospital there, and I forget the name of the hospital. And I had a couple of unique experiences there. One of them was that the -- my family learned where I was, and they came there. And I was in (inaudible) officers' ward. And

my mother came in, and then disappeared. When I (inaudible) that cast, I weighed about 175 pounds. And when came out, I weighed 139 pounds. I had never been able to eat very well when I (inaudible). And so my mother disappeared, and they went and found her up the hall and she was crying her eyes out. And she says, "he looks like he was on the death march." But anyway, and the other unique experience there, I had never been circumcised. And they talked on to you -- I'd never been circumcised. And this doctor talked me into that. Most painful thing that ever happened to me. And the other thing was interesting, in my whole life, I only had the flu one time. And they came around to our ward and said there was a new thing that was being tried, and would we be willing to participate in this flu vaccination program. And we all agreed, and every one of us got the flu. They say it was live and too strong. And that's the only time in my entire life I'd had the flu.

JF: That's amazing.

LB: And then they transferred me down to (inaudible).

JF: Was your cast off at that point?

LB: Yes. They cut the cast off up in Longview. Took me out of the cast. And I had been in four months. And that's where

they weighed me and I weighed 139 pounds. And that's when my mother saw me, when I was out of the cast. So then I went down to (inaudible). Well, they transported me down to (inaudible), and I was a convalescent there. And I was required to use crutches but do as much walking as I could. And since I was a golfer, they even suggested I get out and walk the golf course with the golfers as much as I could -- and stay out of their way. And so I another officer there who was -- and he was from Houston, and he had gotten his car up there even though he was still in the hospital. But he was convalescent like I was. And so he and I -- he was dating a nurse. And she decided that we was a little too frisky for her to date by herself. So, I agreed to go on a double date. And we were standing under the sign at Walgreens downtown in San Antonio. And this beautiful Mexican girl started walking up the sidewalk toward us -- and I'm on my crutches. And she turns around, and starts almost running away. And her friend went running after to her and got her to agree to come, even though that what she had wanted to do was go dancing. And so after a few drinks, I quit my crutches and went to dancing. And ultimately, she became my wife.

JF: Is that right?

LB: Yeah. And we had four children, and we had a great 55-year marriage.

JF: Isn't that something. That's amazing. Good story, good story.

LB: Yeah. I then went back to A&M after the war, of course, and got my degree. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) on active duty one summer because I needed the money. And I went back on active duty one summer while I was at A&M. I just didn't take classes that one summer. And anyway, oh, and I had been promoted to Captain just before I got injured. A very good friend of mine, Bob [Gasperoli?], from upstate New York, they had pulled him out of us because he could Italian. And they needed officers who spoke Italian, and so they pulled him out, and I was made company commander, and got my bars.

JF: Before you got injured?

LB: Before I got injured, yeah.

JF: Good. So, you were discharged in Brooke Army Hospital.

LB: I was discharged down at Brooke General.

JF: Brooke General, OK.

LB: Yeah. Went on inactive duty there, and then stayed in the reserves and within the reserves. And when the Korean War came along, I had a pregnant wife and son. And I felt that

they needed me more than the Army did, so I resigned my commission. I felt I had done my part.

JF: Absolutely. Absolutely. So, you got your degree in engineering from A&M in what year?

LB: Texas A&M, 1948.

JF: Forty-eight. What did you do in civilian life?

LB: Well, I had four years -- I went with a small company because they would pay me more, and they would recognize my Army experience. And in those days, believe it or not, an engineer graduating out of school, the going rate was \$275 a month. If you believe it. And because of my Army experience and all, this company -- the Eugene B. Smith Company, they agreed to pay me \$300 a month. And I didn't even realize it then, but not only that, Mr. Smith gave two bonuses a year. He gave a Christmas bonus, and he gave a fiscal year bonus. And so I wound up making a lot more than the guys had gone with General Electric and so forth, you know. And then I was with them for four years, and an interesting thing happened. His daughter married a guy from a family with a great old Southern name who had nothing left but their name. And so he came in and was trying to become the number two man in the company. And my boss was the -- his nephew from the nephew of Mr. Smith's

favorite sister. And so they got into a family squabble, and I got caught in the middle. And so I wound up -- and Mr. Smith's says, "now, Lloyd, this is not fair to you. And so you are no longer the general superintendent and head of engineering here. But you can stay here, you can use the secretary, you have an office here until you can find a job that is commensurate with your ability." And so then my boss was playing golf with one of the managers from the big union carbide plant out in Texas City. And he said, you know, I've got an engineer you guys ought to interview. And so they interviewed me, and offered me a job. And we had an interesting experience there. I had been there about three or four months, and they had a dinner party with all the guys who were working as engineers in the maintenance and construction. And they went around, said, now we need engineers who become absolutely expert in various phases, such as protective coating, paints and so forth -- and this, and various items that go into equipment. And they got to me, and I said, well, I'm gonna tell you the truth. That my forte is supervision and management. And I said, "I was an Army officer. I also spent four years as an engineer general superintendent in a big operation in Galveston." And I

said, "that's my forte." And so about three months later, they gave me -- asked me to take charge of the boiler maker and pipe fitter and sheet metal shops. Which comprised about 100 people there in this big Texas City plant. And so I took that over and reduced the work that was being sent out to Houston considerably, without adding any manpower. And so three years later, they offered me a job in California as the general superintendent in a new plant over construction, maintenance, and engineering. And I spent three years there, and two times the union tried to organize us. And the first time, it was 53 percent nonunion. And the second time, it was 57 percent nonunion. So, I then went to Puerto Rico. I transferred in grade because my wife was Mexican, and my kids were half Latina and Latino. And I thought it would be great for them to live in a society that represented half of their heritage. And so I transferred there, and I ultimately became plant manager there.

JF: Where? What town was it?

LB: In Ponce, Puerto Rico. And I became a citizen there. And in fact, I was a (inaudible). I was president of the country club for two years. I was on the Island Board of Directors for the YMCA. And I simply became a Puerto

Rican. And I used to have a big (inaudible) before I had cancer (inaudible). And I was a solo voice with the Pablo Casellas Choir there as well. So, remember I had been a soloist with the Pablo Casellas Choir in Puerto Rico. And so then I --

JF: Still with Union Carbide?

LB: Uh-huh.

JF: OK. Did you retire from there?

LB: I was in with Union Carbide at that time. And then I decided that I was not being treated fairly in their promotions. And so I decided I wanted to do something else. And I decided, really, that I wanted to go into business for myself. So, I bought (inaudible) in Waco, Texas, my old home town, and also opened an Amoco Transmission franchise. And I was in my early 40s, and I found out that dealing with the public -- I was too old to get used to that. Because I found out the old Texas saying that there are more horses butts than horses in this world it just absolutely true. And so I then had been recruited by Kerr-McGee when was I still working in Puerto Rico. So, I wrote this guy that had recruited me. I wrote him a letter and asked him if they still had a position open. And he had just gotten in from New York City, and he was

going through his mail. And it was 11:00 at night in California, and 1:00 at night in Texas. And he phoned me at 1:00 in the morning, and wanted to know how soon my wife and I could get out to California for an interview.

JF: Isn't that great.

LB: And so I wound up going out to -- and going to work for Kerr-McGee out in the Mojave Desert, and I spent 13 great years there. Working in the desert isn't at all like people think. And I went out as the manager of engineering construction maintenance. We went through a big strike, and I was able to reduce the -- my workforce was 150 people when I got there. And when I left there, we were doing the same amount of work with 750 people as we had done with 1,150. Because we had four-month strike, and we won the strike even though it was the operators in the plant -- not my people. My people were in the trading unions, you know. But the operators in the plant were part of Harry Bridges Longshoreman of all things. But we won the strike. And we were able to put into place things that I had setup for reducing the manpower in the plant, and reducing costs. And we had done it successfully. And so then I became -- I was put in charge of spending \$350 million to build a very large plant. And we completed it on time and on budget,

and I was the startup manager, and the first plant manager.

And --

JF: Where was that?

LB: That was out in the desert.

JF: And when you say desert --

LB: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) California.

JF: Where?

LB: Trona. Trona, California. It's the last stop before Death Valley.

JF: OK.

LB: It's in the Mojave Desert. And so I apparently did something right, and they promoted me and moved me to Oklahoma City, and promoted me to vice president and a general manager over a large operation.

JF: Oh, that's great.

LB: And it was unique, I had spent entire career in chemical manufacturing after I left the cotton business in Galveston. And they gave me a large mining division. I had [Panache?] Mine, several thousand feet underground in New Mexico. And I had the fourth largest non-coal open pit mining operation in the country in Florida for phosphates. And then after the cranberries were harvested, we had an operation in New Jersey sifting through the cranberry soil

and getting (inaudible) out of that. And I was in the Oklahoma City because Mr. McGee required if you were an officer, you had to have your office in Oklahoma City. And I spent six years flying 40 weeks out of the year. And then I retired -- took early retirement in '63. And I had went out where I had bought property out on the coast in California overlooking the Pacific in lovely, lovely Mesa. And I put in a walnut grove and farmed for 18 years, and kept myself young and healthy.

JF: OK. Well, you look great today.

LB: And then my wife died, and I got back together with my very first sweetheart and had an 11-year great marriage with her. So, altogether, I had the pleasure of being married to two very, very smart women -- both Oriens. And I was married for 66 years, and I've been a very, very fortunate man. I have four children. I have a son who owns and operates a 15-bed Alzheimer's unit in the San Diego area in California. And I have a son, he -- of course, my boys are all A&M graduates. I was the first of 23 of us in my family who are (inaudible). And my second son was a regular Army officer out of A&M, an Airborne Ranger Officer. And after 8 years, his wife who had been an Army nurse, talked him out of the Army. And he's done several

things along the way, including having two master's degrees, including an MBA. And then he was taking his vacations and going down into South America, and doing missionary work. And he became so enamored to that, that he then became a minister. And he is a missionary minister on Mandala Island in the Philippines, teaching Muslims about Jesus Christ. And then my daughter who was a -- had a very unique experiences in her life. When I was the president of the country club, Chi-Chi Rodriguez was trying to get me to hire his brother when I needed a new golf pro. And so she got to take private golf lessons from Chi-Chi Rodriguez. And then when she was in school in San Diego, she and one Jacques Cousteau's sons starting. And she wound up getting to scuba dive with Dr. Cousteau, and had her introduced her to a group of about 700 people up in Berkeley one day as one of five finest young scuba divers in the whole country. And she actually taught scuba diving when she was in Cal Berkeley, and she graduated with honors in Cal Berkeley. Very, very smart woman. And she and her husband have retired in Mexico, and they live just up the Sea of Cortez from Cabo San Lucas, an absolutely beautiful area. And then my other daughter is mentally challenged. She has severe paranoia, and she's in Sacramento.

JF: Well, Lloyd, you've had a very interesting military career,
and a tremendous civilian career.

LB: I have. I had a very unique life.

JF: You certainly have, and I really enjoyed listening to you.
And I thank you for your time today.

LB: Well, thank you for this.

JF: And I hope we got everything recorded probably. I think we
did.

LB: I hope so.

JF: So, again, thank you for your service, and thank you for
your time today.

END OF AUDIO FILE