

Wisconsin Public Television
Korean War Stories Project

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
CLIFF C. BORDEN, JR.

Intelligence, Army Security Agency, Korean War
Army/Army Reserves/Army National Guard, Career

2004

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Madison, Wisconsin

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Borden, Clifford C., Jr., (1930-). Oral History Interview, 2004.

Video Recording: 4 videorecordings (ca. 115 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Military Papers: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

Clifford C. Borden, Jr., a Summit, New Jersey native, discusses his career in the Army, including his service with the Army Security Agency during the Korean War. Borden touches on his awareness of World War II while growing up and his rough awareness of Korea. He discusses worrying about the draft because he was not getting very good grades in college and enlisting in the Army Security Agency. Borden mentions attending armored infantry basic training at Fort Knox (Kentucky) and radio traffic analysis school at Fort Devens (Massachusetts). Assigned to Supreme Headquarters in Tokyo, he talks about duties as the noncommissioned officer in charge of typing intelligence summaries. In 1953, Borden discusses requesting an inter-theater transfer and being sent to the Army Security Agency Headquarters in Seoul. He describes the destruction in Seoul, the use of dogs for meat, and the efforts of Korean civilians to earn money from GIs through black markets, prostitution, shoe shining, and pick-pocketing. He talks about handing out gum to Korean kids. Borden discusses how South Koreans made examples of spies by hanging them off bridges and of draft dodgers by shooting them. He tells of being on a ship that brought Turkish soldiers home and reports hearing two of them get shot. He compares the work conditions in Japan and Korea and emphasizes the importance of providing intelligence to save American lives. Borden explains how the Army gathered, decoded, and translated intelligence. He discusses living conditions and sanitation in Seoul. He touches on employing mama-sans to do the laundry and characterizes a house-boy who loved to read. Borden details attending Christmas and Easter masses at large Korean churches. After the Armistice was signed, he states he had more time off and tells of hitching a ride to the Demilitarized Zone to witness Operation Big Switch. He details switching places with a Military Police soldier in order to take photographs of prisoners of war being returned through Freedom Village. Borden details watching an American repatriate break down in tears at the end of an interview and recalls the prisoners' physical condition. Borden talks about seeing South Korean repatriates in poor medical condition returned to Seoul by helicopter. He mentions returning to the DMZ in 1985 and watching the North Korean and American soldiers eyeing each other over the border. He touches on education information programs, his access to news, and his awareness of the big picture while working in intelligence. Borden reveals his unit took a survey and discovered the enlisted men averaged having a year more education than the officers. He examines the politics behind the war and concessions made for the amnesty. He analyzes his opinions of Syngman Rhee and tells of taking photographs in Seoul during celebrations of the Republic of Korea's 5th anniversary. Borden describes night-time bombing attacks by Bed Check Charlie and reports it bombed a nearby orphanage. During the final months of the war, he declares he could never quite reconcile why they were not allowed to retaliate against having ordnance dropped on Seoul. He mentions drinking with British soldiers and points out that there were 516 Canadian casualties. Borden references the initial invasion by North Korea and the early campaigns. He touches on the camaraderie between United Nations veterans. He describes

his homecoming, being struck by the apathetic response of old classmates to his military service, and using the Korean GI Bill to go to college. He debates the cool reception of Korean veterans as being due to the lack of total victory in Korea and recalls being refused membership by a local post for this reason directly after his return. Borden speaks about joining a civil affairs unit in the Army Reserves and working his way up to major. He touches on work as a public affairs officer in the Pentagon (Washington, D.C.) and retiring at the rank of full colonel. Borden discusses giving presentations about the Korean War to school children, mentions a Department of Defense initiative to make people aware of the Korean War during its fiftieth anniversary, and touches on the relabeling of the “Korean Conflict” as a war.

Biographical Sketch:

Borden (b.1930) served in the Active Army from 1951 to 1954 and for thirty-five years of combined service in the Army, Army Reserves, and Army National Guard. During the Korean War, he was stationed in Japan and with the 501 Communications Reconnaissance Group in Seoul. Borden served stateside during the Vietnam War in the Commissioned Active Army Service (1967 to 1970), served special short tours in West Germany (1981) and South Korea (1985), and performed annual tours of duty at the Pentagon with the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Department of the Army (1972 to 1986). His civilian occupations included radio news reporter and director, television news anchor, and public information officer for the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs until his retirement in 1990. He settled with his wife, Sally, in Madison (Wisconsin).

Citation Note:

Cite as: Cliff C. Borden, Jr., Interview, conducted May 24, 2004 at Wisconsin Veterans Museum, Madison, Wisconsin by Mik Derks, Wisconsin Korean War Stories, for Wisconsin Public Television.

Context Note:

Raw footage interview filmed by Wisconsin Public Television for its documentary series, “Wisconsin Korean War Stories.” Original WPT videocassette numbers were WCKOR009, WCKOR10, WCKOR011, and WCKOR012.

Related Materials Note:

Photographs of this narrator’s military service can be found in Wisconsin Public Television. Wisconsin Korean War Stories records (VWM Mss 1389).

Interviewed by Mik Derks, May 24, 2004

Transcribed by Wisconsin Public Television staff, n.d.

Transcription edited and reformatted by Wisconsin Veterans Museum staff, 2010

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2011

Transcribed Interview:

Cliff: I'm a Jersey native. I graduated from Summit New Jersey High School, 1949, and went to college for two years to study to be a history/English teacher. And, of course, I was registered for the draft in 1948 when I was a junior. And always worrying about 1A draft classification, so--

Mik: That was still an issue then? That long after?

Cliff: Well, it was not an issue--by way of background, the Selective Service Act was renewed in 1948, about the time that I registered, because during a period of '47-'48 we tried to have an all volunteer force. We fell short of even peace-time levels, as far as military personnel was concerned. So they went back to the draft. So even though there was no war on in 1948 and '49 and the early part of '50, they still had small draft calls. So every male U.S. citizen, young male particularly, was concerned about the fact of being classified 1-A; whereas, if you were in college you had a 2-S student deferment, similar to the 2-F student deferment that young men had during the time of the Vietnam War. So then when the war was on, we were a year into the war and I was a sophomore at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania. And frankly, I was not too good a student. I didn't apply myself to my studies—typical immaturity at the age of twenty. And I was going to college with World War II people on the G.I. Bill, and I had some friends who were four or five years older than I was, World War II veterans, and they said, "Cliff, you're wasting your father's money," which, of course, I was. And so they said, "Why don't you be a man and go and do your part for your country?" So I did, but, however, not until the Selective Service System floated a trial balloon. They were short of men because, of course, the Chinese had entered the war and this and that. We needed more men. We're building up the troop base like mad, and so General Hershey and the Selective Service System said, "Well, okay, if you're not a straight A student, or pretty close to it, you may lose your 2-S student deferment, and we may change national policy and start drafting college students who are not performing too well, and you'll be reclassified 1A." Which I was in the period of April and May of 1951. Well, we decided to look around and see if we could find a choice in the service, so we would not be drafted into the infantry. One of the other branches--the Air Force, Navy--I tried them all out; went through recruiters and, on campus, were recruiters for the Army Security Agency, which is communications intelligence. Well they said, "Hey." Went down to the basement of the post office of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania and Sergeant says to three or four of us, "You guys don't want to be in foot-flogging infantry. You want to be with guys like yourself, who have a couple years of college. And granted you'll start out as a private, but you'll go to school, and if you go through the school, you will get a Military Occupational Specialty [MOS] and a security clearance will get--pretty much guarantee you that you will not be up in front lines should you be assigned or deployed to Korea." And, of course, the war is raging. So that's what I did. Went to Fort Knox, Kentucky for Armored Infantry Basic, took my advanced individual training at Fort Devens, Massachusetts in Radio Traffic Analysis, graduated from the school.

Mik: What kind of training is that?

Cliff: That is analyzing radio traffic, enemy radio traffic, of course, which, for teaching purposes, was in English, but when actually transmitted was either enciphered. It was coded messages, which had to be deciphered by people who had other training in the Army Security Agency and it also had to be translated into English from Mandarin Chinese—that's after the Chinese entered the war—or Korean, for the North Koreans. So this is a team that operated out of the Supreme Headquarters in Tokyo.

Mik: And you did neither of those, you didn't decipher or trans--

Cliff: Well, no. No. I was working strictly--I was the noncommissioned officer in charge of turning out the daily and weekly intelligence summaries and the reason is strange; I knew how to type. Now the army had a paucity of people that knew how to type so, "Anybody here type?" So I volunteered. Now, I did go to Korea initially. I went to the Far East to our headquarters in Tokyo, as I mentioned, and was assigned for nine months to Okinawa. Well, we had a listening station and we were monitoring southern China radio traffic. Then I decided that I wanted to experience Korea, so I asked for an inter-theater transfer; fifteen days later there I am in Seoul.

Mik: Before you get to Seoul, tell me when you're monitoring in Okinawa, is that what you said?

Cliff: Yes. Of course, all of us was--we were debriefed and told, "Don't tell anybody. Don't tell your mother what you did." But since then, things have liberalized a little bit and we now are realistic and we realize that various nations all spy on each other and the parent agencies: National Security Agency, of course, is involved in communications intelligence, communications security. And that was the mission of the Army Security Agency; still is, though they don't call it the Army Security Agency anymore.

Mik: But for you it was just basically paperwork. Things were coming to you on paper?

Cliff: Well, basically, we worked during the last six months of the war that I was there, before the Armistice--

Mik: No, I mean in Okinawa

Cliff: Oh, in Okinawa. In Okinawa we were working an eight hour day, five days a week because we had sufficient people down there, and we didn't have the pressure of the tactical situation, which was going on in Korea. There wasn't a war going on in Okinawa. These listening stations are all over the Free World on the borders; on the Bamboo Curtain and the Iron Curtain at that time. So that's--the mission was the same, but we were working normal garrison life in Quonset huts albeit, but we had

a--the mission was basically the same except it was much more serious than Korea, but we were still exercising the same skills. Went to Korea and, then instead of working eight hours a day, we worked fourteen hours.

Mik: What did that involve--went to Korea?

Cliff: When I went to Korea in March of 1953, and since I already had the training and I had the skills for nine months in Okinawa, the basic skills, then, of course, we filled the needs at the time; in this case in the intelligence headquarters. After a couple months, I ceased to be in my MOS [Military Occupational Specialty], but I was then a typist in effect typing up the intelligence summaries, which were then sent through the intelligence officer, chief intelligence officer, who then forwarded them on to 8th Army Intelligence downtown. And then the intelligence gleaned from these intercepts were used, in part, as a basis for determining enemy attacks. When the enemy would be coming up the hill with a plane to shoo--blowing the bugles--and we would be--anticipate these massive frontal assaults from the Chinese Communists or the North Koreans. But this, as you can see, is a very important job although albeit we're not a combat force, as such, but we're providing information to save lives, American lives.

Mik: Did you know enough about the war and what was going on that you would recognize something important when you were typing it up or did you just type up thing after thing—

Cliff: Well, no, this was a result of other people; this is a team effort. Other people gather this information; commissioned officers and career people who had a lot more experience would then go over this material. So, in effect, I was merely acting as a journalist putting together the stuff in readable form and turning out these intelligence summaries fourteen hours a day, six days a week. Then when the Armistice was signed, it was interesting. When the Armistice was signed, we went back to a eight to ten hour day schedule, five days a week. And as the fall wore on, in 1953, we had some time off and that's when I had a chance to hitch a ride, literally hitch a ride, on these helicopters, the type you see on M*A*S*H, and went to downtown Seoul. Got on these helicopters with a friend and we went up to Munsan-ni, which was the United Nations base camp just south of the Demilitarized Zone. And then by truck, and by jeep, once again hitchhiking, we went up to witness Operation Big Switch, which was the big prisoner exchange, which was a part of the Armistice settlement, the Armistice having been signed at Panmunjom on the 27th of July 1953.

Mik: I'm sorry there was that noise. I wanted to make sure it wasn't interfering with what you were saying—

Cliff: Okay. When up there, I had a chance to see the operation; to see, to take photos. I've always been a serious amateur photographer taking 35mm and I even changed places with an MP when they would send the--they would truck the prisoners from

Koje-do, which was an island south of Pusan, and they would put them on these narrow Japanese gauge railroads, and they would send these railroad passenger cars all the way up to the end of the railway. If it's across the Imjin River, put them onto an MP collection point for prisoners. Then they would have a two and a half ton truck visible, prisoners were visible. They took the canvas down and so it was just a stake body to the deuce and a half truck, and the prisoners would be in there, and then every other vehicle would be a jeep with MPs with shotguns, riding shotgun as they say, to make sure the prisoners didn't jump off en route. And then it was a distance of perhaps ten miles up to the point where the line of demarcation, the center of the Demilitarized Zone. There was a bombed out bridge that had been repaired. It was called the "Bridge of No Return," and that separated North Korea from South Korea in the middle of the DMZ. And so what I did when I went up there and changed places with an MP--grabbed his pistol belt and his pistol and his helmet and went up there as part of the shotgun guard--because I could then take my camera and shoot pictures of the Communist Chinese and North Korean Freedom Village, their freedom village where their repatriates would be processed. This was actually in North Korea, technically it's North Korean territory, so I had one shot at that and this of course was an opportunity I was not about to deny myself.

Mik: That was legal?

Cliff: I don't know how legal it was, but I just went ahead and did it anyhow. But nobody was going to argue with the GIs, and essentially I was not armed because you couldn't be armed in the Demilitarized Zone unless you were an MP, the Chinese or Korean guards, and the United States MPs, dressed in appropriate uniforms, and they took turns at the Peace Pagoda where the Peace Treaty was signed. Then there was another temporary building in which they conducted talks and they resolved differences--day-to-day arguments they had over relatively minor matters and so that if the Communists had a complaint, they would call a meeting. If we had a complaint, they would call a meeting. In fact, they still do that now they have permanent buildings, permanent structures, that sit on the line. In fact, if you're a visitor to Korea today you can take the Korea tour and you go up there and you can see. And I went back in 1985 and saw these things--the fully uniformed and dress uniformed Communist soldiers on one side and the U.S. soldiers dressed on the other side, facing each other, looking each other down. And that situation has been the case since 27th, July 1953, right up to today as we sit here.

Mik: So, what were your thoughts as a—[technical problems]

Cliff: You guys picked a great studio site. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is not funded thanks to Newt Gingrich.

Mik: Boy have they bumped up—

Cliff: Well they try, Gingrich tried to destroy you because you're a bunch of wild-eyed pinkos.

- Mik: Which actually aided PBS, because the swell of support was so very good.
- Cliff: Oh, well, yeah that's right.
- Mik: Okay, we're back on. Okay. So I was--what I was going to ask you was how you felt, especially at something like Big Switch as a--you must have thought of yourself as an observer, photographer—
- Cliff: Observer of history--of a history-making activity. Of course, all these activities were supervised by neutral nations who flew their flags and had their own little headquarters, but to make sure that everything is being done according to the standards, which had been set up after two years of talks--at first at Kaesong and then later, and principally, at Panmunjom, both of which are near the North Korean/South Korean border, near the Demilitarized Zone. It was an emotional time, particularly when you saw the Chinese trucks, which were a little smaller than a two-and-a-half ton U.S. Army truck, carrying our prisoners and you could see them hanging out of the sides waiting. They just couldn't wait to get to freedom, and I have some pictures taken across the rice paddies of these people coming across; these soldiers--fellow soldiers who've been to prison, many as long as three years. Because fifty percent of the prisoners, our prisoners--prisoners that were captured U.S. and other U.N. personnel, and Republic of Korea soldiers who were captured--fifty percent of them were captured in the first six months of the war. So a lot of these people had spent a long time in captivity. A lot had died in captivity, been tortured, and so on and so forth. Similar to the situation, some ways, in as far as the prisoner conditions that existed in Hanoi--Hanoi Hilton in--during the Vietnam War. So, of course, you get a feeling of thankfulness that you were not a prisoner for three years when you see these people. I wrote a letter to my mother, which I read years later, that I had written a few days right after, telling of the experience I had going into a room where the media--television media and newspapers that were assigned to the Freedom Village compounds, inside the compounds. I wasn't supposed to be in there, went in there anyhow. And they brought out this young man--And I had the letter by the way. I actually had the letters to my mother explaining how the young man broke down after much questioning. He was real cool and answered all the questions until the last one when the guy said, "If you had a choice right now what would you really want right now, what would it be?" And he said, his lips quivered, I was no further away from him than I am to you, and he said, "I want to go home. I want to go home." And he just broke down, totally broke down emotionally. An officer, lieutenant colonel, gently led him away and the cameras shut down and that was the end of the interviews for the day. So you can see that that would have a very emotional, even for a witness, very emotional experience.
- Mik: What kind of physical shape were they in?
- Cliff: Varying. The ones that needed medical care were evacuated to a to an evac hospital. And if their--depending on their medical needs--medical needs were first taken care

of and then a final debriefing. The ones that you see--as we got toward the end of the war-- they fed. Our troops, who were prisoners, were fed a little better and cleaned up and so on and so forth so that they would make a better impression on the world opinion, and so many did not require serious medical care. The same was true of the South Korean repatriates. They came back to their "Liberty Village" as they called it and many of them were helicoptered--many of them suffered greatly and they were helicoptered back to Seoul. And I was back in Seoul. I had pictures of these North--South Korean--South Korean patriots being led--some were carried in litters off the helicopters and some were being led by a medical personnel off of the helicopters and into waiting ambulances. And the ambulances then took them to medical facilities where they could be cared for.

Mik: You mentioned brainwashing?

Cliff: Yes, while they were prisoners. This is where the term "brainwashing" came from. They would be constantly reeducated to why Communism is great and would be isolated from everything. They would be told lies about the U.S. For instance, that we were using germ warfare, which was not true. There were some that were forced to make confessions and there were others who were merely put through an intensive brainwashing to try to get them to believe that the Communist way was the way and not the way of the West. And a lot of these people had to be deprogrammed. But in most cases the prisoners have their own little society within the prison camp and they keep up their own morale, unless they're in isolation. And I was never a prisoner of war. I can't really address that. Ideally you should be talking to someone who was a prisoner of war and not someone who was a rear-echelon troop.

Mik: Were you aware that that was going on?

Cliff: Yes. It was in the intelligence community. As I said, we were in a position where we were able--we were in Seoul--we were able to get the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. We were briefed through our troop education, information education programs, TI&E [Troop Information and Education] programs by our officers as to what was going on. Plus we were told the big picture. There was a little more informality in the Army Security Agency where I served between the officers and the enlisted men where I will share--be able to talk together more freely than in some circumstances. And we were able to, although the strange thing is, we went and took a survey, our unit newspaper in Seoul, and found out that the average educational attainment of the enlisted men--the private, PFC, and the corporal--was two years of college completed. The officers, one year, which was much to the delight of the enlisted men of course. [laughs]

Mik: When you talk about knowing a little bit more about the big picture--

Cliff: Yeah, that's what it was. Yeah.

Mik: Because you were in intelligence. For those guys that that were just holding a line, did they understand that big picture? I mean did—

Cliff: Well, that was—well, they were busy fighting a war. I mean we were fighting a war in a different way. We were gathering intelligence, but we had more time to think about these things, and we had more chance to read a newspaper, to hear Armed Forces Radio--it wasn't Armed Forces Radio and Television because there was no television; it was Armed Forces Radio--and to get the reports from back home, and also to get troop education briefings within the military establishment through the Armed Forces Radio and Television Ser--Armed Forces Radio Service as it was called in those days. And this was, of course, received on normal portable radios with batteries, which some of us had during the war. Now people up in the front didn't have time for this. To begin with, they were too busy--too, too busy conducting the warfare--they didn't have the time always to have this--what I call privilege of being able to find out about the big picture.

Mik: Well the big picture was so totally different from the war that everybody had experience with, which was get to Berlin or get to—

Cliff: That's right.

Mik: Japan.

Cliff: That's right. The objectives were not always so well-defined. Plus you had opposition, particularly towards the end of the war, from Korea's first president, Syngman Rhee, a name well-known to anyone who was an adult in the fifties. And Syngman Rhee was the intransigent. He would not give in to the U.S. position. Eisenhower wanted to get us out of a war. In fact, he promised that he would get us out of the war if he was elected President, and he made one trip over to the Republic of Korea and visited the troops, ate with the troops, and so on and so forth, and said that he would try to bring the war to a successful conclusion. Well, a successful conclusion, in the eyes of Dwight David Eisenhower and his Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, was a little different than that of Syngman Rhee and his generals. Syngman Rhee wanted to go--

Mik: Okay.

Cliff: Syngman Rhee was elected when the Republic of Korea was established by election in 1948. And so, he was president all through the war until after the conclusion of the war. Syngman Rhee was a very stubborn man and he wanted the United Nations Forces, which were twenty-two nations, including the United States. The third biggest force that was the Republic of Korea Army, called the ROK Army, and the United States Army, and then the British First Commonwealth Division, which was comprised of Commonwealth nations including Canada too--to include Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, and so forth. So it was the United Nations effort, the only really successful United Nations undertaking, and their aims were a little

different. They wanted to conclude the war with the idea that South Korea would remain free--that was everything south of the 38th parallel would be back to where it was on June 25th, 1950, where you had a fledgling South Korean government and North Korea government in Pyongyang under Kim Il Sung, who was a puppet--was in effect appointed by the Soviets. The Soviets also had a heavy hand in advising. They flew MiG-15's in the war and they actually took part--they tried to make be low-key about it, but they still took a part, a very significant part, in the war. However, the Chinese had taken a tremendous beating after the Inchon Invasion split the forces, and then we decided to go north all the way to the Yalu River. MacArthur wanted to push further and then, of course, this ultimately caused MacArthur's relief from command in the Far East. And Matthew Ridgeway became the commander. And this all occurred in April of 1951. But Syngman Rhee, meanwhile, when it got down to the end--when they had the talks, the talks lasted two out of the three years of the war, all of late--latter part of '51. Strange as it may seem, it was the Soviet U.N. Ambassador, Yakov Malik, who was the one, on orders from Stalin no doubt, was the one that ordered that talks begin; first at Kaesong near the Demilitarized Zone and then the talks were moved to Panmunjom. But these talks went on and on and on. And while they were going on and on and on, our troops and their troops were being slaughtered. Not much real estate was taken. It was back and forth, particularly during the last phase of the talks, which were the spring and early summer of 1953. This was a time when you had these Heartbreak Ridge, Pork Chop Hill, and not much territory taken by either side, but a war of attrition. Syngman Rhee, in the face of that background, Syngman Rhee wanted to advance and unify Korea on his terms and they'll just go back up and take over North Korea. Well, Kim Il Sung would have no part of this so, in the mean time, President Eisenhower--as the historian explains this very well for your viewers, and they want to read that, there's several books which explain this attitude of Syngman Rhee. Eisenhower, meanwhile, was insisting--he sent special envoys over to Seoul, while I was there in 1953, in the spring of 1953, to talk some sense into Syngman Rhee. We ultimately made concessions. A lot of them are economic concessions, which ultimately resulted in Korea, after the war, being able to recover economically and get on its feet. And today it is a very prosperous and free country. **[End of Tape WCKOR009]**

Mik: What I was wondering about Syngman Rhee is--what you thought of him at the time while you were there?

Cliff: Well, early on Rhee was not quite so stubborn, and when the talks were on and he had not incurred a large amount of animosity on the part of those who were engaged in trying to bring this war to a swift conclusion. I went in Seoul to the fifth anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Korea and took my camera with me and I got a nice close-up shots of Syngman Rhee, his wife, who was actually a woman from India, and the U.S. Ambassador and his wife to Korea, and General Maxwell Taylor who had taken over as commander in 1953 of the United Nations Forces in Korea. And there in a view, review stand, was a portable review stand set up and then all the ROK Army division: Navy, Air Force elements, ROK Divisions-

-all had regiments who parade, went on parade. This is a big parade and I had a camera, and was nervy, and I had a chance to step out into beyond where the MPs were and everything. They didn't bother with me cuz I was a troop, and I had a camera, and that was good enough for them. So I had some--I got some good pictures of that. And Syngman Rhee was treated with every bit of respect, of course, by everybody--the Americans, the U.N. people, and, of course, this was a moment of ceremony, and that's the only time I actually saw Syngman Rhee. Syngman Rhee basically didn't make many public appearances, for obvious reasons, and his home was in what they call the "Blue-Tile Palace," which is if you take the City of Seoul, it would be in the northwest corner. It had blue tile on top of it and was surrounded by much razor wire and so on and so forth. Umm, which brings up Bed Check Charlie. Bed Check Charlie was some--something that many of the troops were familiar with in all sections from the combat sections down to Seoul, down to Port of Pusan. They would fly out of Pyongyang and come down at night, and they were planes similar to the type that you would see in central Wisconsin where they fly bi-wing and single planes at very slow speeds and very low altitudes to crop dust. They're like crop dusters: 1920-type, 1930 small planes. The reason they used these aircraft rather than high-performance jet aircraft was so that they could go between the mountains north of Seoul. There were two mountains like this [gestures] and the plane would fly between them. Over here was Kimpo Air Force Base, fourteen miles to the northwest. They had the radar. There was no radar to pick up aircraft because we had air superiority, right? Okay. That was the last two years of the war, so Seoul didn't have any ground-to-air protection, no "ack-ack" [anti-aircraft fire], no anti-aircraft protection believe it or not, despite the fact that 8th Army Headquarters and 5th Air Force were located in Yangsan, Seoul area. So all the detection and all the anti-aircraft was located at Kimpo Air Base, now the home of Gimpo International Airport, fourteen miles northwest of Seoul. Well, of course, they would come in and drop their ordnance, which wasn't heavy--it was like hundred-pound bombs and so on. They'd drop anything they had out the side indiscriminately. They didn't have any Norden bombsights, which are very familiar to World War II veterans, particularly for having pinpoint precision in bombing. They would just drop this ordnance as a harassing thing and the one time we got very angry because an orphanage that we had a part in supporting--it was bombed and many of the orphans were killed. It was about a quarter of a mile away from our compound. Umm. Bed Check Charlie as he was called would come in about bed check time. He'd come in right after dark. When the skies were not totally dark, you could see it up at the top. And we had coaxially-mounted fifty-caliber machine guns in an anti-aircraft configuration--it was these four fifty-caliber water-cooled machine guns on the roof to shoot down Bed Check Charlie. Plus we had our own side arms, but we were not allowed to fire a shot in the final months of the war on orders from 8th Army. We didn't want to rattle the sensitive negotiations that were going on. Meanwhile, up on the front, right up until the last day of the war, U.S. casualties were being taken in large numbers. I have never been able to reconcile that, or to fully understand that, or get an explanation from anyone on that. I was told to--I used to like to imbibe a little bit on Canadian Club, which being an intelligence organization we managed to smuggle in and I was told by the Colonel,

"Sergeant Borden, get down in the shelter, down below ground level, with your bottle of Canadian Club and stay there." Firing a shot would be a major international incident, if we would've fired a shot. Orders were right from General Taylor that you don't fire back at these people. It's okay for them to drop ordnance on Seoul, but it's not okay to get rid of the enemy air. And now, as far as why didn't they scramble the jets that were at Kimpo, because the jets would be scrambled, but by the time that they would be, they would be back in Pyongyang at the Officer's Club before they discovered that the planes went overhead and dropped their ordnance.

Mik: We'll pick that up.

Cliff: What we got now? Bed Check Charlie would fly between these two mountains north of Seoul and he would drop his ordnance. We would see his silhouette in the sky--sometimes as high as a hundred, a hundred and fifty feet over our--because our bombed out schoolhouse, which is our headquarters in Seoul, was on elevated ground so we were closer to Bed Check Charlie than people down in the city itself. So he would fly over the city; fly around, and go back, and fly back, and by the time he had disappeared, the word finally had gone through Army and Air Force channels, Seoul has had another visit from Bed Check Charlie. See, not a shot fired except Bed Check Charlie would drop his ordnance. Okay? So then, they would be barely back in the Pyongyang Officer's Club laughing their head off. Okay? In the meantime, here come the tracers from the ground-to-air, which was at Kimpo. And they would be coming up at--instead of a trajectory like this up at the planes and the lights--okay, the trajectory would be almost flat; it would be over, just over the top of the mountain. Now what they were firing at I don't know because there wasn't any planes up there anymore. And the jets--if they scrambled, they'd overshoot these guys. In other words, they'd have to maintain a higher altitude and they'd be so fast that they would--by the time they spotted these guys they would've overshoot them. I suppose the technology in those days--aircraft technology was not quite what it is today. And a Navy officer jerry-rigged an L-19 Observation Plane with thirty-caliber machine guns and became the first ace to shoot down Bed Check Charlie. Five knockouts from this Navy pilot flying an Army L-19 Artillery Observation Plane with thirty-calibers mounted on the fuselage and shot down Bed Check Charlie. Five of 'em.

Mik: Five of them?

Cliff: Yeah. You had to be five, in Air Force or whatever you were, but you had to shoot down five in order to be an ace.

Mik: So when they'd get one another one, would more just--still come the next night?

Cliff: Well, no. They would come sporadically. We'd go for three weeks and not have a visit from Bed Check Charlie. So this, of course, we could not understand the reasoning behind these things.

Mik: Their reasoning?

Cliff: That we could not understand the reasoning of the powers that be. By this time President Eisenhower--and I'm not knocking Ike, but by this time, the push was really on to end the war. And to end it, essentially we wanted to end it just north of the 38th Parallel. The Communists wanted to set the line at the 38th Parallel exactly. When we first started the talks, in the early 1953 part of the talks, we wanted them to be on the main line of resistance. The main line of resistance was on high ground and the DMZ was not so, from a tactical standpoint, we would be better--we had taken the high ground. It's better to fight the war from the high ground down than it is to--I mean I'm not the supreme tactician here, obviously. I'm not even combat arms, but then having read a lot of analysis on this afterwards. Bevin Alexander is an author of a book called *Korea: The First War We Lost*. Well, I disagree with him on the title because I think we preserved the freedom for the Republic and the people of South Korea by having been there and defended them against the Communist sect in the North. But aside from that, he makes a very credible account of the Korean War, both before, during and after. Bevin Alexander. But the talks--ultimately, of course, Syngman Rhee came around after a lot of concessions were made, but he refused to sign the Armistice. He would go along with it, but he wouldn't be a signatory to it. Whereas Kim Il Sung, the longtime leader of North Korea, signed along with his top generals and our top generals. There were a number of signing ceremonies that took place. The Chinese signed separately, the North Koreans, and so on. And then, as a part of the truce--the truce was a cease-fire--that portion of it was a cease-fire and also a defining of the line--of the territorial lines. And the 38th Parallel runs through the middle of the Demilitarized Zone. Syngman Rhee wanted it, as I said, wanted to go ahead and take the North. Well, he finally backed off that position in return for concessions that were made by the negotiating team, which was both the State Department and involved the State Department, the White House, and, of course, the Department of Defense, and the United Nations Command. In the meantime, until the actual cease-fire took place on the 27th of July 1953, the fighting continued and fiercely with many, many, many casualties on both sides. Finally, there was the cease-fire.

Mik: Huge numbers.

Cliff: Huge numbers. Huge numbers. I don't have them sitting here at this interview, but I know what they are because I've read the casualties and official reports and there were many casualties--unnecessary loss of life as far as I was personally concerned. This was due to the intransigence of Syngman Rhee who would not agree to the Armistice period, much less sign it. Well, finally the Armistice was signed, peace treaty. The next thing that came along was part of the settlement. It was actually a separate document, but it went hand-in-hand, and that was to provide for the repatriation of forces from both sides. In other words: the Chinese and the North Koreans that we held captive and the Americans, the Brits and other, and the ROKs --the Republic of Korea soldiers--and the other UN forces, which were captured.

These people had to have a chance at going back where they wanted to go. They could either--the Communist could either forgo Communism. The Chinese ended up in Taiwan when they decided they didn't want to go back to Communist China or Communism. And the North and the South Koreans were welcome--the South Koreans were welcomed back to their own homeland. The Americans, of course, all but twenty-three, wanted to be repatriated back to U.S. Command and ultimately go back home to their homeland, to their families. There were twenty-three who refused repatriation. As years went by, they let go. I believe there were only two remaining, and--but one Briton. There was one from the British 1st Commonwealth Division who refused repatriation, wanted to stay up there. And we can blame this on brainwashing because the neutral nations were there to supervise when the questions were asked, "Do you want to go North? Do you want to go South?" So it was a very, very, very, very difficult time. Syngman Rhee ultimately retired in exile to Hawaii where he lived out his final years.

Mik: Did all the different UN forces have their own bases?

Cliff: Most of the UN forces that were over there were a battalion, or at the most brigade level. The British 1st Commonwealth Division did maintain their own control, a chain of command, and they had various bases; if you want to call them bases. There was one down the street from us, down the alley, I should say, from us in Seoul, which was a British subcommand for logistical and communications purposes. And in that unit, we used to go drink beer with those guys--one of the few times, few hours we were off in the evening and they had--they were fierce soldiers. They lost--the Canadians alone lost 516 soldiers to combat in the Korean War; just the Canadians alone, 516. They were a relatively small Commonwealth Nation. There were many more from Great Britain itself--many more casualties--many more men that fought, but they fought underneath a British general officer. And the British Commonwealth Division, of course, the Commonwealth Nations share or at that point, at that time, shared a common defense policy. And there was their foreign policy. With regard to respect to the Korean War, they were pretty much all together on it. And they all took part.

Mik: Did you say there were more ROK soldiers than there were American soldiers?

Cliff: Yes, and more, more, more casualties, far more casualties, because they lacked training. You got to remember that these people were under Japanese occupation from 1910 to 1945 and they were not allowed to have any leadership training or a chance to practice leadership, whether it be in the field of business, whether it be in the field of civil government, or whether it be in the armed forces. And so therefore, all there was--once we pulled out our occupation troops, and the Russians pulled theirs out and went back to Russia, and we went back to the United States, because we couldn't field any troops to begin with--we didn't have great numbers. We had 500 advisors in the KMAC detachment, which was in Seoul, plus one battery of artillery and that was all there was to protect the American forces besides the Marines in the embassy. So we had a KMAC group--which was a cadre, which was

before June 25th, 1950--were training the South Koreans to defend themselves against encroachment from the North, which did occur on 25, June '50. But we had known some time that the war--there would be an invasion from the North. We figured it would not be during the certain time of the year, which it turned out it was--that it would not be until after the rainy season. And, as it turned out, it was a surprise attack on that morning. There was one United States Army captain who had his quarters; he was with the KMAG group and he had his quarters at Kaesong, which is right on the line. And he heard the small arms fire and the RPG rounds coming in too close to his quarters, so he grabbed his jeep and caught up with the rest. Overnight, the North Koreans had laid the tracks. They had removed the trackage between North and South Korea at the time that they split North and South Korea. They removed the trackage, so overnight they put the tracks back in so that they could then take supplies and move them, that the trains moved the supplies to follow the troops. They had armor columns and they had T-34 Soviet-manufactured tanks, which at that time was considered to be the best tank of any armed forces in the world. And these--this armored column was coming at the first U.S. troops, which were deployed, which was a battalion minus called Task Force Smith. It was commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel Brad Smith, West Pointer, World War II combat vet. And his senior NCO's, and a few senior officers, and the rest were all green troops who were flown over from Japan where they had the soft life as occupation troops in Japan. Training was minimal; the arms and the ammunition were either inoperable or obsolete. And so with this obsolete force--for instance the only thing that would penetrate the armor on a T-34 tank would be a heat-seeking round from a Howitzer. All we had in country at that time was six heat-seeking rounds.

Mik: Six?

Cliff: Six.

Mik: Rounds? Or six—

Cliff: Rounds. Six rounds.

Mik: [Laughs]

Cliff: So we knocked out a couple tanks and that was it. It was downhill from then on, fighting as hard as they could using what they had, the infantry weapons. But this was like two companies of infantry, plus they were augmented by a battery, which was stationed in Seoul with the KMAG group. And they took their positions. They were flown over in C-130s. They were flown over to Pusan, put on a train from Pusan, and they were taken up to--is it Taejon or Taegu?--which are in South Korea, midway, and then put on Army trucks. And then towing 105 Howitzers, and then they moved up to a high point north of Seoul--a place called Osan and that's where they dug in and took their stand against these armor columns, which were coming across. Meantime the Koreans blew it. They blew the only bridge across the Han

River, south of Seoul, and meantime you got all these refugees are coming south. And plus you have the ROK troops coming south. And they lost a lot of their NCOs, a lot of their key officers were lost, so they couldn't get across the water. Han River's a big body of water south of Seoul. Alright, well, in their panic, they blew the bridge before the troops all got across. And many people were on the bridge at the time and they all drowned in the Han River. So these were bad times. I wasn't there fortunately.

Mik: So what was, just--well, I'm not going to ask that yet—

Cliff: No, but some of--

Mik: It's too noisy—

Cliff: No, well anyway, just to tell you off the camera--the troops that you interviewed, the two Native American guys have great stories to tell. Anyway one of them was a prisoner and very articulate--very articulate. I don't know who you're going to choose, but, I mean, he's the one that, if I were choosing, he'd be one of the guys I would choose. And I believe you have one who was involved in an early on confronting of the enemy. It was either there were several--when we first landed, there were elements of the 24th Infantry Division, which was commanded by General William Dean, who ultimately, when they went to the Pusan perimeter, went the wrong way; turned the wrong way and was captured. That's kind of a oversimplification, but, anyway, he was captured and held prisoner--the highest ranking--he was a Major General and he was high ranking Commanding General of the 24th Infantry Division. Ultimately the 25th Division came over and it was augmented eventually all during the first year of the war by many Division: 8th Army, number one, and the 45th Division, and the 40th Division--the California National Guard. These people--they took tremendous losses because their status--state of training was very inadequate to what it should have been in order to fight off these well-trained, Soviet-trained forces of North Korea. But, however, we prevailed, and we prevailed, and MacArthur, of course, had the Inchon Invasion and the Inchon Invasion split the forces between the North and South and so then we just cleaned up. We moved up like this and moved down. We took care of the forces that were in the southern half of Korea, and then, flush with victory, MacArthur then went on the offensive, and we moved all the way up; took over Pyongyang, the North Korean capitol, and moved on up the peninsula. Eventually our forces were up on the Yalu River.

Mik: Yeah that's what I was going to ask you, was if Macarthur was basically removed from command for going up there.

Cliff: That was after we were already up there.

Mik: Right.

Cliff: But he wanted to go into Manchuria.

Mik: But then why then did Rhee think there was any hope at all that the UN would support him in taking—

Cliff: Well only the mind of the late Syngman Rhee can answer that question. I've never read anybody who was close enough to Rhee to be able to figure out why he was so obstinate. It was the great dream, you know, to unify. In fact, today a lot of the civilian leadership of South Korea today would like to see uniting of the North and the South. The North, I am convinced, will only unite on their terms. Whether it be because of conquest by them, or by intimidation, and this, of course, is where the thing stands right now. We're trying to get the Chinese, and Soviets, and so on to get the North to give up its production of nuclear weapons.

Mik: So when the—

Cliff: And they're not. They're still continuing to develop them.

Mik: When the North Koreans first invaded, I mean, everybody knew that was with Soviet support, right?

Cliff: Well, the people on the inside knew, but it was hard to prove because all this was being done sub rosa ["under the rose," used to denote secrecy or confidentiality], you know.

Mik: And then once the Chinese entered, was there still that they were still flying MiGs right? Was there—

Cliff: Yeah, basically yes. Yes. Now, of course, I wasn't up at Chosin Reservoir so you need a Chosin Reservoir veteran to be able to tell this story properly, but the fact was that the Marines--the Marines never retreat. The Army calls retreat a "retrograde movement"--we had to flee because of the overwhelming odds of Chinese coming down across the line. They had troops positioned up there in far greater numbers than our intelligence even dreamed; like ten times the number of troops up there waiting and poised to come down--to come down when they decided to attack and the moment was right. So we were pushed down to the Pusan perimeter while we established a line of defense augmented by Army troops.

Mik: Oh, that was—

Cliff: Army troops came in--

Mik: When the Chinese came in—

Cliff: This was after the Chinese came in--

Mik: They were pushed back—

Cliff: After the Chinese came in. After the Chinese came in and pushed down not--the Pusan perimeter was earlier in the war so don't confuse that. We're talking about when the Chinese entered the war. And they came down and pushed us down to the-- Marines were trapped at the Chosin Reservoir.

Mik: Chosin.

Cliff: Right. And the Army provided cover, and the Marines provided cover, so--and air support—U.S. air support provided ground cover. In fact, there is a veteran from Wisconsin who retired, Brigadier General Don Harned, who, I believe, was on one of your listening sessions--he actually flew a air-to-ground support in the retreat from the Chosin Reservoir down to the port of Hungnam. In the port of Hungnam, they successfully were able to evacuate Marine and Army personnel from there and then they blew the harbor up afterwards. The Navy SEALs, or what they now call the Navy SEALs, went in there with high explosives and destroyed everything as they went so the enemy wouldn't be able to capture any war materiel. And Hungnam was then a port and then they--eventually the--when they got back, they had a chance to regroup; the fortunes of war. The Chinese lost a tremendous amount of people, tremendous amount of people, so much more than we did--much, much more--to the point where they were ready for talks. And in the--actually it was the Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations who pretty much insisted to the Chinese leadership--Communist Chinese leadership and to the North Korean leadership that the talks be initiated and to start to find a way out of this morass. They didn't take very kindly to this. They wanted to continue the war because, okay, we were--we were really starting to push toward--push north again--not into North Korea, but, you know, up near the 38th Parallel.

Mik: So that's why they--we gotta change tapes. **[End of Tape WCKOR010]**

Cliff: There's a brotherhood between us. They're trying to get me to join the Brit--The thing is, our by-laws for these groups, since we're all united under the United Nations banner--Also, veterans who are non-military and non-governmental, okay, have a camaraderie between us. Not only did I serve alongside the Brits and so on, but also now I'm their friend as the officer. I go to their ceremonies. They come to ours and the same is true of the other nations, in a smaller number, sometimes down as small as battalion size units.

Mik: Tell me about--describe Seoul for me when you got there.

Cliff: It underwent the ravages. I arrived early in March of '53, uh, on a C-124 Globe-Master, which the veterans are all familiar with. That's the same plane that flew the troops when they got to take R&R--Rest and Relaxation--over in Japan. They flew these planes from K-16 which was an airstrip on an island out in the middle of the Han River between Yong Dong Po to the south and Yongsan, Seoul to the north.

And so I flew in on this thing and was picked up by the motor pool, by the vehicle from the motor pool and taken to the head quarters and processed in as a transfer to Korea into the Army Security Agency Headquarters, which is the Five-O First Communications Reconnaissance Group in Seoul. And that is where I remained except for the short time that I traveled up to—ah--right after the war when I traveled up to Prisoner Exchange Exercises, which was on my own time. But the rest of the time, I was basically working in two Japanese-built high schools, steel-reinforced concrete buildings that had a lot of damage on the buildings from artillery. You got to remember that the Communists went through Seoul and took it over twice, and we did it back and forth. There was the Seoul City itself and all its infrastructure, all its buildings and everything, and its people, of course, were subjected to invasion four times, all told. So the buildings were not in very good shape, for the most part. Ah, and you would have windows with no frames and doors with no frames in them. You would have many buildings, no roofs on them. So, I mean, this was not as bad as Dresden in World War II, where you see these pictures of Dresden where they had the fire bombings. Not as bad as that, but it was a war-torn city. People--you had open markets with bare necessities of life for sale with the Korean merchants selling to the populace what little they had--many of the compounds of Seoul, which were occupied by various units of the American forces, and the British forces, and the ROK forces. Ah, many of the--we'll say--GIs had pet dogs they kept in the compound. Compounds were surrounded by concertina wire so that the pets knew that they would be fed if they were in there. And, of course, people like pets, dogs. Okay, the dogs would occasionally either be stolen or would get loose. If they would get loose and into the hands of the Koreans--the Koreans used to boil the dogs live for meat. You could hear the animals screaming in the dark of night with no moon. You could hear the animals screaming as the dogs were tossed into the boiling water. The Koreans eat dog; that is just part of their culture. Dog meat--dogs are raised for meat and you, ah, were Korean. In fact when I went back in '85, they were getting ready for the Olympics in Seoul and they said, "For gosh sake," the Americans said, "Don't serve dog in your restaurants, on your main street restaurants." [Laughing] But they would take the dogs and use them for meat. They were hard up for meat especially. The grains were a little better because the South was agricultural. The North was, ah--largely industrial. And I'd say part of the problem today with North—North Korea has to import a lot of their agricultural products and part of the South. So the South was better off from an agricultural standpoint. The people were impoverished. There was the black market downtown. Prostitution was legal. Little orphans would come around dressed in just a G.I. tee-shirt, come around and, excuse the expression, pimping for their sisters and their mother. The G.I. would come by, would try to ply the trade of prostitution. The little boys--from anywhere from four years old up to fifteen--would be shoeshine boys, and they would offer to shine your G.I. boots when you walked downtown Seoul. Well, you'd no sooner get your boots shined, and I mean you could comb your hair in them--in the reflection, and there would be a whole flock of these little urchins coming after you. They'd want, "Shoeshine, GI?" Ya know. I know one friend of mine that went down to the black market, and he had a camera he bought in Tokyo on R&R, and he had it snipped off with a box cutter or a

razor blade, and the next thing he knew he was walking around with just a strap around him--because of the crowds pressed into this side street alleyway and everything. They were so packed in, so close that pickpockets flourished. And so, this is what it was like. Everybody was trying for survival. I am talking about the civilian populace now. I'm not talking about the G.I.s. They had their own mess hall and everything.

Mik: Was it so crowded because everybody had congregated?

Cliff: About a million and a half population in Seoul at that time. So, ah, they were all looking for handouts. If you went down to the very primitive PX we had downtown, we would buy a carton of Wrigley's Gum. We'd be lucky if we had one stick left when we got back to the--walked back to our quarters, because your heart went out to these kids. You gave away your candy bars away. Every group that had a headquarters or had a unit in Seoul, a rear echelon unit, supported or partially supported a Korean orphanage; didn't have any choice. The picture that is behind me is of an orphan. This used to be his neighborhood. His clothes are made from cloth made from American G.I. hundred-percent wool blankets. Chances are an aunt or some relative made those clothes for that little boy and he is clutching his little cap. Your heart went out to these children. The children didn't ask for that war.

Mik: Tell me about that encounter. You were just wandering around there?

Cliff: They were very friendly to the Americans because the Americans would never abuse a Korean, a child under any circumstances. They were friend, friendly, typical G.I.s. World War II veterans, friends of mine, combat and out of combat, would tell me about having run into civilians in the course of the war. Everybody loves a G.I. And the G.I.s, being Americans and being raised in American culture where they value individual life, would feel sorry for these orphans and, in our small way, would try to better their daily life as much as we could. The few hours that we were off and we were non-operations--course no Koreans were allowed in our compound because everything was top secret. We, our own perimeter guard--many of the units used Koreans--guards; armed guards to guard their supplies and so on and so forth. But because we were operational under top secret intelligence outfit, we had to take our own personnel, which were scarce, was one reason why we worked fourteen hours a day. Didn't have enough people and also took turns on a roster. Anybody, corporal or below, would walk guard at night to be sure that no one breached the compound. But I can't really tell a war story because I was very fortunate in being behind the enemy lines.

Mik: Was there any kind of combat going on--not combat, but terrorism, or sabotage, or anything going on in Seoul?

Cliff: No, because once in a while there would be a North Korean--now I have one little anecdote here: a North Korean agent in civilian clothes would make their way down.

When they were discovered by the ROK military authorities, they were spies. As an example to anybody else--I saw a skeleton that still had flesh on it, hanging beneath a bridge in downtown Seoul, swaying back and forth. In other words, that person was executed as a spy and then was allowed to rot, and the summers are warm in Seoul. But that was a lesson to anybody who would collude; who would from the North would come down and be a spy or a South Korean; who would openly side with the North Koreans. In other words, everybody was suspect. Draft dodgers, another thing. Draft dodgers—anybody who was a draft dodger; who was a South Korean young man who avoided the draft. They used to go around with two and a half ton trucks. The ROK M.P.s would go down, and they would round up civilians, and if you didn't have the proper papers, and it was proven that you were a draft dodger; you were given a choice. You were either allowed to immediately join the ROK army and be shipped to the front or you would be executed with a .45. And I actually didn't see it, but I heard the .45s go off. Once they drove four--five of these guys that were left on the truck. Some of them went this way--went to the Army Headquarters--and the others went into a compound, which was behind big doors--big oaken doors--and we heard the quiet dispatches of the .45. In other words, they did not want to go up to the front. They had a choice: death or be drafted. And, of course, my mind thinks in terms of U.S. people who oppose the war and who draft dodged in various ways. Quite a contrast. Not that I advocate that we go shooting draft dodgers. Don't get me wrong [laughing]. No way. But the point is that that's their system. Very harsh.

Mik: But what about the fact that some of the people chose death?

Cliff: That's their choice. They could've gone and joined the Korean Army and had; since they were draft dodgers they wouldn't be given a soft job back in Seoul. They would be shipped up to the front lines as infantry. I only witnessed that once, but it's quite obvious. The Turks were rough too. I came home--when I came home, we took the Turks home. Went home from a--instead of going back to the West Coast of the United States, I took a Military Sea Transport Service vessel--a twin stacker--took it back to New York. And we went home by way of Pusan. It took thirty-six days to go from Pusan to Port of New York between February and March of 1954. We took the UN troops home. They didn't have their own boats to take home their relatively small contingents: French, Benelux nations, Turkey, Greece. And when we got off at the Port of Izmir, which is a flat dock area, you can see--you get up on B deck of the vessel--and you can see the people and they are all waving; cheers and greetings to the returning Turkish troops who are rotating home to their homeland after having fought hard in Korea. Well, there were two Turkish soldiers in leg irons and hand irons, which were led off the boat by Turkish M.P.s across this open area and down a couple of blocks and behind. And we were up on the dock watching everything going on and in about fifteen minutes we heard, once again, the unmistakable sound of pistol shots from a .45. It's only conjecture on our part, but we figured they had a kangaroo trial and a quick summary court martial. And they probably had colluded. I don't know, but we all--all the combat troops agreed, we all agreed on the B deck, they probably colluded with the enemy, which is why they

were taken off in leg irons to begin with. And once someone collaborated, a released prisoner, for instance, who didn't collaborate, probably told on them. The fact that they collaborated and gave them the punishment. So why mess around? The Turks are tough. They ran out of grenades, they used to throw rocks, I was told.

Mik: So what was it like, then, when you got home? Was it after the war?

Cliff: It was after the war, yes. It was after the war, but just after the war. I got home in March of--I had a sixty day leave. Was it a thirty day leave or sixty day leave? I was two years in Far East command so I was given a post overseas, post combat area leave. And I went downtown. I was proud of being a soldier. I was proud of the fact that we had saved the South Korean people. And so I wasn't afraid to wear my uniform, which in those days was like the uniform worn in Europe in the ETO by the World War II veterans: Ike jacket and the trousers, wool trousers. And the only thing different was the fact that I was wearing Korean ribbons instead of wearing Pacific or Theater ribbons from World War II. I was wearing Korean ribbons. So I went downtown and I walked into the malt shop. When I walked into the malt shop, there were people there that I had known before the war, before I went to college, in my hometown. And they said, "Cliff Borden, where have you been?" They didn't know I was in the Army. They'd gone to college, and graduated, and so on, and they were in there, having a malt, in the afternoon, handful of them. And when they found out that I had given up my studies and joined the Army--I wasn't drafted--had gone over and then volunteered to go to Korea--I was, ah, rivaling some of my stories of where I was, where I'd been--they'd asked me where I'd been. They were not very complimentary to me. They called me, well let's just say for the sake of television, that they called me a fool for having done this. Well, this apathy for the returning veterans has been shared by many. If you ask any Korean veteran, and in most cases, not all, but in many cases, there were no, no parades like after World War II. There was apathy and apathy hurts. So then I felt--I went back to college on the G.I. bill, the Korean G.I. bill, which by the way was less generous. Congress was less generous with treating the Korean veterans returning home for an education than those in World War II or from Vietnam. So I went back to college and worked part-time to support myself on the G.I. bill; ended up finding friends. In a college, you do. You're with strangers; big college at that time--it was about three thousand: all males; a Catholic university, Seton Hall University, which I owe a lot to. Wonderful education. Made friends with the veterans. Veterans all hung in together at a veterans club. We were over twenty-one. All of us were over twenty-one. We could drink. We could go out with the girls that do, as they say. And so we did. We dated. It was a nurse's training facility over in the Oranges. Where? South Orange, East Orange, I forget where it was. And we dated these women and there were no co-eds because it was non-coeducational institution of higher learning. So we did and we hung in with the veterans and ultimately several of us who kind of liked the service, but didn't want it full time--wasn't any war on--with no wars in sight--Vietnam wasn't in sight--and we decided to join the Guard Reserves, the Marine Corps Reserves, so on; whatever branch of the service we were in on active duty. We decided to join the Reserves

and that's where I started my thirty-five years of military service. Ultimately in 1958 I got a direct commission as a first lieutenant, and I worked my way up to sergeant first class, and then obtained a direct commission; ultimately serving as a captain and later as a major during the Vietnam War as a single volunteer. I was supposed to go to Vietnam. Instead, I was assigned stateside as a--what they used to call a re-tread because I was thirty-seven years old. I wasn't eighteen anymore.

Mik: Was all of this in intelligence?

Cliff: No. I got out of the intelligence game. I went into the Reserves and joined intelligence and then I went into civil affairs; military government they called it in those days--civil affairs unit. Today, in Green Bay, there's either a brigade or battalion of civil affairs headquarters in Green Bay that deployed to Iraq and recently returned. Civil Affairs takes over where civilian government is totally broken down--public works, law and order, monuments and archives, everything that--everything that is broken down in the civilian--until the civilian government can be reconstituted. They use civil affairs people. They are all Army Reserve people and active duty is just the framework of it. That's all. They don't on active duty have Civil Affairs branch. But I joined civil affairs and then when I got commissioned--I got commissioned in the Adjutant General Corps, which is the administration of the Army. And that's where I stayed until later in my career when I had quite a bit of media experience. They decided to assign me at the Pentagon to a branch of material assignment which was any branch--single corps, infantry, whatever--as a public affairs officer; as a PAO. They used to call them PIOs, Public Information Officer, Public Affairs Officer, and then I remained in that until the end of my time, and, ultimately, I was moved to full colonel and then I served five years as a full colonel. In 1990, I retired.

Mik: Back in Seoul, when you got there, what was your job there?

Cliff: When I was in Seoul I was assigned, like I was in Okinawa, as a radio traffic analyst, but I ended up--because I was one of the few people or comparatively few people who was very proficient in typing. As a college prep student you usually weren't allowed to take typing. That was for the girls in the commercial department in high school, only I talked my way into it because I knew when I went to college I'd probably have to know how to type because my handwriting is, in the words of my third grade teacher, hasn't improved since I was in third grade. My cursive writing is no good. So I decided I better type or I'll never get these themes and everything done. So I found the space in the typing class and I became very proficient in typing. And so they said, "Okay who can type? We need somebody to turn out all our paper work, which is generated as a result of all this intelligence gathering in the headquarters." So that's what I did the whole time I was in Seoul.

Mik: So, in Seoul, the intelligence was coming right off the front?

Cliff: Well, we were talking radio intercepts when you come to the Army Security Agency. Now there are other forms of intelligences that I won't take time to go into now, nor am I that knowledgeable of all the different forms of intelligence. For instance there are people who cross through the lines who are then interrogated by teams, intelligence teams. There are various forms of intelligence gathering. One of them is communications, radio communications. At the low level, it's the company commanders and lower--both enemies: Chinese and the Communists. Now in order to--we had to--these teams had to be augmented and these were all people in the Army Security Agency. They were people who, at the low levels, took voice communications and translated them. Now the voice communications didn't involve encryption, but when you got to the more strategic level--where you were spying on the enemy electronically and gathering intercepts, which were in four letter code groups--then they had to break down those code groups; break the code, translate the code, and, at the same time, translate so it would be usable to the intelligence officers who spoke only English. The Army Language School in Monterrey, California trained these people in either Mandarin Chinese, in the case of the Chinese intercepts, or, in the case of North Korea, Korean. It took one year of school if you signed up. I could've signed up and taken an extra year. It would have been four years instead of three years enlistment. A year of it would have been out there as submersion language training. In other words, you spoke nothing but Mandarin Chinese the whole time--you're in the mess-hall, you're in the billets, at the Presidio of Monterrey, California where they still have the Army Language School--

Mik: But in, in um—

Cliff: We didn't directly--the intelligence was turned over to those who would be planning how to respond to enemy attacks--anticipated enemy attacks and so on and so forth. That's what the intelligence was used--used to gather the intelligence strengths of the unit, order a battle, who all the head officers were, when they were transferred. All of this stuff was subject of radio traffic back and forth. So it was a constant monitoring of enemy traffic at the low level and the high level. The low level intercept people that we had were actually front line troopers. They were in bunkers. They had infantry men around them to keep them from being overrun in many cases, but they were in bunkers operating; doing their job intercepting walkie-talkies--the enemy--intercepting because they didn't bother at the local, tactical level, in mo--they didn't bother to encode it. It was all in plain text, in other words, they were just talking. And so there you, of course, you needed to have the interpreters.

Mik: And how did that get to you?

Cliff: Well that got to us down through intelligence channels.

Mik: The runners would bring the—

Cliff: Well, well no. It would be transmitted. Some of these things--the details of this, I really can't discuss because we are doing the same thing today.

Mik: When you talked about the four--the four word codes—

Cliff: Well, they--

Mik: Were they just like Morse Code?

Cliff: Well, it's transmitted as Morse Code. Okay, but it isn't--instead of a sentence or words, one word might be ten characters long. One word might be three characters long if we're in English or whatever. Let's say in English. Okay, well, then what you do is you operate off a code book and then you put that in. You encipher it. And there are enciphering machines that will turn all this intelligible stuff that you don't want anybody to hear--would then be turned into four letter code groups. We're talking letters here, letters and numbers, code groups of four and then you have people operating typewriters that type only uppercase. And they would be sitting there doing this with a set of headphones on 'til they go nuts. And they'd be sitting here taking all this stuff down, which means nothing to them except it will mean it to the people who are going to analyze it later. So I mean, basically, that is the basis of how these things are done. But as far as other factors, I don't wish to go into this because technically--years ago when we first got--after the war was out, we're not even supposed to talk about these things.

Mik: But it--you have a sense that it has continued pretty much the same system?

Cliff: Well today we still--the world--every embassy has--is bristling with--whether it's U.S., or Great Britain, or Soviet Union, or China, the embassies have antennas on top of them. Now some of them are to communicate with the State Department and others are receiving antennas. And receiving antennas--we have intercept operators in every embassy--that would be particularly those embassies that are near countries that are not friendly to the United States. So we are gathering this information now, but there's no war on. We're not--we're processing for future use. We keep these files updated. This is all part of a world-wide intelligence gathering system. The National Security Agency is the one that is the father of the Air Force Security Service and the Army Security Agency. They've now changed the names. The functions are the same, but they've combined them with other types of intelligence gathering so that, for instance, my outfit used to be called the--it used to be involved only with communications intelligence and also communication security. We monitor our own radio signals; going out to be sure that no one's breaking security accidentally or otherwise letting out information, which would be of a benefit to an enemy or a potential enemy.

Mik: When you were in Seoul and you were going out with your camera, was there a certain boundary that you wouldn't go past? I mean, was there city limits or were there—

Cliff: Oh no, no, no, you could wander around where it was safe, you know, where it was reasonably safe to your person just like around here. I mean, there are certain places in Washington D.C.--and I was stationed at the Pentagon for eleven years there, in the summers once a year. Now I would know better than to go into certain neighborhoods. After a while you get to know where, for instance to the capitol, you don't go any further. If you go there, there's what they call the "monuments district" of Washington D.C., which runs from the Potomac River and the Lincoln Memorial, runs past the Reflecting Towers goes up to--past the Vietnam Memorial, and the Korean Memorial, and the Washington Monument, and then you go into a big area of grass, big ellipse that goes up to the Capitol building. The U.S. Capitol, the White House is over here. Jefferson Memorial is over there to the south. The Tidal Basin is over here and then behind the--to the east, just to the east is the Library of Congress. You don't go any more than a couple of blocks east of the Library of Congress and the whole neighborhood changes. You're liable to come back mugged, dead, robbed, or worse. There are very bad neighborhoods as you go down into the southeastern part of Washington, D.C., particularly around the Anacostia area.

Mik: But were there still neighborhoods in Seoul? Were there wealthy neighborhoods and—

Cliff: No, there's nothing wealthy. No. Nobody was. This place was torn apart. I mean, these people were living in--everything was made over if it happened to get hit. If it was fortunate, if it was an old home and the people lived there, they didn't have any electricity in a lot of cases. They didn't have, well, for instance, we were in Seoul--we had a latrine, which was, for lack of a better word, an outhouse. It was open. It consisted of two sticks, a ditch, for the whole headquarters. And they were not sticks. They were placed--you sat between two branches and there was a little roof overhead in case it was raining--and shovels--where you had taken shoveled dirt in on top of waste material. Well, that was our sanitation. Our electricity consisted of a portable generator. This is in the enlisted quarters, which were behind the operations building. There were two long buildings. And the operations building faced out onto a parade field and this was, of course, a playground, I guess, when the school was there. Two school buildings: one was for operations, the one in the back was for the enlisted men who lived in a classroom. There were about twenty or twenty-five to thirty of us who lived in a classroom. We'd have a cot. We'd have a sleeping bag and we'd have a homemade box with a lid on it for a trunk and hang our clothes on nails. And overhead we had one big light bulb that would come down like this and that would be connected outside to a portable trailer generator, which would give us electricity and we thought we were in heaven. We shaved in the morning out of G.I. steel pots just like they did in--the troops up front would wash in the steel pots. And we would wash ourselves in the steel pots and, of course, the water would be brought in the Gerry cans of the World War II persuasion there. It's large water containers of potable water. And we would fill our canteens from a potable water source, which was a water truck, which was trailed behind a

deuce 'n a half or trailed behind a jeep or a three quarter ton weapons carrier. We ordered it to go from a central source of pure water so we were drinking potable water and it was non-potable water for washing purposes. As far as how did we wash our clothes? We sent them out with mama-san and paid her--[**End of Tape WCKOR011**]

Mik: So, I was wondering what you knew about Korea when you were a student still.

Cliff: Not much, even though I was a history major. You're not much of a history major when you are a freshman and a sophomore. However, I did take world history when I was a junior in high school from a woman who I admired more than any other teacher I had in the public school system. And when I would come to class unprepared or basically prepared, meaning a two sentence answer to something, which I should expound on, Mrs. Brown would say to me, "Clifford, that's a good start, continue." And the rest of the class would sit there with smirks on their faces knowing full well that I had prepared this thing based on the fact that I had looked at the book for half hour for homework the night before. So, I didn't apply myself that much. It wasn't that I wasn't interested. I just was, I guess, typical of many who don't live up to their potential academically when they're young because they have other interests. So that--it's not that, I was always interested in history. And I lived under the shadow of the greatest generation--the World War II guys we looked up to because, whether in school or out of school, of course World War II was constantly on our minds. I was eleven years old when Pearl Harbor was attacked, and I was fifteen years old when V-J Day came and the Japanese surrendered. And so, the military always had a fascination for me and still does. And I still consider that a major portion of my life and my being is being a soldier.

Mik: So when the initial invasion happened, when the North Koreans swept down—

Cliff: Oh, I knew where Korea was. I knew where--I was aware of the basic thing because I did read newspapers even though I didn't study it in school. Although there, the first time the American forces ever landed on Korea militarily was in 1871, which is going back a long ways.

Mik: But during the war, or the police action, I mean—

Cliff: Oh no, it was not a police action.

Mik: Was it front page news? Was it—

Cliff: Uh-- not as much attention as later when the war really got going. Well, the war was going when I joined in '51, I shouldn't say that, scratch all that. Kill every bit of that offa' the camera. I don't want that on. We read about it daily and perhaps our interest, whether we were history majors or not--the two years I was in college--the second year I was in college was '50 and '51 before I went into the service in June of '51. So, in other words, while I was in Bucknell, it was of interest to us not because

we had to be up on our current events, but we wanted to find out because we were susceptible to being drafted and sent over to this thing. "What is this?" "Where is Korea?" "Why're we doing this?" These questions were asked of our history professors. We asked the questions we wanted to know, because as college kids--we felt that we were maybe a notch above just high school graduates. And we felt that we should be up on--scratch that one too; it's snotty.

Mik: So were you also—

Cliff: Anyway, the point is we--what we did is we were up on the Korean War if we were susceptible to conscription--being drafted--being reclassified 1-A. That threat constantly hung over us as civilian college students, with 2-F student deferments. And what was going on and, it's like what was going on in Vietnam, wasn't very much of interest to young men of draft age during Vietnam War who were going to college and didn't have to go into service, at least not then. It was incumbent upon them to keep their marks up and so on and so forth. The case can be made for the fact that the majority of conscripts are usually from the working class and that the congressman's son and the white-collar folks very often send their kids to, in those days, send their kids to college and did not have to go into service. Hopefully the war would be over by the time that they faced the draft. So the draft was very much--today young people don't even know anything about these things. But this was foremost on your mind and you paid attention to it for that reason not because you wanted to be a good history student.

Mik: I guess what I'm trying to understand—

Cliff: Maybe I'm not answering your question.

Mik: Well, no, I'm not asking you the right question, but what I'm trying to understand is—

Cliff: I'm not happy with the answer either.

Mik: Why there is so little either awareness of the war back home or reception of the veterans when they returned. Why there was so little respect for them. What—

Cliff: Well, it was because, in the words of the World War II veteran who kicked me out of one of the major veterans' organizations posts--I forget it was either the American Legion or VFW from my own hometown--when I went to try to join, "Get outta here kid, you lost America's first war!" Quote, unquote. And because they consider that we lost it, because it wasn't a total victory, which theirs had been--or it was perceived that and to a large extent was a quote "popular war?" The citizenry from all walks of life backed it. This was absent in Korea. So when we got home, it was thankless at best to drop your life and go in and serve and be in harm's way and maybe come home dead in a box. Or, at best, it was a losing cause because we only ended up with a stalemate. We ended up back essentially on the 38th parallel.

Without taking into consideration time to--takes time to evaluate history. It takes decades to put things in proper perspective. And in 1954, when I came back to my hometown of New Providence, New Jersey, that perspective was not there.

Mik: You would think that of all people who should understand what the veteran experienced, the World War II vets would be a little more understanding—

Cliff: Well, I am not saying they were all that way. I know for a fact having been involved with the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars--indeed all the major veterans' organizations today recognize this. In fact at the time, the national convention of the VFW voted to have Korean veterans in at the outset. It was the local posts where you had people discourage membership. I was eligible the day I came home. I should have been accepted into that post. It was against the national by-laws not to allow me as an honorably discharged Korean veteran to be a bonafide member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, but it was the local post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars--individuals who had an attitude toward us. We lost the first war. "Get lost!" Because it's a privilege to belong to a veterans' organization. It's not mandatory. They don't have to take you in. When you join, you are voted in by the membership of the post at the lowest level, the posts. Then you can advance if you want, up through the hierarchy and eventually become a State Commander and, in the case of one of our Korean veterans, he became a National Commander-in-Chief: Walter Hogan, from Brookfield.

Mik: When you were talking about your laundry and going to the Mama Sans, the way you said it, it sounds like there was a Mama San that did everybody's laundry, but—

Cliff: That's right.

Mik: What was your relationship with—

Cliff: Well, the relationship was strictly business. These were middle-aged--I would call middle-aged women. You know, mothers and--the ones that I saw were really, truly middle-aged, middle-aged women and they would balance on top of their head all this laundry; straight up. And it was all starched, and clean, and pressed, and everything. And did all this by hand, went down to the stream and did it on flat rocks with flat baseball bats. And they beat this stuff with the starch and I don't know their secret, I didn't actually watch them do this, but I had friends who went down to watch Mama San wash the wash. See now we were working--our shifts, when Mama San did all of this. Now the Mama Sans were allowed to come on the base and drum up business for their wash. "Washy-washy."

Mik: Any other services?

Cliff: Yes, houseboys. Every unit had a houseboy who would do menial tasks that we didn't particularly want to do and didn't have time to do; everything from shining my shoes, to making my bed, to see that my clothes were all in order, and clean the

room. I never took a broom to the floor, the school house floor where I was quartered. It was all done by the house-boy. And we would pay--the government didn't pay for this; we paid out of our meager salaries, as privates and corporals and sergeants. We paid the houseboy. And every school room would have one houseboy, and we had thirty people, so the one houseboy for thirty people to take care of the room, make it immaculate. He would also fill all our water jugs with potable water. And he would do all. He would be a housemaid. Well this one houseboy, I'll never forget him. Name was Kim Kihung [?] and he was twelve years old. Cutest kid you ever saw. And he wanted to be a lawyer when he grew up, and so he went down to the black market and bought books and studied. He'd get--most the houseboys are goof-offs. They'd take all day, get it done and then get bawled out because they didn't do somebody's shoes. This guy would have everything all done by about 9:30 in the morning and the rest of the day he'd sit in the sunlight, in a corner of the school room there and everything--watch our stuff--little security for our stuff. He'd watch the stuff and he'd be reading and reading. He'd read books, one after the other. I went back in 1985; I tried to find him. I was not successful. He must have moved to another city.

Mik: Did they speak English--the houseboys?

Cliff: Yes, pretty good, I mean, you know, "Your boots okay, G.I.?" You know that kinda broken English, yeah. But they needed their business--matter of survival, because they didn't go to school. Schools were all closed down, except for a handful in 1953, a handful of private schools. There was a private girls' school. I have a picture of the girls sitting out on the lawn, eating from little tins, eating this kimchi--if you know what kimchi is. It's this kind of a rotten cabbage. Okay well, they'd sit there, and they'd sit with chopsticks, and eat them, and they'd be out there on the lawn of the school. So they would go to church and—there are a lot of Christians in Korea, a lot of Christians. In fact, the one most thrilling moment I had before--a month before I left to go home, well, less than a month, no, just a month before--it was Christmas, Christmas 1953. We heard there was going to be a Christmas Eve mass at the Archdiocese and Cathedral in Seoul, which was a vaulted, European-style cathedral. And we went, and they had no electricity in this place. Everything was lit by 1,500 candles. Thirteen-hundred Koreans came and took communion. It was til 3:00, 3:30, 4:00 in the morning before they got done serving communion. We were--a handful of G.I.s went and witnessed this, some of whom are still friends of mine today, that were there that day or that night. And we went in there and were served communion--took communion--even though many of us weren't Catholic. We were Christian. We weren't Catholic; [we were] Protestants. Went in there and there were probably--it was very impressive--they had a Korean man who sang up the in balcony, way to the rear of the sanctuary, and he sang two numbers, which will remain with me all my life, very beautiful Christmas numbers. He sang "Ave Maria," Bach/Gounod's "Ave Maria," and "Panos Angelicos." Catholics are very familiar with those two--and sang those two--and just picture it--these people--freedom at last--and they're there on their hands and knees praying, thanking God for their freedom. And we're here just by accident; heard about it, walked across

town to this Catholic cathedral. This was a day when the mass was in Latin. Talk about impressive; really impressive. The other was the Easter service, when the war was still on, on the South; on the mountains of the South side of Seoul. Over 100,000 Koreans walked as far as fifty miles away with their children on their back. These were Christian Koreans there to celebrate Easter Sunday morning. It would have been a total blood bath had the enemy--had we not had air superiority, 'cause this was soon after I arrived in Korea; the war was still on. Even Bed-check Charlie could have raised all kinds of havoc, and didn't. And they had a choir there from the University--was singing the "Hallelujah" chorus. And the sermon was preached two of 'em. One was a Korean, priest, a ordained minister, and the other was a Major General in the Air Force, who's Air Force Chief of Chaplains, came over to preach the sermon for the Easter sunrise service, and the sun coming up over the mountain. Now I'll tell you the thing, if that doesn't leave something in your heart. It does.

Mik: Did you have your camera?

Cliff: Yes [chuckle], but I didn't have the camera the night that we had the 1,500 candelabra, when we had the service at the Seoul Addison[?] Church. It wouldn't have been appropriate to take pictures inside there anyhow. There were no pictures that were taken, so there was no pictures there, but the other one's in broad daylight. Oh it was early in the morning and the pictures need to be enhanced a little bit if you're going to use them, but I have this sea--mass of humanity. I have a picture of the Brigadier, because the Americans got favorite treatment, we were kind of on the side--and here's the area and, up at the top, is a solitary--painted white--fifty foot high cross--above the whole thing--this wooden cross probably made with four-by-fours--up on top there painted just plain white; on the top of that. And you just don't forget those things.

Mik: Yeah, well that's--I've been thinking about the "Forgotten War" and it's certainly not forgotten by the people who were there.

Cliff: Or their families. And now, because of a Department of Defense initiative, which was started from World War II veterans, not because of that, but during the anniversary, 50th anniversary of World War II, you recall, they had a Defense Department initiated campaign to make the people more aware of the sacrifices the people made in World War II, and so on and so forth, that lasted the four years of the war. Well, they did the same thing from 1950, '51, '52, '53 that just ended. We had one for Korea and all the veterans' organizations took part in it: Lions Clubs, schools--I mean, the people become aware of the sacrifices made by Korean War veterans during the Korean War and what the Korean War was all about. I've been preaching this stuff, all four years of this through either the VFW or the Korean War Veterans' Association, which I was a founding member of the South Central Wisconsin Chapter and we made it--we had to have it to satisfy our national organization--we had to have a mission. And our mission was to go to the schools and teach the kids about the Korean War once we found out the text books--they might have this much about the Korean War in there.

Mik: The World War II guys say there's that much about World War II.

Cliff: Yeah, the history books don't mention these cataclysmic conflicts involving freedom.

Mik: When you get to those schools, what do you find? Do the kids know anything at all about the Korean War?

Cliff: Not much, but boy do they become interested when you start talking, particularly if you bring in--I use my slides and I also use some tapes, pre- pre-recorded tapes, and I put this together as a multi-media presentation designed to fit into a fifty minute classroom space. And they know a lot more than they ever thought. And this has been very successful. The Vietnam vets started this and then the WWII and the Korea came in, going into the classroom. Now the veteran in a classroom is an object of the [Wisconsin] Department of Veterans Affairs to go out and do this. They have a program which they support, [the] Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs; that I worked for a number of years. And also, all the veterans organizations, that I know of, embrace this and individual veterans. Getting out in the classroom, and giving and, presenting source material. And, of course, the kids liked it. They come up with simple questions, "What was it like to do this and that?" And all this, and--

Mik: "Did you ever kill somebody--"

Cliff: Well, I only had that asked once. Usually they don't do that. You'd be surprised. These kids are sophisticated today. They are amazingly sophisticated. I only had one discipline problem that occurred and the teacher happened to be a veteran who was the head of the history department, and this kid was a smarty, okay? And the teacher very quietly said to him, "This guy has seen more than you'll ever see in your lifetime. Sit down, and shut up." And the kid sat down and what he did is he incurred the enmity of the rest of the class. And from then on, it was forward. I mean the kids were attentive, right down to the last minute of the class, and asked intelligent questions based on some of the background that I had given them. I gave them background, historical chronology, limited, and then anecdota. And part three is, of course, if you're a good lecturer, you entertain questions. All this in fifty minutes is pretty capsulated. They learn more in fifty minutes about the Korean War and I've talked to WWII veterans who've done the same thing.

Mik: So, it looked like you took a little offense when I referred to it as a police action--

Cliff: Yes, very much so. Yes. All Korean veterans do--or Korean Conflict. President Clinton was the one who pushed Congress, and he signed it off, was to get every bit of statutory language, which refers to the Korean War--it was always the Korean Conflict, not police action, but Korean Conflict, okay? He got all the "conflicts"

taken out, and "war" put in their place. With a capital "W," because that's what it was, undeclared or not--not just a conflict when you have that many men suffer.

Mik: And how many?

Cliff: Well, we had--well, if from Wisconsin alone--and we're a Wisconsin program here--we had 132,000 served; 801 killed, and many thousands were wounded. And I have all those figures. I don't have them here on camera--I don't, I don't, I don't, I don't have 'em, but I have those I can give--.

Mik: And what did you say, 33,000?

Cliff: A 132,000 people served in the Armed Forces during the three years; U.S. Armed Forces during the Korean War. Now the ones in country I don't have off the top of my head, but they could have been--except for some corporal who assigned them to Europe to be in the NATO Force instead at the same time and we--unlike the Vietnam vets; the ones who were in combat--who were in-country, call the others Vietnam Era vets--we don't call them--we call them all Korean veterans. It was just the assignment clerk prevented you from being sent to--because how important really are you when you're a private in the Army or you're apprentice seaman, or an airman. You know, you get assigned. You're a number and the number on top of that is your military specialty. First you're trained as a soldier, then as a specialist; then you're utilized. You're deployed. You might be stateside. You might be in Europe. I had people in the Army Security Agency from--oh, I know guys, personal friends of mine, that worked in the department here who served in--one in Turkey and, which is near that, that former Soviet Union, and one who was in the Philippines, the listening station. They were involved in the same type of work generally that I was. They said before--I'm probably waiting for your next question. [chuckle]

Mik: We're probably done.

[End of Interview]