

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

SHERMAN J. CRAWFORD

Rifleman, Army, World War II
Medic and Mine Clearing, Army
Korean War

2002

OH
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Crawford, Sherman J. (1926-2012). Oral History Interview, 2002.

Approximate length: 85 minutes

Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording.

Abstract:

Sherman Crawford, a Milwaukee, Wisconsin native, discusses his twenty-year military service in the US Army and World War II duty as a rifleman with the 4th Infantry Division, 12th Regiment, 2nd Battalion, Fox Company in Luxembourg, northern Germany, and the Rhineland in central Germany; his return to the States awaiting redeployment to Japan; his reenlistment and being stationed in Korea and occupied Japan; his Korean War experience as a medic with the 8054 Mobile Army Surgical Hospital and in an antitank mine platoon with the 3rd Division, 7th Regiment; service as a medical aid in occupied Germany; and his training and career back in the US as a radar repairman at Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico and as an instructor of electronics at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. After trying to enter the service at sixteen, Crawford volunteered upon his eighteenth birthday in April 1944. He talks of his training at Fort Hood (Killeen, Texas) and weighs the impact of the German breakthrough in the Ardennes on basic training; his January 1945 landing in Glasgow (Scotland) and crossing of the English Channel to Le Havre (France), and his arrival in Luxembourg and placement with the 4th Infantry Division. Crawford describes march-and-fire, town and village warfare and the nature of resistance encountered, relating in particular an encounter with snipers in one central German town. He comments on the state of medical care afforded the injured GI. Sent home on leave and with departure for the Pacific looming, the war ended; Crawford served out the remainder of his enlistment, but reenlisted. He describes his assignment to the 34th General Hospital and a psychiatric ward in Korea in 1948; upon the outbreak of war in Korea, a stint in a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital in Pusan that led to clearing mines; and joining the 4th Infantry Division in occupied Germany as a medic after again reenlisting. Crawford tells the story of how he went from medic to tracking missiles at the Holloman Air Force Base radar site and worked with Wernher von Braun in the Hawk Missile Division of Redstone Arsenal.

Biographical Sketch:

Crawford (1926-2012) during a twenty-year military career served in the US Army with the 4th Infantry Division in Luxembourg and Germany during World War II; in postwar Korea and occupied Japan; and with the 3rd Division during the Korean War. After service in occupied Germany and work at the Holloman Air Force radar site in New Mexico, he reentered civilian life as an instructor of electronics at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2002
Transcribed by Emily Behrend, 2012
Reviewed by Channing Welch, June 2015
Abstract written by Jeff Javid, June 2015

Interview Transcript:

McIntosh: Where were you born, sir?

Crawford: Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

McIntosh: In April of 1926?

Crawford: Yep, twenty-third.

McIntosh: I see that. And so you were still in high school when Pearl Harbor came about.

Crawford: I was just about a freshman in high school; I was fourteen years old when Pearl Harbor happened.

McIntosh: Well, what'd you think about that?

Crawford: Well, it's [laughs]—.

McIntosh: Not much?

Crawford: I honestly did not think anybody would start a war again because gas was so bad that you just couldn't get along with [inaudible].

McIntosh: But as a high school freshman, you didn't worry about that.

Crawford: Yes, I did [laughs]. We were listening to Hitler's speeches back in the '30s, you know.

McIntosh: Yeah, I know. I was there.

Crawford: Yeah.

McIntosh: We had 'em up here too. Well, did you assume that this would be something that you were going to be involved in?

Crawford: Ah, at fourteen—.

McIntosh: Probably not.

Crawford: Probably not. But I was very disappointed that I couldn't get in it right away, you know. I wanted in.

McIntosh: Everybody did in those days. So, when did you join the military service?

Crawford: Well, I tried from when I was sixteen on, when I could pass for eighteen. I kept trying to get in, but my eyes were keepin' me—.

McIntosh: Your parents wouldn't sign?

Crawford: And the parents wouldn't sign. I was lyin'. I was having friends sign my certificate, you know, even to the Merchant Marines, you know.

McIntosh: Yeah, I'm surprised then you couldn't get in.

Crawford: Yeah, I was—well [laughs], I wasn't very bright, you know. But finally at eighteen I volunteered for the draft, and they took me. I volunteered in April, and I was in the Army in June.

McIntosh: Did you consider the other services, or not?

Crawford: In fact [??] when I joined—when I was drafted they took us to Milwaukee. And when we went up the interview table—Army, Navy, and Marines—the Navy officer was sittin' there, and he said, “Well, what service do you want?” And I said, “Well, which is best for me?” And he says, “Well, you won't get as good of a job in the Navy as you would in the Army because you have glasses, you know.” Straight infantry. Volunteered [laughs] for the Army and got straight infantry.

McIntosh: Oh my. And your basic training was in Fort Hood [Killeen, Texas]?

Crawford: Yeah.

McIntosh: How long was the basic in those days?

Crawford: It was sixteen weeks for us. Uh, when the breakthrough came some of those guys that was finished in six weeks got kicked out. They went out the same as I did, you know.

McIntosh: Breakthrough?

Crawford: German breakthrough at the Battle of the Bulge, you know.

McIntosh: Yeah.

Crawford: When the Germans broke through, uh—.

McIntosh: They cut down basic training?

Crawford: They [laughs] were shipping everything out that was—.

McIntosh: You're kidding?

Crawford: Over six weeks. Yeah, Fort Hood, Texas was shipping everything out.

McIntosh: So if they only had six weeks, they were gone?

Crawford: If you learned how to fire a rifle you were gone.

McIntosh: Now, that's the first time someone's told me that.

Crawford: Oh yeah, I met guys up in—I have to—it was either Fort Meade, Maryland or Fort Monmouth, New Jersey I got shipped to, you know. And I met guys up there that was coming out of Fort Hood with six weeks of basic training.

McIntosh: Yeah, that's one of the reasons they got in trouble in the Bulge, you know.

Crawford: Cannon fodder [laughs].

McIntosh: Well, I mean 8,000 men surrendered primarily because they lacked experience. Bad decisions made then.

Crawford: Well, I think 8,000 men surrendered because it was so damn cold you couldn't move, and if you ran out of bullets and ammunition—or food, you didn't have a chance anyhow, you know.

McIntosh: Well, I won't debate that one.

Crawford: No, I don't mean to debate. I don't give a damn [both laugh].

McIntosh: I understand. There was a lot of reasons. Anyway-- .

Crawford: Oh yeah. And it was cold, man it was cold—.

McIntosh: I understand.

Crawford: Cold

McIntosh: I know. So, after your basic, where did you go?

Crawford: Well, you know, after basic I got a two week leave, I think it was. It was some place around twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth of December that I got a two week leave before I reported to either Fort Monmouth or Fort Meade,

one of those two camps. And I went home on leave, and when that breakthrough came, you know, on the seventeenth or nineteenth of December, man, I got a telegram, "Get to Fort Monmouth," you know. And when they, uh—

McIntosh: Not individually?

Crawford: Individually.

McIntosh: They didn't send you as a group?

Crawford: When we left Fort Hood we all went on leave. We all got a vacation. We all got like—

McIntosh: Oh, they sent this to your home?

Crawford: To my home, yeah [laughs].

McIntosh: It said, "We changed our mind. We're taking you back before your leave was over."

Crawford: Before my leave—my leave was four or five days was all. Maybe six days. But I only had like a ten day leave anyhow so it wasn't important, you know.

McIntosh: This was—how soon after—the Bulge began on the sixteenth so when was—

Crawford: Sixteenth or seventeenth, that's what I would say [laughs]. Yeah, about the nineteenth I was on my way to—I was in Fort Meade at Christmas.

McIntosh: So, what'd you think?

Crawford: Well, I—

McIntosh: Had you been checking with the radio? Did you know what the hell was going on?

Crawford: Yeah, we were listening to the radio, but all through basic training, uh, I lucked out, but all through basic training they kept telling you, "When you get over to fighting the Japs, this is what you can expect. This is what you can expect when you fight the Japs", you know. When they assigned me to Europe, I was happy as hell [both laugh]. You know, 'cause I didn't like that fighting the Japs where you don't take prisoners and stuff, you know. In Germany they take prisoners, you know.

McIntosh: Sometimes.

Crawford: Sometimes. So did we.

McIntosh: Right, so did you have an MOS [Military Occupational Specialty] number by then?

Crawford: Well, I don't remember the MOS, but it was 1-1-1 now, I think, or after the Army. I don't remember what my MOS was.

McIntosh: But that was, but you were still strictly a—.

Crawford: Infantry.

McIntosh: Grunt then.

Crawford: Yup. Rifle. Yeah, no, I was nothin'. I went through basic training and got sent to Europe.

McIntosh: Right. You were a rifleman.

Crawford: Yeah, cannon fodder.

McIntosh: Not necessarily.

Crawford: No, I made it [laughs]. But the buttons got in the way sometimes.

McIntosh: The buttons?

Crawford: Yeah. Couldn't get close enough to the ground, damn near peeled 'em off, you know.

McIntosh: [Laughs] So, how did we get over to Europe?

Crawford: I lucked out on that one. When we went up there they shipped us to Camp Shanks [Orangetown, New York], processed us at Camp Shanks.

McIntosh: Where's that?

Crawford: Is that in New Jersey or New York?

McIntosh: Somewhere up there.

Crawford: Somewhere up there [laughs].

McIntosh: Okay.

Crawford: From there they, you know, they organized us up alphabetically. You're always alphabetical, you know, and put us on the ship to the Ile de France at Boston Harbor.

McIntosh: Really?

Crawford: Yeah. It moved, man.

McIntosh: I was gonna say, you didn't have [inaudible] and take long to get over there.

Crawford: No, it was—.

McIntosh: Four days, probably.

Crawford: It wasn't very long, and we landed in Glasgow, Scotland. They put us in trains, took us through England. Every place we stopped the ladies were out there with coffee and donuts.

McIntosh: When did you get there? Tell me that now, when did you arrive in England?

Crawford: Well, England and Scotland, you gotta combine those because I didn't know one from another, you know.

McIntosh: I understand. When did you get off the ship? Month and year.

Crawford: Oh, well, it was—no, it was—.

McIntosh: [inaudible] January by that time.

Crawford: It was January when I got off the ship. I'm glad you didn't ask me the date 'cause I don't know when I left New York [laughs] or Boston.

McIntosh: January of—.

Crawford: '45.

McIntosh: '45. Yes, right.

Crawford: Then we went right straight across to the embarkation point at England, and, uh, they put us in LSTs [Landing Ship, Tank] and took us across the Channel to Le Havre [France].

McIntosh: At Camp Lucky Strike.

Crawford: Maybe [laughs] an Old Gold or one of those cigarettes.

McIntosh: That's the place I came back from those Lucky Strikes at Le Havre. Okay. Then they formed you into what unit?

Crawford: They didn't form us into units at all. They put us in each—.

McIntosh: Oh, you were in the replacement depot. You're a "Repo Depo."

Crawford: Yeah, and they put us on trains and shipped us to the—they put us in Forty-and-eights [French boxcars that could carry forty men or eight horses], you know those forty-and-eights. They put us in Forty-and-eights and shipped us up to the front, and we went up to Luxembourg—oh, 4th Infantry Division, 12th Regiment, 2nd Battalion, Fox Company.

McIntosh: 12th Regiment?

Crawford: Yup.

McIntosh: That's good.

Crawford: They took us off the Forty-and-eights and just, "You go here, you go here, you go here," and uh—.

McIntosh: So where'd you go?

Crawford: I went to F Company.

McIntosh: And? Were they in tents?

Crawford: We were in a farm barn. We didn't have enough people. We were the people that came up. They had three or four people, enough to direct. You know, they had a couple sergeants and a couple lieutenants, you know. We were fillin' up the company.

McIntosh: Sure. So what was your assignment?

Crawford: Third Platoon, Third Squad.

McIntosh: That's all?

Crawford: Uh-huh.

McIntosh: Had your rifle with you by that time?

Crawford: Oh, I carried--I was issued a rifle at Camp Shanks. That was part of that supply line, you know. A rifle and full pack.

McIntosh: Right. So you're all ready to go.

Crawford: Yeah, uh-huh.

McIntosh: Well, what'd you think about that? Other than being cold?

Crawford: Well, it was cold, and it was miserable, and at that time when I went to Germany—.

McIntosh: This was before Germany?

Crawford: Well, I call it—okay, [laughs] when I went to Luxembourg the guys were going through a shortage of cigarettes so when we come in with cartons of cigarettes, you know, man, those guys were happy as heck, you know, to see us. 'Course, they stiffed us [both laugh].

McIntosh: You shared them with them?

Crawford: Oh sure. Yeah, we got 'em given to us so it didn't matter at all who—and you know at that time you just—whenever you smoked you pulled up a cigarette and went around the circle, you know.

McIntosh: Yeah, everybody smoked.

Crawford: Oh, well, you always offered around the circle. Whenever you pulled out a cigarette and somebody was standing around, you just offered them one too, you know.

McIntosh: How were you accepted in your squad? Okay?

Crawford: Oh yeah. Yeah, they were happy to see us.

McIntosh: They were glad to have another body?

Crawford: They were glad to have us over.

McIntosh: Had they been traumatized at all by the Bulge at that time? Or not? They hadn't been in combat yet?

Crawford: They had been in combat, and they had got the hell kicked out of 'em. They were there. My outfit was there from D-day, you know.

McIntosh: Yes, I know.

Crawford: They got the hell kicked out of 'em. They got the hell kicked out of 'em quite a few times. And so did we.

McIntosh: But in reference to the Bulge, which had happened a few days before, a couple—you know, a couple weeks before you got there, and had they been disseminated, or were they still intact, or what was the situation in your regiment?

Crawford: I can only talk about my—.

McIntosh: Your company.

Crawford: Company and my platoon, 'cause that all I could—that's all you could see, you know [laughs]. You just moved on.

McIntosh: Had a lot of 'em been killed in the fighting in the Bulge by the time you got there? I guess that's [inaudible].

Crawford: Killed and captured, yeah, yeah. That's— .

McIntosh: A lot captured?

Crawford: A lot killed and a lot captured. They told about seeing whole platoons that they were watching and couldn't get to 'em to get 'em out. Give up.

McIntosh: So the company then was—there's not much. All replacements, is that right?

Crawford: Well, the company, if you call it a company, but I would say that when I joined my unit, there was maybe two lieutenants and eight or ten sergeants. That was the whole [laughs]—everybody, you know if there was nobody else he'd promote 'em to sergeant. That was about all that was left of our company.

McIntosh: Well, what was your first—and then what'd you do right away after you got there? Were you on the line or not?

Crawford: We were in a holding area, and then we moved out, and we moved out and started trying to move forward. But we didn't do too good but we moved a little.

McIntosh: By the time that you moved, had the Bulge been straightened out yet, or not quite?

Crawford: When I got there, the Bulge was still around—bulging, you know. And you'd try and move and maybe take a German position.

McIntosh: You were on the south end, is that right?

Crawford: I have no idea. I didn't even know I was in Luxembourg until one of the guys asked me, one of the farmers, we took his house and barn—you know, the house and barns were all together. When we took his house and barn he asked me for permission to put up his king's picture. "Go ahead, I don't give a damn, where are we?" [laughs]. So he hung up his king's picture, and he had it hid, you know, until we took the farm.

McIntosh: And so then when did you come in first contact with the Germans?

Crawford: That was it, right there. It was probably two or three days after I got there.

McIntosh: In the woods, fighting in the woods, or fighting in the hills? Or both?

Crawford: Most—well, that one there was a farm. We were fighting in a small farm village, one of those little villages, you know, where you take the cows out in the daytime and then bring them in at night, you know, and stuff like that. And, uh, but it was—most of our jobs was small villages, small farms, where the barn is here and the house is attached right to it.

McIntosh: And you had to go through all of that to be sure there's nobody hiding in there?

Crawford: Well, we went through 'em to clean 'em out, you know.

McIntosh: When you went through a house like that, did you put in several bombs, or hand grenades, and then look? Or did you look first?

Crawford: We—most of the time what you do is you start shooting from the outskirts and then start taking cities—town by town, or house by house, you know. And a few times we'd have to call in tanks to help us.

McIntosh: Well, somebody—how did you know there was nobody in the house? As you came up to the house and you were going past—

Crawford: No, you didn't.

McIntosh: Somebody had to go in there.

Crawford: We had to go in, but you had to shoot first to get in there, you know.

McIntosh: That's what I'm getting around to. Did you toss a grenade or two in there and then go in? Or put some fire in there? Did ya put a flamethrower in there or what?

Crawford: Honestly, I never saw a flamethrower in all of Europe. But we would be told to take this village, and we'd start in the village, and there'd be return fire from most of the places, you know.

McIntosh: You look through the upper windows?

Crawford: You'd look through any window, and if you'd come up—well, like one place we took, we came up into this field, and they started throwing mortars at us, you know. And we took it, and we started up, and three snipers came out and surrendered. We took those snipers and started stripping 'em down. Three more snipers came out and surrendered. We took those three snipers and started searching 'em down. Machine gun nest come down [laughs] and surrendered. We took nine prisoners right there in that one spot.

McIntosh: You hadn't seen the machine gun there?

Crawford: I hadn't seen a sniper! Until they surrendered to us.

McIntosh: What do you think motivated 'em? Were they hungry? Were they too young?

Crawford: I think they were sick and tired of the war. I can't understand why in the hell they gave up—

McIntosh: Did they seem to be, to you, to be younger than usual soldiers?

Crawford: You know, I was eighteen.

McIntosh: Yeah, I was gonna say, it's hard to tell who's younger, right. Everybody—.

Crawford: And [laughs] it's hard to tell who's younger, but they were not much older than I was, you know. Then after that we started getting in the end of April or May, you started gettin' kids, the women, you know.

McIntosh: That's what I meant.

Crawford: Yeah.

McIntosh: Okay. So, you kept moving on, town to town?

Crawford: Town to town and woods to woods, and one of the things I'd like to comment on, I should give credit, you know, because one of the woods that we took, we walked through a woods all day and they said, "We're gonna take this one right here tonight." And the company commander says, "Line up here. We're gonna march and fire." March and fire is where you take two or three steps and pull your trigger, you know. And we were told that the artillery was going to fire into this woods, and then we were gonna march and fire in to the woods.

McIntosh: Behind it?

Crawford: We were gonna come right in behind that artillery. The artillery—I says, "Who's the artillery? Where are they at?" "Oh, that's that Jap outfit over on the hill." It [laughs] was—our 65th Artillery was Japanese [laughs]. They were good. Oh man, they laid that artillery right in there within 100 yards of where we were layin' on the ground, you know. So when the artillery is over, the company commander yelled, "Move!" And we just stood up and marched and fired. I'd say we took twelve or fourteen people, but they weren't—they were so hit by bombs that they weren't—they didn't even know where their rifles were, you know. They weren't fightin' back.

McIntosh: When you took prisoners, how did you handle them?

Crawford: Very good, very, very good.

McIntosh: I know, but what'd you do with 'em? You just ship 'em on back and somebody else took 'em back to some holding area?

Crawford: Well, we usually sent one man with our prisoners—we had nine or ten prisoners. Just one guy would—most of 'em, when we took 'em prisoners they wanted to give up anyhow, you know.

McIntosh: Well, I understand, but somebody had to bring 'em under control.

Crawford: Take 'em back, yeah. We had one—usually one man would take 'em back to the holding area.

McIntosh: To the [inaudible] at the division level or less?

Crawford: I never took any prisoners back, but I sure saw a lot of 'em alongside the roads, you know.

McIntosh: In groups?

Crawford: You know, five, six hundred of 'em in groups, you know [laughs]. But I never took any back.

McIntosh: Okay. So how was the food during this time? You did--on K-rations or better?

Crawford: Uh, no, the food was—I was on K-rations damn near for six months.

McIntosh: No hot food dropped in?

Crawford: Well, when my birthday came up the company commander sent me back to Service Company because he didn't want anybody killed on their birthday. So I got hot food [both laugh].

McIntosh: He didn't care about you; he didn't want it on his record.

Crawford: Well, I don't know, he just—when I was nineteen—'course I didn't think I'd see nineteen so when he sent me back I was happy as heck. But you got back there and you got those instant potatoes and the chicken. But you know, it was good, it was hot food. But most of the time it was K-rations and K-rations was eggs for breakfast, cheese for dinner, and hash for supper. And Chelsea and Fleetwood cigarettes. You ever heard of them?

McIntosh: Sure.

Crawford: Whoo!

McIntosh: Everybody used to smoke those things [??].

Crawford: Those are the worst, those are terrible [laughs]. Oh, those were terrible cigarettes. And I've never seen 'em in the States since I've come back, you know.

McIntosh: That's good. Yeah, they used to Chelseas for ten cents a pack.

Crawford: I don't know about that, but I think we got four in a K—three or four in a K-ration.

McIntosh: Yeah, in the K-ration there was that little package for four cigarettes.

Crawford: Four cigarettes, yeah. And they were the rottenest cigarettes you could get a hold of. I think they pulled them out of a pig sty or somethin'. [James laughs] You smoked 'em?

McIntosh: Well, of course, when you're addicted, you're addicted. And if you smoke, you smoke. You know, you smoke whatever it is. Okay, you must have come across a river here pretty soon if you kept going east.

Crawford: We—oh [laughs]—we came across, not a river, streams, you know. We could wade 'em. We waded into the one stream one night, and it was kind of comical 'cause the water was up to about the chest, you know. And we went across the stream, and it was—it was snow on the ground, it was cold. And the guy in front of me fell. He slipped [laughs] on the rocks or somethin' under there and went completely down over the top of his head. And he came up, and he started, you know—we had to keep walkin'. You just walk yourself dry. And it was miserable.

McIntosh: A lot of guys had trench foot?

Crawford: Not in my outfit.

McIntosh: You changed socks frequently?

Crawford: Well, we tried to change socks frequently, but, you know, in this—in our units, if you had something, you carried it. And you carried it until you got tired and threw it away. So usually one pair of socks on your stomach was about all you had, you know.

McIntosh: But you're supposed to rotate those.

Crawford: You're supposed to rotate 'em, yeah, and keep 'em clean. And if we get the hell kicked out of us and go into holding company or something or in a hold in the woods or something, you know, on the edge of a woods we'd get sent back for rations and change of socks, underwear and stuff like that, you know.

McIntosh: A lot of guys had trouble with trench foot [inaudible] a big problem?

Crawford: Well, I got frostbite, but I didn't get trench foot. But for years afterwards, when I'd stand up, man, I could feel that on the bottom of my feet, you know..

McIntosh: Right on the bottom?

Crawford: Right on the bottom. The whole length of my feet.

McIntosh: Like needles?

Crawford: Like needles, just like you're standing on a bed of needles.

McIntosh: And that lasts [inaudible]?

Crawford: Ten minutes maybe, five minutes. But it was with me for two or three years there. It was—but it's like elbow—what do you call that? Tennis elbow. It hurts like heck, you take care of it, and all of a sudden you don't even notice it. And hey, that stuff's gone, you know.

McIntosh: Like arthritis.

Crawford: Yeah, arthritis. Yeah, that hurts [laughs].

McIntosh: It only hurts when you move that joint. Otherwise it doesn't hurt at all. Okay, but you got to the Rhine River?

Crawford: Yeah.

McIntosh: You crossed it where? Do you recall? Did you cross on a regular bridge or was it one of the Bailey bridges [portable, prefabricated truss bridges]?

Crawford: I crossed on a Bailey bridge, but I don't remember any of the towns. I don't even remember—we fought in northern Germany and the Rhineland in central Germany, but I—

McIntosh: What was the first German town you came to? Do you remember?

Crawford: I can only remember one. Well, I can only remember one damn town in all of Germany, and that was called Borsdorf [??] 'cause that was—we went in with a full platoon and came out with two three-man squads.

McIntosh: Tell me about this.

Crawford: Well, it was not too good [laughs].

McIntosh: What time of the day was it?

Crawford: Oh well, it was—the town of Borsdorf [??] was a little farming village that we were supposed to take. And I think the company commander read the directions wrong, but he got us up at daylight, and we moved out, and we crossed this river—a little stream, and we went over to this other town, and we were short on ammunition. So he says, "We're going to take this woods and this town." And so he says, "Don't fire unless you're fired on," you know. Well, we had sat there all night—all night we'd sat there watching that town being fought for.

McIntosh: By whom?

Crawford: By the Americans.

McIntosh: Which division were they?

Crawford: Oh, I don't know. I don't know, we just sat there all night and watched, you know the flares. You can see the flares, and you can see the tracers and stuff like that. And I don't know who was over there, but we watched the whole night, and the flares and tracers were all over. In fact, they were coming back past us, you know. And [laughs] so we went over to that woods, and we took that woods. We didn't have to fire. Then we went in and searched the village. We didn't have to fire a shot, there was nobody there. Not even an American was there. And then that's when the company commander said we're going back to pass our own position and take the next town, the one that was within 200 yards of us behind us [laughs] when we dug in that night. And we went back toward that town, and when we got up to that town we received fire. And hell, that was almost noon, you know. And we started trying to take that town, and we were catching hell and especially with shooting, you know, especially rifle fire.

McIntosh: Not mortar fire?

Crawford: Not mortar fire, but rifle fire. And when we got in town we didn't get a single mortar shot into us. We got a couple on the way in, but not any there. And we took this one barn and the house. We got the whole platoon into that barn and house, and then we were going to the next one. The next was about 100 yards in front of us. And what it was, was it was perfect because it was kind of hills—a little knoll, not a hill, a little knoll on each side, you know. We could run down that knoll and get to the other barn. And [laughs] we started down that knoll, and this guy in the front of me hit him in the face and went flat down on his face. So I hit the ground, you know. The guy behind me said "Ugh!" [laughs] The guy in front of me was dead. The guy behind me was shot.

McIntosh: The Germans planned on you going down, right down—.

Crawford: Goin' down that hill. I'm crawling on my stomach to get back to 'em. I'm not going to stand up anymore, you know. And I crawled on my stomach and got back and bandaged him, and he said, "Send a medic," and I said, "I'll send one as soon as I find one." [laughs] I took off like a bat out of hell. I got to that other barn—I got to the barn, man I—.

McIntosh: Alone?

Crawford: I was alone then, yeah. [laughs] There was three of us when we started out. I was alone when we got there.

McIntosh: Then what?

Crawford: Then we went into town.

McIntosh: Nobody else was in the barn?

Crawford: No, they came in the barn, but I was alone in the barn, and they came in the barn. Then we started through the town, and that's when we caught hell 'cause we were told not to shoot the church, and they had a sniper in the church, and we lost a couple of sergeants. But I wasn't—I'm not a leader, you know. I'm a private. And if there's a sergeant there, he is goin' first. I'm not goin' first, you know, unless he tells me to. And the company commander told me to a couple of times, and to get out and scout and stuff like that, you know, when we're goin' from one town to the other, you know. And I didn't like that at all.

McIntosh: So what'd you do with that guy in the church?

Crawford: Oh, we got him. But—.

McIntosh: How?

Crawford: The guy—.

McIntosh: Somebody climbed up there?

McIntosh: Climbed up there?

Crawford: Yeah, one—well, one of the sergeants died right at the foot of the church, and one of the guys got in the church. We had heroes in my outfit. They would do that stuff, you know. But I wasn't one of them. I'd back 'em up [laughs], but—one of our sergeants went charging down the street, and he didn't make it very far. Well, he wasn't the guy—it wasn't the guy in the church that got him, it was somebody else who had him zeroed in, you know.

McIntosh: When you walked into a town like that, you assumed there'd be snipers on both sides of the streets.

Crawford: And booby trapped, yeah.

McIntosh: Tell me about the booby traps. How were they often arranged, the usual arrangement?

Crawford: I never ran into any that I personally found, but we were always told to watch for booby traps. But I think we got—they, let me say the military, my friends got more booby traps in Belgium and Luxembourg than they did in Germany because they didn't want to blow up their own houses, you know.

McIntosh: How about Schu-mines [anti-personnel mine in a box; also called “Shoe Mine” or “Shoe Box” mine]?

Crawford: I never stepped on one.

McIntosh: Did any of your company have trouble with those?

Crawford: Nope, we never had any trouble with rollin' [??] With mines.

McIntosh: Did your company have the heavy weapons unit next to it with the machine guns and so forth?

Crawford: Yeah that's the fourth platoon. The fourth platoon is always your mortar and machine guns, you know.

McIntosh: Right, so you stayed pretty tight with them.

Crawford: Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, well, they were with us all the time. They were—.

McIntosh: I assumed that.

Crawford: Huh?

McIntosh: I assumed that.

Crawford: Yeah.

McIntosh: That you were out ahead of them.

Crawford: Really, effectively, yeah, but every once in a while we had to pack their gear, you know, 'cause it's like the BAR [Browning Automatic Rifle]. You always had a BAR in every squad. You pass that BAR up and down the squad. When you're marching or walking that BAR gets [**end of Tape 1, Side A**] heavy. So you pass that up and down the squad, and you pass the BAR belt up and down the squad, you know. And that's the same with the mortars and machine guns. If they're walking with us, you pass it up and down the squads.

McIntosh: This is the machine guns?

Crawford: Yeah, they'd get too darn heavy for them to carry all the time, especially that plate.

McIntosh: Yeah, I was going to say, that plate is heavy.

Crawford: That plate is heavy, and you can't walk too far with it so you just pass it up and down the squad, you know. And that's mostly what we did. I don't ever remember our machine gun or mortar squads being away from us very far. They were always in the rear, but they were not away from us.

McIntosh: Well, the mortars were shooting over you, generally.

Crawford: Yeah, yeah. Well—yeah [laughs]. Well, we were told not to talk to them because [McIntosh laughs] they counted steps. When they were moving they were supposed to count steps. They knew the distance from where they were to where they were going, you know. They counted, I don't know if we could talk to 'em or not, 'cause I didn't pay any attention to 'em. I wasn't even—I was in another squad. But I think the shooter, the gunner would count steps. I was told he was countin' steps. I don't know what he was doin'.

McIntosh: So, then as the war moved further—closer to the end, did things change? You said more people started giving up?

Crawford: A lot of the soldiers started givin' up. The thing that changed was that as the war got towards the end we started running into a lot of kids and people that wanted to be heroes, and they'd come out, and they'd shoot up all the ammunition they got, and then they'd run like hell, you know. And uh, but—.

McIntosh: You'd shoot 'em?

Crawford: I don't know if I ever hit anybody or not. I shot at 'em, but I was as scared as they were. It's like you said, "Kill the leader. Kill the ones with brass on their shoulders.

McIntosh: That was what you were instructed?

Crawford: Yeah, hell, I never thought anybody would—until they surrendered. I never thought—you can't tell an officer from an enlisted man at 200 yards if he's layin' down or takin' cover or somethin'. You can't tell an officer from an enlisted man. I shot, but hell I don't know if I hit anything or not, you know. Like [laughs] the one time—I took good care of my rifle, a man takes good care of his rifle, you know. I laid down, went to sleep, leaned it up against a tree. We got up the morning and was told to move out. We moved out, and we were goin' into attack, attack the woods. I took my

rifle, you know as usual, march and fire. I fired off my eight shots, and I grabbed my next cartridge clip. I gathered my next clip out of my cartridge belt and went to ram it in my rifle. It wouldn't go in the rifle. All through basic you're taught if your rifle won't take your clip, the bullets are probably out of line. Hit it on your rifle. I banged my bullets on my rifle to line up the tips of the bullets, tried to ram it in again, it wouldn't go in. I said, "What the hell's the matter with this thing?" And I did like that and shook it, and the clip fell out and hit me in my nose. Somebody had switched rifles on me, and that damn thing wouldn't eject clips. It didn't bother me after that 'cause I just flipped the rifle over, and it was gone. But when you're in attack and fire that makes your hind end pucker, you know [laughs]. I couldn't get that damn thing to load, you know. But I just tipped the gun up, and it hit me in the face so from then on I just flipped the rifle over and kept on going. But somebody had switched rifles with me.

McIntosh: That was a used clip that hadn't been ejected?

Crawford: Yeah, after I fired my eight shots—you know, after you fire eight shots you reach down and grab the next one and shove it in there. And as soon as I shoved it in, it wouldn't go.

McIntosh: Yeah, I know, but somebody had to take the old clip out—to get the new one in.

Crawford: No, as soon as you twist the rifle up it fell out, you know.

McIntosh: Okay.

Crawford: But I think it was two or three clips that I lost right there because my first clip didn't go in. I banged it on the rifle, tried to shove it in, wouldn't go in, so I threw it away. Grabbed another clip, tried to put it in, it wouldn't go in, what the hell's going on here? [laughs] That clip fell, got hit right in the nose with it [laughs].

McIntosh: So when did you stop? When you get into Germany you're getting close to the end of the war, then what? You stop your advance and just stay put for a while?

Crawford: Yeah, we went in the holding position. We went in the—I think in the first part of May we were in holding positions.

McIntosh: Where were you, do you recall?

Crawford: No.

McIntosh: Were you in a town or just in the field?

Crawford: We were in a field.

McIntosh: You weren't close to the Russians?

Crawford: I never saw any Russians.

McIntosh: Then you weren't near the Elbe River then.

Crawford: I never saw anything—.

McIntosh: Were you still in Germany, or had you moved down to Czechoslovakia by then?

Crawford: That was when—I think we was in Czechoslovakia. They said we were in Czechoslovakia. We were in Rhineland, central Germany, and I think they said Czechoslovakia, but I don't know.

McIntosh: Well, that's where the 4th Division went. I assume that's where—.

Crawford: Yeah, oh well, then I'll mark that down on my calendar 'cause [laughs] I never kept track. I didn't—.

McIntosh: Every day's the same, right?

Crawford: Yeah.

McIntosh: Every day was the same.

Crawford: Well, every day was the same, and when we're taking towns and villages, they were all the same too. They were mostly—well, mostly farm villages. I think my platoon—I think, you know when I review my company or the way we fought the war, we were going around, and we were taking towns, and the tanks were goin' around, getting' around the towns or somethin' 'cause we were taking these little towns, and we was taking these little, small woods, tree lines. The woods were thirty or forty yards, fifty yards deep, stuff like that, you know, around towns. That's where I lost damn near my whole platoon one day, in one of those things.

McIntosh: How'd that happen?

Crawford: [laughs] We attacked the woods, and they kicked the hell out of us.

McIntosh: And your scouts hadn't found them?

Crawford: We didn't find anything until we got plumb in the woods, and that's when they opened up on us, and the only thing that was behind us was a great big open field, and some made it, some didn't.

McIntosh: The company commander said, "Let's get the hell out of here"?

Crawford: [laugh] Yeah, somebody said, "Let's get the hell out of here."

McIntosh: So you retreated, or you just—.

Crawford: Oh, we retreated a lot of times, but the company commander said, "Fall back," you know. And then what you do is the first squad falls back, second squad falls back, third squad falls back, and you try to work your way back by helping the others. But most of the time we ran like hell, you know.

McIntosh: Right, and that's when—you lost a lot of men in that process?

Crawford: Yeah, that was one of those—that was a day we come out with two three man squads, and we didn't have a squad leader left. We went to another platoon [laughs] to get a squad leader. We didn't have nothin'.

McIntosh: Was the medical care of the wounded men pretty good as far as you could tell? They picked them up quickly and got them on stretchers and got them out of there?

Crawford: Yeah, our—.

McIntosh: Your medics were okay?

Crawford: Our, well, our medic—our platoon medic was terrific, you know. But the medics were okay. That was one of the things I worried about though was—I was worried about getting a soft wound, one that was not too bad, you know. Then you'd freeze to death before you'd [laughs] get back to the aid station.

McIntosh: A million dollar wound and freeze to death?

Crawford: Yeah, million dollar wound and freeze to death. That was the main thing you worried about. You know, you'd get a leg wound, and hell, some of them died before they'd get to the aid station.

McIntosh: Bled to death.

Crawford: Yeah, well, they bled to death or they froze to death 'cause—but you know, at that time, when we put tourniquets—you know, the medics were

too busy most of the time. We had to do the help too, you know. We'd put a tourniquet on, and they'd say every fifteen minutes open it for five seconds and stuff like that. That's probably why he'd bled to death 'cause every fifteen minutes you'd open that tourniquet little and let him bleed a little and then tighten it up again. And that was, uh—when you think about it now, it was—when we were doing it was to keep the gangrene from settin' in.

McIntosh: To keep from losing that leg is what that was done for. If you compress the artery too long, you'll lose the leg. Okay. So you still keep in contact with that medic?

Crawford: No, unh-uh.

McIntosh: You don't know where he is?

Crawford: No, I didn't know where he was—I didn't even remember his name after I left Camp Butner, North Carolina.

McIntosh: He was with you for four months and you don't remember his name?

Crawford: About six months. No, I didn't remember him. Hell, the only one I remember is Craig from my home—Craig? Cunningham or somethin'—Craig was the guy next to me when we shipped off from Camp Shanks [Orangeburg, New York]. Next bunk on the ship, stand by me on the Forty-and-eight boxcar, but he got hit. They took his arm off the first time we got shelled so—but I remember him 'cause we were together, and he was from Chicago, you know. But that was alphabetical. But no, I don't remember any of those people. 'Course, you didn't—.

McIntosh: You were too busy.

Crawford: Well, too busy, but it's like, we got—at the end of the war the Air Force didn't need their gunners anymore so they started making 'em infantry men and sending 'em to us. And we got one buck sergeant in from the Air Force, that he come in with his buck sergeant stripes on. We took this woods, I talked to him, next day he was shot. He was gone so I talked to him one day, and he was out of there.

McIntosh: Tell me about the last—when you found out the war was over in Europe. When Germany surrendered, tell me about what were you doing that day that you found it out.

Crawford: Well, we were, I would say we were in a holding position, that's what we were—we went into a holding position, before and that's when the company commander said we could, if you wanted to, you could go into to

town and try and wheel and deal with the Germans and get some beer and stuff, you know. But we just—.

McIntosh: You weren't in Czechoslovakia?

Crawford: I don't know [laughs].

McIntosh: Oh, you said that you ended up there.

Crawford: Yeah, I think we were in Czechoslovakia. I don't have any—it all looked the same to me.

McIntosh: Did you go in town?

Crawford: No, I didn't. I didn't trust—I stayed real close to other guys, you know.

McIntosh: How long were you there before they turned you around and sent you home?

Crawford: When they—we were there maybe, two weeks, I think we might have been there two weeks. But we were back in France in June. We were back in France, and we were putting cosmoline on our rifles and stuff like that. Doin' this stuff that they say, you know you gotta keep the GIs busy, you know, doin' close order drill and marching, and callisthenic stuff like that and putting cosmoline on our rifles and getting them ready to ship to the States. 'Cause the Fourth of July, we were on a ship leavin'—.

McIntosh: Le Havre?

Crawford: Le Havre or Camp Old Gold or Camp Lucky Strike or one of those things you know, one of those cigarettes. It was all named after cigarettes, you know.

McIntosh: Did they talk to you about going to Japan?

Crawford: Well, that was why we—that's why we went to—that's why we were on the ship the Fourth of July. When the war was over, let's say when the war was over—when the war stopped in Germany my unit lost all its—you know, there was a fifty-six point cutoff. If you had fifty-six points, you were put in one unit, and you were going back to the States after us. I had thirty-one points. You get a point—five points for a Purple Heart, five points for being in Europe, five points for medals. Well I only had thirty-one points, and so I was scheduled to go to Japan.

McIntosh: They told you that?

Crawford: Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, they told us we were going back to the States first, and we were gonna—we got guys from all the other units in Germany.

McIntosh: You were going to form a new division?

Crawford: We were gonna—well, we were the 4th Division. We were still the 4th Division, and we got guys from all over Germany, came into our units and filled up our units while our men with fifty-six points—

McIntosh: Went home?

Crawford: No, they went to other units, some other place where—they were gonna be slow. We were goin' out first because we were goin' now, you know?

McIntosh: Okay.

Crawford: I don't know if they got home before I did or not, but we were left the 4th Division pulled out of Le Havre—pulled out of one of those “Cigarettes” [staging area camps]. The fourth of July we were on ship, out of the harbor, and we went to New York. And in New York they shipped us to all the camps all over the United States for processing. I got sent to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, and the lady gave me orders to go home for a thirty day leave. And when I went home for thirty day leave, that August the war in Japan was over. Man, I celebrated. I celebrated! [laughs] I was home in Monroe, and I celebrated that place, you know.

McIntosh: I'll bet.

Crawford: But I didn't celebrate much in Germany or Czechoslovakia. I didn't celebrate then 'cause they told us we were goin' at our low points—low points we're goin', you know.

McIntosh: So then you were discharged from McCoy?

Crawford: No, we were all assigned to Camp Butner, North Carolina. Everybody, when they sent us all over the United States to send us home, I went to Camp McCoy. Then after, when my leave was up, I went back to Camp McCoy, and they sent me back to Camp Butner, North Carolina to join my division again. Our division was supposed to have, I don't know thirty days or ninety days training and then go to Japan, but when the war was over in Japan, we just went back to Camp McCoy for, you know, march—

McIntosh: Processing out.

Crawford: Well, no, we were marchin' and doin' military duty, you know. Process—workin' like soldiers, you know. When I was at Camp Butner, North

Carolina, they said that with my thirty-one points, it would probably take me a year and a half, two years to get out of the Army—before they got down to thirty-one points. So I got a brilliant idea. I reenlisted for a year. And I was home on leave when my friends at Camp Butner were getting' discharged. [laughs] They'd gotten down to twenty and fifteen points and were kicking 'em all out, and here I got another year in the Army to go, you know.

McIntosh: And how'd that go?

Crawford: Well, it made me mad as hell, but I had to serve the year, you know.

McIntosh: Where did you do that?

Crawford: I served that in Camp Campbell, Kentucky. I went—I got sent to Camp Campbell, Kentucky.

McIntosh: Doing what?

Crawford: Oh, 5th Infantry Division. Same thing, you do it all the time. It's basic training.

McIntosh: Yeah. They're just doin' somethin' to keep you busy.

Crawford: Well, if you get in an infantry division, you can tell. The infantry divisions start off with individual training, two man training, squad training, platoon training, company training, battalion training, division training. That takes a year. You go back to individual training, two man training, squad training, platoon training, battalion—company training, battalion training, regiment training, division training. That goes on every year. It takes one year to go, and if you stay in the infantry long enough, you know just about what's coming next month, you know? 'Cause it's the same over and over and over.

McIntosh: You got pretty good at that after a while,

Crawford: Hell, you get so used to it you don't pay any attention to it anymore, you know. You get so used to it you can sleep standing up, sleep sittin' up. They give classes, and you go to sleep [laughs] sittin' up, watchin' 'em.

McIntosh: So after the year then you were discharged, and that was it?

Crawford: Well, I reenlisted, and uh—I reenlisted for the 1st Cav in Japan, and I wound up at the 34th General Hospital in Korea in 1948. But uh—.

McIntosh: You were planning to become a regular?

Crawford: Yeah, I'd like it.

McIntosh: I believe it,

Crawford: Yeah.

McIntosh: I thought you didn't like getting' shot at? What happened?

Crawford: I didn't like getting' shot at, but the peacetime you got three "hots [meals] and a cot," and, uh—.

McIntosh: Yeah, I know.

Crawford: You heard about that? Yeah [inaudible].

McIntosh: Well, then Korea came, and then you may have made the wrong decision again.

Crawford: Well, I went to Korea 19—February 19—.

McIntosh: '51?

Crawford: 1948, I think. But I was in Korea when we—I helped them close Korea in '48. And I got shipped to Japan—I got shipped to Tokyo.

McIntosh: You were still single?

Crawford: Oh, and I got shipped to Tokyo, you know.

McIntosh: Because your family's here, I won't ask my next question, but anyway did you enjoy Japan?

Crawford: Yeah, I did all right in Japan.

McIntosh: [laughs] Right. You enjoyed the occupation?

Crawford: Well, I did all right.

McIntosh: What was the camp in Japan?

Crawford: I was on the Sumida River. I was in the 30—no, 361st Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, I think it was. When I went to Korea, I joined—I signed up for 1st Cav in Tokyo, in Japan.

McIntosh: Yeah, but I don't know where that was.

Crawford: I don't know where it was either because they didn't send me there, they sent me to Korea [James laughs]. When my ship pulled into Korea, I went to the—you know—.

McIntosh: [Inaudible] Pusan.

Crawford: Well, I don't know.

McIntosh: I think it was [??].

Crawford: Could have been up in Seoul 'cause that's where I was stationed at Seoul, outside of Seoul. But the thing was that when you reenlisted as an enlisted man, you didn't read the directions anyhow. And I was assured that I would go to 1st Cav in Japan. And when my ship landed, I landed and went to the 34th General Hospital in Korea. And when I reported in the 34th General Hospital, I worked around and got a MOS [Military Occupational Specialty] of athletic and recreation NCO. Lead calisthenics all day, you know. And I report in the 34th General Hospital in Korea just north of Seoul, and the— interviewing officer, the lieutenant said, "We don't have any use for an athletic and recreation NCO [non-commissioned officer] here in the hospital. Do you want to be a MP?" And I said, "Sure," no sweat you know. I'm here, I'll stand at the gate and wave the troops through, you know. MP and NP sound damn near alike to a guy that's standing there a recruit, you know. He says, "Well, report to Ward 3D." I went up to 3D, and it was a bunch of damn psychos up there, you know. Man, I wound up on a prison ward or a psychiatric ward, you know. But MP and NP sound damn near alike if you're not listening too good, you know. But I was going to stand at the gate. But I wound up with neuro-psychiatric [NP] technician. And that's what I closed—I helped close the 34th General Hospital over in Korea. And that's when they sent me to Japan so when I got to Japan, our unit, our ward went to the, uh—I think it was the 361st Mobile Army Surgical hospital in the Sumida River. And we went back to the psycho and prison wards, you know.

McIntosh: How many were in that psycho ward? How many patients?

Crawford: Oh, when I got to Korea we had—let me say it was six. I can't really count now, but it was either six or eight cells with sometimes two, three, and four in a cell. Sometimes one in a cell.

McIntosh: In a cell?

Crawford: Yeah, uh-huh.

McIntosh: You mean they were prisoners?

Crawford: No, we locked ‘em up laughs] in that psycho ward, yeah. And they were the closed psycho. You’d always have a closed psycho and an open psycho, you know.

McIntosh: What kind of treatment were you giving those guys? Electric shock?

Crawford: Yeah, we gave lots of electric shocks.

McIntosh: Your job was to hold down the left shoulder I’ll bet.

Crawford: No, my job was usually on the legs. I’d hold down the leg. No, the nurses and the doctor, the doctor was up there—.

McIntosh: The nurse held the thing in his mouth, and then he put the electrodes on the head and—.

Crawford: Yeah, he’d put the electrodes—.

McIntosh: Let ‘em shake.

Crawford: And we—.

McIntosh: That wasn’t a pleasant sight, was it?

Crawford: Well, I don’t know. I went in the first time, they just said, “Grab that leg,” you know? And so I grabbed that leg and held on, and I says, “How long before these guys come out of this?” ‘Cause you know we picked him up and took him back and put him in a cubicle or a cell and laid him on a mattress. And they said, “Oh, he’ll be out of it in just a couple of minutes,” you know. But we had open—we had in the mornings, when we stayed two or three days a week, we shocked people, you know. And we’d shock this ward, and then we’d go over and shock on the women’s ward.

McIntosh: Women?

Crawford: Yeah, they had women psychos too in that hospital.

McIntosh: Women soldiers?

Crawford: Well, most of them were drunks, from uh—they got over in Japan and got too damn soft with their—.

McIntosh: Were they Army WACs [Women’s Army Corps]?

Crawford: No, they were females—well, wives and stuff, you know.

McIntosh: Oh, so this is a civilian hospital that you're in?

Crawford: No, it was a military hospital it was in, but we took care of civilians. We took care of Army wives. But over in Japan, the wives got too soft.

McIntosh: Soft?

Crawford: Yeah, they got maids, and they got housekeepers. They got a special—a person to stand out in front of the house and watch the kids

McIntosh: They didn't all get those.

Crawford: If you hired 'em, you got 'em, you know [laughs].

McIntosh: I know. I was there.

Crawford: Yeah, well, you know that you got housekeepers, maids—.

McIntosh: Just depend on how much money you have.

Crawford: Just depend on how—if you was willin' to hire a guy. I've saw one guy that all he did was walk that kid around the yard all day, you know. But yeah, that was a—well, if you know that, I got me a motor scooter in Tokyo. One of my patients couldn't leave for the States till he sold his motor scooter. So I gave him seventy-five dollars for a motor scooter. And I got around.

McIntosh: I'll bet. Did you stay out of trouble?

Crawford: No. But I had a good time.

McIntosh: [laughs]. Good.

Crawford: But yeah, I was down there, uh—were you in Tokyo?

McIntosh: I was just on R&R from Korea.

Crawford: Oh. Well, you know where MacArthur's headquarters were?

McIntosh: Of course.

Crawford: You know where that little policeman stood out in the middle of the street?

McIntosh: Yep.

Crawford: He'd let me park my motor scooter there while MacArthur went both directions, you know [laughs]. Yeah, I'd park my motor scooter there, watch MacArthur go by.

McIntosh: How long were you in Korea?

Crawford: Well, the second time, thirteen months. The first time—let's see, seven months the first time.

McIntosh: The first time you went to Korea was when?

Crawford: Oh, it must have been about—I think February of '48. Yeah, we shipped out probably August or September of '48.

McIntosh: And then the second time?

Crawford: Well, that was [laughs]—that wasn't good. That was the eleventh of July we landed in Pusan in '50, 1950.

McIntosh: Oh, in wartime.

Crawford: Yeah [laughs], yeah.

McIntosh: I thought I had orders by then. The war started on the twenty-fifth of June. By July third I had orders to Incheon, Korea. Picked up a hospital ship.

Crawford: Oh.

McIntosh: So I know about that place.

Crawford: Where did you land in Korea?

McIntosh: Kimpo Airport.

Crawford: Oh.

McIntosh: South of Seoul. Then I just took an ambulance over to the water, in the harbor there. Went out to the hospital ship that was in the harbor.

Crawford: Oh, you didn't go to the *Jutlandia*, did ya?

McIntosh: I'm sorry?

Crawford: *Jutlandia*. The Swedish or Danish or Swedish—.

McIntosh: We parked next to it.

Crawford: Oh, uh-huh.

McIntosh: They had a nice nurse on there. Her name was Cipriana Minima. I'll always remember that name, charming girl. We had a lot of beers together. Anyway—

Crawford: That's where I tried to get assigned. When I got wounded I tried to get to the *Jutlandia*.

McIntosh: That's kind of nice.

Crawford: Well [laughs], I didn't make it.

McIntosh: It was a pleasure ship turned into a hospital.

Crawford: Yeah, that's what I heard. That's why I tried to get on it [laughs].

McIntosh: And they had a lot of Danish people on it. The Danes have an entirely different view of—.

Crawford: Sex.

McIntosh: Men and sex and things. It's quite revealing for most Americans.

Crawford: Yeah, I heard about it up at the front so that's why I tried to get assigned there.

McIntosh: It was—see, now you got me distracted thinking about that.

Crawford: Well, I, no, I was in Tokyo when—.

McIntosh: You didn't tell me what I want to know. When's the second time you went to Korea?

Crawford: 11th of July.

McIntosh: What year?

Crawford: '50.

McIntosh: So 7/50. Okay. Got it. Sorry, I missed that.

Crawford: Yeah, that war started the 25th of June, and I landed—.

McIntosh: The seventy-sixth anniversary of the day George Custer got his. That same day, seventy-six years later.

Crawford: Well, I was—I got caught going out the gate in Tokyo with five cartons of cigarettes so I got to be one of the first ones out of my hospital to go to Korea, you know.

McIntosh: Were you going to sell ‘em?

Crawford: Hell, yeah. And, yeah, you get good money for cigarettes, you know [laughs].

McIntosh: Sure.

Crawford: The company commander—.

McIntosh: Well, I didn’t know whether you were gonna sell ‘em or take them to some mama-san.

Crawford: Well, same—.

McIntosh: Same thing. Okay. We should probably discuss this some other time.

Crawford: Yeah, yeah. But, uh, my company commander drove past [both laugh]—the company commander drove past [both laugh]. And so then they came down just a day or two later when the Korean War on the 25th, and he says, “Send Crawford.”

McIntosh: Get rid of that guy [Crawford laughs] [inaudible].

Crawford: Oh, when we got orders—my hospital got orders to send x amount of people. Well, x amount of people got out and lined up and got their names on the roster and everything. And they says, “Come on, we’re gonna give you the shots for the Far East,” you know.

McIntosh: You’re already in the Far East.

Crawford: We lined up and got all new shots in Tokyo. All new, at that hospital. They shipped us to Yokohama to form us up. The next morning, “Line up for shots.” “We took ‘em yesterday!” “We don’t have any record of it.” We lined up the next day and got every damn one of those shots again. Two days in a row we got **[End of Tape 1, Side B]** shots.

McIntosh: They didn't make you sick?

Crawford: No, didn't bother me any. But, uh—we lined up—I didn't see anybody get sick. But they said in Yokohama that we didn't have any record of our shots. Man, we took 'em all again.

McIntosh: Builds character.

Crawford: Yeah, it builds—but that was like in Korea, when we was in Korea, I was with the 8054 Mobile Army Surgical Hospital in Pusan. And—

McIntosh: I interviewed Sig Sivertson in my book. In that hospital he was a physician in the 8054 in Pusan.

Crawford: Oh.

McIntosh: You read about him when you read the book. You got surgeon Sig Sivertson from Lacrosse [Wisconsin].

Crawford: Oh, I might have met him.

McIntosh: Yeah, 'cause he and I were in the same medical school class. And he used to come over 'cause he had such lousy food. He'd come over to our hospital [Crawford laughs] where we always had good food, and we always had ice cream. We had nurses and just all kinds of entertainment available.

Crawford: That's what a—when I did a lot of—we had to do a lot of carrying of patients. We'd work all night on the psycho ward, and then go over to the surgical ward in the daytime and carry patients into the operatin' room and carry them out of the operatin' room, you know, stuff like that. And uh—but that man you were talking about, Sivertson, his hospital, what unit was here—we were about two blocks away in the annex. And between—well, 200 yards out of my front gate at the annex we took over a school is what we did, but 200 yards out of my front gate at the annex was an opium house. The guys were sittin' out on the front porch smokin' and “plop”, wake up and smoke [laughs] again. And I had the psycho ward, I had drug addicts.

McIntosh: What's the difference?

Crawford: But they wanted out.

McIntosh: Yeah, right, and the others wanted in. Okay, and uh, then how did you get out of Korea?

Crawford: Well, I didn't luck out. Guys were coming into the psycho ward and claiming that they were heroes, and why don't you go out and get yourself shot at once in a while. And I had done it in Germany, you know; and I—

McIntosh: Didn't learn a thing.

Crawford: Well, I didn't learn a thing. I—finally it got to me. I was there a while. And in April of '52 I said, "I can't stand it no more. I'm going up to the front." And so I went down and caught a train and took off to the front.

McIntosh: What unit?

Crawford: Well, I joined—I walked in—I was getting hungry 'cause I hadn't eaten in two days. I walked into headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 7th Regiment of the 3rd Division. And I says, "I need some chow, and I'd like to join one of your companies." And he says, "Okay, you're in this one." And so I got assigned to head in head [??] of the 3rd Division—7th Regiment of 3rd Division. I was in the antitank mine platoon, and I was pretty good at it.

McIntosh: At what?

Crawford: Diggin' up mines.

McIntosh: Getting psych patients out of the—.

Crawford: No, I was pretty good at digging up mines. I could find mines, you know.

McIntosh: They had bayonets?

Crawford: Yep, and I dug up mines for a while, but I didn't last too long. I went to the front lines in April, and the 13th—3rd of May or 13th of May—it was something like that, anyhow—.

McIntosh: And that was '51?

Crawford: Yep. Anyhow, a group of us were unloading gunny sacks and barbwire to cover the regimental headquarters. And a truck pulled in, and we were standing with a wall behind us, you know, a dirt wall behind us, and the truck hit a land mine and caught me in both eyes and the face.

McIntosh: With shrapnel?

Crawford: Shrapnel and dirt and mud and stones. So that's when I tried to get shipped to Jutlandia, but they sent me to Pusan instead. I got operated on

in Seoul for my eyes, and then they shipped me to Pusan because they had a good eye surgeon at the—well, it was at the hospital I went AWOL [Absent Without Official Leave] from, whatever that number was [laughs].

McIntosh: They didn't send you back to Japan?

Crawford: No, I never got out of Korea.

McIntosh: Hmm, okay.

Crawford: They sent me to that surgeon, and uh—.

McIntosh: He cleaned up your face and so forth?

Crawford: He cleaned up my face, and then he took me to a—I'm not sure, but I think it was the *Jutlandia* that he took me to to have a—to look in the eyes with the scopes, you know. I don't know what you—.

McIntosh: Ophthalmoscope.

Crawford: Well, he took me down there and looked at it, and he said, "Well, you're okay for now."

McIntosh: He was looking for foreign bodies that were still there. He didn't find any obviously.

Crawford: Well, I don't know. I still have one little, looks like an ink spot there, you know. But anyhow, he said it was fine so he said, "Go back to work." So they released me from the hospital, and I went back to work. And then in either August or September of that year they come out with the points to go back to the States. Well hell, I had points from Germany, I had points from Japan, I had all those points. So I was one of the first ones to get out of my hospital.

McIntosh: September of '51.

Crawford: Yeah, I think it was about September 'cause I was home for Thanksgiving. But, uh—do you have any more questions?

McIntosh: Why, do you have to go to the bathroom?

Crawford: No, he wants me to, uh, tell you about when I caught that German general. I caught a German field marshal.

McIntosh: Caught him what?

Crawford: I captured him in his house.

McIntosh: When was this?

Crawford: Well, that was in 1945 [laughs].

McIntosh: I know it was in '45. You mean in May or—.

Crawford: I have no idea. I don't know now. But I took this farm house—.

McIntosh: Well, it was when you were in Germany or Czechoslovakia —.

Crawford: Yeah, yeah, when I was in Germany. I took this farm house—.

McIntosh: Has to be April or May then.

Crawford: Okay.

McIntosh: Okay.

Crawford: But I took this German farm house. You know, part of my job was to bust in that damn farm house, and I took this farm house, and I found this big, red hat that it was at least a field marshal or German general's hat. You could tell—it was big, and it was red, you know. And I captured this cap, and I looked at this guy, and, "You're, you're, you're?" you know, "Yah, yah, yah." And I said, "General, field marshal?" And you know, I can speak no German at all so I'm struggling to find out if he's a general or field marshal 'cause he's got a big red hat, you know. He says, "No, zug, zug." I had captured a damn conductor on a train [both laugh]. Zug—what the hell is a zug? And then you look, and you and see that wing, and you can see that railroad wheel, you know. But I had captured a—I thought for sure I'd get promoted, maybe a Bronze Star for that.

McIntosh: At least.

Crawford: At least, you know. Shit, I captured a conductor of a train [laughs].

McIntosh: So what'd you do with him?

Crawford: Nothing. I gave him back his cap [laughs]. But I—man, I was gonna at least get corporal, maybe the Bronze Star for that one.

McIntosh: [Laughs] Oh, that's cute. When'd you get home from Korea? September '51 you left, were you out of service then?

Crawford: No, I got home about November of '51. I didn't get out of the service till—I reenlisted in Korea because they gave us an extra bonus. If we reenlisted in Korea we got a 360 dollar bonus for enlisting for six years. So I signed up—.

McIntosh: You upped for six more?

Crawford: I upped for six more [laughs] while I was in Korea. I was having a good time.

McIntosh: You did that in '51?

Crawford: Yeah, I did that in '51, and uh, I'd have to look at my discharge to see when I did it. But I reenlisted in 1951 for six more years and got 360 dollars and sent it back to the bank in the States, you know.

McIntosh: And what'd you do in the next six years?

Crawford: I served in Korea and came back to Fort Sheridan, Illinois. Went to Germany—.

McIntosh: What'd you do in the occupation in Germany? What was your duty?

Crawford: In Germany my duty was a medical aid man for the 4th Infantry Division.

McIntosh: You were a medic by this time? You sort of osmosed into that. Six years, I can't believe you'd do that.

Crawford: Well, they didn't have eight [both laugh].

McIntosh: Jeez. And you're an awful nice guy, but I think you missed a message or two here along the way.

Crawford: No, yeah, the only message that you're missing is that I swore when I was a private down in Fort Sam Hous—down in Fort—what's that one in Texas where I went?

McIntosh: Hood [Killeen, Texas].

Crawford: Fort Hood. I swore then that if I pulled ten years, I was going to stay in, you know.

McIntosh: So you did.

Crawford: So I did. And I stayed in for twenty, and then I was afraid to get out, so my wife told me I had to get out. Too many of my friends were gettin' out and killin' themselves or dyin' right away. As soon as they got out of the Army they—I had friends cleanin' their quarters to retire and died, you know.

McIntosh: Why do you suppose that was?

Crawford: I don't know, but I wasn't going to be one of 'em. I was going to stay in forever, you know.

McIntosh: That was the only safe place you could think of goin'?

Crawford: Yeah. And she finally said, "We're not movin' anymore." So uh, she says, "We're staying here."

McIntosh: How many kids did you have by that time?

Crawford: Well, that was one of the things that kept me from movin' is that I had—I flew her to Germany and married her, you know. And—from the States. And we had three children—two or three. We had three children then and uh—.

McIntosh: In Germany?

Crawford: No, we had one in Germany. Then come back to the States, and uh, we had one in Fort Hood, Texas—some place in Texas. Well, San Antonio—Fort Sam Houston. Then we went to Fort Monmouth [New Jersey], and we had a baby, and then we went to—no, we didn't have any at Fort Monmouth. We had a baby in New Mexico, Holloman Air Force Base.

McIntosh: Then, when after you got out of service, what'd you do?

Crawford: I went in as instructor at the electronics. When I went to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey—when I come back to the States I checked to find out of I could be a medic back at the Green County Farm over in Monroe, Wisconsin. I went out and interviewed there. And they said, "Man, we want you. We'll pay you sixty-five dollars a month, room and board." [Laughs] Sixty-five dollars a month, room and board? I said, "I got a wife and two kids." So I went down to Fort Hood, Texas. I got assigned to Fort Hood as a drill instructor, you know. Or no, Fort Sam Houston, Fort Sam Houston, Texas as a drill instructor.

McIntosh: And you were a civilian?

Crawford: No, I was a military. I was still in the Army.

McIntosh: And what did you do when you got out of the military?

Crawford: Oh, when I got out of the—you're ruining my story [laughs]. When I got out of the military, I was an instructor in electronics in the Hawk Missile Division of Redstone Arsenal.

McIntosh: Oh, okay.

Crawford: Yeah, I went up to Fort Sam Houston—.

McIntosh: That's in Huntsville [Alabama].

Crawford: Yeah.

McIntosh: Okay.

Crawford: I went to Fort Sam Houston, and I says, "This being a medic is not going to be damn good at all when I retire, you know, in twenty years." So I looked in my catalog and found the longest electronic school I could find, and I put in for radar technician up at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. And uh—am I running out of time?

McIntosh: Don't worry about it.

Crawford: Oh, but uh—I looked at the thing, and I said, "Hell, this here is thirty-three week school. I can—I can qualify for that, you know." So I signed up for Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and I was approved for the school. So when I reenlisted I was supposed to go to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Well, to go to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey I had to take an electronics test. And I'd been a medic and an infantryman most of my life. I didn't know a capacitor from a resistor to a tube—

McIntosh: Sounds like the Army I know!

Crawford: Oh, yeah. I went up and took that damn test, and I took that test, and I think maybe I got my name right. And I told this girl, I says, "Now, I only need 112 to get into a—110 to get into Fort Monmouth for this school, and I already have my orders. Now, just let me get over 110." She says, "Okay." And she went back in the back of that thing, and I think she erased every damn one of my answers [James laughs] and filled it in for herself. She come back and said, "You did good, you got 112." But when I got to Fort Monmouth and learned electronics, I knew I didn't get 112 'cause if I come up to a capacitor—a capacitor is open circuits. You can't go either direction on it, you look at that, it's an open circuit. You can't go

that way, so I went some other direction, and, man, I—but I think she uh, I think that little WAC [a member of the Women’s Army Corps] said that she felt sorry for me [laughs] and shipped me out, you know.

McIntosh: So, you went to the school for how long?

Crawford: I went for thirty-three weeks at Fort Monmouth and then—.

McIntosh: Did that change your MOS then?

Crawford: Yeah, I changed it to a radar repairman. And I got sent to White Sands Missile range in New Mexico, and they assigned me to Holloman Air Force Base on a radar site. So I was at a Holloman Air Force Base radar site tracking missiles, and I got—well, my family’s asthma bothered them a lot. So I put in for another school in Huntsville, Alabama, Pershing Computer Repair School. And I was approved for it. And besides that, it was P3 pay, I was only getting P2 pay, so—professional pay, P1, P2, P3—well, I was only getting P2 so radar computer repair, Pershing Computer Repair paid P3. So they sent me through another, oh probably thirty week school learning computers, you know, and computer repair. And at the end of the thirty—at the end of the school they said, “Crawford, you’re surplus.” And when you go through school you owe them two more years of Army time. And I says, “No, you can’t declare me surplus. You’ve gotta pay me because I’m drawin’ P3.” They said, “Well, you can draw P3, but you’re surplus. Well, at surplus, you can’t be promoted.” So I said, “Hell, with it. I’ll retire.” And they said, “You can’t retire. We won’t type your papers.” So I sat down and typed my own papers, you know. Typed my papers, submitted ‘em, they were approved. I retired from the Army on the last day of December, 1950—1965. And on the fifth of January I went to work for Boeing Aircraft Company at Redstone Arsenal on the S1C [Saturn rocket] test stand, first stage of the moon rocket. I went to work there—.

McIntosh: You and the Nazis.

Crawford: Yeah, me and the Nazis. Yeah, [Wernher] von Braun. Von Braun and all the Nazis—

McIntosh: Our archenemy at one time [??].

Crawford: Yeah, I went to work for—I saw him. I went to work for him. And when we’d fire sometimes he’d come to the blockhouse, and, you know, when we—we put stuff on the test stand, and then you have to test ‘em, the five engines of the first stage of the moon rocket. And if the test—if an engine fails on a test, my job with my crew—I was a peon—we took it out, and took it over and put it on another test stand. Then we had to fire it like six

times before we could bring it back and put it in this rocket again, you know, and when we fired we went from the test stand to the blockhouse and watched gauges to make sure that the gauge stayed exactly at what it was supposed to be for the whole duration of the fire, you know. And when I finished up—when I was working there, Windmon—a guy by the name of Windmon got hired in like two weeks before I did. So they said he was going to be day foreman at the test stand in Picayune, Mississippi. We were all going to be shipped to Picayune, Mississippi, and I was going to be night foreman at Picayune, Mississippi to work on that particular test stand. I looked Picayune, Mississippi up on a map, and I told them, “You got my two weeks notice.”

McIntosh: [laughs] Now ,that’s one smart move.

Crawford: Well, oh, it was—that was a smart move. I said, “You got my damn two weeks notice. I’m not going to Picayune, Mississippi, you know.” So I went over to civil service and put in for civil service, and I got interviewed for civil service, and he says, “Well, we’re going to hire you. It just depends on where you’re coming—where you’re going.” He says, “Report in Monday.” So I report in Monday, and they assign me to the Hawk Missile Branch, or Hawk Branch, you know. And they put me in the missile launcher so I spent damn near twenty years in the missile launchers.

McIntosh: Oh my.

Crawford: I went back to Pershing a couple times on loan, you know, they’d got short on people—.

McIntosh: What was your specific job there?

Crawford: Instructor. I uh—.

McIntosh: For the Hawk launcher?

Crawford: Well, I started out on the Hawk missile. I went through the—well, we had to do all the stages, you know. I started out at the Hawk missile, the guidance system, stuff like that. The internal—.

McIntosh: Doing what?

Crawford: Electronics—teachin’ electronics, teachin’ the missile.

McIntosh: How to repair it, or how to build it?

Crawford: How to repair it. No, it was all built, everything was built. It was sent to us. We had the stuff. I started out on the—I was assigned to—we had three crews. We had the missile crew, the launcher crew, and the loader crew, you know. And I went through the—I was assigned to the missile crew, and I stayed probably a year in the missile crew. And then we were told we couldn't be promoted until we got through the other crews, you know. So then I went over to the loader crew and taught for about a year in the loader crew. And then I went to the launcher crew. I—hell, you could have taught the launcher in two weeks, you know. I'm sorry, the loaders—the launchers were longer. But the loader crew was two weeks. It was like a tank. You guided it with two hands, and [laughs] it had tracks, you know. Except I dropped three missiles off of one pallet one day, but uh, I just went into a—.

McIntosh: I assume they didn't explode.

Crawford: They weren't even loaded, they were dummies. They were just—you'd bend the hell out of them. They'd get mad at that. But I just went in and grabbed a class of Marines and told 'em to come back and pick the missiles up, and put them back on the pallet so I could lock 'em down, you know. 'Cause I had forgot to lock 'em down when I set 'em on the pallet, and they just slid off the back [laughs].

McIntosh: So, next up? Then what?

Crawford: What do you mean? I went—.

McIntosh: When you got finished doing that?

Crawford: Well, I went to the uh—I went to the missiles, then I went to the launchers, and then I went to the loader. That's all there was until the Roland—until—well they come out with self-propelled launchers for Hawk missile system. And I got assigned to that group too, you know. And we had to learn it, and then teach it. And then they came down, we had a reduction in force, and I got transferred to technical writing. And I was in technical writing about maybe five months when they came out with a new Roland missile system. You ever heard of that?

McIntosh: Nope.

Crawford: Well, it's a small missile system that, uh—it's got a machine gun and two launchers and about six men crawl in it and ride into combat, you know. And the damn thing is aluminum, and I sure in the hell would not want anybody in it, but the Army says it's good, but aluminum burns. If you get it hot enough it's gonna burn [laughs]. I don't want anybody in that thing, but uh, I taught that for probably a year or two, and then they transferred

me back to Hawk missile again. And I spent all my time up until I retired in Hawk missile system.

McIntosh: Then when you retired, where'd you go?

Crawford: To the golf course.

McIntosh: Stayed right in Huntsville?

Crawford: Oh yeah. I've been in Huntsville since '64. Yeah, I—.

McIntosh: Join any veterans groups?

Crawford: No, unh-uh. I retired, and uh, I didn't do much of anything after that.

McIntosh: Your Bronze Star was given to you primarily from your work in Europe, right?

Crawford: Yeah.

McIntosh: Was that an experience we talked about?

Crawford: No, but that ain't—that isn't nothin' I don't want to record anyhow 'cause I was detailed with this guy to go back and get ammunition and food. They were coming back up the road, and they tried to pick us off with artillery. And so we jumped out and got 'em into a ton and a half or somethin', a small truck, you know. And we got underneath that truck, and he looked over at me, and he says, "You know, this thing is full of ammunition." So we jumped back in the truck and took off, and a couple forward observers saw us and recommended us for medals.

McIntosh: For taking the ammunition truck out of danger?

Crawford: I would say that's why, but they said repairing an ammunition truck under fire, you know [laughs]. Shit.

McIntosh: What you—was repairing yourself out of the area [laughs].

Crawford: That's right. It was not very funny at the time, but it's—you don't want to repeat that, you know—.

McIntosh: No.

Crawford: 'Cause uh—.

McIntosh: That should've gotten you home a little sooner because you—.

Crawford: Yeah, five points. Five points for that, you know. But that was only thirty-one points [laughs].

McIntosh: Well, you had a hell of a career.

Crawford: Oh, I—but you know, I was raised in the Depression. You were probably close to that too, you know.

McIntosh: Well, you were born in '26. I was born in '23.

Crawford: Yeah, I checked that out in the book.

McIntosh: Oh, did ya?

Crawford: And uh, you know, during the Depression sometimes you missed a few meals. I didn't miss too many meals in the Army, you know.

McIntosh: Doesn't look like it.

Crawford: Yeah, well, you should—my suit coat comes to here. You know, my son, when he got his commission got permission for me to wear my uniform at his commissioning, you know. I put on my uniform, and it comes to about here.

McIntosh: They shrink.

Crawford: Yeah.

McIntosh: They all do

Sherman: Especially in those damn mothballs, you know.

McIntosh: Right.

Crawford: She won't even leave it in the house. I got it out in the garage in a garbage bag full of mothballs.

McIntosh: Right, leave somethin' for the moths. Right. Okay, did you forget to tell me anything? We're runnin' out of soap here.

Crawford: I don't think I forgot to tell you anything. But, can I tell you about my son's going to Saudi Arabia?

McIntosh: Sure, let me turn this off 'cause that won't be on the tape [inaudible].

Crawford: Oh, okay. **[End of Interview]**.