

Wisconsin Public Television
Korean War Stories Project

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
ROBERT W. KACHEL
Intelligence, Marine Corps, Korean War
2004

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Madison, Wisconsin

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Kachel, Robert W., (1930-). Oral History Interview, 2004.

Video Recording: 2 videorecordings (ca. 38 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

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

Abstract:

Robert W. Kachel, a La Crosse, Wisconsin native, discusses his service with the Marines during the Korean War. Kachel mentions enlisting after high school, boot camp at Parris Island, and preparing to go on a Mediterranean Cruise with the 2nd Marines when they got orders to go to Korea. He talks about landing in Inchon and Wonton in 1950 with the 1st Marine Division, 1st Marines, 1st Battalion and the high casualties after Marines got stuck in their sleeping bags during an attack. Kachel speaks of being positioned at Koto-ri during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir: sending supplies to Hagaru, being hit by Chinese forces, watching the Chinese trenches get bombed, and retreating during intense cold. He explains his duties gathering intelligence, spotting activity on patrols, and observing the interrogation of prisoners of war. He recalls trying to gather and protect Army stragglers during the retreat and the importance of not leaving wounded or dead Marines behind. Kachel tells of his gunnery sergeant's getting wounded by a trip flare. He discusses his equipment, living in extremely cold weather, and difficulties with frozen food. Kachel touches on difficulties that veterans are starting to have with effects of frostbite. He talks about the noise the Chinese made when attacking, their lack of weapons and clothing, and combat while being surrounded by the enemy. Kachel explains he "prayed for daylight" because combat was more frequent and chaotic at night. He touches on close air support, supply drops, and his activities below the 38th Parallel. He analyzes the Korean War as a political war and compares it with the Vietnam and Iraq Wars.

Biographical Sketch:

Kachel (b.1930) served in the Marine Corps from 1948 to 1951. After the war he became an electrician, raised five children with his wife, Mary, and settled in his hometown of La Crosse (Wisconsin).

Citation Note:

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Context Note:

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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, September 2, 2004

Transcribed by Wisconsin Public Television staff, n.d.

Transcript reformatted by Wisconsin Veterans Museum staff, 2010

Transcript checked and corrected by Kate Brenner, WVM staff, 2011

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, WVM staff, 2011

Transcribed Interview:

MIK: How did you first decide to be in the military?

BOB: Well, you know when I got out of high school, I didn't know what I wanted to do, so I joined the Marine Corps. It was in 1948. And they, well, how do I say it--. It was an eye opening experience to go in the Marine Corps, and I stayed in there, and I liked it. I was at the boot camp and that; I was down at Parris Island, Parris Island at boot camp. And then ah, from there I went to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. And we went on a few--well, like down to the Vieques and a few other places. 1950 we was going to go on a Mediterranean Cruise, so I was transferred over to the--we was going take a Mediterranean Cruise so I was going. I transferred over from the 2nd Range Division, over to the 2nd Marines who were going to make that Med Cruise and this is in June, yeah June. And then we got orders to be out to Camp Pendleton in July. We was shipping out to--we went across country on train to Camp Pendleton, and we joined the 1st Marine Division with 1st Battalion. 1st Marines is what we were. And we shipped off for Korea and I landed in Korea and at Inchon. And we went all the way from Inchon to Seoul and back down, and we went aboard ship, and went and landed at Wonton. This was all in 1950. And we got down to Kojo, I believe it was, where we took over for part of an Army group, the ROK Army. And ah, we was down there for a couple of days and we--1st Battalion part of that one company. We got--well we got hit pretty bad, because we couldn't get our sleeping bags off. Sleeping bags are supposed to--when you zip 'em up, they're supposed to fall apart. They never fell apart. They were--we had quite a few people got bayoneted in their sleeping bags on that one, so--. And we started after that, we went up and tried going up to the Reservoir. We got up to the Reservoir, I don't know exactly the date on it, but it was Nov. 20--20 something like that, 15th something like that. And we was at Koto-ri with the 1st Marine Regiment, Chesty Puller's outfit. I was in a two-section. And, how do I say it, we were just sitting there, and then we went up to Hagaru a couple of times. Sometimes we went up to Hagaru to take up supplies and that to them. We backed down and then the Chinese hit us. And when they hit us, we were formed up in another group cause Yudam ni was there. They were surrounding us there, and we was trying to break through, get 'em some more people up to Hagaru to hold them up, to hold that out. And ah, this Lt. Colonel, he was a British Commando. Drysdale I think it was. Anyway, he was a CO that was gonna go up there with George Company. And the headquarters and service group made up quite a bit of this area, and we started to go up. And we got nailed before we even got up there. We got nailed out of the--right after we got out of the perimeter of Koto-ri. And we got turned back, so when we got back down there we was on the, ah--they put us back on top of the hill. We got hit around late November, 29th or 20--or 30th something like that. November we got hit by the Chinese. They had probing attacks on us, but not too many for us on that where we were. Where we were situated, we could see the Chinese over on the hill--oh, what, a thousand yards away from us, or maybe a mile; whatever, I don't know. You could see them on top of the hill. And it was so funny. I mean we remarked about this with our people and we could--our Corsairs, our fighters would come in and

they would strafe them, and then they would drop napalm on 'em. And we always remarked the Chinese didn't get outta their hole until the napalm was just about on 'em, then they'd jump out of their holes and run down the hill. The napalm would come in and spread out on their, oh, trenches and that, so that when it was over with, the Chinese would be back in their trenches and we'd say, yeah look at them, we're sitting out here freezing and those people are getting a warm place to--hide or whatever you want to call it. And we was down at Koto for--till we left there in December. I don't know if I remember the date, but we was there. We watched--seen a bunch of our buddies come in from the 5th and the 7th Marines. I seen a few of them that I went to boot camp with. I'd lost a couple of them up there at the Reservoir and ah--that's about all I can tell you about it. Like I say, you could see the Chinese and that a distance away, but, I mean they were still visible. You could fire at 'em, but whether it was effective or not, that's another thing. I would say we wasn't that effective when we fired at em, but it was cold--in the thirties below zero—and--that's about it.

MIK: What was your job?

BOB: I was an intelligence man--up there we was supposed to be gathering intelligence on what was coming in. Then we could--we'd go up, go out on patrols and a few other things spotting and coming back in, telling what we saw, what we found. And if we had any prisoners, we'd be there to interrogate the prisoners and watch over them. Shall we say, not protect them, but I mean be watching them. That was our job.

MIK: So tell me about that intelligence procedure or the interrogation procedure. How would that work with the interpreters?

BOB: Oh, they had questions that the interpreters would be asking the prisoners that we brought in, or if we brought any in, or whatever at the moment when a line company's got some. We would bring 'em back, and the interpreters would be there to a find out what outfit they were with, whether they were Chinese, or whether North Korean or what. And that's how they would do it. That was mainly our job there, until we got hit; then we was back into the same group as everybody else. We're all riflemen again. But that was what it boiled down to, and--

MIK: Was it a surprise to you that the Chinese came in?

BOB: Well--how do you put it, I mean, ah, we had captured some Chinese before that and we knew that they were there, and everybody--we figured they were gonna be coming in, and the Army didn't believe us on part of that stuff--and that was the whole point. I'm not bashing the Army, but I mean this is--part of it that's what the hell happened. I mean, they didn't believe that the Chinese were gonna come in and the Chinese were there and they came in. And they were in a large amount of people.

MIK: Like a really huge amount?

BOB: Oh yeah. Well you could--how do say it--you could--if they hit you on some of the stuff, they could--all's you had to is throw your rifle up over your--wherever you was, just put it up there and pulled the trigger, and when you got through firing eight rounds, clip in another eight rounds and fire it again, because there was a mass of people coming in. I mean it was just a human wave, is what all they were. So that was the way it was.

MIK: That's when you need your training. Keeps you focused on your job ahead.

BOB: We did our job and that was--and when we came out, we came out with our wounded and our dead. And like I say, on part of this area it was funny because--well, in the beginning there, on top of this one hill we could see the Army was coming. While stragglers and that, they were hit, and I don't know it was convoys or maybe it was part of Fay's [?] people up there and, ah--we holler at them to come this way where they'd be protected, or whatever you want to call it. We'd bring 'em into our compound and they--some of them came in; a lot of them just turned around and walked away another way. We ran down the hill that we picked up a few a wounded ones, we helped 'em bring 'em into the compound and our perimeter and that. But there was a lot of them that just turned around and went back out. I don't know where they went to, what they were gonna do, but we know that they didn't--a lot of them did not get back. We tried to escape our groups. We're always knew what was going on, we knew where we were and that was it.

MIK: Why do you think they turned around? Were the Marines in trouble?

BOB: Well, we don't know. I mean unless they thought we was--[inaudible]--we figured out--. Our thinking was that they thought we were all Chinese. And course half of these people that were coming in did not have any weapons, and we had equipment and--but, that's about the only thing we could think--that they were thinking that we were Chinese and they didn't want anything to do with us.

MIK: Tell me, why was it important that you brought all your wounded and dead out?

BOB: We always--we never leave anybody if possible. We never leave a dead or wounded person, wounded Marine there. We'd always bring them out. They came with us. They were buddies and they deserve it.

MIK: That was instilled in you from pretty much in the beginning, then?

BOB: That's right.

MIK: You were overrun at night in your sleeping bags and you couldn't get out of 'em?

BOB: That's right.

MIK: That's gotta be frustrating.

BOB: Well, the sleeping bags are supposed to be, like I say--the zippers on the sleeping bag are supposed to be that you could pull them all the way up and they would break apart. The zipper would break apart and that would be it, and they wouldn't do that. So after that, most of us never slept again with our--we never zipped our sleeping bags up, shall we say. From then on, it was always the sleeping bag was open so if you had to you could get out of it. That was down in Kojo, that was below the Reservoir.

MIK: How big was your unit?

BOB: Well, in my section that I was in--it was a two-section. We had twenty people. Twenty people of them in there is what we had. We had a gunnery sergeant was in charge, we had two lieutenants, and a captain was there, regimental two, that's two. And ah, we lost our gunnery sergeant, we lost him. Gunnery sergeant Cutty [or Cunningham], we lost him. As we was going up the Reservoir, we pulled off one night into the area. Everything another one—everything was supposed to be cleared and no problems, the Army was ahead of us and they says they we've got everything outta there, no mines, no nothing. And we got up into it, and all of a sudden we heard this cutting was going around us, all of a sudden we heard a whoosh [sound effect]. Gunney Cutty took a trip flare, right in his, what do I say, his belt buckle and worked all the way up and up. And he was one of them that carried a single action Colt .44 is what he carried on his side arm, that's what he carried. And it--any other man I think he would have probably killed him, but he was in good shape--[laughs]-all he got out of it was third degree burns all the way up on his stomach and that, going up to his face. But um, that's the only one we lost at that time. We didn't lose any at Reservoir. We lost a couple of them out there, another outfits, another two sections and that. We lost them outta there, but in our section that was the only one we lost. He lived, but I mean he didn't come back in until late in '51 when he came back. That was--outside of that our group was a pretty good section we had.

MIK: What is it like to operate in the cold thirty below?

BOB: Well, you don't actually, you--what we had was shoe packs. And ah, the shoe packs, you'd walk in them as if like you've got--the hunters got these boots right now that are shoe packs, and your feet would get cold. You'd sweat, and then they'd get cold, and then they'd freeze, and you had a parka on that was halfway down to your ankles, was how big the things were. And I would say it probably weighed about twenty pounds, or what it seemed like it weighed twenty pounds. You're supposed to climb up a hill and everything else with that stuff, and you just don't move. And--you just can't do any movement with it. I mean --it was always cold down there and the only thing we worked--the only thing we didn't like was nighttime. We'd rather have daylight, because then you could get up and move around, but at nighttime you can't do that, because somebody shoots--I mean, your own people or a gook we get, if they're close by, would jump up and shoot ya, but he was--you couldn't do

anything with that--. Like I say, the parka and that--we prayed for daylight all the time. And it was cold; it was thirty--well, there--I hear it was thirty to forty below. Where we were they said it was thirty below zero on part of it, and we got--like I say there was no indoors. You couldn't go indoors, you had where you was outdoors twenty-four hours a day on it, unless you could get back down the hill and that, and go in one of the warming tents, which is maybe you got down there once every other day, or something like that. But your canteens and everything was freezing with you; whatever you had. We used to carry a little block of C-4 with us, and we'd shave off a few pieces of that, put it down and light a match to it, put our canteen cup over the top of it and it would boil our water, so we could make coffee. And by the time that we'd get it outta there and drink, you'd get about two sips of coffee outta that before it was getting back to frozen again. And ah, the only rations you could eat would be your dry rations because your wet rations, which would be your ham and lima beans, or pork, or spaghetti and meat balls, and some of this other stuff, that was all frozen solid. You could throw that into a fire and let it sit in there for, oh, four hours and you'd pull it out and it would be only hot, I mean, or burnt on the outside. Inside the center of it, it would still be frozen solid. You could eat the wet--the only wet you could eat would be the fruit, and that and that would be just a frozen--just like a ice cream is what it would be like. Sherbet or whatever you want to call it. And that was it, that's what you lived on for two weeks. The time we was up there, it was around two weeks--and crackers and Tootsie Rolls, or if they had chocolate--we had candy bars, that if you had 'em--but outside of that--. Yeah, you couldn't eat, there was no food. I shouldn't--there was food but I mean, it was frozen, that's the whole thing.

MIK: I understand Tootsie Rolls were pretty famous.

BOB: Oh yeah. They helped you out, they got you through on a lot of things. And it used to be the same way with Charms. We used to have Charms too. They used to send in to us. And in '51, they had road signs on some of the stuff, like the old Burma Shave signs. They say this one here, and then it say, Burma Shave, then they'd have it, and then it's come back and say Charms, Charms, Charms. Same way with Tootsie Rolls, the same thing.

MIK: What are Charms?

BOB: They're little hard candies. It wasn't a Life Saver, but it was a hard candy is what it was. You'd put that in your mouth and suck on it, just like you did with the--like a Tootsie Roll, only thing is these here were--oh, they had lemon and strawberry and different flavors on this stuff. It was always a hard candy is what it was.

MIK: Yeah, I think of Tootsie Rolls and I think of summer, and biting them off. It's probably a little hard to do that when they're frozen.

BOB: No, we had [inaudible]. The ones we had we are small and individual, and you could just open it up and throw it in your mouth and suck on it, is how you could do it because everything was frozen solid.

MIK: What's the story of that photo?

BOB: Which one?

MIK: The one we've got behind me that was in the magazine.

BOB: Oh, that was. Well, that was taken in Koto-ri. And that's, like I said, before that was the Army people were coming in, and we seen 'em and they seen us. We was on top of a hill, we'd trying to call 'em in and nobody--. And all of a sudden they just started to leave going the opposite way, and we ran down to pick 'em up, make sure that they could hear us, and a couple of 'em, they just left and then there was myself, and Harris, and another person we got on the stretcher on this one that they were carrying this--a wounded person on it. We carried him back up to our perimeter, and got him in the perimeter to the medics and then we hadda go, climb back up to our own holes again. But that's--I didn't even know that was there, and then I looked, but then I showed that to him, this is taken in '50. And I showed that to my wife when I seen it and she says, "No, that's not you." I say, "Yeah, that's me." I said, "I know my picture," I said, "and that's the way I looked in 1950."

MIK: What was it like to see the picture? Did it bring you back?

BOB: Little bit. Like I say, it something to see and then I--cause I knew that the other man on the other side of me was Harris. I mean he's from West By God Virginia. He was South and it was--. He was always cold.

MIK: Was there a lot of problem with frozen feet and frozen hands?

BOB: Well, everybody there, I think come back with some kind of frostbite, or frozen feet, or ears, or noses, hands. I think most of 'em, lot of 'em came back with it. They just don't--well, it hasn't bothered them, shall we say, and a lot of it now it's starting to bother everybody, so that's the thing. But they never recognized frostbite or that before. Now all of a sudden they're recognizing it.

MIK: I've heard stories that the Chinese would charge and make a lot of noise.

BOB: Well, they'd let you know and everything, when they was going to come, and that would be they'd blow a bugle, or whistles, or--mainly it was bugles and whistles is what they would have. They'd blow all that stuff. And they'd come up, you'd see them coming. And--it was one mass attack, one big bunch of people coming. It would just be like you go in New York City or at noon time and that, and you see all them people coming in, and it was just about like it was there. You know, a lot of people. And they just kept coming, that's all. When they'd break off, they would

come and blow their whistles again, and trumpets and that, and that would be it. They'd fall back and--by that time most of them were--our people probably clobbered most of them outta there at that time.

MIK: I also heard that the Chinese had more soldiers than weapons.

BOB: Yeah. Yeah, they did. The first couple of waves that they had, shall we say, had weapons. They had their rifles or whatever, or machine guns, whatever they had. And then after that, shall we say, the fourth, fifth, or so on back farther they had no weapons, and then as they would come through they would pick up weapons off the people that were dead, or wounded, whatever you want to call 'em. That's what they would do with it. They tried--that's what they did on any of it. I mean even for us people, they would come and take our weapons away from us. At the Reservoir they'd take our weapons off of our dead, before we got back to them. I mean, they'd try to take their sho-their parkas and rest of the stuff and--because they were all cold. I mean, they had tennis shoes is what they were wearing up there, and their feet were all blistered up and from the cold--frozen. That was something--the one thing that the experience you don't forget.

MIK: What happened when you started heading south again, were you surrounded?

BOB: Yeah, we were surrounded all the way. We came out--didn't make any difference where you were, I mean, we were all surrounded. Every--we had three regiments down there, the 1st, the 5th, and the 7th. The 5th up at Yudami-ni, the 7th is at part of Hagaru, and the 1st is at Koto-ri. And we were all surrounded. You could look any place you wanted to look, you could see--on the occupying hills and that, you would see Chinese up on 'em or you'd see the gooks on there. Whether they were Chinese or North Koreans, either or. But that was it. They were going to split us and they, the Chinese, did do some of that, but we still fought our way out of there, and that was it. They didn't--I don't think they knew what they were getting into when they tangled with us.

MIK: You knew your jobs?

BOB: Yeah, we knew our job, we knew what we was supposed to do. We were all riflemen is what we were actually. And that was it. They needed people up there. They'd take them in from the headquarters company, they could shove them into the line and they would work, function just like a regular rifleman. They were grunts.

MIK: Wasn't it a Marine officer that said don't retreat?

BOB: Well, that was--we had two of them, shall we say, O.P. Smith and then Chesty Porter. All says, "Well, now they can't get away from us because they were surrounded, and they won't get away from us now," and that was it. And--that's what--like I say, they were all around us. We didn't retreat. I don't know how you

can say we retreated because they were in front of us, behind us, on both sides, so it wasn't a retreat--we were still going.

MIK: Just fighting your way through.

BOB: That's right.

MIK: I mentioned that we had interviewed a guy in a tank company, a Marine, and he said one of their big problems was that the machinery stopped operating.

BOB: Yeah.

MIK: Did you have any motorized equipment?

BOB: Well, our--no, we didn't have--we was mainly walking. But a lot of times the weapons froze. They didn't operate. I mean, ah, carbines and that would freeze up, they wouldn't fire period on some of it. But they had to be dry; there could be no oil or anything else on these weapons. And you gotta try--you gotta fire 'em at least--everyday you had to go and fire them a little once or twice to make sure that it was gonna work.

MIK: You said that you prayed for daylight. That wasn't only the cold was it?

BOB: No.

MIK: Weren't there a lot of attacks at night?

BOB: That's when they'd usually attacked was at night. During the day they were gone, you didn't see 'em. But at night is when they came out. That's why I always says we always prayed for daylight. You asked me that once before, I said I prayed for daylight, that's what I wanted. You could at least get up out of your hole and walk around and try to keep warm. At nighttime you couldn't do that because somebody's always--somebody'd shoot ya. Whether it was your own man, or whether it was a Chinese, but you'd be moving around and they--hey there's somebody moving over there, shoot, don't ask questions, shoot. That was more or less the order of the day.

MIK: What was your experience after you went back down to the 38th Parallel?

BOB: Yeah, we went down, we boarded ship down at Hungnam after we got out of the Reservoir. And then we went down to Pusan, and then Pusan we started back up again, going North. We never went past the 38th after that, anyway, I didn't. We was at Seoul again and that, and then I got rotated home in October '51. From there I was Parris Island and ah, discharged.

MIK: When you were at the Reservoir, was there much support from the Air Force?

- BOB: Well, we had Marines, we had our own--our fighter pilots were there. The Air Force used to drop us supplies on that, but when they would drop the supplies, half of the supplies that they would drop--they missed us, shall we say, on quite a bit of it. But they would--. We'd have to fight our way down to the hill to pick it up, and fight the way back to come back up the hill. Lotta times you just let the stuff go, and let the gooks have it. Then one time at Koto-ri, they came in and flattened the whole--. We had three tents set up on one thing, for warming tents, and they flattened all three of them with the stuff that they dropped, and they missed everything. They missed the panels and, ah--nobody got killed and nobody got hurt on it, but that's what happened to it.
- MIK: That's right, the Marines did have their own-
- BOB: Right
- MIK: Fighters—
- BOB: We had our own close air support
- MIK: Tell me about that, how did that work?
- BOB: Well, what it was is that they had people and pilots and that on the ground. And ah, they had communications with the fighter pilots in the air and they'd have--. Say we got held up going up a hill or something, we got hung up and it would be that, hey--the controller would give them the coordinates and that; they'd set out a pattern of that, and then the planes would come in and hit where we were right above us, right ahead of us, shall we say. And then they would, say, maybe make one or two passes, and then after that was done, then we'd charge up the hill. They was always there to help us. Course in the Reservoir and some of that, we were snowballing on some of that stuff, we--they couldn't fly on a few times, that they couldn't fly when we needed it, but most of the time they were on station for us, if we needed 'em.
- MIK: So you went through all that, and did you get wounded?
- BOB: Nope.
- MIK: You went through all that--.
- BOB: No. Cold, a little frostbite, a little frozen things, but outside of that, no. **[End of Tape WCKOR031]**
- MIK: About the Korean War. I was a little kid, just old enough to remember celebrating the Armistice was signed.
- BOB: The thing--but it seems like is that--they call it a police action is what we were told it was. It was a police action. If you look at it--I mean, after awhile it was still

political. You couldn't go up there and say, "We're going to charge this hill, we're gonna do this." You had to clear this here, and then the government or whatever you want to call it, "Oh no, we're not gonna do this, we're gonna hold back, we're going to stop this." Vietnam was the same way I would say, cause mostly that was political. We should--we had the chance and we could win. But, we got stopped, and Iraq was the same way. It's still a political war, I mean that's what most of it is, it's political. I don't know.

MIK: Yeah, I've heard it referred to as asking the military to fight with one hand tied behind your back.

BOB: Well, you could--I would just say, in Korea you could get up there, you get up in the Reservoir and that you could chase the Chinese. And they could go across the river on the ice, cross the Reservoir; they could go across the whole works. And they'd get over there and then they could shoot you, but you couldn't shoot back at them. Cause it's, "Hey, you're going into China and we don't wanna start a war with China." What are these Chinese doing over then? Then they said, "They're all volunteers." Well, I don't know--they had a pact going someplace, somebody had, and you get Army groups coming in from China. I mean I don't know.

MIK: And the whole thing about Russia not being involved, and yet why were Russian pilots in Korean uniforms—

BOB: Well, you gotta re--Russia was the one that trained the North Koreans. And America trained the South Koreans. And, when they hit, shall we say, on Septem--in June, I mean it was--they had all Russian equipment. That's what they had. And they brought it all in through there, and they just blitzkrieged everybody. They held--I mean I've felt sorry for the Army that was in there because in the beginning of there, because there was nothing. They took the brunt of it, to hold, and they didn't have the training or anything else. But they held, as much as they could. I mean, they fought a delaying action until people could get in there. The rest of them got there, and that was it.

MIK: You said something about not many people paying attention. Was there such of that when you were there that--back in the States—

BOB: No, I think in the beginning everybody was for you on that when it went in there. I think Truman [unintelligible] everybody was for that. And then after awhile, shall we shall after a year or two years then all of a sudden there was, "Oh what are we doing over there, let's quit, let's get outta here, get our people back home and the rest of the stuff." Ah, I probably shouldn't talk this way, but I mean that's--it's politicians. They're the do-gooders on some of that, and that was it. You didn't want to see anybody more people over there. They wanted to get back, they wanted everybody to be safe, which was true. I'd want my kids home too, I mean, but if they're over there to do a job, let's get the job done. Doing that, we don't have to go back over again.

MIK: Was there such that the Marines were going in to do the job that they were tougher than the Army?

BOB: No.

MIK: Everybody was in it together.

BOB: We were all in it together. I mean, I think what it was that we were still--the Marine Corps always prided itself on being better and everything else, and I think on part we had better training, I think we had better discipline--we had more discipline on part of this than what the Army did. I really believe that. And that's what --I would just say that the Army, what they had down there on part of that was--I can't think of the word on it. But they were peacetime or peace troops is what they were. They had no advanced infantry training or anything else, they were just--there.

MIK: Was the Marine Corps at pretty low strength?

BOB: Yes we were. We were at low strength. I means that's why we had brought in the Reserves, and they also brought in the--they got the people from the 2nd Marine Division to bolster up the a 1st Marines, cause they could send over a complete division and that was--. And we picked up the Reserves, and we and the 2nd Marine Division, or part of 'em, all incorporated into the 1st Marines. We were low, I mean--then we built up, and then now we got what, three divisions, I believe it is.

MIK: So, after the Reservoir you didn't see much action?

BOB: Oh yeah, we seen action, but I mean, we didn't--we was on line or we had, what was it--one time we was on line for eighty days, for three months. And then we pulled off, I mean but it wasn't like when was up the Reservoir. It was, more or less, we was in one group for one section, that's where we was and that's where we stayed.

MIK: At the Reservoir you were all just really fighting for your lives.

BOB: That's right. We was in quite a--we was--. Three different areas, I mean we was approximately eleven, fifteen miles apart, but we would take two weeks to get up there, I mean to fight your way back for it. But that was it.

MIK: Thank you for doing this and thank you for your service.

BOB: No problem.

[End of Interview]