

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
GLEN PRUSYNSKI
Infantryman, Army, Korean War
2001

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Prusynski, Glen R., (1933-2003). Oral History Interview, 2001.

User Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 50 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 50 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

Glen Prusynski, a Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin native, discusses his Korean War service with the Army in a heavy weapons company of the 14th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. He relates basic and infantry training in Hawaii and assignment to the communications section of the 81mm platoon. Prusynski discusses his unit including the roles of various members and his job radioing coordinates between the forward observer and the guns. He describes his participation at Heartbreak Ridge including battle tactics, guarding against Chinese patrols, firefights, living conditions, slippery ground, and food supply. He compares the battle to World War I, with fixed lines and peace-talk politics prompting attacks. Prusynski touches on casualty rates for his regiment and describes making bunkers with logs, sandbags, and rocks that could resist mortar attacks. He comments on rotating home and assignments to a communication section at Fort Lawton (Washington) and an anti-aircraft battery in Kirkland (Washington). Prusynski describes practice at a firing range and one time everyone completely failed to hit a target. While in Washington, he says about half the Korean veterans were broken at least one rank because they didn't put up well with "chicken shit" discipline. He talks about using the GI Bill for college and for a home loan. Prusynski mentions that his platoon was so spread out he did not get to know very many guys, and as a result he never joined any organizations or reunion groups.

Biographical Sketch:

Prusynski (1933-2003) served with Battery C of the 20th Anti-Aircraft Artillery, 25th Infantry Division during the Korean War. He was discharged from service in 1954 and settled as a paper maker in Madison, Wisconsin.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2001.

Transcribed by Jeremy Osgood, 2009.

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2010.

Transcribed Interview:

Jim: Talking to Glen Prusynski, and it's the 15th of August in 2001. Where were you born, Glen?

Glen: I was born in Wisconsin Rapids.

Jim: When was that?

Glen: 1933

Jim: And you entered the military when?

Glen: In early November, I think November 3rd of 1951.

Jim: Were you drafted?

Glen: No, no, I joined.

Jim: Were you threatened with being drafted.

Glen: No, but the draft was in effect. So you knew that you were going to go.

Jim: What were you doing?

Glen: I had just finished the cranberry harvest and working on the cranberry marsh. For Gaynor Cranberry Company at that time.

Jim: Oh, out there raking that stuff?

Glen: No, I had a, I didn't have to rake.

Jim: That looks like work.

Glen: It was.

Jim: That's what the Indians did.

Glen: Yes, that's right. I was on the dyke crew out there drying and stuff like that, and then doing the sorting operation. So when I finished I knew I'd have to go in the service, so I joined the Army.

Jim: So where'd they send you?

Glen: Well, it was, I joined in early November of '51, and you may recall 1950 and 1951 were the two coldest years of the century, I mean, it was *cold!*

Jim: In November of '51 I was coming home from Korea, you know that? I was over there in October of '50. And I came home in November of '51. Well anyway, so.

Glen: So, anyway I was down in Fort Sheridan, Illinois, and it was colder than Billy Hell. And I was standing in line to get my first 20 dollars, you know, so you can buy shaving stuff and stuff like that. And there was a big sign that says, "Take your basic training in sunny Hawaii." So I thought, "Boy, that sounds good to me." So I signed up and I got to Hawaii on December 7th, 1951. Ten years after the Japanese bombing. So I took my basic training in Hawaii. Took infantry basic and then advanced infantry.

Jim: You're talking about a twelve week deal here?

Glen: Well, it's, I was over there for like 17 or 18 weeks. It was like 8 weeks of basic and then 8 weeks of advanced infantry. And fortunately I got to come home. I got a short leave. And from there I was assigned to Korea.

Jim: So, what was your MOS [Military Occupational Specialty]?

Glen: I was infantry.

Jim: Just infantry?

Glen: Yeah, I forget what the MOS was.

Jim: Your specialty was carrying an M1 rifle.

Glen: Right. Right. So anyway, when I got there I got assigned to the 25th division. And eventually I got a company. I got up to How Company, 14th infantry.

Jim: 14th regiment.

Glen: 14th Infantry Regiment, yeah.

Jim: 14th regiment.

Glen: And so, I was in the How Company, heavy weapons company. We had—

Jim: You have to describe that now.

Glen: Well, we had recoiling 75s. We had platoon of those, we had a platoon of heavy 30 caliber machine guns and we had a platoon of 81 millimeter mortars. So I got assigned to the mortar platoon.

Jim: Shooting that Willy Pete over those guys?

Glen: We shot some Willy Petes, yeah, we did.

Jim: I took care of a lot of guys had that shot back, you know.

Glen: Oh, yeah.

Jim: Terrible, terrible wounds.

Glen: You didn't want to get burned by it, I'll tell you.

Jim: It was so deep, and so extensive, I really was impressed with that stuff.

Glen: So, I got assigned to the commo section of the mortars.

Jim: What section?

Glen: Communication section. You know, in a mortar platoon you have, like, we had four mortars. Okay, well, mortars are high angle fire. They're usually located down in a valley or in a ravine, and they shoot real high and come down real straight, so I mean they're kind of—

Jim: Mortar team is six guys or—

Glen: Well, there's a gun crew, and then you have a fire direction center, and you have an FO [forward observer] crew and you have a commo section.

Jim: So, four guns, then we're talking what? Twenty guys?

Glen: We're talking, no I think the platoon must have been probably closer to 35, 40 guys.

Jim: For just four guns?

Glen: Yeah. You had to carry ammunition—

Jim: 80 millimeters, what do those weigh?

Glen: I think, probably eight, nine pounds for a round. The whole weapon breaks down into three parts.

Jim: That's the next thing. The weapon itself is heavy.

Glen: Yeah. It breaks down into three parts, each of which weighed about 45 pounds.

Jim: So, three guys, you're talking about.

Glen: You had the tube, you had the base plate, and then you had the bipod. So I mean, it was a three man crew to carry the weapon, and then you had the ammo and all that stuff.

Jim: And who directed fire.

Glen: You had a forward observer and a commo man.

Jim: Enlisted man, or—

Glen: Yeah.

Jim: He was contact by radio with somebody behind.

Glen: What I did is, my job was the communications section, so my job was to ensure that we had communications between the forward observer and the guns. Now, in most cases the guns were like six, eight hundred yards behind us. So, we maintained communications two ways. We ran a wire—

Jim: A land line. A land line.

Glen: --So that we had telephone communication. And then we had a radio, so that if the wire got cut, we could still use the radio.

Jim: What was your range for that? I mean, how much, when you look ahead, that kind of range.

Glen: For the mortar?

Jim: Yeah.

Glen: Could shoot a couple miles.

Jim: Couple miles. Two miles.

Glen: Depends on the charge.

Jim: Well, I understand that. And what you wanted to do.

Glen: Couple miles.

Jim: But generally a couple of miles. In other words, there would almost always be infantry ahead of you. Between that and—

Glen: See, I went up with the FO. So, we had what they call an FO team. It was the Forward Observer and myself as the Commo man. So we were always attached out to the rifle company, so I spent my time, basically with the rifle company. So.

Jim: That wasn't as healthy as the chaps back where the gun was.

Glen: Between me and Joe Chink was nothing but space. No, we were right with the rifles there.

Jim: So, tell me about your first experience with that. They drove you up to there or something like that?

Glen: We went up to relieve an outfit on Heartbreak Ridge. This would have been late August of '52. And they drove us up, I think, probably within six miles of the ridge. And I went up, and I had a SCR300 radio, on a pack board on my chest.

Jim: Is that standard?

Glen: That was the standard radio at that time. Weighed about 45 pounds, total.

Jim: Jesus!

Glen: Yes, that's what I thought, too. And then I had my pack.

Jim: Battery pack.

Glen: No, my, my pack—

Jim: Oh, your field pack.

Glen: My field pack, with my personal gear and stuff like that. And then of course my rifle, my helmet, my canteens, and my first aid pack, ammo. And it's blacker than Billy Hell, and we're walking along a narrow path on the side of this damned ridge and, I mean, if you didn't keep track of the guy ahead of you, you didn't know where the hell you were. And so, we hiked about six miles up to where the outfit was that we were going to relieve, and we relieved 'em. And I was pretty damned tired, I know I—

Jim: Six miles walking with all that stuff.

Glen: Yeah, yeah. I fell asleep, I know, that night. Yeah, that was my first— We relieved this outfit, and I don't even remember what the hell outfit it was. Might have been the seventh division.

Jim: You mean the whole twenty-fifth relieved—

Glen: Well, at least our whole regiment went up at that time. I don't know about—

Jim: It was the fourteenth regiment.

Glen: And I know the 27th regiment was on our right. And so, we spent the next 65, 70 days on the ridge. We got pounded every day.

Jim: With what? Mortars?

Glen: Mortars and artillery, basically.

Jim: Artillery.

Glen: More mortars than anything else. You know, you saw that picture of the terrain? And that's the kind of terrain that mortars are just designed for, because—

Jim: Right, because they're protected, and they can just, right in.

Glen: All those little valleys and ravines and gulges you can just dump a round in. So, they'd had the ridge zeroed in for eight months. So they knew every damned, they knew where the hell we were and we knew where they were, so it was just a matter of—

Jim: So you're trading mortar fire with them, mostly, all day long. And night, too.

Glen: At night, of course, that's when the Chinese came out, was at night, because we didn't have air power at night. So then they would venture out, and—

Jim: Try to sneak in and [inaudible] you mean?

Glen: Sure, they'd set up ambush patrols. Or they'd make probing attacks along the line and stuff of that nature.

Jim: So, how'd you guard against that, just sort of set up a perimeter?

Glen: Well, we had our main line of resistance. And then in front of that, usually couple hundred yards, we'd have a listening post, which would usually be a couple of guys out there, and they'd have the sound power, which was a wire communication back to the main line. So if they heard anything or seen anything, of course they'd alert us, so we'd know about it.

Jim: After they alerted you, they'd start throwing their hand grenades?

Glen: No, they'd start getting their ass back to the main line. Right nobody wants to be out there on their own. Of course, they ran patrols all the time.

Jim: Did you have a perimeter that was zeroed in with machine guns?

Glen: Oh, sure.

Jim: So that if they decided to start coming across, with sheer force, you could stop them initially with that.

Glen: We had fields of fire. Like, right next to me was the heavy thirty caliber machine gun. And, of course, with that terrain you can't get grazing fire, because it's all up and down. But the machine guns would cover the ridges, the approaches down the ridges, and the mortars, we'd cover the ravines and the gullies.

Jim: You only used thirties.

Glen: Oh, there were fifties.

Jim: Yeah, 'cause I talked to one guy that said, "I put fifties on my perimeter." And I told the guy, "Any doubt, just shoot. Just start shooting."

Glen: We even had a tank up there on the ridge. Now, how the hell they ever got it up on that ridge is beyond me. Because, there was one, I know there was a tank up there. And there was a kind of a snaky road down the— Heartbreak was kind of like, almost like a U-shaped ridge. It came around like that, and I know that there was a snaky road up here that they must have gone down.

Jim: And the Americans were facing the inside of the U or the outside?

Glen: We were on the inside looking out.

Jim: So then almost you had the enemy on almost three sides of you.

Glen: Just about.

Jim: Did that make things a little more difficult?

Glen: Well, they had observation everywhere. They could see what the hell we were doing. But we had a lot of airpower, so it wasn't very safe for the Chinese to get out.

Jim: Well, in the daytime the situation was all yours, and at night it would sort of even up?

Glen: Yeah, then they had a lot more freedom of movement.

Jim: So then it was harder for you to deal with those people.

- Glen: Nighttime was the time when most of the excitement would occur. That's when you'd have firefights.
- Jim: How did, just an average firefight would begin with rifle fire? Or it would begin with everything?
- Glen: Usually, at the time I was there, the firefights started one of two ways. Either a platoon would get ambushed, or would ambush somebody. Or, if a probing attack was being launched. We had a couple of incidents where the Chinese actually made probing attacks on our lines.
- Jim: They'd rush through your mine field?
- Glen: Right, they'd come right up and try to take over our MLR [main line of resistance] and that would precipitate a big fight.
- Jim: No kidding. Well, somebody was saying that the way they got through the mortars, they didn't use any mortar detectors, I mean mine detectors, they'd just send a platoon through and then follow them. Let the platoon blow up the mines.
- Glen: I think earlier in the war, when they had all of the mass attacks, that's probably true. But, at the time I was there it was more like World War One. Our lines were fixed. So, at that point peace talks were going on. So we more or less defended our lines, and I'm sure they were more than willing to defend theirs.
- Jim: So it was just jockeying back and forth, then?
- Glen: I think what would happen, after reading all the histories, apparently what would happen is if they had a bad day at the peace talks, then one commander or the other would order this or that attack, to move the thing off dead center. It was pretty political at that point.
- Jim: Did many guys in your outfit get hit?
- Glen: We had, I think in our stretch at Heartbreak I think we had 42 killed in our regiment. And I don't know how many wounded. I know we had quite a few wounded. I remember one day that we had eight guys get hit within thirty yards of where I was.
- Jim: With mortars?
- Glen: Mortars, yeah. The mortar was, oh, I hated mortars with a passion.
- Jim: Cause you couldn't see from where they're coming?

Glen: Well, a machine gun bullet, you know, bullets fly in straight lines. You can get into a trench and it isn't going to come in and follow you. But that cotton picking mortar goes up like this here, and it comes down right on you, you know? Yeah, they were bad.

Jim: And getting in a foxhole didn't necessarily protect you.

Glen: No, not if they landed right in there. We had, at that point we had, on the ridge, our fighting positions were in the front of the ridge, facing the enemy. And on the backside we had bunkers that we lived in. We made them—

Jim: They were just huge foxholes?

Glen: They were, actually, we made them out of logs.

Jim: Oh, I see. So they were in the ground, partially, too.

Glen: Yeah, and sandbags. And usually, we dug them down, and then we put logs over the top, and threw sandbags to beat hell on top, and then we threw rocks to beat hell on top of the sandbags, because when the mortars were falling in you wanted to be in a nice safe place. Those bunkers were really our refuge.

Jim: And the rocks were over the sandbags because?

Glen: Detonate the round first, so that they wouldn't penetrate so much.

Jim: If you just had sandbags the chance of getting a round coming through was much enhanced? See now that's very good, now I didn't know, that's one thing I never heard before.

Glen: Whenever we went into that bunker we always threw up whatever rocks were available around. We always added another layer of rocks.

Jim: There was never too many.

Glen: Never too many, no.

Jim: These bunkers generally held, what, six guys?

Glen: Well, I think in the bunker I was sleeping in there was one, two, I think there were four of us in there.

Jim: And did you have a rotation of sleep and guard duty?

Glen: Yeah, usually we had like a fifty percent alert at night.

Jim: So fifty awake and fifty asleep?

Glen: Yeah, at night about half the people would be on alert, out in the fighting positions.

Jim: Oh, outside the bunker.

Glen: Oh, yeah. And every night I used to go up and see the company commander and I'd find out where the patrols were going, where our patrols were going, so that if there was going to be a fight, I could support them, you know, and things of that nature.

Jim: Well, you wanted your radio at his side.

Glen: No, no, I would come back and we had our OP, our observation post. That was our station so that if things were going to hell, that's where we had the communications from there, down to the mortars.

Jim: So, you never got wounded?

Glen: No. Thank God.

Jim: And, how about food. Tell me about, did you get any?

Glen: Basically, we got one hot meal a day.

Jim: Oh, that's pretty good.

Glen: Yeah, what they would do is, they had thermal cans, you know, the insulated cans, and they would usually bring up enough food so that everybody could have one meal a day. The rest of the time we ate c-rations and k-rations, stuff like that. You know, you got your favorites, and I'd eat beans and franks for a month, and get tired of those, and eat ham and lima beans for a month. It was pretty boring food, but it kept you going.

Jim: Water? You were able to get water up there? Did you have a problem with that?

Glen: They brought up water. They had what they called a lister bag.

Jim: Right, I know what those are.

Glen: That was a water point, because there wasn't any water up on the ridge.

Jim: That's right, there's no place to dig it up there. And did you have an aid station?

Glen: That was down at the bottom of the hill.

Jim: So if anybody got wounded, you had to, guys could, came down by stretcher. Take them down, paramedics.

Glen: When somebody got wounded it was a struggle.

Jim: It's hard to get them down there, isn't it.

Glen: The ridge was so cotton picking steep.

Jim: It's difficult not carrying anybody, right?

Glen: It was a struggle. We had a guy got hit, and hell, I mean, we just worked our butts off getting him from the front side of the ridge to the back side of the ridge. He was unconscious, he was limp. God, there were four of us struggling to get him through the damn traction to the other side, you know. And, it was tough.

Jim: Did the guy make it?

Glen: That one didn't, no. He didn't. No.

Jim: Okay. And how long were you on the line there?

Glen: Well, we spent about 65 days up there, I'd say. And then we went into a reserve position for a while. And then we transferred. We went west, I would say probably 60, 70 miles, to the Kumwa [Kumwang?] area, which was, the terrain was quite a bit different then where we—

Jim: It was flatter?

Glen: Yeah. The valleys were wider and there was actually signs of human habitation. Over in the east, in the mountains and there, it was just like being out in the wilderness.

Jim: You didn't see any civilization.

Glen: You didn't see anything, no.

Jim: No civilization.

Glen: No. No houses, no nothing. I would imagine down in the valleys there probably were settlements or farms or whatever. But up in the mountains there was just nothing up there. But Kumwa was, they had the wider valleys, and I know there's an old railroad line, and there were a couple of roads and stuff. So, it had more indications of civilization.

Jim: And, so, when did they move you back home?

Glen: I got out of there in February of 1953. I left the company and went back—

Jim: The whole unit. Your whole outfit.

Glen: No, no, you rotated individually.

Jim: By points, was it?

Glen: Right. When you got 36 points then you were eligible for rotation home.

Jim: Well, you were in that zone one.

Glen: Well, you got four points for combat each month, and if you were in rear echelons you got a lesser number of points I guess. Two or three?

Jim: Now you were in zone four then on the line.

Glen: I was getting four points a month. And then I found out that the fact that I took basic training in Hawaii give me an additional four points, which shortened my tour by a month.

Jim: That was a heavenly surprise.

Gwen: Really. Because at the time I was in Hawaii it was still a territory and it was considered overseas duty. So, while I was there I was getting one point a month. So, yeah, that was a pleasant surprise.

Jim: I'll bet. I'll bet. Well, finally you got enough points, and you rotated.

Glen: I got enough points to come home.

Jim: Did you rotate right back into the states or via—

Glen: It took about a month to go from, from your outfit in Korea, you went to a repple depple [replacement depo], and then we went down to Pusan, and went across to Sasebo, and from Sasebo we got on a ship and came back to the states. So it was probably a month from the time that I left my company until I got to the states. So I was one of the last guys that went in to my company, and so in like January and February all of my buddies that I knew were being rotated out. So at the end, I was one of eight guys left in the company that were there when I first joined it. So it was kind of a, I sure missed, when my buddies left, you know.

Jim: Were you discharged rather quickly after you got back to the states?

Glen: No, no. I had joined up for three years, so I had another year and a half to go. So I went and I got my thirty day leave and I got reassigned up to Seattle, Washington into an anti aircraft outfit. 90 millimeter guns. And our mission up there was to protect Seattle from air attack. So, at that time I know Seattle had at least three, we had three batteries in our artillery battalion. We had guns ringed around Seattle and of course, they were radar controlled. So that's where I was, in that outfit for the rest of my time. A year and a half.

Jim: Doing what, specifically?

Glen: Well, I started out in the commo section at Fort Lawton, which was more or less the headquarters. And my job was to maintain communication between the headquarters and the various gun batteries. After a while I got what is known as a Chinese transfer. That's when I, with the boys, we went out and we raised a little hell, and of course the Captain was not too happy about it, and so I got a transfer out to one of the gun batteries. And so, at that time I went to Charlie battery which was about twenty miles out of Seattle. It was at Kirkland, Washington. Just on the other side of Lake Washington. So I spent the last year in Kirkland.

Jim: Was that pretty boring? Sounds like it would be.

Glen: I don't know.

Jim: Well, you didn't do anything.

Glen: We'd pull our guns over to Yakima, Washington. They had a firing range.

Jim: They had a range there that you could play with?

Glen: What they would do is, they used to have airplanes come and tow sleeves on a cable, about a thousand yard kind of plane, and of course our radar would track the sleeve, and then the guns would shoot at it, you know? Yeah, that part was pretty boring.

Jim: Did you hit anything?

Glen: I don't know if they hit anything with the anti-aircraft guns. I imagine they did. Because they were—

Jim: That's a long gun, boy.

Glen: Yeah, and they cut the fuse automatically on it for a timed explosion. But I did have one fun thing over there, and that was they had this range, and we had four quad fifties. You know what a quad fifty is? It's four fifty caliber machine guns and it was in a turret, a little motor turret, so you could spin the turret and up and down. So, there were four of these lined up, and then there two single ground

mounted fifty caliber machine guns. So there was a total of eighteen fifty caliber machine guns. And they brought in this radio controlled airplane. I would say its wingspan was maybe sixteen feet or something. Boy, they brought that thing in. It come in, when it hit the range you could start shooting at it, you know. So I was in one of these quad fifties and I mean to tell you, I just hammered out those rounds to beat hell. And the other machine guns were doing the same, you know, and, Christ! You could see the tracers. It looked like, this thing is coming down right now, you know. It proceeded to fly all the way across the range. And when it got out of the range we had to stop shooting, of course. So the guy flew it around behind us and cut the motor, and a parachute popped out, and we all ran over there, cause we knew it was full of holes. We went over there, wasn't a damn bullet hole, not one. Out of I don't know how the hell many rounds we shot at that thing, but, boy, I know I shot a bunch!

Jim: I interviewed a guy who was in the navy. He was a navy flier. And he was, misbehaved down on the shore in Hawaii, and so they took him off of flying his combat aircraft and they made him fly targets for a week as his punishment. So he flew off outside of Hawaii and out in the ocean there, and circled around this carrier dragging this sleeve around. And he said, "Jesus, those guys shot and shot and shot, all the way around and they didn't hit it!" And he said "The guy I was with finally radioed down to the combat officer down there and he said, 'Sir, why don't you turn that carrier into the wind, and we'll land it, and those guys can beat it to death.'"

Glen: Yeah! I don't know, you know, when I came back from Korea, I'll bet you of all the guys that came back that got reassigned up to Seattle with me? Within, I'd say within three months that at least half of them had been broken at least one rank, and most of them more than that.

Jim: That means you had too much free time.

Glen: Well, you know, what happened of course is, over in Korea discipline was very informal. I mean, it wasn't all the chicken shit. Then you get back in the states and you have, police the grounds and you got some dingbat telling you to pick this up and do that, you know, and well.

Jim: Guys didn't tolerate that well.

Glen: No, they didn't go for that much, no.

Jim: Once they've seen the elephant, they're not going to put up with that.

Glen: Right, so I mean, they got everybody. The corporals were privates, and the privates were buck privates.

Jim: They were picking up stuff.

Glen: Yeah, right.

Jim: So, then after you finished there your time was up and you just—

Glen: Put up three years and I said —

Jim: Of course, they offered you a great promotion, didn't they? If you did sign up for another six?

Glen: Yeah, everybody wanted, they wanted you to stay in, but I concluded early on that I wasn't cut out to be a professional soldier.

Jim: I don't think I could have stayed in the Navy without becoming an alcoholic. I just, the way they put that booze down was just shocking to me. And I can drink with anybody, but, Jesus! Some of those guys, I mean, that's all they had to do in the evening. It's just not a good life, as I saw it.

Glen: I didn't like being told what to do all the time. Jesus, I used to hate that, you know. Especially back in the States, I mean, God almighty, they'd have you leveling out the damn crawl space under the barracks, you know, that much, "Get in there and level it out!" Or paint this, or do that.

Jim: Chicken shit things.

Glen: Really. So.

Jim: That's too bad. I'm sure you were thrilled to get out.

Glen: I was very happy.

Jim: So, did you use your GI bill?

Glen: I did, yeah.

Jim: What'd you do with that?

Glen: Well I went to school. I went to college for a year and a half.

Jim: Where?

Glen: I went first up here at Stevens Point and then I went to the University of Arizona for a year.

Jim: And what did you become?

Glen: Well, I was going to become a geologist. And I wound up becoming a paper maker.

Jim: Oh, really?

Glen: Yeah.

Jim: Well, you're in the right territory. That's what they do around here.

Glen: That's right, that's what we do. But I used my college. I studied chemistry in college, and I used a lot of chemistry.

Jim: That GI Bill was wonderful, wasn't it.

Glen: It was. Great, certainly. I used it for a house loan.

Jim: And you got a better job because of that, right?

Glen: Yeah, really. Yeah, the GI Bill I think was probably one of the best pieces of legislation that—

Jim: Ever.

Glen: —Congress ever passed.

Jim: It developed a whole middle class.

Glen: Sure did.

Jim: That ordinary guys who would just be, you know, ordinary laborers, now they had a chance to be guys up in a level where they could make their own decisions.

Glen: That's right. They had a lot more options.

Jim: Well, sure. That's the best thing about education, is it gives you options.

Glen: That's right.

Jim: Okay. And so, where did you do the paper business?

Glen: Right here. Consolidated Paper.

Jim: You joined consolidated? They had a job for you right away?

Glen: No, you know, I started out piling lumber in the yard at Consolidated, but that's really where my chemistry came in is, you know, there was an opening for a lab technician.

Jim: So you jumped in there?

Glen: With the chemical, chemistry that I had I got in there, and from there I progressed and I retired, I was a superintendant, I had about a hundred people working for me.

Jim: Fantastic.

Glen: I mean it had its benefits.

Jim: Well, I think that's marvelous! The paper company was a good company to work for?

Glen: Oh yes.

Jim: Consolidated?

Glen: Yeah. Yes, now it's Stora Enso.

Jim: Somebody bought it?

Glen: Mm-hm, the Finns own 'em now. I retired ten and a half years ago. I retired at 57.

Jim: That's early.

Glen: And, it wasn't early enough.

Jim: Why? You were mostly ready earlier than that?

Glen: Oh, yeah. I was ready to go. So, as soon as my youngest daughter, she'd gotten a scholarship, so as soon as I knew her college plans were taken care of I said, "I'm getting the hell out of here." Which I did. So, yeah, I was happy to be out.

Jim: So how do you entertain yourself now then?

Glen: I hunt a little. I fish a little. I gamble. Like to play black jack. Travel some.

Jim: You hit Las Vegas?

Glen: I haven't been to Vegas for a long time. But we've got all kinds of gambling around here. I like baseball, been down to the Brewers four times.

Jim: Oh, really. I was there once this year.

Glen: Were you? I've seen 'em win every time. I am. I've always been a baseball fan.

Jim: Have you really? I grew up as a Cardinals fan. I grew up in Madison. Of course they didn't have a Wisconsin team, and most people were Cubs or White Sox fans.

Glen: Cubs, right.

Jim: But my folks had lived in St. Louis just before I was born, and they always used to talk about the Cardinals and so forth and so on, so I grew up. And that was the time when Joe Medwick and all those gashouse games. They were so good, you know, and so I just got caught up in all of that. So I've always been a Cardinals fan.

Glen: They've always had a pretty good baseball history, St. Louis.

Jim: Sure have.

Glen: It's a big baseball town.

Jim: Surely is. I've been down there and seen games at St. Louis. Well, okay. Did you join any veterans' organizations?

Glen: No. You know, that's one of the things I learned as a result of my service, was I became a non-joiner. I joined the Army, and after the Army experience I said, "Shit, I'm not joining this, I'm not a joiner anymore." No I didn't, I never joined any of the veterans organizations. I come close, but.

Jim: And did you have any reunions with any of this group that you were with?

Glen: No.

Jim: Have they threatened you?

Glen: No.

Jim: You mean you don't have any contact by mail with them, either, is that what you mean?

Glen: I have had some e-mail exchanges with people that were serving in the same area at the same time, on the internet.

Jim: But nothing from the 14th regiment.

Glen: No, no. It's kind of different. Being in a heavy weapons company like I was. I spent most of my time with other companies.

Jim: With the grunts, really.

Glen: Right, so I really knew in my own company, I really knew only, hell, the guys in the commo squad and maybe six or eight guys.

Jim: Most of the others were just riflemen. Well, you don't miss that, so it works out.

Glen: Well, it would be kind of nice to have had a wider circle of acquaintances. For example, if you were in a rifle company in a platoon, you get to know the members of that platoon pretty well. But my platoon, the mortar platoon was spread all over hell.

Jim: You never were together a lot?

Glen: No!

Jim: Right, is that what you mean?

Glen: Right. See at any point in time usually, probably 75, 80 percent of the platoon was down by the guns which was probably about half a mile away, and the rest of the FOs and the commo people were distributed among the rifle companies. So usually there was myself and the FO. Or when I was the FO it was me and the commo man. Didn't really get to know a lot of people there.

Jim: And you got a combat infantry badge. Any other decorations?

Glen: Just the Korean service ribbon and the United Nations and that. The only one that counted for me was combat infantry badge. Because to me that was an indication that—

Jim: You put yourself in harm's way.

Glen: You were up on the line, right.

Jim: Now, did you apply for your Korean medal from Korea?

Glen: No.

Jim: I had to see that. I did that.

Glen: You did?

Jim: Yeah, it's kind of a nice medal.

Glen: Is it?

Jim: Yeah.

Glen: No, I wasn't even aware that there was a—

Jim: Oh, you aren't aware?

Glen: No.

Jim: Well you're not interested, but if you were interested I know I can tell you how to. You have to write, all you need is a copy of your service discharge two fourteen.

Glen: No, I—

Jim: It'll come in the mail. But if you don't want it there's no point in doing it.

Glen: I was down at, over here at Finley they had an open house at the National Guard air bombing range over there. And they had several military displays over there. And when I was going through there, one of the things I saw was that they had a combat infantry badge. So I bought one of those so that I could put it on my shirt.

Jim: Put it on your night shirt?

Glen: No, my wife had bought me a t-shirt that said Korean Veteran. And it had like, the Korean Service Medal, and the United Nations Ribbon, and I don't know what the hell the other was.

Jim: So you attached this to that?

Glen: So I put it on there. In case I ever go to Washington, to the memorial over there.

Jim: Oh, that's right.

Glen: I been to Washington a few times, but I haven't been there since the Korean War Memorial has been put up.

Jim: No, nor have I. I am waiting 'till Bob Dole gets the World War Two done, then I'll go down and see that. And I'd like to go to Norfolk and see the battleship. And I'd like to go down to New Orleans and see Stephen Ambrose's Eisenhower—

Glen: D-Day Museum? Yeah, that'd be interesting. Yeah. I was in Norfolk here couple, two, three years ago and took a tour of the harbor. Boy it was a beautiful Sunday

morning. They took us down along where all the atomic submarines were and a couple of carriers were and docked there.

Jim: Big harbor.

Glen: Pretty impressive.

Jim: Shows you your tax dollars are working for you.

Glen: Yeah, really.

Jim: Well, that's great.

Glen: Well, that's one of the things that, you know, I guess the national defense is something that the congress can't shirk. You know, they spend money for everything else, they sure as hell ought to be able to spend it on national defense.

Jim: They better.

Glen: Cause there were some awful prices paid for not paying attention to national defense in the past, so.

Jim: I know it seems to me, after I've done a lot of reading, like you have, on the military, that when there's a different war, it seems like we're reading the same problems over. They weren't paying attention, they assumed that this wasn't a risk, or they assumed that this wouldn't happen.

Glen: They'll never do this.

Jim: God damn it! They just did it! And the war before, they did the very same thing.

Glen: And, you know, the people that paid was Joe Citizen, or G I Joe, you know, or that Navy ship sitting in the harbor. Those were the guys that really paid the price.

Jim: That's exactly right. Okay, see I've got a thing. I can't think of anything else to ask you. Did you forget to tell me anything?

Glen: Not really. No. I put in three years. And I learned a lot. And I guess I'm like a lot of other people. I wouldn't do it again. But I—

Jim: Of course you would.

Glen: Well.

Jim: Why not?

Glen: It's like, if I could avoid it, I wouldn't do it again.

Jim: Well, of course not. None of us would.

Glen: But it was a very valuable experience.

Jim: Well, you know we get a lot of questions at the museum, people come in and say, "I see all these young guys, kids in college, and I don't think they're as patriotic as we used to be in my," what is it, Korean or World War Two. They're all the same, you know. And they're giving me these statements and sort of testing the waters to see how I respond. And I've gotten in the habit I said, "No. If there's a crisis they'll rise up just like you did, and I did." The American spirit is still there, believe me. It's under the skin now, when times are good. But when people are threatened they will rise to it.

Glen: It takes a crisis to wake a lot of people up. But you know the one thing about today's young man is probably he's a hell of a lot more aware of what war is all about than we were, I know, what the hell.

Jim: Well the information is certainly more available to him than it was ever for you and I.

Glen: You know, when I was 18 years old I didn't think, what the hell. There's no Chinaman that can ever kill me. And that's the way you think until you see somebody get hit, and then you realize.

Jim: You're immortal at 18.

Glen: That's right.

Jim: That's like the famous military man said, give me an army of 18 year olds, they'll conquer the world.

Glen: Yeah, really. Cause they don't know a damn thing.

Jim: That's what you need to be a good soldier. I forgot to ask you this. Did you get into a situation where the cold weather was a problem for you? I think I neglected to ask you.

Glen: Well it was cold in the winter time over there. But this was actually the third winter of the war.

Jim: So you all had the right boots this time.

Glen: I had pretty good cold weather gear. I'll tell you one thing. You know how slippery it is around in the winter time on flat ground. Well can you imagine

going up and down those damned hills. We used to have these clamp-ons, onto your boots so you wouldn't fall on your ass all the time.

Jim: You mean with the tongs on em?

Glen: Yeah, yeah.

Jim: You needed those.

Glen: Oh, Jesus.

Jim: I mean you couldn't just. A regular boot would not stand up. It would slip.

Glen: Oh, sure. I mean, it was so steep. I was reading the letters I wrote home to my mother when I was in the service. And in one of them I made the comment that my, the buddy that was with me, his name was Priced. He fell five times going down the hill to chow. And I said I did almost as good myself. Cause, you know, everything was, the terrain was terrific over there.

Jim: Well I don't see, you couldn't muscle those machine guns up to that ridge very easily, then. That must have been very difficult.

Glen: Manpower. Even a machine gun, you take it apart.

Jim: Each part, I know, but each part is heavy.

Glen: Oh, sure, but when you're 18, 19, 20 years old your pretty strong. We were in good shape.

Jim: Well you needed to be.

Glen: War is a young man's game.

Jim: No kidding. I've run out of things to ask you. Thank you. I appreciate.

[End of Interview]