

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
LLOYD YOUNG
Medic, Air Force, World War II.

2000

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Young, Lloyd, (1929-). Oral History Interview, 2000.

User Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 25 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 25 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Video Recording: 1 videorecording (ca. 25 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

Lloyd Young, a Madison, Wisconsin native, discusses his Korean War service as a radio operator with an anti-aircraft battery stationed in Yokohama, Japan. After being drafted, Young talks about basic training at Camp McCoy (Wisconsin), getting a tattoo while on a weekend pass, and going to Japan. He comments on maintaining the field generator, which supplied power to the radar and a four gun battery of anti-aircraft guns, and he recalls a tense inspection. Young speaks about an incident where he was preparing to fire on a plane when the American pilot radioed in at the last second. He touches upon monitoring the radar, trips into the city, food, and guard duty. He tells of breaking up a fight outside a restaurant in Yokohama. Young comments on returning to Wisconsin after the war, using VA hospitals, and joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion.

Biographical Sketch:

Young (b.1929) entered the Army in January of 1950 and served in Japan during the Korean War. After the war he worked as a landscaper and settled in his hometown of Madison (Wisconsin).

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2000.

Transcribed by Kate Howell and Dan Hudson, 2010.

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2010.

Transcribed Interview:

Jim: Okay when were you born, Lloyd?

Lloyd: January 27th, 1929.

Jim: January '29. Where were you born?

Lloyd: Madison.

Jim: When did you enter military service?

Lloyd: When?

Jim: When?

Lloyd: January 15th, 1950.

Jim: Were you drafted or did you enlist?

Lloyd: Drafted.

Jim: And where did they send you first?

Lloyd: Uh, they sent us down to Great Lakes, and then from there I went up Camp McCoy, called Fort McCoy now.

Jim: Right you joined them— you were drafted into the Navy then?

Lloyd: No, Army.

Jim: Oh you said they went to— went to Great Lakes.

Lloyd: Yeah spent the night there. Then they told us where we were all going the next morning.

Jim: And they sent you to McCoy?

Lloyd: Yep.

Jim: I see. And uh, you took basic training there?

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: How long was that?

Lloyd: Been there about ten months.

Jim: Ok. And then did they teach you anything specific? Did you get an MOS number?

Lloyd: Had one but I don't know what it is.

Jim: Ok, what did they teach you to do?

Lloyd: More or less run the radar.

Jim: Oh, radar operator, was that your designation as a radar operator?

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: And where did you do your radar operating?

Lloyd: Yokohama, Japan.

Jim: That was your first overseas uh?

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: Yokohama—Yeah I've been there. And how'd you— what did you do there anything particular—practice or type?

Lloyd: Oh we did. Most of— I got out of the radar and run the field generator.

Jim: Oh ok. Was that a problem— would the field generate a break down easily or—

Lloyd: No.

Jim: All you had to make sure it hadn't, what, run out of gasoline?

Lloyd: Yeah, took care of it just like it was my own.

Jim: Your— your engine?

Lloyd: My engine.

Jim: Right. How big was a field generator?

Lloyd: Oh pretty good size; I would say a six cylinder. Engine there was like a Dodge engine and a Oshkosh engine.

- Jim: But it was like a truck engine would that be comparable?
- Lloyd: Yeah, and a big generator behind it. Then I— some guy up northern part of Japan was running one and he stuck a screwdriver in— inside of the generator and burned it up and made the General of the Engineer Corp mad.
- Jim: Did he do that on purpose or was—
- Lloyd: Just goofing around I think, but he had to pay for it.
- Jim: Pay for it?
- Lloyd: Yeah, he had to pay for it.
- Jim: Took it out of his Army pay?
- Lloyd: Yep.
- Jim: Good. Otherwise I'd had to pay for it.
- Lloyd: Yeah. Then they— he was so mad about it that he went had an inspection through the whole Far East. Checked every— the guns out and everything else. Come up to mine, the machine moved the rig down, I would uh, I would get the mechanic up there to fix it. And he was asking a lot of questions. He wanted to know what was inside the machine besides just looking at the outside. And he asked me some questions and I told him what he didn't know. [Lloyd yawns] A couple weeks later, they come got me and took me down in motor pool, their Lieutenant or somebody was sitting behind the desk; everybody was there. Screaming and hollering that this wasn't done right, that wasn't done right. I was standing next to a Sergeant that I was working the machine. Then he got done yelling and he says, "Sergeant so and so, or is it Mr. Young? PFC Young. Standing right here, come up here to the desk." I thought I was going to get my ass chewed. Excuse me for talking that way. He says, "I have orders from the General to congratulate you for you are the best chink field gunner operator in the Far East."
- Jim: Fantastic.
- Lloyd: Yeah. "Just keep up the good work." [Referring to the Sergeant] "I've only got two more weeks to go and I'm going home," I said. [Lloyd laughs] Yeah.
- Jim: Then they promote 'ya?

Lloyd: They couldn't promote me; too many Corporals and Sergeants.

Jim: Where did you stay— how big of base were you on there?

Lloyd: It must have been about fifteen big tents.

Jim: You didn't have any permanent barracks there, just tents?

Lloyd: Yep. Big ones.

Jim: And what were your— what unit were you attached to?

Lloyd: Either the 235th 8A or 237th 8A. One or the other. I don't remember.

Jim: 255th or uh 2—

Lloyd: 235 or 237.

Jim: Oh 235 or 237.

Lloyd: Yeah one or the other.

Jim: Field Artillery? Field Artillery, isn't that what they called the unit?

Lloyd: Anti-air craft.

Jim: Oh Anti-air craft. Was that a regiment or battalion?

Lloyd: Well they had four batteries so it rotated around. We was an A Battery.

Jim: But your unit, was that called a battalion or a—

Lloyd: Yeah, battalion.

Jim: Ok. And uh— so all of a sudden the Korean War started. How did you find that out?

Lloyd: When I got my orders to go in the Army. [Lloyd laughs]

Jim: Ok. How long did they—when did they decide to send you to Korea then?

Lloyd: About 14 months after I was at Camp McCoy.

Jim: Right, but you were in Japan at the time?

Lloyd: Yeah I was in—they sent me to Japan.

Jim: Right. How did they get you to Korea? Is what I'm asking, Lloyd.

Lloyd: Troop ship.

Jim: Did you know in advance, that you were going?

Lloyd: About a week.

Jim: That was about a week before you were gonna— you thought you were going home?

Lloyd: No. They just come up and said you gonna have your stuff packed, you gonna move to— Well I went home for 30 days. Then I went to Seattle, Fort Lewis. They put us on a boat about 9 o'clock at night, went to, went up to the Aleutian Islands course everyone was sleeping didn't know it. They took the northern route down to Japan and they stopped at Hawaii to drop some troops off there. Twenty one, twenty two days ride to Japan.

Jim: How long were you in Japan before you went to Korea?

Lloyd: I didn't go to Korea.

Jim: Oh you didn't.

Lloyd: No.

Jim: Ok— I misunderstood it from the article I thought you at Korea.

Lloyd: No, I was stationed right there in Yokohama.

Jim: Ahh I see. So what was your daily activity on an average like?

Lloyd: Running that fuel generator. Doing other smaller jobs.

Jim: And how long were you in Japan?

Lloyd: About ten months.

Jim: Then you were automatically discharged because you'd finished your two years?

Lloyd: Yeah. I got off November '51. They gave me— gave me a month freedom for being such a good guy. [Lloyd laughs]

Jim: So tell me what problems you had. You must have had some exciting problems.

Lloyd: Oh I just about shot that airplane down.

Jim: How'd that— tell me about that.

Lloyd: Well—

Jim: This is while you were in Yokohama.

Lloyd: Yeah. I was— everybody had their— had to run— to stay in that semi where the radar is for battle order New Years Eve. New Years Eve, I— all the guys come up visit with me cause they thought I could use some a little company. And they left and I got call from headquarters that an unidentified plane was coming in and said shoot her down.

Jim: They said shoot it down or was that just a standing order?

Lloyd: They said shoot her down.

Jim: Who said that?

Lloyd: Someone from headquarters.

Jim: By telephone they called you?

Lloyd: Yeah. So I rang the bell and got everybody out of bed— got the gun reel out. Everything going and I said, “Ready aim” and then the guy hollers, “Don't shoot I'm an American. Don't shoot.” [Lloyd laughs]

Jim: Who said that?

Lloyd: Airplane pilot.

Jim: He called in?

Lloyd: Yeah. Finally.

Jim: How'd you have control of the guns if you were just running the generator?

Lloyd: Oh we just had a microphone so we could tell them when— I wasn't running the generator I was in— in by the radar and all that.

Jim: Okay, you had a different duty then?

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: So you didn't tell me about switching from worrying about that generator to being a radar operator.

Lloyd: Everybody took their turn at it— that was the only time I did it.

Jim: Where did you get your radar training? In Japan?

Lloyd: No, in uh Camp McCoy.

Jim: Camp McCoy. Was there a written exam involved there?

Lloyd: Can't remember.

Jim: K. And was it hard to do that sort of business, the radar business?

Lloyd: No. You sit and look at that green screen— but the needle goes out real long [???

Jim: So if you a blip then what were your orders? To report it to somebody?

Lloyd: Report it to the captain.

Jim: Where was he from you?

Lloyd: Wanderin' round the camp. [Lloyd laughs] There was two, three of us in there.

Jim: But somebody else had to take a look at that radar plot. Must have been somewhere else if they also had one like you did.

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: Yeah that's what— where was that from you?

Lloyd: Headquarters' battery had one.

Jim: How far back from you? Next building or—

Lloyd: No. Oh no. They were— they had their own little camp.

Jim: That's where the guns were?

Lloyd: No. We had guns but we always got the orders from them to shoot.

Jim: What were your guns?

Lloyd: Ninety millimeter.

Jim: A battery of four?

Lloyd: Yeah. There's four.

Jim: Four of them? K. What was the problem with that pilot? Didn't he identify himself in the beginning— what did he do wrong?

Lloyd: Never did find out. I have a feeling he come back from a mission and he probably fell asleep. That's what I think. I never did find out. Just that spilt second though he'd been dead. [Lloyd laughs]

Jim: Did you stop the shooting?

Lloyd: Yeah. Before they even shot.

Jim: You just said, "Wait a minute this guy is a friendly?"

Lloyd: Yep.

Jim: You couldn't tell what type of aircraft he had on your radar scope?

Lloyd: No. Just a blip or whatever you call it.

Jim: Right.

Lloyd: I often wonder what ever happened to that airplane pilot. [Lloyd laughs]

Jim: How did you enjoy your life in Japan?

Lloyd: I did. I liked it real well.

Jim: Did you have an apartment in town?

Lloyd: No. I lived right on the base.

Jim: You lived right on the base.

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: Did you get into the city a lot, into Yokohama?

- Lloyd: Well I've seen quite a bit of Yokohama. We made one trip one Sunday afternoon to Tokyo on the train.
- Jim: Go to the PX?
- Lloyd: Oh yeah. We lived back in the PX.
- Jim: Oh yeah I was going to say that PX in Tokyo was a big, big store. I was impressed with that. Did you buy camera like everybody else did?
- Lloyd: Nope.
- Jim: Send a lot of souvenirs home? [Lloyd shakes his head no] Oh.
- Lloyd: I bought a watch.
- Jim: Rolex— everybody was buying Rolexes.
- Lloyd: I don't know what kind it was—I got it. I got home. [Lloyd yawns] And the crystal [??] had come off while I was sleeping over night. But the heck with it, I don't want it so – I said give it to me and I'll get it fixed and give to Leroy, my brother. So she did. [Lloyd laughs] I had them jackets you know.
- Jim: With those tigers on them backs.
- Lloyd: Yeah. Some with Mount Fuji.
- Jim: Yeah, they're pretty cheesy stuff.
- Lloyd: [Lloyd laughs] Yeah, but then that stuff was cheap.
- Jim: Everything was cheap. That's why I lost all of my money. I was buying things to save money. Lot of stuff I really didn't need, but it was so cheap I kept buying it.
- Lloyd: 300— was it 370 yin to a dollar at that time?
- Jim: Something like that. It changed. It varied. You get used to eating any that—Sukiyaki over there?
- Lloyd: Yeah.
- Jim: I enjoyed that. The food was good.

Lloyd: Yeah. They had the best beef steak there that I've ever had in my life. It was probably one of their oxens. [Jim laughs] It really was good. Fried rice.

Jim: You get into the Japanese baths?

Lloyd: Nope. No I didn't get into them.

Jim: Oh that's too bad that was— that was very interesting too. Didn't chase any girls over there?

Lloyd: Oh, we don't want to talk too much about that.

Jim: Oh well, that's the ah— that's the exciting part.

Lloyd: Yeah. I had a different one every night when I went out.

Jim: Oh my.

Lloyd: Yep.

Jim: Well that's gotta— disappointing for you to come home after all this excitement over there?

Lloyd: Yeah, shoulda— one of those. Well it was nice to get home, you know. I had 30 days to make up my mind if I wanted to reopen again. And they wanted me to go to Oklahoma to diesel. Be a diesel mechanic. I should've done it, but I didn't.

Jim: Were you married at the time?

Lloyd: No. Didn't get married till after July of '53.

Jim: So you got out of the service then?

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: And did you use your G.I. Bill?

Lloyd: What is that?

Jim: Well it's— free education for one thing or a 5% loan on a house if for another.

Lloyd: Oh, I never applied for it.

Jim: Oh. That's too bad.

Lloyd: Veteran's hospital up here taking care of me now.

Jim: Oh well, what is that? Something that happened to you recently?

Lloyd: Yeah. I fell down and burnt my arm. And they gave me open heart surgery ten years ago. Been taking good care of me.

Jim: Your initials on your arm? Was that something you did while you were in Japan.

Lloyd: Sometimes. Go by a dark alley, you know that's my name.

Jim: Right did you do that when you were in Japan?

Lloyd: No.

Jim: Oh you did that when you where younger?

Lloyd: I was in the Army. I come home on a weekend pass. Future wife's cousin did it.

Jim: Must've been drunk. Most guys are drunk when they had that done.

Lloyd: Well I had a few drinks. [Jim laughs] I wish I never had it done.

Jim: When I was uh in Korea, I spent a lot of time taking tattoos off the sailors. Almost everyone said, "I did that when I was out getting drunk." Usually right after they finished corps school or boot camp. And almost every single one said, "I wish I had never done it."

Lloyd: I don't know how you couldn't do it. Been on there now for 50 years. [Lloyd laughs]

Jim: Well now it doesn't make any difference now does it.

Lloyd: Nope.

Jim: So what did you do after the service?

Lloyd: I got a job at Oscar Meyers. Right away, about two weeks after. Stayed there until spring. My dad was a landscaper, laying sod and that, so I bought a dump truck and we worked together on that. Quit Oscars. It wasn't too bad of a job over there. I liked to be outside.

Jim: So that's what you did for several years?

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: Did you join any veteran's organizations?

Lloyd: No.

Jim: Did you –

Lloyd: Yeah, the VFW.

Jim: Oh ok.

Lloyd: When I lived in Sun Prairie, the other one, what did they call it?

Jim: American Legion?

Lloyd: Yeah, American Legion.

Jim: Did you keep in contact with any of the people you were in service with?

Lloyd: Couple times I wrote. And uh I can't remember this kid but he said that he wrote back and said good thing you got out he said we're moving out of Japan and going to Greenland. Good thing cause I didn't want to go there. [Lloyd laughs]

Jim: You'd been outdoors up in Greenland.

Lloyd: Yeah. [Jim laughs] Snow up your butt.

Jim: Right. So did you use any of the knowledge you gained from the service in your civilian life?

Lloyd: No.

Jim: Didn't run into any generators that needed fixing?

Lloyd: Run into 'bout two of them. That was just in the last four, five years. For I brought them in for junk, at my cousin's place of business. I got em going.

Jim: Good. See you learned something. Now you're an expert.

Lloyd: And he sold them. Made money. Yeah. How long is this going to take?

Jim: [Jim laughs] We're about done.

- Lloyd: Are we?
- Jim: Unless you – Unless you got some more stories to tell me.
- Lloyd: Right now I can't think of any. [Noise in background] Huh? [Tell him about the— or something if you can] Oh. It was something with a village. I was in Yokohama one Sunday. And uh a buddy of mine went in to eat in this restaurant, steak of course. A whole group of men, a lot of them in a big circle. They were beating on this one little guy.
- Jim: These were Japanese?
- Lloyd: Yeah. I'm going to go out and help that guy. So I went out there and went over to him and the Japs they all started moving towards my back. I turned around and I said, "Get out of here." Then the other half of the circle started. I finally broke it up with no one, no fighting or anything. Communists. They were trying to take over this town. So they all finally all left and I went back into the restaurant. I didn't have to pay for my meal or my drinks or anything. [Lloyd laughs]
- Jim: Yeah. You did a good deed.
- Lloyd: Yep. That's when the Communists were trying to take over. We had to double our guards and everything else.
- Jim: Around your camp?
- Lloyd: Yep.
- Jim: Did you have to stand guard duty?
- Lloyd: Yeah, a lot of it.
- Jim: You didn't like that. I can tell the way you said.
- Lloyd: I remember one time I was on guard duty, you're on two hours and you sleep four hours. It was kind of raining out. Some guy walked outside, start walking the guard duty and I got the hiccups. I couldn't stop em until I got back in the building. Two hours. Then they woke me up in four hours is up. Back out there and I got the hiccups. And they lasted another two hours. [Lloyd & Jim laughs]
- Jim: Unbelievable.
- Lloyd: Just can't understand why.

Jim: What was your weapon?

Lloyd: Uh, what the heck did they call em?

Jim: A rifle or a 45?

Lloyd: Shotguns.

Jim: Shotguns.

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: 12 gauge?

Lloyd: Yep.

Jim: Pump.

Lloyd: Mmmhmm. Something pump.

Jim: And there was two of you at each post?

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: And how big an area did you protect?

Lloyd: It went all the way around the whole thing. Since it was like it's on a big hill.

Jim: Oh, you circle the whole thing on your walk?

Lloyd: Yeah.

Jim: Ok.

Lloyd: You spelt one night. Raining like a son of a gun. Went down this big of a bank went there was this little door in it. Leaned against the door watching it rain. Lit up a cigarette. Oh, I'm glad I didn't get caught. It's the ammunition dome.

Jim: Oh my. [Lloyd laughs]

Lloyd: I could've blown the whole place up.

Jim: Right.

Lloyd: I was something.

Jim: Alright. Well I can't think of anything more to ask you. Did I forget to ask anything?

Lloyd: No. Nope.

Jim: Okay that'll do it then.

[End of Interview]