

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

JAMES R. ZEASMAN

Clerk General, Army, World War II, Occupation of Japan & Korea

1996

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Zeasman, James R., (b. 1926). Oral History Interview, 1995.

User Copy: 2 sound cassette (ca. 95 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 2 sound cassette (ca. 95 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder)

Military Papers: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder)

Abstract:

James R. Zeasman, a Mount Horeb, Wisconsin resident, discusses his service as an 055 clerk general in the Army at the end of World War II and with the Occupation Forces in Korea and Japan. Zeasman relates he grew up in Madison and graduated from Madison West High School in 1944. His father was an agricultural engineering professor at the University of Wisconsin. Zeasman states his mother was a UW graduate, unusual for a woman of her generation, and he adds that his older sister joined the Women's Army Corps (WAC). After high school, Zeasman enlisted in the Army Specialized Training Reserve Program (ASTRP) at the University of Illinois. He explains he was discharged as 4F after one semester because he failed the vision test. Zeasman analyzes his reaction upon returning to civilian life, stating he "felt I was missing out on...the Big One." In 1945, Zeasman reveals he tried to reenlist. When the first draft board in Madison denied him, he went to the second draft board with a falsified name, passed the vision test, and was accepted. Zeasman suggests he was accepted because the Army needed more manpower at the end of the war. Next, he recalls telling his commander the truth during basic training. The officer was angry, but when he saw Zeasman was eager to stay in the Army, he fixed Zeasman's enlistment papers. Zeasman touches upon his basic training at Fort Walters (Texas) and his advanced training in intelligence and reconnaissance. He mentions he was still in training on V-J Day. Zeasman explains he still wanted to serve, so he reenlisted for three years with the Occupation Forces in Japan. In 1946, Zeasman was shipped to Korea with the 52nd Infantry Replacement Training Battalion, Company D. He explains he was trained as an intelligence reconnaissance scout, but served as 055 Clerk General in the Adjutant General's office with the ASCOM 24 unit. He was stationed in Ascom City near Seoul. Zeasman outlines a typical workday, stating he spent his time processing classified correspondence and declassifying documents. His other jobs in the Army included operating an ice cream plant on base and pulling guard duty with the military police in Inchon for six weeks. Zeasman reflects thoughtfully upon racism in the Army. He speaks of discrimination against his friend Jimmy Nakada, a Japanese-American soldier whose family had been in an internment camp in Arizona. Zeasman also tells what the Army was like before integration and speaks positively about his interactions with African-American soldiers. In addition, Zeasman mentions two soldiers in his company who were both decorated veterans of Okinawa and were "known to be gay," but "nobody cared." He explains that "people knew [but] they made no bones about it." Zeasman comments at length on military life; the lack of privacy, "GI language," camaraderie, boredom, combat fatigue, and recreation. He characterizes the

Army's attitude as lax during this era and states alcoholism was widespread. Zeasman also addresses prostitution, which was legal in Korea. In Inchon, he pulled guard duty in the red light district at night. Zeasman reveals the guards were supposed to keep American troops out of the brothels, but during the changing of the guard, the MPs allowed soldiers from their own company to get through the lines. Zeasman often touches on tensions between commissioned officers and NCOs like himself. As a corporal, Zeasman felt most officers were "self-serving" and he discusses conflicts with stubborn officers who refused to promote NCOs. Also, Zeasman discusses Korean politics and interactions with Korean civilians. He blames years of Japanese control for making Korea "backwards." Zeasman characterizes Koreans as "very tolerant" and criticizes U.S. troops for acting "superior, arrogant and disrespectful" in Korea. Zeasman also addresses American soldiers dating Korean girls and mentions that some soldiers lived off base with "concubines" and had biracial children. Zeasman frequently portrays himself as a naive, immature eighteen year-old and comments that the Army made him grow up. Zeasman briefly talks about General MacArthur whom he characterizes as having a big ego, but was an effective general. In March 1948, Zeasman returned to the United States after two years in Korea. He reveals he was tired of Korea and had tried to be transferred twice, once by writing a letter to Army Command and once by pretending he was engaged to his sister's pen pal so he could get hardship leave. After returning to the States, Zeasman served his last six months at Fort Benning (Georgia) and was discharged in September 1948. He returned to Madison, worked briefly at Oscar Mayer, and then started college at the University of Wisconsin on the G.I. Bill. After a year, he transferred to Stout Institute. Zeasman explains he preferred the smaller class sizes because at UW-Madison he was "still a number" like in the Army. Zeasman implies that the Dean at Stout was reluctant to accept him because of his poor academic record, but enrolled him because Zeasman was a veteran. At Stout, Zeasman did well academically and had classes with many other veterans. He mentions he met his wife at Stout and they got married in 1952. Zeasman cites statistics from that time showing that veterans did better in school than non-veterans and married veterans did even better. He states with pride that he helped put his wife through college, "which was unusual at that time." Zeasman graduated with a master's degree in 1954 and became a high school teacher in Mount Horeb. Zeasman jokes that the career aptitude tests he took in the Army said he should be a teacher, but at the time he laughed at the results. Finally, Zeasman refers to souvenirs including grenades, Japanese rifles, and other items he collected when he was in the military and later donated to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

Biographical Sketch:

Zeasman (b. 1926) was born in Madison, Wisconsin to a large, educated family. Both his parents graduated from the University of Wisconsin, and his father taught agricultural engineering at the University. Zeasman's older brother, also a UW alumnus, was an engineer at Boeing during World War II, and Zeasman's sister was a WAC. After graduating from Madison West High School in 1944, Zeasman enlisted in the ASTRP program through the University of Illinois, but he was discharged after a semester when he failed his vision test. A year later, Zeasman reenlisted under a fake name with the regular Army. He was in intelligence and reconnaissance training at Fort Walters (Texas) when World War II ended. Zeasman re-upped for three years and served in Korea from 1946 to 1948 with the occupation forces. He went to Korea as a replacement with the 52nd Infantry Replacement Training Battalion, Company D but ended up with ASCOM 24 in "Ascom City" as a clerk general in the Adjutant General's Office. Zeasman was discharged honorably in September 1948 with the rank of corporal. After the war, he attended UW-Madison for a year then transferred to Stout Institute where he married a fellow Stout student in 1952, received his B.S. in industrial education in 1953, and his master's in industrial arts in 1954. Initially working as a teacher in Waukesha, Zeasman became a high school teacher in Mount Horeb where he stayed. Zeasman retired in 1988 after teaching for thirty-four years.

Interviewed by Mark Van Ells, 1995

Transcribed by Joanna D. Glen, WDVA staff, ca. 1998

Transcription edited and abstract written by Darcy I. Gervasio, 2010

Interview Transcript:

Mark: Today's date is March 1, 1995. This is Mark Van Ells, Archivist, Wisconsin Veterans Museum doing an oral history interview this afternoon with Mr. James Robert Zeasman, the fiftieth interview that we've done here at the Museum. Good afternoon. How are you doing?

James: Good.

Mark: Let's start out at the beginning, I guess. Perhaps you could tell me a little bit about where you were born and where you were raised and a little bit about your upbringing and what you were doing prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

James: I was born December 8, 1926. I was born in Madison, St. Mary's Hospital and I grew up 2220 Keyes Avenue. My folks bought the place there in 1918 and mom was still living there when she died at 101, a year and a half ago. My sister owns the house now. Went to grade school at Dudgeon and high school at Madison West and graduated in '44.

Mark: What did your dad do for a living?

James: My dad was a University of Wisconsin Ag Engineering professor. He graduated from the U. in 1914 and mom graduated in 1916, which is kind of unusual at that time. Dad's specialty was erosion control. They claim that he was the father of erosion control in the state, and I've always understood he was the only full professor in the University without a Master's Degree. He finagled that one and they hired him.

Mark: You can't scrub toilets at the University without a Master's Degree anymore!

James: That's for sure.

Mark: So you were a high school student while World War II was raging. Perhaps you could tell me a little bit about what it was like to be in high school and having your 18th birthday coming up and what's the attitude, in your experience, among high schoolers at the time? Were the guys anxious to get into the service? Or fearful of it? Or how would you describe it?

James: I was a sophomore at the time of Pearl Harbor. I don't have a lot of memory of the European war starting other than the fact that I have always been a nut about building model airplanes and ships and stuff and so very interested in that part of it. Probably one reason for my attitude at that time, my dad was very anti-New Deal and very isolationist in his attitude. I don't remember a lot of discussion at home about it but maybe that's just 'cause I didn't pay any

attention to it. My folks, in hindsight, I perceive my folks didn't get along real well, but I was the fourth of six kids, and by the time I came along, their truce lines had been signed. So, I wasn't aware of argument or anything like that when I grew up although mother, essentially, raised myself and my younger sister. I had a younger brother that died quite young. At the time of Pearl Harbor, I was sitting at my desk in my room, whittling on a model airplane when I heard it come over. My reaction was typical of all my friends: "Those Japanese must be absolutely nuts. We'll whip them in a week. They can't see straight; they can't make decent equipment," and all the rest of that. Now, it's very obvious that that was a result of our extremely racist attitude towards Orientals. We even had that attitude because I can still, to this day, remember vividly pictures in Life and in newspapers of our war games in Georgia in 1941 in the Fall and the guys were training with broomsticks as machine guns and a big sign reading "tank" on the side of their jeep to simulate a tank. We had no equipment. So, we had that kind of an attitude. Of course, we didn't know any better at that particular time. There is a real interesting thing though-- we had two girls and one boy of Japanese extraction in my graduating class of 301. We had thirty-five boys who actually were serving in uniform at the time of graduation. Those were the days of war diplomas. If you dropped out of school and entered the military, served honorably, you got a wartime diploma. You didn't have to finish high school.

Mark: How did the Japanese kids get along in school?

James: To my knowledge, there was never any animosity whatsoever towards those kids.

Mark: Were these professors' kids or something?

James: I don't know. I think at least one of them was a youngster that belonged to this Japanese family that had a truck farm out there by Nine Springs Sewer Plant. They were out there for years and years. I really don't know. They weren't in my circle of friends. Along with that, at that point my mother brought us kids up to be very, very non-prejudice. An incident when I was in grade school. Mom always told us we were Americans and that's all we ever knew and the school records wanted to know whether you're German or Japanese or English or whatever your heritage was. I wrote down American. The school called home and gave Mom all kinds of heat and she wanted to know why they wanted to know that. They said they would know better how to teach me. Mom said, "How do you teach a German as opposed to an English child?" From that point on they were satisfied with American. So, Mom was kind of a strong-willed person. I don't remember ever seeing an Afro-American in the City of Madison when I was growing up. Whether it was because I didn't know any better, whether there weren't any, I haven't the slightest idea. In fact, the first I saw them was when I was taking training in Texas, but I don't have any recollection

of it. The first I remember seeing them was when I got to Korea. I don't know whether I was colorblind or what. I really don't know.

Mark: You were anxious to get into the service?

James: You better believe it.

Mark: I grew up after the Vietnam War and the experience of that war was that young men were trying to stay out of the military. It's interesting to someone who grew up after that, World War II people who would lie to get into the service. I'm interested in what made you want to go into the service so badly.

James: You have to realize that World War II was essentially a popular war. Probably the only popular war in the history of this country, as a direct result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. That was the biggest mistake the Japanese ever made. They unified this country. Remember we'd been in the war for two-and-a-half years when I graduated from high school and we had been living with it, having older brothers, friends, neighbors, and so on going into the service. However, I have two older brothers and a younger sister. My older sister is the only one besides I that served during the war. Older brother was 4F, my second brother was in University Engineering at the time the war started and he got a job with Boeing, and he was important to Boeing in the designing of the aircraft so Boeing kept him busy out there, although he kept wanting to get in because he did have flight training, but Boeing wouldn't let go of him. My older sister joined the WACS and served out in California for I don't know how long. A year maybe. I never worried about my future when I was in high school because I knew what it was. We were going to serve, period. So, the only thing remaining was do you wait till they draft you or do you enlist and have some choice as to what branch you're in? I wanted desperately to get into the Air Force. My eyesight was such that the only thing that would take me is I enlisted in the inactive enlisted reserve for an ASTRP program. Are you familiar with that?

Mark: Sure.

James: In fact, I left a ASTRP patch here. The patch with the yellow background on it, diamond background. I enlisted in that about two or three weeks before graduation. I went into the ASTRP program at the University of Illinois then that fall, and they shoved fifty college credits in about four months, so you can guess what kind of a schedule we had and of course, the Army cut out the things that they didn't think was important.

Mark: Now at school you went to classes with other ASTRP persons or regular student body?

James: With other ASTRP persons. We were living in a commandeered dormitory all ASTRP people in it. The Army calls it an A12 program. We had 24 guys in our unit. We marched to and from classes and we had mandatory study hall in between classes in the school library and there's an interesting thing there too. My first brush with racism, and I didn't know the difference, they went down the list and they started with the A's and asked who we wanted to room with. Got on down to N [Nacata] and there was just silence when his choice came. I said that I would love to be his roommate if it was OK with him. It turns out that this young man was the youngest of the brothers, I think there was a dozen kids and eight or nine boys. He was in a relocation camp in Rivers, Arizona. His family was in relocation camps. Every single one of his brothers was serving in the military [volunteers] and he was serving and he was one of the nicest guys I've ever know. Just a super kid. Good student, fun to be around. The racism was why nobody would be interested in being his roommate. I didn't perceive that. All I recognized was a pregnant silence. The guy appealed to me - I didn't know the difference.

Mark: Before you got to the University of Illinois, I got two questions. First of all, the State Guard, when did you...

James: That was later.

Mark: The second thing was did you have some sort of basic training or military indoctrination before you went to school at Illinois?

James: No, I didn't. Went directly. We were activated from unassigned enlisted reserve. We were actually serving down there at government expense but we weren't on the payroll. Kind of an interesting set up.

Mark: So you didn't get the haircut and the drill sergeant with the Smoky-the-Bear hat?

James: That's right. That came later. Then when I completed that in February of '45, we were being reassigned and transferred through Fort Sheridan, heading for basic training camp at that time and went through the physical and they called me to the orderly room and gave me my orders. Report to the Replacement Center over in the other side of Fort Sheridan. I remember thinking how strange that was being assigned over there. It didn't make any sense at all to me. But, I was just 18 and didn't know much about anything. In those days, 18-year-olds didn't think that they knew a lot about anything either. I got over and asked why I was being assigned there and the guy says that I'm being separated not assigned. When I asked why, he said that I had failed the physical. What happened was I needed new glasses. Concentrated study for that four or five months was such an eye strain on me that I failed the physical and didn't even know I was failing it. So they sent me home. A couple of weeks later they discharged me into the unassigned enlisted reserve. A couple of weeks later I

got a discharge from it, which was real strange 'cause I was working at Armed Forces Institute in Madison for that period of time that I was out and there was a friend of mine there that had been discharged-- the same thing a couple of months sooner-- and as far as I know he never did get a discharge. That spring, you have to understand the times. The patriotism, the fact that Truax and the University had a large contingency of Army and Navy personnel in radius and here's a young man, obviously of military age, apparently physically fit, walking around town in civilian clothes. You have to live that experience to understand what it feels like. At that time we had the ruptured ducks when you got discharged if you know what that is. Nobody recognized what they were because at that point there had been very, very few people been discharged yet other than disability discharges. Discharged veterans were not common yet at that time. That came late in '45. I didn't like it. I was very, very unhappy. I felt I was missing out on it, and I suppose part of that thought was asking myself "What I'm going to tell my grandchildren that I did in the Big One?" Looking back on it now, judging from friends' experiences that did get in the combat, grandchildren aren't the least bit interested. Kind of a funny turn of events. That's the way I see it now; I may be wrong. At that point, President Roosevelt died in May, and that pushed me over the brink. I had to get back in. I went back into the local draft board and remember this is just before V-E Day, but V-E Day was obvious at that time. I went over to the local draft board, number one, where I was registered. They looked at my discharge and saw that it was medical and said, "No way." So, I went out into the adjoining room to draft board number 2, gave them a fictitious name, song and dance, I just turned 18 and the family was killed out in Colorado in a car accident and all the usual baloney, told them I wanted to be inducted. I'm sure that they knew I was putting them on. I'm also sure at that point they were happy to have someone volunteer so that they didn't have to draft somebody. I'm speculating on that.

Mark: Did you have any documentation to back this up?

James: No. I just walked in and told them. Anyhow, two weeks later I was back at Fort Sheridan, I don't know whether my eyes had improved that much, whether they'd changed the standards or what. I was on limited service first time around, the second time around no limitations at all. It never made a lot of sense to me other than the fact that they figured they needed more bodies at that particular time and they did that during the war. Requirements go up and down depending on personnel needs. So, I got back in and down to Fort Sheridan and called home. I thought my mother was going to have a heart attack when I told her what I had done. The thing that upset her was that she lost her son because I had a different name. I picked the name Martin because I always detested being in the corner of the room at school with a "Z" name. I wanted to be in the middle. Believe it or not it took the Army three months to get my name changed back but they wouldn't give me my old original enlistment serial number so I ended up with a draftee serial number. That's not significant.

Mark: So the Army found out that you weren't...

James: I went and told them. As soon as I passed the thing and after I talked to Mom, I figured I better do something about this or she's going to tip over the apple cart. I went in the Company Commander's office. The kid just before me was under 17, came in and told me he wanted to get back out. He lied to get in and he had second thoughts. So the Captain was kind of in an ornery mood, and I walked in and told him what I had done. He blew his top and said, "I suppose you want out?" I told him that I didn't want out, that I just wanted my name changed back. Then he cooled off. I thought for a minute I was headed for the stockade. It just says something about the time. I wanted to do my part, I felt I was missing out on something, I really don't know what I can say other than the fact that at that time, as I perceived it, all of us wanted to get in there and do our part. I don't remember ever hearing anyone saying "How can I avoid it? How can I stay out?" Some of them went to the University for a semester until their draft number came up. I remember in high school as teenagers, very, very strong feelings of patriotism and I know that's awful hard for people in the Vietnam era to understand. During the Korean War I think a lot of the guys who got discharged from World War II went into the Reserves for various reasons and those guys ended up in Korea and I was real glad that I didn't opt for the Reserve. At that point in the game I had come to understand what was going on a little bit.

Mark: So you finally went off to basic training then in the Summer of '45.

James: Yeah. At Camp Walters, Texas which now is Fort Walters and is a helicopter training school. At least that is what I have been told. We had seventeen weeks of basic training. The first six weeks was standard infantry basic and then we went on to specialist training and I was put into a unit where we trained truck drivers, message center, I&R scout and I can't remember the fourth specialty in our battalion. It was the 52nd Infantry Replacement Training Battalion. I was in Company D and was trained as an intelligence reconnaissance scout, was an MOS761. That training is to train you for the regimental level S2 reconnaissance platoon.

Mark: Which would do what?

James: They were the ones, to summarize it, they'd give you a .45 and a couple of days rest and tell you to go out ten miles behind the enemy lines, count their tanks and come back. They wouldn't give you any more fire power than that because they wanted you to come back with the information. They didn't want you getting in an argument with anyone. The weird thing I discovered about a week ago, my brother-in-law was with the 78th Division in Europe and he served with

the I&R platoon in one of the three regiments in that division and went over the Ramagin Bridge and that stuff.

Mark: So how did you adapt to military training?

James: I liked it. We didn't have the D.I.s like the image now has where they are up there. Remember at that time the war was still going on. They didn't waste time with a bunch of Mickey Mouse, they were trying to train people who would survive when they stuck them into combat. The way things worked out we would have been involved in the invasion of Japan. The timing would have been such that we would have been there, either in shock troops or at least in the replacements for the initial waves. In fact, I think there are several guys were in that ASTP unit I was in that ended up there. Ended up in some of that late war combat.

Mark: So you must have been in training when the war in the Pacific ended?

James: Right. We were out in the field on an overnight of some sort or another when we got the word that they'd been dropped and of course it didn't mean a lot to us other than the fact that obviously it ended the war. That changed a lot of our attitudes. And at that point, the dropping of the bombs, we saw only as ending the war. That's all it meant to us. It didn't mean anything more or anything less. So you kill 50,000 Japanese with one bomb or you kill 70,000 Japanese with a 500 plane fire-bombing raid--to this day I can't see where there's any difference. It doesn't register with me. I had experience, as I mentioned earlier, I had visited both A-bomb sites in '46 and '47. In fact I stood at ground zero at the Nagasaki bomb site and we didn't even think about radiation at the time. Never gave it a second thought, and that was only a year later. But, looking at it, that gave the Japanese peace faction the alibi or the strength to quit the war when they did and regardless of what protesters say today, you'll never convince me that it didn't save probably a million American casualties and probably about 10 million Japanese casualties.

Mark: The Atomic Bomb in the Smithsonian Exhibition has been the subject of controversy lately and I would be interested in your comments having...

James: Angry as blazes that these people are trying to revise history. We were fighting a war for our national survival at that time. We were fighting a war in the Pacific that was probably as vicious as any war in the history of man on both sides and the atrocities were not limited to just the Japanese, we committed them as well. They started the war in the sense that they fired the first shot, and all the politics leading up to it we can get into a discussion for ten years and solve nothing with that. We pushed them into it to a degree and I acknowledge that, but it was inevitable if you study the history between World War I and World War II. Nevertheless, napalm is just as vicious a weapon as an atomic

weapon. There's a lot of them. I can't imagine the flame thrower being a more pleasant or humane way to die than dropping an atomic bomb on somebody. I was reading something about three weeks ago where they ran a study on the grandchildren of the A-bomb survivors and there was no genetic damage at all that they have been able to measure. I think that was in U.S. News and World Report but I'm not sure. I thought that was real interesting.

Mark: So, some veterans say that the bomb saved their lives. There's an English professor--

James: I agree. If they hadn't dropped that I could very easily be planted somewhere as a result of the invasion of Japan, along with about ten times our number of Japanese. They were training kids to run under tanks with bombs strapped to their back. That's a documented fact. You think that Iwo and the rest of those islands were a tough nut! Hirusu, Honshu would have been exactly the same thing except a lot bigger and to me, there's nothing humane about war. You kill a guy with a bullet or a bomb or a fire or whatever, I don't see where it makes a heck of a lot of difference. In hindsight, I'm awful glad they dropped them, because at the time I wanted to be in and to serve, I wanted to get over there. That patriotism and naiveness could have cost me my life, or an arm, or who knows what. You won't get very far arguing with me that we shouldn't have dropped them. When these guys at the Smithsonian start that stuff - I don't know - free speech, yeah, but distorting?

Mark: Did the end of the war affect your training at all?

James: We finished our training. I don't have any memory that it changed it. I don't know how good the training was because obviously, it didn't apply to post-war occupation troops. I know our attitude changed. I don't know as the difficulty of the training changed. We aren't getting ready to dodge bullets anymore.

Mark: So what did you want to do? Did you want to go home?

James: I didn't. I liked military service. In fact, I looked at that time and I thought I might make it a career. I also looked at the G.I. Bill where I could get an education. Us kids were all expected to go to the University. We all went for various lengths of time. My younger sister has a Bachelor's and Master's from the University. I have my Bachelor's and Masters out of Stout. My other brothers and sisters-- the one that was at Boeing had two-and-a-half years of Engineering School here. He finished his Engineering courses at the University of Washington at Seattle for his job but he never did get his degree. The other two never finished. Dad was always disappointed about that because that's why he took the job at the University instead of the offer he had at the University of Chicago. After the war had ended, I wanted to make it a career so as soon as they announced the regular Army enlistments were available, a buddy and I ran

in and volunteered for three years. It took them a month to get the authority to be able to figure out how to do it. Can you believe that?

Mark: I can, I was in the service too!

James: Anyhow, by that time when the war was over, I got my wish. I ended up in various camps staging to go to Korea. I signed up for three years for the infantry for Japan, spent a month out of Fort Ord until they got enough guys together for shipment to go that direction, cause most of them were coming this direction and we had out there what they called T training or 21 days of it. During the war it served a very good purpose as a refresher of your combat courses, weapons firing and patrol problems and so on. At that point, there wasn't any war going on and out of the 21 days, my records said I actually completed a total of three. You talk about gold bricking! I found ways to goof off out there like you can't believe. And, I got away with it is the amazing thing. They asked us the first morning at qualification for rifle range. "Who doesn't know how to swim?" I had a gut feeling. I took one step forward. They put us on the range, we fired our qualification and never got into the pits. They took us out to the swimming pool [for lessons] and we played in the swimming pool for a couple of days. You'd try to pretend you don't know how to swim when you know how to swim! That's a problem! But, that kind of stuff all the way through and that's the attitude we had. We didn't care about firing a mortar at that point.

Mark: Do you think this attitude filtered down from the officers? From the command structure? Or was it just among the troops?

James: I would say that there was a very relaxed attitude and that it probably filtered down from above. I remember having a full dress parade, a formal parade to award medals to personnel. There were a couple of guys getting combat awards, if I remember they were silver stars and there was a base commander was given the Legion of Merit or something for running the T training program, which I can see was very useful but at that point I didn't see it. We stood at full parade, sling arms and parade rest, which the guys interpreted as "at ease" about as respectful a group-- I don't know where you'd find a group as disrespectful as that! It blew my mind at the time to watch it. If they would allow us to stand at a formal parade, sling arms, I would say definitely that the higher echelons didn't take anything seriously anymore.

Mark: So when did you finally head overseas?

James: We shipped out by way of Seattle. We spent a week in Seattle. The only day the first week of February they had sunshine that I got an 8-hour pass to visit my brother in Seattle. That's the only sunshine I saw for that week I was in Seattle. Then 21 days I'm on the troop ship going over and

Mark: What was that like?

James: I'm not a sailor. It was an 18,000 ton troop ship, a war built troop ship, general class 9. It was a big ship, a C2 hull developed for troop transport. We have five bunks high and going over we were only using three of them and I was smart enough to grab an upper bunk right away. The funny thing is I was in compartment 2D both ways, on sister ships. The troop ship coming home was identical. That's the first troop compartment in the bow of the ship. Right at water level. That's where you get the maximum up and down, maximum rolling back and forth. The least desirable place in the whole ship. They had cargo hatches, big square hatch in the middle of the compartment and all the troop bunks were around the outside. The most vivid memory I have is a 55 gallon GI can in each corner of that hatch--

Mark: I've heard that term but I can't remember what it means: GI can?

James: Garbage can. And, it was put there for troops that were seasick and after a period of time you can imagine what that compartment smelled like. It permeated. The whole time I was aboard ship I never threw up, I made sure I ate every meal because I knew I had to and my stomach was turning flip flops for the entire 21 days and for the 24 days coming home, I had exactly the same experience. I am not a sailor.

Mark: So it must have been quite a relief to land then.

James: It's interesting because Korea - you could smell Korea from 50 miles off shore and I think most anybody who has visited the Orient would say the same thing unless times have changed.

Mark: Can you describe that smell?

James: We called them honey holes. Their fertilization and sanitary systems where they would take in their bathrooms they would use a pail underneath their seat and then they would dump the pail in the honey hole and let it age and come Spring they'd use it for fertilizer in the fields. That was normal procedure through the Orient although from first experience I can only speak of Korea. We used to talk about the honey wagons that they'd have. They were four wheel wooden ox carts that they would haul this from the storage pit to the field and one time a 2.5 ton truck hauling barrels of diesel fuel back from Inchon to Ascom City about the third truck in the convoy on the gravel road didn't see the honey wagon and hit the darn thing and that truck and about four behind it parked out on the parade ground where they tried to get the smell off of them.

Mark: With any success?

James: Very little success. But you get used to it very soon. The entire country - that's just the normal smell.

Mark: So you landed in Seoul or in Incheon?

James: Incheon. Incheon is a port city for Seoul. It's about 30-40 miles from Seoul. Incheon, Seoul and Kimball Air Base form a triangle and I was assigned to Ascom City which was about the middle of that triangle. There's an old Japanese small arms plant. If I remember right they still called it Ascom City during the Korean War. We went from Incheon by train to Yong Dung Po which was across the river from the Seoul industrial suburb and that was our repo depot. I will never forget my first exposure to that country. The climate there is very similar to Wisconsin except that they are very close to the ocean so it's damper. The winds coming across the Yellow Sea have got more of a bite to it than here.

Mark: When did you arrive again?

James: I arrived there the 26th of February. They put us on an old railroad train. The thing would go three miles forward and two miles back, three miles forward two miles back and I swear to you it would stop every intersection. At least that was the way it looked. We were in these cars and the windows were all broken out and we had every piece of clothing we could get on to try to keep warm. I will never forget the first thing I saw, the first town we stopped. My car was parked right across the main street, I looked out the window and here is some little Korean kid, probably 3-5 years old running around out there in the snowy street with nothing on but a cotton tee shirt. I couldn't believe it. The next stops it was strangest thing - you talk about culture shock for a naive 18-year-old, some Korean woman had the call of nature so she squatted right in the middle of the main street and pulled her pants up and relieved herself. For our western society, I grew up in Madison, that was quite a jolt. Later on in downtown Seoul, that was a modern city, big wide streets, downtown probably five to six story buildings and so on, if a Korean man had nature call, he stepped over to the curb and relieved himself right there in the gutter. For somebody from Madison, Wisconsin that was a real shock. You do an awful lot of growing up awful quick. You learn a lot about tolerance.

Mark: Was your reaction of shock typical among the other soldiers? Was there laughing? Were there people aghast?

James: I think we were all just so startled by it. Later on we were wandering around Seoul and some Korean guy would do that and we made typical teenage derogatory comments among ourselves. You have to remember too that in that time, compared to today, we probably weren't as sophisticated as the 8th graders are today when we graduated from high school. It was a very unsophisticated

time compared with today. I, particularly, was an extremely naive, immature individual. I taught high school for 34 years and I cannot believe how I acted as a high schooler in my memory. Times are different and it had a lot to do with my upbringing. I was brought up to be extremely tolerant, colorblind, I was never one to yield to peer pressure at all. I spent four years in the service, I came out I didn't drink, I didn't smoke, I didn't gamble and I didn't chase women. Now if that doesn't make me a weirdo I don't know what does!

Mark: It certainly makes you unusual!

James: To this day I don't indulge in any of those. To my knowledge I never dated a girl who smoked. I just don't like it. I don't have any big moral feelings about it, it's just not for me.

Mark: I have more questions about military life and Korean culture, but I'd like to discuss your initial inprocessing in Korea. What your duties had become because you were trained as an I&R scout and on the information sheet you served as a clerk. How did this transformation come about?

James: This is typical Army procedure. At Yong Dung Po at a repo depot I sat there for a full month waiting for assignment, believe it or not. They had just broken up the 40th Infantry Division. Remember, I had enlisted for the infantry for Japan; I expected to go to the 6th or 7th Division. I sat there, they had so many low point guys in the 40th Division who were transferring into the 6th and 7th that they didn't have any place for anybody even to pitch a tent, I guess. So they waited and pretty soon they figured out that they could pawn me off down there on Headquarters Unit so all of a sudden I was a fully trained O55 Clerk General. The Army just abruptly retrained me with a pen. I was assigned to Headquarters Quarters Company, Army Service Command 24 which served troops for the Korean Theatre. I was first assigned to the Inspector General's office, they cut their TO and E from

Mark: TO and E?

James: Table of Organization and Equipment. That's not the modern Army. That's our old-fashioned Army. They cut that from 4 to 2 personnel. The Company had 720-man table of organization during the war. They cut that to 210 men. So you can imagine what that did with their assignments and their staffing and promotions and all of the rest of that stuff. They got rid of all of the combat personnel, the guys that had been in a certain length of time and I'm sure you're aware of the point system for discharge. The fact that I was regular Army probably had something to do with it. They sent me down to the Adjutant General section and I was put in the Classified Documents in the Adjutant General Section which was a real interesting job. I handled all classified correspondence in and out of the organization. One of my big duties was to go

through and declassify and destroy all the out of date material. If that isn't a process. Some of the stuff I had to stand there and have an officer help me supervise the burning. I don't know why. I had a copy of "black list" [which] was our plan for the invasion of Korea, which was to have come off just before the invasion of Japan. That was the basis for the one that MacArthur used during the Korean War, at the Inchon landing. They dusted the "black list" off and brought it up to date. Incidentally, the Korean handbook that I donated to the [Wisconsin Historical] Society back a while was part of that. The Army wouldn't have been pleased if they knew I had it, but that's beside the point.

Mark: So, if you don't mind my asking, what sorts of things were classified?

James: Well, one time we had an outbreak of Japanese B Encephalitis in Japan and so they came through with orders to inoculate the personnel and it came through as a confidential and what it was was instructions to the medical personnel and it said "You have to have one bed available for x number of people receiving the shot because we expect this level of fainting." Now you can imagine going in to get your own shot when you've already read that. We would get information from Intelligence that said that "we have information that there is potentially going to be a communist inspired riot in Inchon on such and such a weekend." So they called it an alert. We had those about every two weeks. We took it so seriously that after a period of time we weren't allowed off base without a side arm. I had picked up a Japanese pistol with a covered holster and I sent the pistol home. I had a holster. So my side arm when I went into town was that holster with two flashlight batteries in the bottom for weight and stuffed with toilet paper. That's how seriously we took it. After all, carrying an M1 was a lot of weight. Various operational orders. There wasn't a lot of stuff that you or I would consider significant. Mostly there were Intelligence reports and it did give me a position of power. I had a Bird Colonel come in one time really obnoxious and he demanded such and so. "I'm sorry Sir, you have to identify yourself." Then he really got ornery. He had me practically court marshaled and shot. I told him, "I'm sorry, I don't recognize you, I can't identify you, you have to check with the major over there." He went storming over to the major and pretty soon the major brought him back, he was about as meek as a little pussy cat. Here's a mere Corporal telling a Bird Colonel that he had to identify himself. But he found out that I was doing it according to regs.

Mark: So this political situation in Korea at this time was turbulent and I was wondering if some of these things turned up on your Intelligence documents or the Russian presence in the North?

James: Oh, there was a lot of that stuff but it always impressed me as being basically routine. I never saw anything that was of any particular consequence. If you stop and realize, this hollering wolf all the time and nothing ever happened. It's

easy to see why the Communists were able to get away with a lot of what they got away with.

Mark: As an 18-year-old kid I don't suppose you were too interested in Korean politics?

James: Sigmund Reed, even from my position, I realized that he wasn't a real popular person. If you go back in the history he was the only one we could put in power over there and he was an extremely bad choice, but there wasn't anybody else. See the Japanese had occupied Korea for about 45 years or 50 years. They had deliberately made sure that there were no Koreans trained in management above the foreman level. Nobody in that country had any management experience and we went in as liberators not occupiers. I guess there was a difference but we as individual personnel, we couldn't quite see the difference. But we were told there was a difference. Anyhow, Reed was not popular with anybody but he was all we had. The Koreans were so used to Japanese dictatorial treatment if they had been given a form of government somewhat similar to ours, they wouldn't have the slightest idea what to do with it. They were extremely backward by our standards. They are an old, old civilization so I'm not saying backwards from that standpoint-- backwards from functioning as a modern society the way we would. Because the Japanese deliberately did that. In fact the Japanese deliberately tried to stamp out the Korean language. It was an illegal language. I never learned to speak very much of it. What we got was a mixture of Japanese and Korean. That was the result of the Japanese colonizing Korea and trying to exert complete control, which was understandable from their viewpoint.

Mark: What about the Russians? In World War II they were our allies and the period you were there...

James: We saw them as a Communist enemy. Once in a while we would see the Communist members of the Combined Commission in Seoul and that's about it. The guys in the 7th Division up along the 38th parallel would view it a lot differently than that, I'm sure. We were probably 40-50 miles from the parallel. I never got north of Seoul, which I think is about 25 or 30 miles from the parallel.

Mark: From what you were told by your superiors and others, there was no pretense that the Russians were our allies anymore?

James: No. That was at the height of the cold war. You gotta remember Berlin came in the summer of '48. I can't remember when it started, but it seems to me it was the Spring of '48. One interesting thing, or a couple of things about dealing with the local people, we had a house boy that would clean the Adjutant General's section during noon hour. I remember one lunch hour--I used to

relate this incident to my classes all the years I taught because to me it's a real good message-- The Koreans had a habit at that time, the ones I knew, when they had to blow their nose, they would blow their nose and wipe it on their sleeve. To us, that's a repulsive thing. A couple of us one noon asked this house boy doing janitor work, "Why do you do such a filthy thing?" and he looked at us and said in his broken English, "Well, you Americans will take this rag out of your pocket, blow your nose, and stick it back in your pocket and carry it around all day. Do you think we should do that?" If you stop and think about it, there's quite a message there in understanding that different societies have a totally different perspective on things and I've never forgotten that. I always thought it was a fascinating answer and the same kid, every other word was a cuss word, "GI language." Anyone who's been in the service knows what I'm talking about. The guys were always trying to talk him into teaching them Korean cuss words. He wouldn't do it. He flat refused to do it. Yet, every other word he was using in English was a cuss word.

Mark: He was aware of this I assume.

James: Yeah, I think so, but that was the only English that he knew. GI language.

Mark: What sort of contact did you and the other soldiers have with Koreans? Did you get off the post much?

James: We had the employees like the house boys on base. They did a lot of housekeeping kinds of things and I don't know if it was for the government to save money or what it was, but nevertheless they did a lot of that. Otherwise, the contact I had with them was basically in shops or something like that. I always thought, "Look how arrogant we American troops are! We won't learn their language, we expect them to learn ours. We run around here like we own the country when we are in their country." And in hindsight, for years I've marveled at the fact that these people were so tolerant of a bunch of American teenagers acting so damn superior. It's baffled me ever since. To me, I would say they were extremely tolerant. I would suspect that they weren't very appreciative of it. The book The Ugly American was essentially in that vein, and in my experience I think it was very true. At the time, I didn't see it. I didn't know any better. The MPs were very, very choosy about who they would accept as assigned to their battalion at Inchon. One night some Korean hotheads got upset at the local police and fired a few shots at the local police station downtown in Inchon. A couple of those rounds missed and hit the MP headquarters up the hill about a half block. The next morning, a couple of dozen of us from headquarters in ASCOM 24 were temporarily assigned down there. I spent six weeks TDY as an MP in Inchon. I happened to be a Buck Corporal at that time. Nowadays they call Pfc's, a fifth pay grade. In World War II, it was two stripes. They assigned the Pfc's and privates to warehouse guard duty. Because I was a noncom [Non-Commissioned Officer] they

wouldn't do that. The rules wouldn't allow it, so they put me on red light duty and they had a red light district probably about four square blocks. I was on the six-midnight shift. Our duty was to keep out all American personnel because prostitution was legal in Korea at that time and it was controlled by the government, but we were to keep our troops out. And what it really amounted to--and I thought it was kind of ridiculous--was to keep out all American troops except the guys from the MP battalion. Sergeant of the Guard actually ran a shuttle bus with a guard jeep hauling guys in and out of there every night. The Officer of the Day would come in to inspect, see how things were going. About a half hour before midnight, you'd go off duty and he was still inspecting, checked with the guys who relieved you, and he left about 12:30 and it was a joke. It does show a little bit how they viewed us. The GIs on the midnight to six shift, a boring shift, heck to stay awake, nobody in the street. Every girl had to be out of the street by 10:00 PM. So that night shift was really a boring one. So the guys had a habit, typical GI humor, they'd go into every one of those red light buildings, go down the hall and they had these little wooden framed doors with a piece of rice paper over, it was opaque. You could see shadows through it. Of course you could hear somebody breathing on the other side. You walked down the corridor, slam every door open and yell: "Piss Call." Every morning about 5:30. One day we were talking to this one girl who spoke pretty good English and asked her if she would like to go to the United States. She said yes, she really would, but there's one thing that she didn't think she'd like. When we asked her what, she said this Piss Call business. The Korean people thought there was somebody here in Madison who would go through and wake everybody up every morning for Piss Call. I thought that was one of the funniest things I ever saw. It tells you a lot about the different kinds of environments, societies, how we come across to other people. You never know. You know what you are trying to say, but you never know what the other person hears you saying.

Mark: There was the prostitution type of contact of course, but did many guys date Korean girls?

James: Yes. There were quite a few. There were occasionally guys who would want to marry them. Once in a while it would be approved. It was difficult to marry a Korean national. Most of the guys would have a concubine, lived with them off post, just lived with the women for their tour of duty and then they left. Sometimes they left a mixed nationality child, which is not accepted in the Orient. Interesting thing too was in the red light district, I think I was the only MP that the girls had ever met who didn't want anything to do with them. I enjoyed trying to talk to them, but they used to say, "The longer you're here, the whiter they get." Well, to me they never got white enough to be interesting. I must have been a real odd ball at that time because the girls couldn't believe it--they were trying to put the make on me and it was a game which was a lot of fun, a lot of flirting and fooling around, tempting each other, but they respected

me for it. This not drinking or smoking or any of the rest of it, I've always wondered. It was really odd because I never sensed any pressure from my friends to change. Nobody ever gave me heat because I didn't care to indulge. My wife has never indulged either. We've been outcasts in many ways socially. But it's a price we're willing to accept.

Mark: There were a lot of guys who did though.

James: Alcoholism was a real problem. Some of the other stuff that would come through my classified stuff, every once in a while some guy would go blind from drinking the local hooch. The Koreans would steal antifreeze and make liquor out of it and sell it to the GIs. I saw that all the time. I saw reports indicating we had a higher level of, just using a broad sense of it, Section 8 or alcoholism as against these same units when they're in combat. Or combat fatigue. It's hard to describe the boredom. You got a bunch of young guys that are at the most active time of their life and they're full of vinegar, and stick them out in a place like that. They had tours of duty at that time, 36 months in Germany, 30 months in Japan, 24 in Korea and on some of the islands you had 12 months. 18 months in Alaska. So that was the Army's measure of remoteness, stress and strain, whatever. I don't know how accurate it was. I do know that from the reports I saw, that alcoholism was a real serious problem.

Mark: Did it affect operational preparedness? Things in the workplace? Discipline?

James: Not that I was aware of. The Major that was in command when I was working at the rest camp at Sando was a MP Major and an alcoholic. That was the plum assignment in the entire command and he was exiled out there to get him out of the mess halls back in headquarters because he was harassing the female dependents so badly there because he was a drunk. I actually ran the darn show out there. He'd come in once in a while and sign papers. He was a big tall guy and the doorways were short. It didn't bother me but he was well over six feet and our doorway was six feet. Sometimes he'd come in with a load on and he'd walk into the orderly room and hit the door jam across his forehead and deck him! He might as well not have been out there. I signed all the papers, I forged his signature. His signature was so bad anybody could forge it. I signed all the passes, I did everything around there. He was almost nothing. Then they finally came to a reduction in force and they transferred him back to MP Headquarters in Seoul and then they left him there for a month and declared him surplus and discharged him.. They kicked him out. They finally got the mechanism working where they could get rid of him.

Mark: *NOTE from transcriptionist - I cannot hear what Mark is saying or asking here.*

James: For that nine months, I was the only guy in the outfit that didn't drink. I put a drunk to bed every single night, one guy or another. I don't think it impaired

their--they were never drunk on duty that I know of. I drank so much Coca-Cola there that to this day I detest it.

Mark: What else did you guys do for fun? You mentioned going to Japan for example.

James: We did a lot of-- whenever we'd get a jeep we'd go visit Seoul on a 24-hour pass. We did a lot of running around in the countryside just walking in the hills. We had a few shotguns there. We could go out and do some bird hunting. I never did. There was a local town and we'd go in and walk around and dicker with shopkeepers even if we didn't want to buy anything, etc. I was very fortunate those two 7-day R&Rs I got to Japan. It was like going to a resort. When I was in the mountain resort on Qushu the only thing we did other than fool around in the resort area itself was that trip down to Nagasaki. The truck ride down the mountain with our Japanese driver and an Army ton and a half, one of these Dodge four by sixes they had like the 3/4 ton weapons carrier with an extra axle. That was a hair raising experience. Fascinating, that visit to that valley. I wish I had saved those pictures I had to give you guys. I'm sure that they are available though in the archives. When I took the trip to Kyoto in '47, visited Osaka, I remember going up to the top of one of the very few buildings still standing, our Army took it over of course, had a roof garden restaurant. It must have been 6-10 stories looking out over the city and about one building in a block if that, was still standing. Earthquake, fire-proof type buildings. Otherwise it was just one shack city. The entire city was corrugated tin, card board, crating lumber, entire city.

Mark: Because of the bombing I assume.

James: Yeah. To me Osaka was as flat from fire bombing as Nagasaki was from A-bombing. Just as flat. I couldn't see any difference except a few reinforced concrete buildings in Nagasaki were flattened too. In Osaka there was a few of those still standing and that was the only difference.

Mark: You mentioned that you were in Hiroshima as well.

James: Just went through that on a train through the center of town and we just got to look at it. We didn't get to get out of the train and walk around. I remember seeing the remnants of a couple of airplane factories along the railroad that were crushed. Still some remnants of airplane frames still in them. At that time, at that age, I didn't have the maturity to recognize that what I should have done was gotten out into the boondocks and to this day I have regretted that. I had the opportunity to go to Shanghai-- we could have hitched a ride and flown back. Prices were cheaper than blazes in those days. I missed all those opportunities. I wasn't mature enough to understand the opportunity that I had. Although I have no desire to go back and visit that area. I'd rather go back to Hawaii.

Mark: I had some questions I wanted to ask you about American racial attitudes toward the Koreans and the Japanese as well. This is a subject that you have brought up before.

James: We thought we were very superior and I suppose that's much like any teenager thinks he's superior to anybody else over 21. I never sensed it as being racist at the time. Maybe that's because of my own perspective. One thing that I suppose I could touch on, when I was assigned to the Headquarters Company, we were assigned for administrative purposes for casual troops that were being collected from around Korea. This was right after I got over there. They were reducing forces and at time, if I remember the numbers right, during the war they had an AGCT score of 65 was minimum to be in the service. They raised that to 67 or 68 or 69 and any personnel that fell under the new limit was discharged for the good of the service. Honorable discharge. We were picked as a company to administer the paperwork to collect these guys to send to the repo depot and we had them coming through and practically all of them were colored troops. They all had been serving in quartermaster or transportation units. A few White guys coming through there but very few. That was my first exposure to Afro-Americans and I don't even know what they want to be called today. I've always used the terms never intending anything derogatory, it's what I grew up with. Large numbers of them came through and they were running all of the quartermaster and supply depots at Inchon and so on. At that time there was no integration in the service yet.

Mark: I was going to ask you about that. '47 was Truman's - maybe '48.

James: That came in in '48 or '49. There were no integrated units when I was in service.

Mark: They seemed to be discharging a lot of Blacks.

James: They were because of their scores. White or Black it didn't make any difference. There were a few White people coming through but not very many. Now these guys had all been serving during the war. That's the first time I had anything to do with them. To me they were just a bunch of troops. It didn't mean much. When I got out to Sang Do for that nine months there were 13 of us out there. Six were colored cooks and seven were White and there were a dozen White MPs. I served along side of those guys for that nine months and as far as I'm concerned, I've never met a better bunch of people than those half dozen cooks we had. They may have been select - out there that was a plum assignment for the whole command. We were on hospital rations, you come in the Mess Hall in the morning for breakfast and they'd ask how we wanted our eggs. We had fresh eggs. Your uniform for the day was whatever you pleased. Most of the time I wore shirts from Shanghai that were similar to Aloha shirts. We were there a three-day pass facility for troops to come out on. We were

expected to do everything we possibly could to make their stay pleasant. As un-Army as possible. The Major didn't amount to a damn thing. He might as well not have been there. We were close, we were good friends. We had a young man, a 17-year-old from Beaumont, Texas. I don't remember his name. There were four weeks of basic training, this was in the Summer of '47 or Fall - had never fired an M1 rifle, was sent home for a week's leave, sent over to Korea to be trained with the unit-- these were the 18 month draftees. He came in there the first night down at the Enlisted Men's Club, he started giving these colored guys a bad time. At the end of the evening, all of us guys kind of cornered him and let him know that that was not acceptable behavior. These guys were our friends and if he said or did anything out of line he would regret it. I'm sure we didn't change his attitude, but we changed his behavior 100%.

Mark: He shut up in other words.

James: That was the same kid who got sick drunk on one can of beer. He'd sit there and drink a dozen cans of beer in the night and get sick drunk. He became an alcoholic I'm sure. I don't know why he drank he got so sick.

Mark: This brings up the issue of regionalism in the troops. Southern guys who would harass the Blacks and that sort of thing. Did you notice regional differences among your troops?

James: No. Other than that incident.

Mark: There weren't some rebels still fighting the civil war? Or east coast snobs?

James: No. Never ran into any of that. Something in your question list was talking about reception center when we were drafted and so on. I don't remember anything other than the guys just being another bunch of guys. The only thing I remember about that whole processing was where you guys are used to growing up in high school in a locker room with group showers and all that and you don't have a great deal of modesty. Down there you got 100 or 150 guys all running around naked, sometimes they'd let you wrap a towel around you but not often, and if they are going to inspect you for hemorrhoids you line up about 15 guys in a row and they'd tell us to lean over and spread them. The medic would walk down behind and look for whatever they were looking for. So there was absolute, total lack of privacy in the military. I don't know if it's regionalism but the military had a way, they used to say "Make a man out of you or break you." I never agreed with that. I said that all it would do is hasten the process to where you're headed anyhow. Because the Army's attitude is "you're fit for duty every day and we don't care what you do otherwise, but don't get into trouble or you're in more trouble." They didn't care if you got drunk at night as long as you are sober on the job. They didn't care what you did in town as long as you didn't get arrested. That was my impression. I remember one

guy, we used to have what we called GI showers, I don't know if they allow that in the Army now. That GI soap, which was extremely strong, we scrubbed the floors with it every Friday night, and we had scrub brushes and in Texas in basic training in the summer you put on fresh fatigues when you get up in the morning and by the time you're done with breakfast you're all soaked. There was one guy there that wouldn't take a shower so pretty soon half a dozen of the guys decided they were going to teach him that he should take a shower. They kind of escorted him into the shower room and took a bar of GI soap and a couple of GI scrub brushes and gave him a bath. He took showers very regularly after that. After his hide got over being raw. Those kinds of things happened and I don't think the command, they didn't encourage it, they didn't discourage it because they think this is what it takes to have a unit that's going to be cohesive. I might touch on something else. We had two guys in one of the units I was in-- one was a staff one was a tech-- they were both gay. Everybody knew that they were gay. They wore one gold earring, just a little small ring. People wonder why I find it so hard to accept boys wearing earrings today. Those guys were known to be gay, they were combat veterans, they'd been through Okinawa, they'd been through Philippines, they'd been through a lot of heavy combat. They were both heavily decorated and nobody cared. They never came on to people. People knew what they were; they made no bones about it. But it was all unofficial, I'm sure the Company Commander was fully aware of it. They were blind to it. I had the feeling that if they'd let them alone, it doesn't make a damn bit of difference whether they are gay or not, if they are in the service.

Mark: This was in Korea?

James: Yeah. 1946. I have no idea what it is now, but obviously...

Mark: There were none of the witch hunts they speak of today?

James: Right. Everybody has their own opinion on that. It crosses my mind, I also knew a Staff Sergeant there that had been through most of the Pacific war and you gotta remember the Pacific war was no holds barred. The Japanese didn't quit. The only way you could capture them was if they were unconscious and wounded where they couldn't stop you. We retaliated. We didn't take prisoners. I'll never forget this one guy-- he was also a Staff Sergeant-- had a pint fruit jar about 3/4 full of gold teeth he knocked off of Japanese bodies. He was showing that to me very proudly one day. To me the difference was that their authorities, in my view, encouraged it. At least they didn't discourage it. Our authorities, it was done on the sly basically. If you read back that submarine raid we had on the first Pacific island, I've forgotten what the name of it was. This contributed to it real, real early in the war. Our Marine raiders went ashore on this Japanese island and they killed quite a few of the Japanese and they mutilated some of them. Stories I've read on it, they actually went so far as to cut off the genitals and cram them in the Japanese throats and leave the

bodies there. It wouldn't take very long for that to get through the Japanese ranks the way it didn't take long to get through our ranks. So when you start looking at atrocities, the difference is whether or not it was sanctioned. We had a math teacher in Mt. Horeb when I first got out there that had been in a combat unit in Europe. He was down in the Junior High, so I didn't have a lot to do with him. He was telling me one time that toward the end of the war when they were capturing the Germans, this one guy in the unit was always volunteering to take them back. Most of the guys didn't want to do that from everything I'd ever heard. Every time you take a man to send prisoners back, you're lessening your strength on the line. They didn't like it very good. They didn't like to take the prisoners. The unit had been in heavy combat, didn't take very many prisoners. It was the green units that took the prisoners. They got a call from behind asking where the prisoners were that supposed to be sent back. They responded that they had been sent back. They trailed them and found out that this guy had been executing them. He had them piled like cord wood in the basement of an abandoned building in one of the little towns. There were three or four groups he'd taken back and had murdered a couple dozen of them.

Mark: I've heard that once or twice myself.

James: Those kinds of things, I can't comprehend what being in combat like that would do to my mind. Anybody that hasn't been there, I don't think can-- George can tell me what it sounds like to have a 90 millimeter shell bounce off a tiger tank in Bastonne but it won't have the impact it has actually hearing it. People grab on to something like that and make a big federal case out of it. Well, you can't unless you've been there. Then you can start making judgment.

Mark: I suppose I ought to take the opportunity to ask you how you collected all the things that you eventually donated to our museum. It might be good to get this on tape.

James: A lot of the ordinance things, the hand grenades and all that stuff, I picked that up on the practice range down in Camp Walters. We would take inert hand grenades and practice throwing them. I learned real early in the game, when to volunteer and when not to. I would volunteer to be a police detail after we were done at the range. I would volunteer to police up the area. The other guys, and I could never figure this out, they never came to understand when they got back to camp, hiking back with their full packs coming back from that range experience, I would already have been showered and be over in the PX. I'd pick up a couple of brass and ride back in the truck. They'd have to walk back. They never figured it out. They always laughed at me. Another thing is I had the good sense of when to volunteer and when not to. When I could smell something that didn't look very good to me, I wouldn't volunteer. I'd volunteer so much that they'd never call on me when I didn't volunteer. So I missed virtually every nasty detail there was. These other guys couldn't quite figure it out. I could

never understand why. I picked up a lot of that stuff out there when we'd get a weekend off or get a day off of training or something, I didn't like to go to town there was nothing there that interested me. We had all kinds of movies on base and I wasn't interested in going to town. So I would go out and hike and walk up some of these practice ranges and pick stuff up. The Japanese stuff, when I first got to Korea, the month I was at the repo depot, they put me and the other casuals to work sorting the Japanese goods that were being sent back to Japan. They were still in the process of sending the last of the Japanese troops and the nationals back at that time. What they did was pack up all your household belongings, take what you can with you and put the rest over here in the truck and we'll send it along. Well, it never got sent along. It was amazing what they'd have in there. There would be these woven baskets of coal they were sending back to Japan. I suppose if I'd spent as much time cold as they had, I would have done the same thing. We were sorting through that stuff, stuff that would go to the military government, clothes, books in another pile, PX salable in another pile, military equipment in another pile and so on. I don't remember all the categories. Things that came through there that looked interesting seemed to find their way into your pocket. Because you knew very well that the best of that stuff never got to the PX. It got sidetracked off into some officer's baggage somewhere along the line. Being an enlisted man I had a view of the officers that they were very self-serving. The Army system encouraged that in my view. Nevertheless, that's where most of that stuff came from. The rifles, I sent home about half a dozen rifles and a dozen bayonets. When I got to Ascom City, out wandering around, found this building -- there was a warehouse that had been burned down-- there was a ramp going down to the basement, a couple of field doors that were ajar, come to find out the building had burned down and GIs being what they were, this happened early before I got there, they found a locked door and pretty soon it was unlocked. In the basement of this warehouse was a storage room for small arms. Light machine guns, rifles, bayonets, all of that kind of thing. Once it had been discovered, ordinance came in there and they took a torch and cut across the breach of every weapon they could find and there were all kinds of rifles, machine guns that were torched across. A buddy and I rooted and dug and scrounged around and ended up with a bunch of rifles that we mailed home. Enlisted men could mail rifles and bayonets. Officers could mail home Samurai swords and pistols. Now I don't quite understand what the difference is, but that was the Army. An officer could send home a mail order for any amount, all he had to do was sign the mail order. An enlisted man could only send a mail order if it had been signed by an officer. So, needless to say, the guys in the black market, there is an awful lot of forging of fictitious names going on. It was a very definite caste system. It always has been and always will be. I imagine that it's necessary. Realistically, at least to a degree. That's where I picked up most of that stuff. Whenever I got my hands on something that didn't seem to have a home, I'd give it a home.

Mark: It's quite a collection.

James: I remember one experience when I was in basic training. It could have been stockade time. I'd picked up a hand grenade out in the field and picked up a handle and a fuse that had been fired and I had it all painted, olive drab. It looked just like a high explosive, I put it all together. I picked up one of these cardboard cartons that the old grenades came in. I put the grenade in that, wrapped that with a piece of tape that came off of the carton. Wrapped it in paper and had it in my foot locker addressed to mail home. We came home from the day's field project and I was told to report to the orderly room. The first Sergeant was sitting there and he looked like he was ready to kill me. I walked into the CO's office and here's my container sitting on his desk. They had a foot locker inspection that day while we were in the field. I told him that it wasn't loaded and he unwraps the tape, takes the grenade out, holds it out. I told him that it was not live, that there was nothing in it. He looked at me, held it over a wastebasket, screwed the fuse out of it, 'cause he was going to have the waste basket catch the powder. I never saw such a downcast look on a man's face as when he saw that the grenade was absolutely harmless. I got a good chewing out for it. That's the only KP I ever pulled. I got a week's KP which was fine by me 'cause you really got to eat good. I never got that one home. He didn't know about the others that I had gotten home. After that I wrapped them and mailed them immediately. I didn't fool around with them in the locker. I mailed them right through the Post Office on camp. That's how lax things were.

Mark: You spent two years in Korea. You weren't subject to the point system?

James: No. I was a regular Army enlisted man. We had a 24 month tour of duty and I actually pulled 24 months and 25 days overseas time.

Mark: Were you anxious to get home and get out of Korea?

James: That's why I applied for OCS, failed the physical because I was overweight, couldn't lose the weight, I was up to 210 pounds. Today I can wear the Ike jacket I wore when I was discharged and it fits me good. In fact, I weigh two pounds less than I did then. I even went so far one time that I had a pen pal girlfriend of my sister's that had me-- we'd gotten the process going that had me coming home for hardship discharge to get married and I figured that I'd be able to stall things about going back over there. I knew a guy who had come home on emergency leave, came back over, was working in the reception center out on the west coast and what he would do was every day he'd go in there and he'd get his orders, his records, take them off the upper part of the pile and put them in the bottom part of the pile. He ended up it took him three months to get back over to Korea and he only had 30 days left to serve when he got over there. I had ideas that I was going to be able to work something like that. I'd been over there for about a year, and I wrote to the Army command, "I'd enlisted for three years with the Infantry for Japan. I am in a headquarters unit in Korea on the

basis of my enlistment, I request transfer to the 25th Division in Japan.” The answer I got was that the 24th Corps is an infantry unit, Korea is part of the Japanese occupational command, so your enlistment has been met. I wanted out but they wouldn’t.

Mark: But you finally went home. You went back on a troop ship?

James: Troop ship identical to the one I went over on. Stopped in Manila for one overnight. We were loaded on buses and given a pass if we wanted it to tour the city one afternoon and we had the opportunity to tour the inner city which at that time they hadn’t even touched by way of reconstruction. I remember the shell shock--remember that was the Japanese’s final holdout in Manila. It was very badly shot up. Came back through San Francisco; I sat at Camp Stoneman waiting for reassignment because I had another six months to go in my enlistment. Most of the guys were being discharged, and I was working there in the Separation Center for that month. I went home on leave, was assigned to Fort Benning, Georgia for the last six months and in one of the headquarters companies at the Infantry School, as file clerk entering extension course scores for officers on their records. They were taking these courses to further their military career.

Mark: You mentioned once that you thought about the military as a career. At this point you don’t seem interested in staying?

James: I figured we had a First Sergeant there, he was a borderline alcoholic and was about as stupid as any management personnel I’ve ever known. Stupid acting. I don’t know if he was actually stupid, but he sure acted like it. I thought: “If the Army can do this to me, put me in a place like this and give me somebody like that in charge of the outfit, I want no part of it.” I decided that I wasn’t cut out to be career. I watched the guys around me with their promotions, I watched what the career men had to do for the promotions, all the crap that was involved, all the politics and all the rest of it, and I just decided that I wanted no part of it. I spent the time I did, two years in Korea but I was transferred from a couple of units to other units for various reasons. The nine months at Sang Do I was on TDY, nobody promotes somebody on TDY even though the TO calls for Tech Sergeant for the job I had as a Corporal. I ran an ice cream plant for about four or five months. That was between the high G and the AG. There was a Tech Sgt., TO&E, there were six of us in there, I was a Buck Corporal, I had a couple of Pfc’s, and there wasn’t a rating at all under Buck Sgt. on the TO there. We were assigned on temporary duty from our various companies. Well here I am sitting over here in the ice cream plant, not doing any good in that orderly room, why should the company commander promote me? The veterinarian--why the veterinarian was in charge of the ice cream plant blew my mind!-- the veterinarian was in charge of my operation. He kept recommending us for promotion. It had to be approved by the company commanders and they

wouldn't do it. Our water supply went bad and they put a reservoir up on top of the building and chlorinated heavily and you couldn't make ice cream out of that stuff because it tasted terrible. In the ice cream plant we were making ice cream for twice a week issues, about 18,000 men plus PXs. My company commander came up one time and they wanted me to make some ice cream on the side for the company. I had five guys working for me, all from different outfits. I was in the position that if I did that for my company commander, I'm opening the door wide open. I told him that I was sorry, but that I couldn't do that. Which was the kiss of death. Wasn't long before I was reassigned. Those kinds of things happen, but one time I got a little provoked because when I was in the Adjutant General's Records Section. Personnel Major, Army Reservist, promoting his men as quickly as they were in grade long enough. My Major was a prewar Sgt., looked a dead ringer for Joe E. Brown, I don't know if you remember him, a comic from the '40s, but anyhow a little short guy. He had just gotten his Regular Army commission as Warrant Officer Junior Grade. You really resented him. He believed in slow promotion. He wouldn't promote anybody in our section. I finally got sick and tired of it. We were pretty verbal around there too. A friend of mine in Personnel came over and told me I was getting transferred and asked me where I wanted to go. He said that the Major said I was too noisy. We went down the list and I chose the Engineer Base Depot. So they sent me down there. They put me in charge of Koreans local area maintenance. It was interesting because I went to Japan on R&R from there and it was real interesting because I couldn't figure out why this guy from the Company went with me and I'd only been in the company for about three weeks and they sent me to Japan on R&R. Guys had been in the company for six months. I could never figure out why the guy was so cool to me. Got back, asked somebody. He said that he couldn't blame the guy that I was CID. "Aren't you? Counter Intelligence Attachment?" The story was that there had been a bunch of towels and linen missing from the supply and they suspected this guy as part of a black market ring. Here I come in, noncom with a year's service in the command, regular Army enlistment they bring me in and give me an _____ job where I'm just kind of wandering around all day long and then send me to Japan with a suspect. It's obvious why they thought I was CID. I thought it was comical when I heard that. I really had a lot of fun with that one. I was in charge of a bunch of Koreans and interestingly, they would look at me and say, "Me no understand." I found real quick that you have to cuss them up one side and down the other in Korean and then all of a sudden they understood English. They played this game "I don't understand what you are saying" until you swear at them in their language and then they figure you know enough of their language, they know you know what they are saying, and then they'd start doing their job.

Mark: I just have one more brief thing about Korea and then I want to get on some post war experiences. MacArthur was in charge of the Far East at that time. What were your images of MacArthur and did you have respect for him?

James: MacArthur was a king.

Mark: He's a controversial figure.

James: He was royalty. Us peons over there in Korea, we didn't see him go by with his chrome helmet and his sirens and his flags and all. I remember a lot of people, Dug-out Doug, a friend of mine in Mt. Horeb was actually assigned to his headquarters. He didn't think very highly of MacArthur, but if you go back and look at the history, MacArthur probably was very, very effective in what he was doing, although I don't think you're going to find an ego as big as his unless you look at Montgomery. I don't think there are two more egos that big in the world. But we had no experience with him. All we had was guys saying, "Dug-out Doug" and laughing at him, but I never had any experience to know whether-- to me he could have been the other side of the world for I knew.

Mark: So you got back to the U.S. then in March of 1948? Then you were in Fort Bragg for a while?

James: Right.

Mark: Then you got your final discharge from the Army when?

James: September 18, 1948 or 16th, I don't remember. At that time, that was 16 days short of my enlistment date, but we had terminal leave at that time. You could either serve out and get paid for your terminal leave or you could go on terminal leave and be discharged at the end of it. I chose to take it and get out early because Dad had a fishing trip scheduled to go with me and I dislike fishing, but nevertheless. They tried to talk me into going into the Reserves and I told them I was going to be either in or out of the service and I choose to be out. That was good judgment because it wasn't long before Korea came on and the guys that chose to be in ended up in Korea.

Mark: This wasn't something you could see coming?

James: No. It's just the fact that I decided I'd had enough of the military and I think most guys that served would say that...

Mark: So after you got your discharge you came back to Madison. What were your priorities? What did you want to do with your life?

James: Well, I was going to go back to the University. I--all of us kids were expected to go to the University because of our parents, Dad's involvement with the University of Wisconsin, I mean it was expected. It was expected that we go into Engineering. I didn't have any real idea one way or another where I was

going to go. I missed the first semester by a week or two so I worked at Oscar Mayer's nights shoveling lard out a 500 pound barrel with a scoop shovel. Reprocessing for the European Relief Program, which was an interesting job. I entered the University in a light building industry. I didn't really know what I wanted to do and it was real interesting because a battery of GI tests that I had to take said that comparing my interests to those successful in fields, first was undertaker and second was teaching and I laughed at them. I told them they had to be kidding. I want no part of anything. So I went to the University for a year and a half, did well in classes I liked, did very, very poorly in classes I didn't like. I was on final probation at the end of a year and a half. I went up to Stout. I wanted to go on to school, I didn't want to live at home, I didn't want to go to the University, I didn't know anybody around town except my good-for-nothing bum friends that weren't going to school. In a year and a half at the University I was never in two classes with the same person. I did not like it. I felt like I was still a number and there's 18,000 on campus at that time and I did not like the size of it. One day I ran into a friend of mine and I was complaining about it and he said, "Why don't you go to Stout? I think you'd enjoy it." So I went to Stout. I took art as an elective in high school. I never took Industrial Arts, only the required 7th grade. So I end up at Stout. Never forget entering up there and that's something I used to tell my students. If you want a kick in the teeth, try this for size. Registration materials weren't there. They sent me over to the Dean of Men. He looked at me and said, "Oh, we were hoping you wouldn't show up." I asked him what he meant and he said, "Your record is such you'll never survive. You're wasting our time." I asked if that meant that I couldn't enter. He said, "No, you're a veteran. We have to let you in." So I entered. Well, I ended up third in my class when I graduated and the Dean was doing his darndest to get me to go on to a Ph.D. There were four different universities where he could guarantee me a fellowship for Ph.D. So, it was a matter of finding myself. I have paid dearly all my life for hating English and for not applying myself, my academic record is horrendous until I got to Stout.

Mark: For me it's math. Did you think the military helped you find yourself?

James: It certainly made me grow up. It matured me. When I entered Stout, I was in freshman, sophomore and junior classes all the first year I was up there and with that four years older, actually by that time probably five or six years older, the time in the military, I was so far ahead of my classmates in maturity that-- and I met the girl that became my wife. I liked what I was doing, I liked school, I didn't know anyone that wasn't a student. The school was only 750 at that time. We used to sit in the Union and play pinochle with the Dean of Men in the evening. The University [in Madison] I think I had one class from a full staff member, otherwise they were all teaching assistants, except for lecture sessions. Now, when I was in grad school at Stout, I was what's called a TA, so I've been on that side of the fence too. I think the biggest rip off in our whole university system and the University in Madison is the worst offender of all, you got a

bunch of TAs which are basically first and second year teachers that aren't trained as teachers and they are sitting in and nowadays the majority of them are foreign students that don't speak the language well and they are up there teaching our kids that we are trying to educate, and our kids are being ripped off in their education. Pure and simple and I am very, very vehement on that viewpoint. I'm speaking as having been a TA. Although when I was a Teaching Assistant, the first time around the professor was doing paperwork off in the corner of the room there. Part of my practice teaching was teaching a freshman mechanical drawing class. The professor was in the room virtually the whole time so he was passing judgment on whether I would be allowed to TA the next year. Maybe they were more selective at Stout. The only TAs we had at Stout at that time was a few of the freshman shop classes.

Mark: To finance your education, did you use the GI Bill?

James: You bet. There's an interesting story there too that goes back to my Adjutant General Records Section. There were times when we had time on our hands and we'd try to keep busy and look busy so somebody didn't have to be hollering at you. I took my discharge and I went through and I found out the Army regulation I was discharged under, and looked up the provisions of it, the GI Bill and so forth. When I took my qualification tests for the GI Bill, they said that I was qualified for one year or 16 or 17 months or something like that. During plus six months. I said that this is the regulation I enlisted under and this regulation says your honorable service plus six months. That gives me full eligibility. So they referred to the date of my enlistment. I said that that made no difference, that this is the regulation I enlisted under and that's what you have to authorize. The date has nothing to do with it. So I got the full works and the way it turned out, regulations are written in such a way they would pay your school expenses through the semester that your eligibility ran out in. They would pay your subsistence. If your eligibility ran beyond the center of that semester, they would pay subsistence for the whole semester. If it ran short of that, then they cut it off on that date. I had one day more I could have gotten. I got subsistence for that whole semester.

Mark: If you hadn't known those regulations then, you would have gotten a different GI Bill.

James: Right. I would have gotten about 16 or 18 months. So that was a matter that I had an advantage because I had been in a position and took advantage of it. I had no idea that that regulation ever meant a darn thing. I was just looking to see what regulation applies to me. Just out of curiosity.

Mark: When you enlisted did you understand that you would have some kind of educational benefit afterwards?

James: Yup. At that time you had the GI Bill and it was the duration plus six months. That was the wartime regulations. Regular Army enlistment it was for specific time periods.

Mark: So when you got out no one had to instruct you about these benefits you had coming to you?

James: Right.

Mark: Did you know where to go to apply for them?

James: I don't remember where it was. Veterans Service Office in Madison? Same place you'd go to sign up for eligibility for the 52/20 Club. You ever hear of that?

Mark: I was going to ask you if you made use of the other provisions other than the education.

James: Nope. You're aware of the 52/20 Club or what we called it? No, I signed up for it immediately when I got discharge and probably about two days later I got that job at Oscar Mayer's. I have never taken advantage of any provisions of the GI Bill, veterans home loans or any of it. I was very fortunate, being in a position where I never had to draw a penny of unemployment of any sort. I've always been able to find a job. I know not everybody was that fortunate. We bought a house in Mt. Horeb, the bank took a first mortgage and the guy who was selling it took a second mortgage on the other half. We built our new house out in the country, we sold that house and had more than enough.

Mark: So you had no need to use the benefits.

James: I had no need at all, which makes me very happy. I do remember when I was in college talking about GI Bill's when I was at Stout. We got married at the end of our Junior year and I put her through the Senior year. It's a little unusual at that time. Girls were getting married and dropping out of school to put their husbands through and actually we got married and I put my wife through. I had the G.I. Bill, I was working in a dry cleaners pressing men's clothes, hovering over a hot steam press, any kind of a job I could make a buck at. I did all kinds of things.

Mark: Was it necessary for you to work? The GI Bill wouldn't cover everything?

James: The GI Bill would have covered it, but I had to support a girlfriend and then a wife and I had a car and I wanted to do that. So I worked. They also found that a student who worked a minimum of ten hours a week and a maximum of twenty hours a week, academically did better. All these being equal. They

found that veterans did better by one grade level than non-veterans. Married veterans did two grades better than non-married veterans. Basically because if you're married and you're going to school, you're giving up a lot to go to school. You got a good idea of why you're there. If you're a veteran going to school, you could be out working and making money. You're going to school because it's important to you. When the Korean War veterans started coming in, I was under public law 346, they were under the law 550. 346 said that we will pay your tuition, books, all expenses that are required and a monthly stipend. University of Wisconsin the students were required to buy their books. At the end of the course, they are theirs. The GI Bill did the same thing. You pass the class the books are yours. Up at Stout, they had a rental, so at the end of the course. When I entered Stout, my fees were \$49.50 a semester the first year I was up there. That included book rental, student activity fee, student health fee, and annual. At the University I think it was about \$150 or something like that. Stout was unique. Stout was a private school associated with the University system, it was not a state university. It was Stout Institute. Later on it became Stout State Teachers College after I graduated. Then it became Stout State University or University of Wisconsin - Menomonee. I remember when we got up there the 550 veterans were paid x number of dollars a month and they paid everything. At Stout, they were living high on the hog, because of our low costs and living in old barracks made into little apartments. There was a little resentment, but we realized that's the idiosyncrasies of the government so we didn't hold it against them but we sure envied them. We envied them more than we resented them. Korean War vets lived pretty good, as compared to us. When I got married I got \$75 a month until then. After I got married I got \$90 a month. I guess I was supposed to support my wife on \$15 a month. When our daughter was born and I was in grad school, I got \$15 more to support the child. Of course our entire doctor and hospital bills and she was in the hospital for the normal six or seven days were \$150. Got to Waukesha and our son was born down there, she was in the hospital three days and our total bill was \$150. Got to Mt. Horeb and our youngest was born in Madison. We had health insurance and it didn't pay the full cost, and the cost to us for Gary was \$150.

Mark: I never saw a bill for mine but I'm sure it was much more than that.

James: Now you're lucky if you get by for under \$2,000.

Mark: You went to school at two different institutions. I'm interested in your impressions of both. First of all, you were a little unusual in that you didn't start school until later. Were there many veterans on campus at the time you were in school?

James: There were a lot of veterans on the campus in Madison. I entered there second semester of '48. A lot of veterans there. Got up to Stout in the Fall of '50. The bulk of the War II veterans were either gone or graduating that year. There were

a lot of Korean War veterans up there in my senior and graduate student years. I graduated in '53 and '54. Married in '52.

Mark: So there was considerable veterans population on campus. It was your observation in fact that the veterans were better students?

James: You never saw the married veterans hanging around the bars. The single veterans, I don't know 'cause I never hung around the bars so I really don't know. I lived in the men's dorm the first year I was at Stout and these Freshman kids, they thought that going down to the VFW and getting drunk was a big deal and they had a very high dropout rate the first semester. After that it dropped off quite rapidly. Then the second year I was up there, I lived in an apartment with three other veterans. Doing our own housekeeping, our own cooking and so forth, because of cost. Third and fourth year up there I was married.

Mark: Did you socialize mostly with veterans? Did you have much contact with the run of the mill freshmen?

James: That didn't make any difference to me. I associated with the guys in the dorm and then later on I didn't associate with the guys in the dorm a great deal because you start going steady with a girl and then going to school, you don't have a lot of time for a lot of other things and she was a lot more interesting than the other guys would be.

Mark: I've just got one last area I want to cover and that involves veterans organizations and reunions and that sort of thing. Did you ever join any such groups?

James: No. I never joined any of them.

Mark: Was that a conscious decision on your part?

James: Right. I never had people asking me to join, just as an aside, but I viewed the veterans organizations, American Legion and the rest of them, the way I viewed the fraternities on campus, as being drinking clubs. Now that may not be a fair assessment. I realize at this point it probably is not a fair assessment. My older sister did join the American Legion in Madison in her own right because she was a veteran and that's where she met her husband. I don't think either one of them have ever been heavy drinkers. The American Legion club that they belong to is defunct now, it used to be out there on Broadway. They had a Sherman tank in their front yard for years. I think a lot of their material was turned over to the Museum here. I don't know how long it's been defunct but it's been a long time. That probably kept me away from it. I have never gone to reunions because I've never been in the type of organization that would have reunions.

Mark: You have sort of unusual experience in the service.

James: I think my experience in service would be maybe a little bit different than would be normal. I don't know how many enlisted men had two serial numbers, not very many I wouldn't imagine. I guess a lot of people would say I hear a different drummer than others do, but I've never been the least bit subject to peer pressure. It made me a social outcast frequently through my teaching career. I'm not a jock. I have no problem whatsoever, going into a bar with a group of people having a good time. I've never had a problem with it. My wife does, I don't. But I know that drinkers are uncomfortable having non-drinkers around. I don't resent it or anything. Its my choice.

Mark: You've exhausted my line of questioning. Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

James: I think we've covered it pretty well. I think one reason my experience in service is different is because of me having different attitudes maybe. Since we've been fortunate enough to get to Hawaii in spring frequently and my wife and I are both odd, we don't like the beaches, we like to go to Maui, where the local people are. It's not as crowded. If you speak to them friendly. They talk about aloha spirit, that's the definition of it. You go where all the tourists are and they're nothing but a pain in the neck-- speaking as a tourist. We've met friends over there, they're extremely gracious. Japanese-American. Incidentally that Jimmy Nakada that's the family you read about if you read the history of the relocation camps there is a Nakada family in there that's referred to. That was his family. I didn't know that at the time of course. He never said anything bitter about it. I still have a lot of problem understanding why people can be so prejudice. But then I think about my dad. My dad was a very super conservative, rock ribbed Republican. Hated Roosevelt and the New Deal and all the rest of that. I remember Dad had a very poor view of the Black Americans. They're lazy and the old traditional stereotypes that are proven so wrong. I got home from service, I never head about it before then, I heard that and thought back about these guys I had known and I put it in perspective. Then Dad comes home when the University first started getting some colored athletes, and Dad taught a few classes, most of his work was extension work, but he taught a few Advanced Soils classes and he was telling about having a couple of these colored athletes in his classes and "they are really good students, they're really hard workers and very, very positive-- but they're different." [Laughter]. I thought, "Dad, you got a ways to go!" Dad was 90 when he died, and Mom was 101. My oldest brother is 77. My sister is 76 and another brother is 73. I'm 68. My younger sister is 66.

Mark: Sounds like you'll all be around for a while too.

James: Another thing that makes a person stop and think about this whole thing about stereotyping people - my oldest brother was rated on all the tests as being a genius IQ. I've had training, I know what an IQ means and I know how that can be influenced from day to day and all it is is just one yardstick. Mother always thought it was gospel, but I don't. My youngest brother that died five or six years ago was a mongoloid-- in my own family. So these teachers who would stereotype the younger kids by the older ones, I knew how wrong they were. I suppose that all these things enter into the background. Mom was too old when she had Jackie. She had been sick. We know what advanced age does to child bearing. Some of the other experiences are meaningless for the kind of thing you're after, I think. I hope this has been useful. I understand what you are trying to do and I really understand how valuable something that to me seems unimportant can be. Like, my mind is blown away thinking of some of the things I brought in to you and how excited you were to get it.

Mark: Thanks for stopping in. I really appreciate it.

James: It's been a pleasure.

[End of Interview]