

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
ROBERT SHINE
Supply Sergeant, Army, Korean War
2015

OH
2015

OH
2015

Shine, Robert, (b.1933). Oral History Interview, 2015.

Approximate length: 1 hour 5 minutes

Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording.

Abstract:

In this oral history interview, Robert Shine, who grew up in Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin, discusses his service as a supply sergeant with the 73rd Engineer Company at the 38th parallel in Korea from 1953 until 1955, his return home and involvement with the American Legion and VFW. Shine was drafted into the Army in May 1953 and discusses processing in Chicago going to basic training at Fort Leonard Wood (Missouri) and traveling from Wisconsin to Chuncheon (Korea) through Japan. He describes his service as a supply clerk with the 73rd Engineers at the 38th parallel including going on patrol and finding landmines, defiling through the mountains to obtain supplies for his company, running drills, being very cold and getting frostbite. Shine mentions that building a road to the Sea of Japan was the biggest accomplishment of the 73rd Engineers during his service. Shine mentions that making friends and getting mail helped with the loneliness of deployment. He discusses how difficult it was to leave his wife, and how happy he was to come home. Shine reflects on the sacrifice of service and being glad that he served his country. Shine also discusses his current involvement in the VFW and his role as historian for the American Legion in Door County, WI. Other stories/topics of note in the interview include: Republic of Korea soldiers, R&R in Japan, submarine nets, equipment failure, VA health care services, and draft dodgers.

Biographical Sketch:

Shine (b.1933) was drafted in May 1953 and served as a supply sergeant with the 73rd Engineer Company at the 38th parallel in Korea until he was discharged in 1955.

Archivist's Note:

Transcriptions are a reflection of the original oral history recording. Due to human and machine fallibility transcripts often contain small errors. Transcripts may not have been transcribed from the original recording medium. It is strongly suggested that researchers engage with the oral history recording as well as the transcript.

Interviewed by Ellen Brooks, 2015.

Transcribed by Audio Transcription Center, 2017.

Reviewed by Rachelle Halaska, 2017.

Abstract written by Rachelle Halaska, 2017.

Interview Transcript:

[Beginning of OH2015.Shine_user]

Brooks: Today is Tuesday, November 3, 2015. This is an interview with Robert Shine who served with the Army from 1953 to 1955 during the Korean War and the years following. This interview is being conducted at Mr. Shine's home in Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin. The interviewer is Ellen Brooks and the interview is being conducted for the Wisconsin Veteran's Museum Oral History Program. So I'm going to have us start at the beginning, if you can tell me where and when you were born.

Shine: March 19, 1933.

Brooks: And where?

Shine: In Fish Creek, Wisconsin.

Brooks: Tell me a little bit about your early life and your childhood.

Shine: I was born and raised in Fish Creek, which I don't remember where that was, but then we moved to a farm in Baileys Harbor and we lived there. It was a very good life. You know, my dad run the farm for John Bertschinger that owned the Alpine and the feed mill in Sturgeon Bay and we lived there for many years. And we had such good neighbors. I had a Shetland pony and another person, neighbor, had a Shetland pony and we used to tie big ropes around our waists and the kids would slide on the roads. And they'd maybe slide for a half a mile or more and then we'd go down and pull them back with our ponies. They'd do it and again and we did it for many, many times. And we also used to play catching with all the neighbors because at that time nobody had any money, kids, or anything.

And I remember—in fact, I was talking to Dale Erston [sp??], he was also in Korea. And his father built a—dug a big hole for a septic system and me and Dale slid on the other side of it and called this one gal that was playing with us, she came and she fell in the hole. And we never thought she could have been really hurt, but we often talk about it quite a bit. And we had more fun. Nobody had much money. And we used to go to movies which was held at Washabeck's [sp?]. Next to Kino's [sp??] there used to be an ice cream parlor there. It's a restaurant now, but years ago we called it Washabeck's and we used to go in there and they had movies and Uncle Louis from Green Bay used to come down and we used to watch that. That was a big thing for us because there was not much else. And after the movie he'd have a dance. I remember my mother and father and a lot of other people would come and dance. I didn't know much about dancing at that time, but like I said we used to roller skate in there too and we could never make the corner. We used to run into the wall. That was really something.

And then I spent—when I got out of the service we moved to—oh, before when I went to basic training I went into basic training at Fort Leonard Wood and I met Gary Gagne and his father or brother was a professional wrestler and we got out to go to St. Louis to watch him wrestle a couple of times and we could stay overnight and we never ate so good in all our life compared to the Army food. I used to go into Chicago where my sister lived on the weekend when we were in Fort Leonard Wood and visit my sister, and my wife would meet me up there too. In Fort Leonard Wood, there was a little town they called Waynesville and they had a little airport and we used to fly back to Green Bay, three of us. And we used to—when we got in it was late at night and we used to hitchhike and somebody picked us up right away. And when I got into Sturgeon Bay it was dark and there was a taxicab driver there and I knew him. He was an elderly gentleman and I asked him if he could drive me to my home in Baileys Harbor where my parents lived and he said he would, which he did and when he got up there he wouldn't take any money for it. And so my folks weren't home at that time and my wife was not home either so I just—I think I fell asleep and they came home and I was really surprised. And they were too really surprised because they didn't know I was coming.

Brooks: And that was all when you were at basic?

Shine: Yeah, in basic.

[00:05:00]

Brooks: So can you tell me a little bit about how you ended up going into the Army?

Shine: I was inducted into the Army. We went to, I think it was some place in Chicago where we processed through. And like I said, my basic training was in Fort Leonard Wood and then we shipped out from Midway Airport and we flew to Seattle, Washington, Fort Lewis, and we were there for maybe a day and we were able to go into a tavern and get a couple of beers before we left. And we left out of Puget Sound the next day. That's the first time I ever saw a flying fish there. And from there we processed over to Japan.

Brooks: So before we get over there if I can just ask a couple of questions about the early service. So were you drafted or did you choose to go in?

Shine: No, I was drafted.

Brooks: And what were your feelings when you found out you were drafted?

Shine: I was happy to go in. Not leaving my wife, but I wanted to serve my country, you know, like that.

Brooks: And that was some time in 1953?

Shine: In 1953, right.

Brooks: Do you remember what month or about what time?

Shine: No, I can't remember. It must have been in May, I think, somewhere in that area.

Brooks: And how was basic training for you?

Shine: Basic training was fine, you know, for me. Used to have to—it was really hot in St. Louis when we were down there and we used to have these big backpacks and you'd have to march for miles and everything else. One thing I'll always remember, on Friday nights we had to clean the barracks and we were on the top floor and when they mopped the floor there'd be water dripping down onto other beds and everything else. And we had to really make our bunks really good because when they came in they had to drop a quarter onto it and if it didn't bounce up you had to remake it. And your shoes had to be what they call spit shined and your rifles had to be cleaned. And we went on different marching hikes and a lot of drills. And we had different units there that came in to this certain area and we all had to stand at attention and each unit had to march and as we went by you have to salute the flag. There were a lot of units at that time over there. I can't remember anything else that I missed.

Brooks: So that was basically basic.

Shine: Yeah, it was basic.

Brooks: Did you know that you were going to be deployed over to Korea?

Shine: Yes, I knew that. And it wasn't very pleasant leaving my life behind, like anybody that was married. And like I said, we flew out of Midway and we went into Fort Lewis at Seattle, Washington. Then we left there, like I tell you, out of Puget Sound. And I can't remember how many days it took us to get over to Japan, but it was, I'd say, roughly ten, I'm not sure. But I remember coming in to Japan, they had opened the submarine nets. You know, like years ago they had the submarine nets that they had there so nobody could get into the harbor. They had one tug on one side pulling it open, one tug on the other side pulling it open so we were able to go in. And as soon as we got in they were taking all the garbage off of there and everything else and we were sent to a Japanese naval base just to be processed. And we could go downtown for maybe a day just to spend a little time down there. We rode in a taxicab and boy, that was the last time I ever ride in one of them because all they do is lay on the horn. If somebody got in their way they'd run him over. It was really something. Let's see, that's about all before we processed over.

Brooks: How long were you in Japan?

Shine: Not too long. I would say maybe two days or a day and a half maybe over there. I remember going over to Korea we got in a violent storm and we had to pull in behind an island. I'll always remember that. It was a very ambitious storm.

[00:10:00]

And we had to stay there maybe a half a day or more, a day. Then we could process on.

Brooks: Did you ever get seasick?

Shine: No, never did. But it was really rough, boy. I mean people would really get seasick and the ship would go way down and up like that. It was really, really rough. And I did see a couple, not sharks but whales. I think they were whales that I did see out there. But it was a rough trip over there. But the night we came in—I can't remember. I think we ended up coming into Busan. I don't know if they have a port there or not, but anyway we got off some place before we got to Busan and we rode on a train that we had to lay in our sleeping bags and everything else. And we got into this port, it was dark, we didn't even know where we were and we ended up in, like I say, Chuncheon. And we went to the 73rd Engineers where we were supposed to go and it was really different being away. Really completely different of being home. You didn't have no stores or nothing, but we did have a houseboy. He'd come in there and clean up our bunks for us and do the floor. And then when I went over to the 38th parallel, if I can go that far ahead?

Brooks: Sure.

Shine: The 38th parallel. We were right on the 38th parallel where North Korea and South Korea was like that. And we built a road to the Sea of Japan which I was involved in it one day, but then I was called to work in supply. Which I did and then the company clerk left and I guess I was the only one that could type so I went in there and did all the typing. We had to make out morning reports for everybody. Like this guy went here and that person was over here, so we knew if something happened who was where. And that's the reason you wore the dog-tags with your name on. And then we'd have—we would find—we would go out on patrols, just looking around, scouting around. We used to find rifles with "Russia" stamped on them and bombs that weren't detonated and we'd have to call the demolition derby, like I said. And they would come and explode them when we weren't there. Then we had the rifle ranges and the M1 would really kick. I remember when I first fired it I wasn't holding it right and it kicked back and I put a cut under my eye. But we used to have the bazooka. The bazooka was the easiest one to fire because there was no kick to it and we used to fire at old jeeps and old tanks and things like that. It was really nice. A lot of fun like that.

Brooks: Tell me a little bit more about being in supply. What does that job entail?

Shine: In supply you had to take care of all the rifles and you had to—everybody was allotted a certain amount of clothes and I would have to give a talk every Saturday and whoever was in charge of the department would have to give a talk. And that was one of the things that I always had to do was give a talk about clothing and what you were allowed. We would go every week to a place where we'd pick up all the supplies in a three quarter ton truck and then we'd come back and everybody was allotted so much. So whenever somebody needed something we were always there to supply them with that. Now, when I went to pick up supplies one time one of my friends, Dale Erston, that lives over here on F [County Road], I didn't know until I got up there and I went by his company and I said, "That's where my friend Dale lives." And he came over. I went in there to see him and sure enough. I had an extra pair of shoes so I gave him the shoes. He needed a pair of shoes so I gave him that.

[00:15:00]

And we used to have to—when we went up there we used to go in these big defiles, like I was telling you before, and with no guardrail you're right alongside these big mountains, big drop-offs and everything. It was really something else. The fighter planes used to fly in and out. You could see the pilot sitting right in the plane. They would practice and they'd go weaving in and out in the mountains there. It was really, really something to see. But it was very cold over there. Very cold and I hated when you got the yellow alerts. Like I said, you had to get up and no matter what you had on you had to jump in a foxhole and it was filled with water and it was really cold. My gosh. When I worked in supply I was called company clerk because I was the only one that could type really, and I wasn't really that great at it. You couldn't make any errors. You couldn't use any whiteout or nothing. I don't know how many times I had to start over. So I found out fastest— just take your time and do it right. But it was very cold. I always remember how cold it was over there. That's how I got my feet frosted. I almost lost all my toes. They start itching me and they start turning black and blue and I finally went to the doctor and he said, "If you didn't come much sooner you would have lost all your toes." I couldn't walk on them for I don't know how long.

Brooks: So was he able to treat them then?

Shine: Yeah, he did something. Put salve on them and so on and so forth, but today I still go with my feet to the VA in Green Bay up there, podiatry. And they're not too bad if I don't get them cold outside. But all in all they're not too bad.

Brooks: I think that's one thing that people often say a lot about Korea, is that it was so cold and there wasn't—

Shine: Oh, it was, yeah.

Brooks: You didn't have the proper supplies. So as the supply person was there anything you could do or can you tell me more about that experience?

Shine: Like I said, everybody was allowed so much clothing, but I go and pick up supplies all the time like food and also clothing, like shirts and pants and jackets and everything else. And they were allowed so much and when their clothing was worn or torn or something we'd always manage to supply them with that. And when I was in supply I was in charge of all the weapons too, so I also went to Inchon, to a place where we had to take all the weapons apart, every piece of the M1s, and be able to put them back in a certain amount of time. I don't know how many times we all had to do that before we really got the hang of it. Then we used to—after we had a few hours we'd walk downtown and we had our pens in our pocket, like this, and these little Korean guys, little kids, would come with a rope on one side or a [inaudible] you couldn't see it and they'd flip it out and flip the pens out and run like heck. We caught onto them so we didn't carry any up there anymore.

But when we went to Inchon too everything was bombed up. I remember this nice church, it was so bombed up, my gosh. But when I watched the golf the other day they were showing Inchon and it was built up and I told my wife that it didn't look like that when we were there. It was really, really something. And they told us never to drink the Japanese or the Korean beer because you could go blind. Have I told you that? Yeah, you could go blind. Well, we wouldn't do that anyway, but there might be somebody that would.

Brooks: What would you be going blind from? Because it was poisoned?

Shine: I don't know. It was something in the beer that I don't know if you'd go blind permanently, but maybe temporarily. I don't know. They told us so we never did it. We wouldn't anyway.

[00:20:00]

And one thing I always remembered, they had these mounds, like mounds of dirt, and I asked somebody, "What are the mounds?" And I don't know if it's true or not, but they said the more money you have the higher you're buried up in the mountain. I don't know it was true or not. I remember when they were carrying—they carried the casket on top of their shoulders and they would kind of dance back and forth with them and everything. Like I said, we had the ROK soldiers that across from our company would stay and they'd come over every morning when they would be sent out with troops to here and there and all over. You know, to work.

Brooks: That's Republic of Korea, right?

Shine: Right, Korea. And we went over to Japan on R&R one time and we stayed at a place. Did I tell you that?

Brooks: No.

Shine: We stayed at a place that they had for soldiers and it was very cheap. I'm talking not even a dollar a day and they fed us and everything. And I remember there was like Ferris wheels on top of buildings because the space was so—there wasn't much space around there. I know it was the fastest train in the world they rode on. And a taxicab, I rode in one once and that was it. Did I tell you about the taxicab?

Brooks: I think you said they laid on the horn, right?

Shine: They laid on the horn, my gosh. If they got in the way, too bad, they'd run them over.

Brooks: And that was standard in Japan?

Shine: Yeah, that was in Japan when we were over there for a short couple of days like that. And we rode on a rickshaw. That was really funny riding on one of them. So we had a nice place to stay and everything. People were all very nice to you. And we used to go to this one place for veterans and they had these great big bottles of beer. I never saw them so big compared to around here. Used to have a couple of them and that was all we could handle, I think. But we met a lot of nice people over there. They had nice stores. Everything was very packed in because as far as space goes. I'm probably forgetting a lot of stuff. I wrote a lot of stuff down there so I wouldn't forget. Took us seven days to get to Japan, did I mention that to you? Submarine nets?

Brooks: Yeah, you said.

Shine: I mentioned all that. I was company clerk, company supply sergeant.

Brooks: Do you know what company you were a part of? Like what unit you were a part of.

Shine: Pardon?

Brooks: What unit you were a part of.

Shine: It was the 73rd Engineers.

Brooks: Good to know for the record.

Shine: And the biggest thing we did was build a road to the Sea of Japan. I was part of that with ten guys to go down and I can't remember what president was there. I don't know if Harry Truman was there then or what. I might be mistaken. It's so long ago I can't remember a lot of stuff. But it was really hilly, so hilly down there. Gosh, you had to be very careful you didn't step on a land mine. It had to be probed and everything like that. One thing I do remember, when we left there I saw this field, it was a huge field, it had to be ten acres or more of trucks and tanks and everything. And I asked somebody about that and they said it's too expensive to ship these home so that's why they left them there. There had to be like thousands of them. But I think the nicest thing was over there was my friend Dale Erston, which I never knew he was where I went to pick up supplies next door. And then when he went by where I was, I was in the weight room, lifting weights and that, and he drove by and he saw that's where I was so he stopped in and I was there and he poked me in the shoulder and I looked up and I couldn't believe it. That was really nice.

Brooks: Small world.

Shine: Yeah, it was really nice to see somebody from home.

Brooks: How often were you able to communicate with your family and your wife?

[00:25:00]

Shine: When I went into Japan I was able to call my wife, but I could not from Korea. But I used to talk to her then and make sure everything is fine. Of course she would write letters back, but we wouldn't get them every day. We'd get them in bunches, like I said. Because the way the mail was coming over there it was—but it was really good to hear from my folks and my sisters and my wife. Because I think we all looked forward to that because we didn't have nothing else. It was just hoping the time was coming when we could go home. It was really lonesome being over there. We were in the Quonset huts. They call them Quonset huts, you know? But I was kind of lucky. I always felt so bad when I had to leave my dog behind there. Everybody had dogs. There were a lot of dogs around. You got so attached to them. This little guy we got—I always had dogs.

Brooks: Where did your dog come from in Korea?

Shine: I thought people raised them. They were running all over. I don't know who they belonged to, but they got attached to us. We couldn't take them into our barracks, but they would sure be there in the morning. Wherever they went at night I don't know. But they were good companions. I think I told you about the airplanes flying on the mountains? Let's see, what else did I miss?

Brooks: When you got mail from home did you ever get any care packages?

Shine: Yeah, we did.

Brooks: What was usually in your care package?

Shine: I can't remember. Like candy bars, peanuts. We couldn't have anything that would melt or nothing like that. Something that you couldn't get over there, for which I was very appreciative.

Brooks: What do you think you missed the most from being in the States?

Shine: I think my wife and my family. My dog. Of course we had dogs over there. When I was in the service my police dog died. I had three dogs at one time and they told me it died and I was kind of sad. He was very protective.

Brooks: And that was a dog that was here in the United States?

Shine: In the United States, right. I had three dogs on the farm. I had a little terrier and when they got in a fight the little terrier would help out and bite the other one in the leg. That was really funny. But I grew up in a nice neighborhood, good family. Good mother and father and sister. I had three sisters. Had one sister that lives in Illinois and one that lives in Buffalo, New York. And my older one has passed away. Like I said, my wife and I are married sixty-two years. That's a long time. Boy, oh boy.

Brooks: Congratulations.

Shine: Yeah, sixty-two years, my God. We have a good life together. We have a lot of fun with our dog and the neighbor across the street has a dog and in the morning they always come over to our place, a couple of neighbors down the road, with their dogs and we sit on the drive and have coffee and the dogs have cookies and play around. Now when it gets a little colder a lot of them have left. One goes up to Illinois and this other one right across the street here, he lives in Green Bay.

Brooks: But you stay here year round?

Shine: Most of the time, no, seeing we have a dog. We used to go to Mexico or we used to go on cruises. We used to go to Haiti which is a bad place. That's the first place we stopped and then on the other side of the island—I forget what the name of it was—we used to go there. That was a nice part of the island. St. Thomas was a very nice place to go and we used to go to Mexico. That's where they had the big hurricane come in? That's where we were. I remember flying into that airport and they had all the baggage out there and they had the dog sniffing, seeing if there's any cocaine or whatever in the bags or whatever.

[00:30:06]

Then we had to get all our money exchanged to Mexican money or whatever it was. We had a lot of fun there. We got on a lot of sightseeing tours and went downtown. And we ate a few American places, American food we could have. I remember we used to go on trips and on buses out in the countryside and some of the Mexicans would make—a Mexican woman would make us a meal out there in the open space and right next to it was corn fields. And the corn, I never seen corn so tall. They said it was Canada, planted all the corn and they'd come down. And they had reservoirs of water up in the mountain so if they needed the water they'd drain it down into the fields.

Brooks: So you went over to Japan and then Korea, was that the first time you'd ever been outside of the United States?

Shine: We were in Mexico.

Brooks: But I'm talking about when you were first in the service.

Shine: Yes, it is.

Brooks: And when you went down for training was that the first time you'd been outside of Wisconsin?

Shine: That was the first time, yeah.

Brooks: Was there anything when you were overseas—what was the most unexpected thing?

Shine: Most unexpected thing was being up at the 38th parallel, I think, when it was so cold up there. That's how I got my feet frosted. It was so cold and I was on concrete floors when I was company clerk and they'd open that door all the time and all the cold air would come on my feet. Did I tell you this? They started itching me and I didn't think too much of it, but then when they started turning black and blue that's when I went to the doctor and found out that I had my feet frosted.

Brooks: And as the supply clerk could you have gotten like an extra pair of socks for yourself?

Shine: Oh, yeah, but a lot of times—yeah, I probably could have, but I don't know if that would have helped because the shoes wouldn't fit and they were tight and everything. It wasn't too pleasant being over there. It's cold and you didn't know anybody except for your soldiers like that.

Brooks: So by the time you had gotten over there all of the fighting was finished?

Shine: The fighting, when we were on the way over, had ended. My cousin Earl Spam [sp??] was over. He got back when it just ended too. Had come back overseas, but one of his sons was killed. I don't know if it was Korea. I think it might have been in Korea. He was killed too over there. And Earl, he was in the tank battalion, and maybe I told you, he got wounded. He said he actually wasn't wounded, but he said a big piece of mud hit him in the leg. But he said they said he was wounded so [laughter].

Brooks: Wounded by mud?

Shine: That's what he told me. He said it was mud, a big piece of mud. But you met a lot of nice people, guys I was in the service with. And I still have a lot of pictures of them and I used to write back and forth to a guy from Tennessee. He was the supply sergeant before I was and then I wrote and I never got an answer back, so I figured maybe he passed away or something. But we were pretty close. It was really good the day we left. Going home, boy, it was—we went out of Inchon when the tide was out. We had to get to Inchon on the backs of big long trucks with flatbeds on the back and we had to go out on little boats and climb up the ships on the ropes going up. We didn't care. Oh, no, we were going home. And I can't exactly remember how many days it took us to get home.

[00:35:00]

I am saying a week at least, but we didn't care how long it took because we were going home. It got very lonely over there. Nobody knows unless you're there how lonely it gets. If somebody had to go to the hospital there would be a helicopter would come in and pick you up. And we had the defile, I remember. Maybe I told you about the defiles? I mean if you go over a drop-off it went way down and there was only one way, you could only go one way. You couldn't go two ways.

Brooks: Are these mountains?

Shine: Big high mountains, really high. When you looked down you were thousands of feet down with no railings or nothing.

Brooks: Why did you have to go up and down them?

Shine: I went to pick up supplies. I don't know if I mentioned when they were changing lines. Did I tell you about that?

Brooks: I don't think so.

Shine: There would be thousands of men coming off, Korean soldiers, and thousands going back on. They would change. I don't know where they came from. Must have been some place up in there. You could see them go past our company.

When they'd change you could hear a lot of shooting going on and everything. Like I said, I think the Sea of Japan was the biggest thing that we did.

Brooks: And you said before you became the supply clerk that you helped with the building of the road a little bit?

Shine: Maybe I was out there a few days.

Brooks: And what were you doing?

Shine: I don't know. I probably had a pick and a shovel digging away and making the roads level. Or we had bulldozers in there too, you know. Or just maybe straightening it out or whatever. Like I told my wife, they had it on TV one day. I hollered, "Come in here because here's the Sea of Japan" and everything. You won't see that very often, but that was, I would say, maybe from our camp maybe it was a mile away, the Sea of Japan. But you could hear the North Koreans, you could hear them shooting on that side and everything. I don't know what they were shooting at, but that guy over there, I never trusted him anyway. I forget his name even, but he wasn't too good. But we had to make the best of it because when you're out there you had to sleep in sleeping bags. We kept warm. Every night they'd have a night check and make sure everybody was there and so on and so forth.

Brooks: What did you do for entertainment?

Shine: We just played cards. I think we had a day room. We used to go in there once in a while. We would have a beer or something. But there wasn't much to really do over in Korea. There was no place to go really. There wasn't any place to go, but we just made the best we could. And we all got together and played cards, mostly played cards. Like I said, I think I told you I had to give a report on clothing on the weekends. Every head of the departments had to do that. But the day we left was the nicest thing that ever happened to us. We couldn't wait. Really sad when you're away from home. No family or no nothing, but you do make friends fast like that.

Brooks: Do you know about how long you were over there?

Shine: Maybe a year and a half. Year to year and a half. I can't remember, it's been so long ago. That was a happy day when I came home, boy.

Brooks: Where did you sail into?

Shine: I think we came back into Puget Sound again and we took—I thought we'd fly back, but we had to take a train. And we took a train into I think it was Fort Sheridan?

[00:40:00]

We were put on KP [kitchen patrol] right away. I think everybody was put on KP that came through there. And then we processed out of there and we were released like that.

Brooks: Where were you released?

Shine: In Fort Sheridan. That was the happiest day of my life, I think, getting out of there. But I was glad I served my country.

Brooks: No thoughts about staying in?

Shine: No. I could have, but two years was enough. If I had to I probably would have, but two years being away from your family was pretty hard for everybody. We used to, like I say, get letters in bunches. That was one of the nicest things, getting letters from home, somebody you knew and like that. That was, I think, the nicest thing. Then coming home was nicer.

Brooks: So when you left Fort Sheridan where did you go next?

Shine: Where did I go from Fort Sheridan?

Brooks: Yeah, like how did you get home?

Shine: I think from Fort Sheridan I think I went and stayed—it's been so long I can't remember all these things anymore, but I think I went back to Fort Sheridan to my sister that lived in Chicago and from there I think my wife came down and from there I think we took a train back. I didn't want her driving up there in that traffic. I think that's all. So when I went back home I was going to go into IBM. I'm glad I didn't now. I went into printing. Did I tell you any of them stories?

Brooks: No.

Shine: I went into printing. I used to work on the *The Door County Advocate* at one time. And I took my apprenticeship there and when they started hiring women I was low on the totem pole so I had to—I was the first one to go. So that was the best thing to happen to me because I moved into Chicago and I got really a good job. My kids were able to go—my son and daughter were able to go to good colleges down there and I had a good job. I used to go into Chicago. I went to Illinois Bell and Water Quality and Fermilab and I used to do all their estimating on jobs. I used to go and talk about jobs and I got to know a lot of these people pretty good so they would kind of favor me because we did good work for them. And the bosses that I worked for, I became very good friends with them too. One is still living and the other one, I haven't talked to him for years, but we got along very

well together and the people we worked with and everything else. I had an excellent job.

Brooks: Was it difficult for you to transition from being Army to being a civilian again?

Shine: Not really. I was glad to get out. And after that, I don't know if I told you, we moved into Milwaukee and I went to a vocational school. I wanted to get into printing because I had a job offered to me already as a linotype operator and I didn't know too much about typing at that time. So in order to get a little better I went to a night school and they taught you typing by music. And boy, I picked it up so easy. They played music, you typed to the music, and it was really good. I picked it up real fast.

Brooks: Did you use the GI Bill for vocational school?

Shine: Yeah, GI Bill. It was really—I'm glad I served my country, but I was glad to get out too. I think everybody felt the same way like that.

Brooks: Was there anything that you missed after you got out of the service?

Shine: I think I missed a lot of the buddies that I had.

[00:45:00]

Like Gagne, the professional wrestler, his brother, I was very good friends with him. And the supply sergeant when I moved in there, before he retired I used to write to him and we used to write back and forth and then finally I didn't get a letter back, so I figured something must have happened, maybe he passed away. So I kind of miss that. I had a lot of friends and they were all, everybody was very nice people. It was good to get home though. I think the worst thing that happened to me was getting my feet frostbitten. That was the worst thing that happened to me. But it was pretty nice, you had to make the best of it. No use complaining because you were serving your country and that was part of your duty was to do it. So I'm glad I did. I know we used to have a lot of draft dodgers around here. I remember one family had four boys and none of them went in the service. I could never figure that out. But I was the only son and I was glad to serve. But I'm glad to be up here now in Door County. Couldn't ask for a nicer place.

Brooks: And so close to where you were born.

Shine: Maybe I'm about three miles away from the farm. Yeah, I was glad I was born on a farm. It was really nice. You knew what life was all about and you knew what hard work was and everything else. Like I said, I had three sisters. I had one that died at birth. Did I tell you about them? One lives in Buffalo, New York.

Brooks: Yeah, and in Illinois.

Shine: I don't hear from her too often. My older sister died, like I say, and I hear from my one in Chicago, west of Chicago. I can't even remember the name of the town where she lives, but we talk back and forth a lot like that.

Brooks: And you're a member of the VFW post up here?

Shine: Yes, I am.

Brooks: How long have you been a member?

Shine: Ever since I've been in Illinois, many, many years. And I belong to the American Legion too. I belong to—when I lived in Palatine, Illinois, that's the first VFW post I belonged to. I remember we used to go down and they used to have fish Fridays. They had two floors. They had fish Friday on Friday night and they'd have busloads of people coming, like seniors from senior homes and everything else. And used to have dances there, Christmas parties for the kids and everything. It was really nice. But then later on the members got old and passing away and so they had to sell the post and join another post. That was really in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Not too far from Arlington Park. Ever hear of Arlington Park?

Brooks: Yeah.

Shine: I used to like to go to the races. We used to do all their printing for them. I used to ask the guys—did I tell you? I used to ask the guys, “You got any hot tips today?” They didn't know any more than anybody else. [laughter] But my wife and I both used to go to the race track. Used to go up to the race and watch. We'd maybe bet a little bit, not much. I just liked to watch the horses run, but the worst part of it was when the horse would be coming in on the final stretch and he'd come around the corner, break his leg. Oh, that, was so sad because they had to—they used to hold up a great big sheet and then they used to have to give them a shot to put them away because they was not worth anything anymore. That was the hardest thing to see. That was really—my son, he was the superintendent of the Arlington Park district. He doesn't live too far from Arlington Park now. Where he works, I should say, Rolling Meadows. And my daughter lives in Palatine.

[00:50:00]

Brooks: So you have the two children?

Shine: Two children and one granddaughter.

Brooks: How much do you share about your service with them?

Shine: Whenever they ask anything about it I do. I used to—years ago I found Dale Erston and when I lived on the farm and we used to have a quartet. We used to

sing. We used to sing all over. We sang over at Green Bay one time on Easter Sunday. We sang and we had our regular piano player and our regular director, everything else. And used to sing in the Catholic church because most of the guys that sang were Catholic. I was Lutheran. But we sang together. We used to sing at our church, we used to sing at their church. And like I said, the biggest thing, we sang over Easter Sunday. I got a picture of that too and I wanted to find it. I couldn't find it. We sang over there. So we had a lot of fun.

Brooks: And is Dale a member of your VFW post here too?

Shine: Yes. Our post is getting a little slim now because a lot of the guys are passed away and everything else, but it used to be big, pretty big post. I don't remember how many we got, but our commander now is a lady. She's very nice. She's from Sturgeon Bay. Michelle Rasmusson, you know her?

Brooks: Yeah, I know Michelle. I actually did an interview with her.

Shine: She's a very nice person, very nice. Like I say, I belong to the American Legion too which we did the fall fest up there. We did very good up there. We always do. That's our big money-maker.

Brooks: What does that mean? What do you do for the fall fest?

Shine: Fall fest is like a big celebration. **[Sister Bay Fall Fest]** It's just a day when they have like thousands of people there. And the biggest thing, at the end there they shoot off all these Ping-Pong balls. They shoot them from, I understand, the top of a big bowling alley. They shoot them off into the streets and then they have different businesses, you can go in and see what they give you or whatever.

Brooks: Like on the Ping-Pong ball?

Shine: On the Ping-Pong ball, yeah. We didn't stay around for that though. We never do that.

Brooks: What do you do at the American Legion there?

Shine: We have a booth there and we sell—our biggest thing is selling sweet corn. But one of the guys makes his bouillon, he sells bouillon. We sell beer. But the biggest thing at the end, I got quite a chuckle out of it, we came up at the last one, we were ready to close up, and this little guy and his father came up, he was about so high, and he says, "Could I get a corn?" And Tom, one of the guys there, he happened to have a little corn about as long as my finger and the little guy says, "Don't you have a bigger one than that?" And I happened to have one left that was about that long, so I give it to him. Boy, gee, you have to dip it in butter like that and he was so happy. He was really happy. But then after that we took everything down and packed it away for next year. When next year is ready we

just put it back up and do the same thing, you know, for making money. Our biggest thing is scholarships. We give scholarships to Gibraltar and different places, boys' camp and so on like that. We have a pretty good membership. Let's see, I'm the historian for the—that's the reason I want to take a picture of you and me today so I can have a picture and put it in there too.

Brooks: Sure. What is your job as the historian? Was that for the VFW or for the Legion?

Shine: I collect all pictures and in fact, I've got books here. I take them for all our events and whatever. I take pictures and I have a record of everything. I have big albums, so big. And then I bring them down. In fact the commander said, "Would you bring them down, let's have a meeting tonight." And he said, "Would you bring them down tonight?" I said, "Yeah, I'll bring them down tonight." Because everybody wants to look at them. Way back we used to go to King too. You know where King is? We used to go down there. When they had a convention or whatever it was. You ever been to King?

[00:55:00]

Brooks: Yes, I have.

Shine: It's right on the water there? How nice it is, they have homes there and everything else. When we were there I think they had the fourth of July. I don't know if I mentioned to you that this dog was in the service and he went through all the service without getting wounded or anything, he got home and he got hit by a car and killed. They had a nice—we went over there and saw they had a big tombstone for him and everything.

Brooks: And where was he?

Shine: This is in King.

Brooks: Where was he in service?

Shine: I don't remember where he was in service. That I don't know. But King was nice up there. We went up there when they had a celebration. I don't know, it was some celebration they had and we used to go up there all the time. They had a workshop up there, I remember. I know Kenny Wendt. You know Kenny Wendt? He used to take a lot of service people up there and when they were in Appleton he used to take a lot of people in Appleton. I used to go to Appleton before they had the one in Green Bay. Boy, am I glad they built it in Green Bay. That road between Appleton and Green Bay was something else, especially in the wintertime. But that was very interesting, going up there. They had a lot of nice doctors and you were well taken care of. But now I don't have very far to go when I go. Maybe an hour at the most from here to Green Bay. That's really a nice facility there. You've been in there, I would imagine?

Brooks: I haven't been. I've been to the vet center in Green Bay, but I haven't been to the VA. I haven't been to a hospital there.

Shine: This isn't a hospital.

Brooks: Is it just a center?

Shine: This is where they have the podiatry and then they have like eye doctors. When you're coming out of Green Bay you know before you get into Green Bay there's a sign to your right, it says, "Veteran's Administration." You go up there and then you make a left and you go around and it's right there. It's a huge place.

Brooks: I haven't been there.

Shine: You haven't been there?

Brooks: Not yet.

Shine: It's really, really a nice place. That's where I go. I'm glad I can go there now.

Brooks: And you get treated well?

Shine: Oh, yeah. Very well.

Brooks: So sometimes, a lot of times, you hear people saying that the Korean War is kind of the forgotten war. And I know you kind of served at the tail end of it, but do you have any thoughts on that attitude? On the idea that the Korean War is the forgotten war?

Shine: I don't think so. I still remember it all the time. And the guys I was in Korea with, we don't forget. I mean you've been there for so long. Being there, being away from home, you didn't have anybody over there except your buddies, you know. No, I don't forget it. I think about it. I remember a lot of things that wasn't very—the worst thing I remember is it was so cold always. Cold over there. You'd get wet when—I think the worst thing was when you had to jump in the foxholes that were filled with water.

Brooks: Was that for drills or were those actual potential raids?

Shine: They were drills, mostly drills. Because we were by the 38th parallel the war had ended but still they had drills. Filled with water and then you'd be soaking wet and they didn't have any driers there or nothing. You had to hang them out on wires or whatever you had so they'd dry out, but hopefully the sun would come out. But we managed and all like that. But the day we left, that was the best time.

Brooks: What about the reception from people here in the United States?

Shine: You mean when we left?

Brooks: When you came back.

Shine: I don't think there was—we were just—we drove—when we came into Puget Sound we took the train back to Fort Sheridan and we were put on KP right away and from there I think my wife—I don't know if she drove down.

[01:00:00]

It's been a long time. I think she drove down and we came home. Or she took a train down? Been a long time, but I think she took a train and she left the car in Manitowoc at that time, I think. Some place. Anyway and so we drove home from there.

Brooks: What about kind of the public perception of the Korean War?

Shine: What kind of—what's that again, public?

Brooks: The public perception, like people consider it the forgotten war because people don't recognize it; it wasn't as grand as World War II and it was short.

Shine: A lot of people say it's a forgotten war, but the people that served over there sure don't. It was a war to us even if you didn't have any fighting when we came. There was fighting at one time, 38th parallel and North and South Korea. But like I say, we just got over and the war ended. The head guy on the north side I know wasn't very good. Still isn't today. You hear a lot of bad things about what he wants to do and everything else. But it's too bad we have to have war. I don't know why we all can't get along together, you know? But we were glad to leave Korea and come home. That was one of the nicer days of our life, I think, leaving there. We weren't draft dodgers. We wanted to serve our country. Our country has gave us a lot. Met a lot of nice people there. Like I said, we used to write back and forth and that kind of faded away. Some of them might have died off or whatever, but we still remember the good old days like that. I will never forget them. I've probably got a lot of pictures around, but I don't know where they all are. I don't know if I have any pictures to show you. Did I have pictures to show you or no?

Brooks: You mentioned them.

Shine: Do you want to see some?

Brooks: Yeah, we can take a look maybe when we're done with the recording. I don't know if you were interested in donating any of them to the museum.

Shine: It depends.

Brooks: We can talk about it. Was there anything else on your notepad that you thought you might want to mention? You've recovered everything?

Shine: Let's see, 73rd Engineers, I was company clerk, supply sergeant. I [inaudible] Inchon. Let's see, I got everything. Water leaks. We had water leaks and my friend Gagne, weekends flew home on basic training. Japan, submarine nets. I guess I got everything covered.

Brooks: Why did you think it was important to do this oral history interview with me?

Shine: Maybe other people if they happen to hear it will realize the sacrifice we gave to our country and served. We weren't draft dodgers. We wanted to serve our country and we left our wives too to do it, and our families. I think I feel much better doing that, saying I did something for my country when they give us so much. It's very little, what we did, compared to what we get. So I think it's very well satisfied. I don't know what else I can—it's nice that you came here to interview me.

Brooks: I appreciate you sitting down with me.

Shine: I had to do it. Can get some of the things that I did for my country and the experiences I had. It wasn't easy and something you had to do and you did it, and we did it, and I came home alive and here I'm talking to you about it.

[01:05:00]

Brooks: Fifty some years later or more. Great. That's all the questions I have so I can turn the recorder off now if that's okay.

Shine: Okay.

Brooks: Great, thanks.

[End of OH2015.Shine_user] [End of Interview]