

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,589
Okay. We're recording the interview of Joseph
Minnich. The interview is being conducted by

2
00:00:07,589 --> 00:00:11,420
Bradley Wing and Ann Moore from Wright
State University's Veteran Voices

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00:00:11,420 --> 00:00:17,609
Project this interview is being recorded
at Bethany village in Dayton, Ohio. It's 11

4
00:00:17,609 --> 00:00:30,810
a.m. August 14 2015. Do you prefer to be
called Joe? That's good. Alright. Joe, when and where were you born?

5
00:00:30,810 --> 00:00:48,530
In Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton. Okay, February, go on, please sir, February 16 1932. Okay. Have you lived in
the area your whole life? All except for when I was in the

6
00:00:48,530 --> 00:00:57,710
service. Okay great. Who are were
your parents and what were their occupations? My

7
00:00:57,710 --> 00:01:07,250
dad was a railway mail clerk and my mother was
just a homemaker. Not just

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00:01:07,250 --> 00:01:22,170
a homemaker. She died at forty. I was sitting on
the corner of her chair. So Sorry. And did you have

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00:01:22,170 --> 00:01:23,020
any siblings? Yes.

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00:01:23,020 --> 00:01:34,140
How many and what were their names and
genders. One. James Earvin Minnich. Just one. Was the older

11
00:01:34,140 --> 00:01:40,920
younger than you? Older. Okay. Did he happened to serve
in the military as well? Yes. Was him

12
00:01:40,920 --> 00:01:42,380
serving in the military

13
00:01:42,380 --> 00:01:49,220
motivation for you to join as well? No. Okay.
So, before you entered the service what were

14
00:01:49,220 --> 00:01:51,100
you doing with your life?

15
00:01:51,100 --> 00:01:59,090
I was pattern maker General Motors. Okay. How old
were you when you decided to join?

16
00:01:59,090 --> 00:02:05,500
Nine, about nineteen. Okay. So you enlisted,
voluntarily enlisted? Yes. Okay great.

17
00:02:05,500 --> 00:02:09,690
And which branch did you serve in?
Air Force. Of course.

18
00:02:09,690 --> 00:02:24,370
Why did you choose the Air Force? Of them all. I don't know. No? Okay.
Do you remember what it was like as you

19
00:02:24,370 --> 00:02:28,970
were leaving to go to basic training? The
like the emotions attached to that. What

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00:02:28,970 --> 00:02:31,310
it was like for your family and you as
well?

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00:02:31,310 --> 00:02:38,580
Embarking out on your own for the first
time I would imagine as young adult. I

22
00:02:38,580 --> 00:02:47,750
don't remember. Okay that's fine. My stepmother was there.
Do you remember what it was like when

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00:02:47,750 --> 00:03:08,990

you arrived at basic training? We were taken to encampment in San Antonio, Texas. We

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00:03:08,990 --> 00:03:11,930

slept on the floor

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00:03:11,930 --> 00:03:27,670

for a while. On mattresses. Okay. How long did that last? About a week. Okay.

Then they you have your beds? Yeah. You know do you

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00:03:27,670 --> 00:03:40,600

recall any of your instructors? I only recall them by what they did? Do you remember any

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00:03:40,600 --> 00:03:47,420

stories about interactions with your instructors, as a young airman? I remember

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00:03:47,420 --> 00:03:54,320

one instructor who was a foreigner.

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00:03:54,320 --> 00:04:01,570

He dropped his helmet on the ground and one helmet hit the ground we were

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00:04:01,570 --> 00:04:03,420

supposed to be on the ground.

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00:04:03,420 --> 00:04:13,459

Oh, okay, high standards, then. And like that. Did you receive any specialized training? Yes.

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00:04:13,459 --> 00:04:16,290

Um, what was it?

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00:04:16,290 --> 00:04:30,580

It was for clerk typist. Okay. And was that your main duty in the military? Yes. Okay.

Alright, so how did you, how did you transition

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00:04:30,580 --> 00:04:38,180

from civilian to military life? How did you adapt to like the physical regimen, the

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00:04:38,180 --> 00:04:41,330

living in barracks, the food, the social life?

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00:04:41,330 --> 00:04:58,560

I got so well paid. Did you find it was easy to make friends, while you were in? Yes and no. Do any of those or any of those friendships like meaningful?

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00:04:58,560 --> 00:05:07,500

Did you carry any beyond your time in the service? Yes. Okay. And then can you elaborate a

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00:05:07,500 --> 00:05:11,340

little bit more on them? Don Hason.

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00:05:11,340 --> 00:05:27,240

He was in Seattle, Washington. I met him overseas. He's dead now. Sorry.

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00:05:27,240 --> 00:05:36,880

Okay. Now, while you were in where all did you serve? 30 months in Japan. The rest of the time in the states.

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00:05:36,880 --> 00:05:44,479

Okay and what are some memories of your time in Japan? I wanted to be load master

42

00:05:44,479 --> 00:05:59,169

on one twenty-fours and my eyes kept me out. You had to be a scanner when you were in flight. Okay.

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00:05:59,169 --> 00:06:23,909

Alright. Were you ever on the front lines or witness any combat? No. So what your day-to-day duties in the military? duties and the military and I don't take

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00:06:23,909 --> 00:06:33,400

I worked in the Adjutant's Office as a clerk typist. I don't know what a clerk typist does. Anything the Adjutant wants you to do. Okay, so you were the jack of all trades then.

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00:06:33,400 --> 00:06:44,310

You were the go to guy. And while your overseas how did you stay in touch with family and

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00:06:44,310 --> 00:07:06,189

friends? By, by letter. Okay, was that. And phone calls. Okay, you were able to make regular phone calls? Not regular, periodic.

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00:07:06,189 --> 00:07:08,779
Okay, when you were in Japan where were you stationed?

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00:07:08,779 --> 00:07:15,259
In [inaudible]. Okay, and what did you do for recreation when you are off duty was there

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00:07:15,259 --> 00:07:25,320
lot to do on an island? Yes, I played softball. Softball.

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00:07:25,320 --> 00:07:33,490
What was your position? Shortstop. You got to be quick to play shortstop.
Yeah, did you have power

51
00:07:33,490 --> 00:07:42,640
too? Did I have what? Did you have power, to hit the ball? Did you hit the ball well? No. No me neither.

52
00:07:42,640 --> 00:07:54,410
They don't need shortstops to hit home runs though the right? I just hit them out in the outfield.

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00:07:54,410 --> 00:08:01,220
Yeah, softball is great. So you served during the Korean War, correct?

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00:08:01,220 --> 00:08:17,670
Yes. Um, were you serving when it ended? I think so. Do you know where you were when it ended? In Japan. In Japan.

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00:08:17,670 --> 00:08:22,600
Okay, um, and then at that point did you stay in Japan or did they let you return home?

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00:08:22,600 --> 00:08:37,490
I was there for 30 months. Okay, um, and after you after your time in Japan did you go? Did you separate while you were in Japan or.

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00:08:37,490 --> 00:08:44,000
you just... I came back to the States and I went to Griffiss Air Force Base in New York. Okay, and did

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00:08:44,000 --> 00:08:54,030
you maintain the same duties? Basically. While you there? So when you separated and you

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00:08:54,030 --> 00:09:03,060

return back home how were you received
your family and community

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00:09:03,060 --> 00:09:11,930

They were coming out the Air Force, airport to meet me. I got
off the bus I was coming down the street

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00:09:11,930 --> 00:09:18,279

and my dog [inaudible] came up the street and greeted me. That's a great memory. Okay.

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00:09:18,279 --> 00:09:32,160

And did you have any difficulty
adjusting back from military to civilian

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00:09:32,160 --> 00:09:44,069

life? No. Okay. That's great. Have... From the friend you made while in the service were you in the service were you
able to keep in

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00:09:44,069 --> 00:09:53,680

contact with any of them after separated? Don Hanson.

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00:09:53,680 --> 00:10:06,270

Okay. We went to the [inaudible] school one time and we
stopped in Seattle. Uh, huh, okay, so you did get to see him that's good.

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00:10:06,270 --> 00:10:22,120

Are you a member of any veterans'
organizations? No. Alright so, since separating

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00:10:22,120 --> 00:10:27,610

from the military what all have you been doing? I went back to pattern making,

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00:10:27,610 --> 00:10:39,560

married my wife. We have been married 68 years. Congratulations. Do you have children?

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00:10:39,560 --> 00:10:47,420

Two adopted. Okay. Sean and Heather. That's great. Did they every think about
joining the military following your

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00:10:47,420 --> 00:10:59,120

footsteps? I don't know. Okay. Let's take some time to reflect now. How did your

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00:10:59,120 --> 00:11:09,760

wartime experiences affect your life?

I'd say not very much.

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00:11:09,760 --> 00:11:25,089

We went to a crash of a 124 in Japan while I was there. We got up early in the morning and went out to search the site for

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00:11:25,089 --> 00:11:34,390

survivors or for bodies. And the Japanese were in the bushes

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00:11:34,390 --> 00:11:39,360

taking photos.

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00:11:39,360 --> 00:11:42,980

That's all I remember. Okay.

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00:11:42,980 --> 00:12:05,339

Um, and what are some life lesson that you've learned in your military service. I'd like to say I learn alot, but I don't think I did. Okay, how is your

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00:12:05,339 --> 00:12:16,889

military service impacted your feelings about war and the military in general? Good.

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00:12:16,889 --> 00:12:24,679

Are you supportive of the direction that our military is headed, recently? Yes. Okay.

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00:12:24,679 --> 00:12:25,549

What is the direction?

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00:12:25,549 --> 00:12:35,989

Um, well I, more I'm curious what you think that is actually? Their downsizing. That's true. I don't support that.

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00:12:35,989 --> 00:12:44,449

Okay so you think we should maintain a large military. Yes. Okay. What about like recent campaigns

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00:12:44,449 --> 00:12:57,040

in Iraq and Afghanistan you feel that those are good decisions? Yes. Okay

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00:12:57,040 --> 00:13:02,680

So what message would you like to leave for future generations

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00:13:02,680 --> 00:13:25,360

who'll watch and hear this interview?

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00:13:25,360 --> 00:13:30,090

Do you think that everyone should experience the military in their life? Yes.

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00:13:30,090 --> 00:13:43,770

Okay. I agree with that, I think it's a big part of growing up for me anyway. Is

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00:13:43,770 --> 00:13:47,530

there anything you feel we haven't discussed that you would like to go back and

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00:13:47,530 --> 00:14:01,270

touch on? We breezed through this kind of quickly. My eyes. I'm color blind that's why I could be a scanner.

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00:14:01,270 --> 00:14:07,600

I couldn't pick an airplane out of the blue. Oh, okay.

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00:14:07,600 --> 00:14:12,530

The first time I knew I was color blind was when [inaudible]

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00:14:12,530 --> 00:14:35,139

came home in her car it was a black 19, something, I called it red.

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00:14:35,139 --> 00:14:39,100

Was that was after you were in the military? That was before. Okay.

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00:14:39,100 --> 00:14:49,449

Okay. How long were you in Japan? 30 months. 30 months.

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00:14:49,449 --> 00:15:00,440

They were much different then what I remember. They were very polite.
I was going ask you if you had maybe culture

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00:15:00,449 --> 00:15:13,410

shock? Going to, because the culture is different? No. No. You just remember that the people were very polite over there. Yeah. I remember one

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00:15:13,410 --> 00:15:31,919

individual in particular was an office boy
whose name Tori and he was okay. Did you enjoy your time over there?

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00:15:31,919 --> 00:15:42,549

For the biggest part. Yeah. Did you, when you were off duty did
you travel in Japan at all? Or go to the big

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00:15:42,549 --> 00:16:10,310

cities? I went to Tokyo a time or two.
Yeah. What was that like that? It was

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00:16:10,310 --> 00:16:15,910

quite a shock to me to see how it was rebuilt. Did you ever feel like you weren't welcome in Japan because of
Japan because of what happened there

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00:16:15,910 --> 00:16:32,510

what had happened in World War II. No. I got on what they called a bullet train
and we were going toward Tokyo.

101

00:16:32,510 --> 00:16:55,230

And going to enter a tunnel. I thought that it would be dark
in there, but the lights went on in the train.

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00:16:55,230 --> 00:17:08,260

You had said you went out to look for bodies after a plane went down? After one twenty-four crashed. Is that the
closest to sort of a

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00:17:08,260 --> 00:17:24,560

combat situation you saw over there? Yeah. So it was a US plane that got shot down. It was one of our planes taking
off. It lost power and it just

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00:17:24,560 --> 00:17:29,860

pancaked had the had the wings wrapped around
the nose. Wow.

105
00:17:29,860 --> 00:17:43,620
So, um, did you find what you're looking for? I guess we did.

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00:17:43,620 --> 00:17:49,450
And how long were you in the Air Force after you came back to New York. A year.

107
00:17:49,450 --> 00:17:54,690
A year. Oh, you were born here weren't you?

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00:17:54,690 --> 00:18:08,890
yeah ok. We have about 12 more minutes.

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00:18:08,890 --> 00:18:29,789
Are there any other experiences you had over there, that you would like to talk about or share? Anything interesting? Strange? No.

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00:18:29,799 --> 00:18:36,379
That's where I met Don Hanson. Okay. You guys were good friends?

111
00:18:36,379 --> 00:18:59,489
Yeah. He when he was on his deathbed he had his wife call. Call from Seattle. And he wanted to talk to me. That's wonderful. And how did you meet Don? By accident. Is there a story, there story to go with that? No.

112
00:18:59,489 --> 00:19:02,929
Was it like at the store,

113
00:19:02,929 --> 00:19:17,299
playing softball? Or you met him in the hospital? I met him at work. Okay. Great.

114
00:19:17,299 --> 00:19:30,580
Well. An you said you didn't really have a hard time adjusting back to civilian life when you returned home? No. It was pretty easy. Yes. You know you think that being in the military how to be may be more organized

115
00:19:30,580 --> 00:19:57,440
and disciplined then you were I don't know before. No. Do you remember why you enlisted? What was your motivation to stop pattern making and join the military? I didn't have a particular motivation.

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00:19:57,440 --> 00:20:07,669

It sounded like a good idea at the time? Yeah. That's why I joined. Yeah. I was tired of living with my parents.

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00:20:07,669 --> 00:20:19,119

That was part of it. I just wanted to escape my small town. Go out and see the world. Yep. Did you ever go on any TDY

you ever going to need to be wise or

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00:20:19,119 --> 00:20:27,600

anything while you're stationed in Japan?

Yes. And where they take you? We went to Yokosuka. Where's Yokosuka.

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00:20:27,600 --> 00:20:40,659

It's out along the sea. Okay. In Japan. Yeah. Okay.

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00:20:40,659 --> 00:20:50,450

And what was your mission? What was your mission there in Yokosuka? To have fun. So it was like an R and R thing. Yeah.

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00:20:50,450 --> 00:21:01,080

Giving you guys a break. Okay. How often would they do something like that? That was on our own. Okay. They just

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00:21:01,080 --> 00:21:10,179

give you guys leave. Yeah. And you go.

123

00:21:10,179 --> 00:21:16,559

If you could have changed anything you could change anything about about your

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00:21:16,559 --> 00:21:25,820

time in the service would you? Do carry any regrets?

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00:21:25,820 --> 00:21:40,639

When I went to school for clerk typist they told us the five that were the top of the class will get a Corporal stripe. I got knocked off at

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00:21:40,639 --> 00:21:58,190

list because of somebody that worked worked for the officer in charge of the school. That's unfortunate. Favoritism. Okay. That's

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00:21:58,190 --> 00:22:14,049

what I thought. Yeah, sounds like it. So clerk typist would you just be sending out lik official memos? We were

working in the

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00:22:14,049 --> 00:22:25,460

message center. Okay. So you you were... We handed out... They'd come up to the window and tell us what their

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00:22:25,460 --> 00:22:37,850

name was, and we'd find it.[inaudible] . Was this like, um, like military correspondence? Messages sent from person to person?

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00:22:37,850 --> 00:22:44,509

Like letters back home? Both. Okay. So any communication that went through any

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00:22:44,509 --> 00:22:54,580

paper communication went through you. Yeah. Okay. Sounds like a lot but did you interact

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00:22:54,580 --> 00:23:01,920

with people constantly? I don't remember. Okay.

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00:23:01,920 --> 00:23:16,160

So what was your favorite part about serving? I had no favorite part. No. Did you enjoy your time in? Yeah. Okay.

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00:23:16,160 --> 00:23:29,230

And how long were you in for total? Four years. Four year.

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00:23:29,230 --> 00:24:04,730

Then you came back here because your family's here and everything? I came back here because this is where the Air Force sent me. Okay. Then you just stayed.

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00:24:04,730 --> 00:24:33,830

I got married in 55 to my wife. Was that after you separated? I met her when I came home. Okay. You knew she was the one, huh. Yeah.

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00:24:33,830 --> 00:24:53,700

If you could have... What was it that you wanted to do that you had to be able to scan to fly. Being an observer when we were in flight. I couldn't do it because of the color blind.

138

00:24:53,700 --> 00:24:59,539

Do think if you were able to do that you might have stayed in longer? No. It wouldn't have made any difference, huh?

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00:24:59,539 --> 00:25:11,120

Okay.

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00:25:11,120 --> 00:25:37,210

Because you were color blind, you couldn't, that's why, you couldn't do that? Yeah. Okay.

141

00:25:37,210 --> 00:25:46,590

So you said you played softball in Japan? Yeah. Was there a league, or a...No. Team... Or just for recreation.Yeah. Recreation. Did you continue that when you came home?

142

00:25:46,590 --> 00:26:09,720

Yes. Yeah. In Rome, New York. Okay. That's where I broke my leg.

I cracked a bone in it. Trying... Playing baseball, softball. Trying to take a catcher off of home plate. Oh. I didn't make it. Bummer.

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00:26:09,730 --> 00:26:20,039

Was that the end of your softball career then? No. No. Kept playing afterwards. Yeah.

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00:26:20,039 --> 00:28:13,870

So you have some things here. Are these your decorations? Yes. That you earned.... What do you have? There is one that's not there. The Presidential Unit Citation. I got this over here. I got it in the mail. Along with this. Okay. It's upside down. When did you get these? I got them in the mail recently. Only one medal is missing there. It is a Presidential Unit Citation. What is this one? It this that's the Army good conduct. So is there a story behind this Ambassador for Peace Medal? This is the story here.

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00:28:13,870 --> 00:28:42,119

This is for your time of service in the Korean War...Yeah. On their behalf. Ambassador for Peace, Official Proclamation. Uh. That's great.I guess alot of people got those. Well only people who... Yeah. Served... That's wonderful.

146

00:28:42,119 --> 00:29:15,689

I don't think the camera can see it. What is this one?[inaudible]. There all listed on this card. Don't mind me. I am just getting audio for a piece. Okay. You guys just carry on. Are you guys still interviewing? We are. Yes. Okay. Go ahead. Keep going. Okay. We're just looking at his awards, his medals now.

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00:29:15,689 --> 00:29:26,419

There's one missing the Presidential Unit Citation. Okay. So, how did you feel when

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00:29:26,419 --> 00:29:30,119

you got the Ambassador for Peace Medal?
Did you know that it was coming to you?

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00:29:30,119 --> 00:29:48,549

or...No, I didn't. So did you feel honored to have received it or... Ah... [inaudible]They they took long

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00:29:48,549 --> 00:30:04,429

enough to get it to, right? Yeah. I am sure it was a nice surprise though. Yes, it was. Yeah. I think that's great. It is.

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00:30:04,429 --> 00:30:30,130

Have you had an opportunity to wear it yet? No. I keep it in this box in the safe. How long ago did you get it? In the past year. Okay. It came in the mail. Okay. That's great.

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00:30:30,130 --> 00:30:46,000

We are on. Oh, okay. I think we have covered all our bases. Thank you, Joe, for your time. Thank you. We appreciate it. Thank you for your service. Your welcome.