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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,259
We're recording the interview of Henry
Drexler. This interview is being

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00:00:06,259 --> 00:00:09,380
conducted by Adrian Hill from Wright
State University Veteran Voices Project.

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00:00:09,380 --> 00:00:15,349
The interview is being recorded at VFW Post 3288 in Brookville, Ohio.
It is about 3

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00:00:15,349 --> 00:00:28,029
p.m. on January 14th, 2014. Henry, when and where were you born?
1/28/29. January 28, 1929.

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00:00:28,029 --> 00:00:33,940
Where were you born? Dayton, Ohio. Who were your parents and what were
their

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00:00:33,940 --> 00:00:43,000
occupations? I'm a junior, my dad Henrie
senior and my mom was Gladis and she

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00:00:43,000 --> 00:00:52,100
worked at Frigidaire for years. She worked war production and also
refrigerators. And then Dad,

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00:00:52,100 --> 00:01:00,489
he run a store here in town for forty, fifty
years, an appliance store and it's still here. I

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00:01:00,489 --> 00:01:08,720
took it over and then I gave to my
daughter and she's still running it. Okay. Drexler Sales. Okay.

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00:01:08,720 --> 00:01:20,890
Did you have any siblings? I have one dead sister and one half-dead.
She's in Florida with Alzheimer's, she's horizontal. Okay. So I'm
truly the only one around.

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00:01:20,890 --> 00:01:25,020

Did either of them serve in the military? Huh? Did either of them serve in the military?

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00:01:25,020 --> 00:01:31,990

Them? no. Okay. Two sisters and I didn't have have any brothers. Okay. So what we're doing when

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00:01:31,990 --> 00:01:38,579

you went into the... Tell us what branch you went into? I joined the Navy Reserve when I was 19

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00:01:38,579 --> 00:01:41,950

years old in 1948

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00:01:41,950 --> 00:01:45,670

and it was during the Berlin Airlift.

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00:01:45,670 --> 00:01:55,750

And they were gonna draft again, just right after the war. The war was just over and I'm not going in the army, so I joined

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00:01:55,750 --> 00:02:04,820

the Navy Reserve in Dayton and I stayed in that... well they called me in for regular duty then in '51. The war broke out in '50.

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00:02:04,820 --> 00:02:16,440

What made you pick the Navy then? A warm meal and a good bed. A warm bed and I always liked water anyhow,

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00:02:16,440 --> 00:02:27,950

so. So when I was in reserves then, well we - you might have been reserves, but we went to training every Tuesday night,

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00:02:27,950 --> 00:02:34,250

once a week and once a year we will on cruises and first year I took to U.S.S. Midway,

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00:02:34,250 --> 00:02:42,390

which everybody's heard of that carrier. She's a museum out in San Diego now and I went on that and we

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00:02:42,390 --> 00:02:51,180

Panama Canal in '49, she was brand new. It was too late to make World War II for her. And then the

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00:02:51,180 --> 00:03:00,070

next year would be '50. I went to a destroyer. We went to Key West, we went to Cuba. Cuba was wide open then.

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00:03:00,070 --> 00:03:07,000

We went to Cienfuegos and then come back in Mardi Gras and we had a good time. And then of course, I got

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00:03:07,000 --> 00:03:10,769

married May and the war broke out in June.

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00:03:10,769 --> 00:03:19,600

Korean war, conflict. So I knew I was going to go, but I had a rating that they wanted. I had a bunch of

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00:03:19,600 --> 00:03:26,489

buddies that was in with me, reserves, never got called. Seamen, swabbies, they didn't want them,

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00:03:26,489 --> 00:03:33,010

white stripers. And I had a mechanic's rating, fireman's rating and they wanted me so they called me in.

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00:03:33,010 --> 00:03:41,030

And when I went in, I went to Great Lakes and I went to Mirror Island and then I catch a submarine

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00:03:41,030 --> 00:03:49,409

hat whole time and didn't take boot camp, right in [swoosh sound] and went to Mirror Island, went to Pearl Harbor,

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00:03:49,409 --> 00:03:58,220

a sub base there and got attached there. And I was in a big maintenance building like this one here. It had

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00:03:58,220 --> 00:04:03,959

machine shops and that we're working on World War II submarines, Gatos, they were called Gato

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00:04:03,959 --> 00:04:14,690

submarines and high maintenance [inaudible] just like an old lawn mower. So we were working on them and we took them out.

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00:04:14,690 --> 00:04:21,190

If they had a problem on them, they'd put you on there and you go around to a couple isles and see what the

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00:04:21,190 --> 00:04:31,300

noise was and all that kind of crap. I stayed there. My main thing when I was there that I remember was snorkeling.

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00:04:31,300 --> 00:04:40,250

We just got snorkel submarines and of course German's invented them. The Germans invented everything. So they took one, the only one we had and they

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00:04:40,250 --> 00:04:45,410

took to Hong Kong and they'd snorkel all the way back to Pearl with it. And we were there

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00:04:45,410 --> 00:04:55,830

band flying and flag flying and everything. It was kind of a neat thing. So then I got out. I had 4 years

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00:04:55,830 --> 00:05:03,979

in. When Truman and the Korean war came, they froze them for a year. Froze all hitches, you had to stay in. So I really had

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00:05:03,979 --> 00:05:04,980

five years in there.

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00:05:04,980 --> 00:05:16,720

I would have got out almost the time before I got in, because I only had only had 4 or 5 months left to go.

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00:05:16,720 --> 00:05:27,540

I would have got out, but they froze the hitch had to put in about a year and a half rev duty. So and came out and got out and

but do I came back and got out and then

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00:05:27,540 --> 00:05:35,070

I got involved in veterans things here then. We'll touch on that part towards the end. I got a few

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00:05:35,070 --> 00:05:43,090

questions about like your basic training and stuff. Oh okay. And boot camp. So you found out you found...

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00:05:43,090 --> 00:05:48,010

you figured you were gonna get drafted, so you joined the Navy Reserve. Yep. Now you had to go to your

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00:05:48,010 --> 00:05:57,540

boot camp initially right? Nope. You didn't have to go to boot camp? I'm talking about then, I don't know what they do now, but then

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00:05:57,540 --> 00:06:02,150

if you were going to go right in, you went to boot, but I went to training down here

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00:06:02,150 --> 00:06:07,320

at the train station down here on 3rd Street at that time. And then you got your other training

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00:06:07,320 --> 00:06:13,960

when you went on cruises. You were obligated to go on a cruise; a two week cruise once a year.

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00:06:13,960 --> 00:06:20,850

So when I was down there for about 3 years and I had 3 rates, I was a

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00:06:20,850 --> 00:06:27,380

same as a corporal in the Army, but so I had a rate when they pulled me in, no

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00:06:27,380 --> 00:06:33,930

boot, they just booted me overseas.

I man just went overseas. So if you went straight overseas you would have to

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00:06:33,930 --> 00:06:39,430

go to boot camp. I don't know. For the guys who got drafted. I'm the only one, there's probably

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00:06:39,430 --> 00:06:47,970

others, but I'm the only one that I know of that didn't go to boot camp. I didn't go to boot camp, I just went right straight overseas. No boot

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00:06:47,970 --> 00:06:56,730

camp because I had a rate. How did you get that? When you say rate you mean? Yeah I had a rate, rank.

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00:06:56,730 --> 00:07:05,650

I was an MEG [inaudible] firemen and when you first go in, your just this flat seaman or fireman

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00:07:05,650 --> 00:07:10,770

then you're a fireman apprentice and then you get a regular rate where you're going to

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00:07:10,770 --> 00:07:19,770

to go where you went into training to get more and then if you got that right there, you got to be a petty

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00:07:19,770 --> 00:07:22,650

officer. I never made it, because I got a

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00:07:22,650 --> 00:07:31,129

Captain's Mass, but I had three red stripes on my arm, which meant I was fireman

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00:07:31,129 --> 00:07:38,919

first class. So how did you... When did you... When you enlisted, did you

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00:07:38,919 --> 00:07:42,379

go to any training at all like right when you enlisted? Nope, just down here

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00:07:42,379 --> 00:07:49,319

on 3rd Street. And then you started going there once a week? Every Tuesday night for two hours. Every Tuesday night and they paid you.

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00:07:49,319 --> 00:07:57,180

You know, every three months you get a little check. And once a year you were required to go on

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00:07:57,180 --> 00:08:07,199

cruises so I went on those. I went on two, I would have went on three, but they called me in so. And when I went in...

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00:08:07,199 --> 00:08:15,210

when you go in as a rookie, you know you're always taking mess cooking, you know, for three months

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00:08:15,210 --> 00:08:22,310

I never had any mess cooking either, never had any mess cooking. I don't know how, I lucked out on that. I told Bobby there, he

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00:08:22,310 --> 00:08:27,150

was in the Navy and he went through everything and he said " how did you ever get out of all that stuff?" I said I don't know,

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00:08:27,150 --> 00:08:38,089

whatever they said they do I did, you know? I lucked out I guess. Oh okay. So here is

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00:08:38,089 --> 00:08:46,010

some of these cruises that I went on. That's one to Midway. And see I had a fireman's rating there

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00:08:46,010 --> 00:08:56,470

there, when I was going there. We were still training of course. Okay, so I'll take some pictures of those after we're done too, but...

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00:08:56,470 --> 00:09:06,600

So how long were you in the reserves then? Your...

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00:09:06,600 --> 00:09:14,089

If you enlist and go into the straight Navy, you're a USN That's it, forever you're a USN.

I went in as a reserve so I was USN-

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00:09:14,089 --> 00:09:23,100

R forever. I was a reserve the whole time I was in and that's it. So when you when you,

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00:09:23,100 --> 00:09:28,240

how long were you in before you found out you were deploying?

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00:09:28,240 --> 00:09:35,490

I went in April of '48 and I went in on active duty in January of 1951.

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00:09:35,490 --> 00:09:43,189

Okay so a few years. I had about three years in before I went, which is... all that was training.

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00:09:43,189 --> 00:09:51,069

I had my uniform, hats, shoes, p-coats, I had everything. They furnished their own shots. Every years they give you all these

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00:09:51,069 --> 00:09:59,709

shots and all this. I had everything just like I was regular Navy, I was reserve. But see, I would have never went in if

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00:09:59,709 --> 00:10:03,410

they hadn't of called me. Where did you enlist?

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00:10:03,410 --> 00:10:12,740

April of 1948. Where though? Dayton, Ohio. just like at the MEPS or is that what they called it then? Did you have to go somewhere

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00:10:12,740 --> 00:10:13,980

to do it, to enlist?

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00:10:13,980 --> 00:10:22,980

No. Where in Dayton was it that you enlisted? Well the reserve training Navy was then, was on East 3rd Street, out there by [inaudible]

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00:10:22,980 --> 00:10:28,679
restaurant and stuff. It's about a mile from
downtown and then later on it went out on Gettysburg

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00:10:28,679 --> 00:10:35,439
and they combined it with Marine, Army,
and everything reserve out there. And now they tore it down, it's

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00:10:35,439 --> 00:10:41,300
gone. But at that time we had a big
building out there and all the training

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00:10:41,300 --> 00:10:52,559
was done in there tying ropes, everything you do in here, you know,
tie ropes and read books and identify vessels and all that kind of

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00:10:52,559 --> 00:11:03,179
stuff. That's what your training was. You know, dry training. But then
when we were on board a ship, on these cruises, we was shooting forty
palm palms

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00:11:03,179 --> 00:11:09,920
millimeter palm palms and doing all kinds board ship. Mess cooking,
peeling potatoes,

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00:11:09,920 --> 00:11:17,699
anything you're willing to do. Okay, so let's see.

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00:11:17,699 --> 00:11:21,639
So did you go to.. So that's the only training
you? You went Tuesday night, two weeks year? So

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00:11:21,639 --> 00:11:26,660
before you deploy to Korea, you hadn't done any
extensive training at all?

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00:11:26,660 --> 00:11:33,359
No. Okay, so let's talk about Korea little bit
then. I didn't go. Far as I got was Pearl

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00:11:33,359 --> 00:11:39,879

Harbor. Oh okay. Sub base. Okay. In the Navy there wasn't anything to do in the Korean War except it they did do

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00:11:39,879 --> 00:11:50,679

the ... invasion, but the Navy just took, I was telling, we just take the bodies over and bring the dead ones back. Now they fly them back. Bu the Navy

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00:11:50,679 --> 00:11:59,179

didn't do anything. The subs... that's the nearest sub base we had. We had a tender that was stationed in Japan if the

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00:11:59,179 --> 00:12:07,239

the subs were over having any trouble, they could call that tender and refuel and all that. But I didn't go to Korea. We got

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00:12:07,239 --> 00:12:12,889

to the harbor and that's as far as I got. Okay, so what did you do in Pearl Harbor then? Well I was in maintenance on

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00:12:12,889 --> 00:12:17,119

submarines. Okay. We had our own barracks, we had our own base.

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00:12:17,119 --> 00:12:23,470

When the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor, they forgot about the sub base, they never touched it. Of course Pearl Harbor was

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00:12:23,470 --> 00:12:30,199

all a put on anyhow, but. All the tanks up on the hills, thousands of gallons of gasoline and everything,

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00:12:30,199 --> 00:12:45,149

never touched it, never touched it. Just battleships you know. Now we... of course I've seen... we used to go over and Hickham and the other bases. They had submarine or... machine

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00:12:45,149 --> 00:12:53,049

gun holes in their barracks at all the shit over there, but they never touched it. I was stationed there

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00:12:53,049 --> 00:12:59,579

and we had all our maintenance there. They had tenders there too. I was on a tender for awhile

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00:12:59,579 --> 00:13:04,779

A tender's a great big ship, 600 foot. Has every tool on there you think of

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00:13:04,779 --> 00:13:13,579

to do a repair job. But that's what we had at the base. So the subs would come in, pull up to the docks and then the commander would turn

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00:13:13,579 --> 00:13:17,580

in to the chief, what he wanted done.

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00:13:17,580 --> 00:13:25,770

Noise in this to, bracket here, air conditioning don't work, something. He'd turn it in and then they'd just sit

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00:13:25,770 --> 00:13:31,880

there. The sit there mostly. They'd be there a week or two while we fixed them. Fixed everything on their

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00:13:31,880 --> 00:13:38,240

list and we'd go down on them and work on them from the.. they'd be sitting right down

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00:13:38,240 --> 00:13:47,380

here on the dock and we'd go down and get on them, work on them and stuff and go out on them. If they requested, like one time they had a noise, they

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00:13:47,380 --> 00:13:53,340

couldn't find it and they want somebody to go volunteer. Okay I'll go ride one.

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00:13:53,340 --> 00:14:04,560

So I get on, go out and I heard the noise and I come in and got to find it. I found it and then they fixed it. Just stuff like that, that's what we did.

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00:14:04,560 --> 00:14:09,600

So you're considered a Korean War vet right? Yeah, I mean time frame.

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00:14:09,600 --> 00:14:18,230

Right. '50 to '53 actually it went to '55. It's over, you know it lasted three years, but

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00:14:18,230 --> 00:14:29,180

they include VA veterans up to '55, 1955. But actually it started July 27, 1950 and

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00:14:29,180 --> 00:14:37,900

was over July of the 30th of 1953. We only lost one boy here, that was from here.

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00:14:37,900 --> 00:14:46,970

Got killed over there, but... Doing what? He was a Marine.

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00:14:46,970 --> 00:15:02,610

Grenade got him. Okay. We've got about two... you know Korean War veterans are really thin, because they didn't have 13 million of them like they did in World War II. Only had 3 or 4

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00:15:02,610 --> 00:15:10,860

million and they're all 80 or better. Of course the Korean War is still going on so if you go to Korea

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00:15:10,860 --> 00:15:17,209

now, you're still in the Korean War veteran. Today it's a conflict, it's never signed, they never signed the treaty so...

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00:15:17,209 --> 00:15:28,740

and we got 30,000 troops over there today and so... lost my train there, but

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00:15:28,740 --> 00:15:42,740

that's on the Korean War it was a three-year deal about 50,000 killed, 100,000 wounded. Most of it was up the

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00:15:42,740 --> 00:16:03,550

Chosin Reservoir. We got about maybe, I only know of two Korean War veterans here that was in Korea. Okay. Two. We used to

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00:16:03,550 --> 00:16:11,340
have about 80 members that was in during the Korean War. But see when they drafted in the '51 and 2,

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00:16:11,340 --> 00:16:20,379
Germany was a hot spot. Berlin Airlift and all that and most of the guys here that got

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00:16:20,379 --> 00:16:28,529
drafted in the Korean War went to Germany. So that's where they went, the didn't go to the Pacific. Okay.

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00:16:28,529 --> 00:16:33,779
So why they did that, I don't know, but they... the big hot spot there needed... you know we still got

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00:16:33,779 --> 00:16:43,079
a couple hundred thousand troops in Germany now you know so. Once we get we get some place we never leave. We'll really never

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00:16:43,079 --> 00:16:54,100
leave Afghanistan and that place... We'll never get out of there, never. You won't see the day we get out of there. I know I won't [laughing]. Well do

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00:16:54,100 --> 00:17:00,629
you have any memorable experiences from your time in Pearl Harbor? Just that snorkel deal I thought

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00:17:00,629 --> 00:17:09,221
kind of interesting. There were times when a sub would come in and we'd go out and we only had 15 there and

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00:17:09,230 --> 00:17:23,010
that's like, you talk about peace time, this carrier carried 120 planes. When I was on it we had 15. Peacetime, '49 nothing going on. So over there

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00:17:23,010 --> 00:17:31,900
during the war they had, usually a little over 30 submarines there at all times and they also had a base in

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00:17:31,900 --> 00:17:41,809

Brisbane Australia, a big base and they had one in Fremantle too. I think that's in Australia. But after the war you know

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00:17:41,809 --> 00:17:50,120

everything just cut way down. There wasn't much going on. And then during the Korean War there really wasn't much for the Navy to do,

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00:17:50,120 --> 00:18:00,240

but haul them over and haul them back, haul supplies you know. North Korea didn't have any Navy, they've got something now, I don't know what they got, a couple

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00:18:00,240 --> 00:18:05,520

PT boats or something over there, but they don't really have much, so.

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00:18:05,520 --> 00:18:14,520

South Korea's got a couple of submarines now and stuff. And later on they put a small... after they took Japan

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00:18:14,520 --> 00:18:21,940

they put a small base over that a Yokohama and put a submarine tender over

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00:18:21,940 --> 00:18:30,260

there. Our submarines would just run from Pearl over there on patrol. they call them patrols, that's what they call

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00:18:30,260 --> 00:18:36,669

all that stuff in Afghanistan, deployment. And they go over and make a deployment and then they come back and they

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00:18:36,669 --> 00:18:42,570

didn't have to go back for 18 months. So I wanted to get on a sub, you had to qualify

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00:18:42,570 --> 00:18:56,669

like a pilot, but I don't have enough time left to. We didn't have anything there that had enough time left on it to qualify, when I was in there. We didn't have much time,

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00:18:56,669 --> 00:19:06,039

which suited me. Who wants to go to service? I didn't, but went anyhow, you know what I mean.
Yeah. I'm glad I did now, but at that time

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00:19:06,039 --> 00:19:12,520

I wasn't too happy about it, I just got married, you know they break you up. Just go married had to go.

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00:19:12,520 --> 00:19:21,389

Yeah. But it was okay, I was only 19. When I went in I was 21 the time I got there so. I had it made,

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00:19:21,389 --> 00:19:27,589

I had a good deal. Did you develop some camaraderie do you think when you were over there in Hawaii?

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00:19:27,589 --> 00:19:33,669

Oh yeah with the guys then, but nothing long term. Okay.

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00:19:33,669 --> 00:19:39,909

I did with all the guys I was there and I admit a bunch of.. When I went over

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00:19:39,909 --> 00:19:54,690

and went on a ship, I met a bunch of Air Force guys and I got in with them over there too. We had an Air Force base right next door, Hickham. Yeah. And some of us guys went in and bought an old car and when they, over there

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00:19:54,690 --> 00:19:59,969

when they shipped there cars back, when their regulars. Shipped your cars back and take all the gasoline

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00:19:59,969 --> 00:20:07,549

out, so then we had buddies over there and they'd give us free gasoline all the time. We had more...

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00:20:07,549 --> 00:20:12,999

our motto was get it before the officer get it. You might have been an offer I don't know, but what we ...

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00:20:13,000 --> 00:20:24,739

but our motto was get it before the officers get it and that's what we did. Called it [inaudible]. That's funny. Yeah we had a good time. So what about staying in touch with your

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00:20:24,739 --> 00:20:28,869

new wife and family and stuff like that? How did you do that while you were in Hawaii?

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00:20:28,869 --> 00:20:39,299

Just letters is all, no phone calls. No phone calls? Did they have anything there or was it too expensive or did they just didn't have that option? I don't know.

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00:20:39,299 --> 00:20:46,250

I really don't know, there was nothing phones and you couldn't afford a phone call from there to

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00:20:46,250 --> 00:21:05,920

Ohio in those days when you're making, what did I make? I started out with 138 or 48 a month, so the only thing I ever did was write letters and get letters. Okay, so what about recreation?

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00:21:05,920 --> 00:21:15,910

We had plenty there. We had a big Olympic size swimming pool right out. we had an L shaped barracks and we had an Olympic size swimming pool right in front of it.

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00:21:15,910 --> 00:21:23,200

And the chapel was right over here, all denominations. And they had baseball and stuff there and

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00:21:23,200 --> 00:21:30,050

anything you want to get into I guess. Joe Lewis showed up there boxing one time and...

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00:21:30,050 --> 00:21:42,180

Well of course you're in the Navy, you're on on time. One day your on 24 hours and then you're off 3

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00:21:42,180 --> 00:21:51,690

like a fireman in Dayton or something you know. You're on 24 hours and then you're off 3 days. So we worked 8 hours

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00:21:51,690 --> 00:21:59,070

a day and then we were off so we could go do what we wanted to do.
Take a car, go to town, taxi, you know bum your way or

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00:21:59,070 --> 00:22:06,080

whatever you wanted to do. Just s you were back there by 8 o'clock
morning. Yeah. And then the day you were on the duty, well then you
had to

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00:22:06,080 --> 00:22:10,450

go stand 4 hour watches and all that kind of stuff.

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00:22:10,450 --> 00:22:17,740

After you worked 8 hours a day you had to go stand 4 hour watches. So
can you just maybe give me a

169

00:22:17,740 --> 00:22:28,040

break down of like an average day? Well an
average day, you get up at six and you eat and all that and get...
When we

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00:22:28,040 --> 00:22:33,510

were working on the base we wore dungarees and unless they had

171

00:22:33,510 --> 00:22:40,840

inspection, then you had to dress in your dress blues or whites.
Whites over there and then we have

172

00:22:40,840 --> 00:22:49,600

to be down at the shop at 8 o'clock and muster, which they call your
name and make sure you're there. And then we... most of us guys that
were

173

00:22:49,600 --> 00:22:58,680

there were, strikers they called them, you were learning a trade, a
specialized trade, so then they'd put you under a guy with a

174

00:22:58,680 --> 00:23:08,850

higher rate that'd been a regular Navy RN, regular Navy and then you
do... what I did was I was in sheet metal and we made

175

00:23:08,850 --> 00:23:14,060
all kinds of sheet metal stuff. We had big sheets of metal. We'd bring them in and bend them up, make

176
00:23:14,060 --> 00:23:15,440
all kinds of stuff,

177
00:23:15,440 --> 00:23:27,810
patch holes and air conditioning ducts and all that kind of stuff and then at noon you could take your break for lunch, then you come back and work until 4, then you're off and you can

178
00:23:27,810 --> 00:23:34,430
do what you wanted to do. But if it's your duty then you was assigned to work a

179
00:23:34,430 --> 00:23:46,410
4 - 8 or the 8 -12 or the 12 - 4 or the 4 - 8 watch. There's always watches in the Navy, there's always somebody walking. On board ship and off board. How often do you

180
00:23:46,410 --> 00:23:53,260
get that duty? Every four days. Okay.
They'd pick you up in a Jeep, throw you in a billy club.

181
00:23:53,270 --> 00:24:04,440
No fire, just a chief's [inaudible] no fire.
They'd take you out in a Jeep and take you out to where you were sectioned, you were supposed to be watching

182
00:24:04,440 --> 00:24:12,300
They turned you loose. Then they would come out once in a while and check on you, make sure you're not sleeping. Right. They catch you sleeping you get a

183
00:24:12,300 --> 00:24:23,740
captain's mast which is like a court Marshall, same thing only they don't throw you out or nothing. I got one on time so I know what they are so.

184
00:24:23,740 --> 00:24:33,980
For what? Well, it was funny, but I was on... you're always on call even though those three days you're

185

00:24:33,980 --> 00:24:41,970

off call and the one day you're on call. But those three days you're off call. Well one of those days I wasn't called, I was off call

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00:24:41,970 --> 00:24:51,240

and me and a guy, we went over on the beach and messed around, it was on a Sunday and here Joe Lewis come to box in

187

00:24:51,240 --> 00:24:56,880

this big arena down there and they needed ushers. So they called us little

188

00:24:56,880 --> 00:25:08,380

riggers in. So they called me in. I wasn't there, I was on the beach so I was court marshalled or captain's masted. So you were supposed to be

189

00:25:08,380 --> 00:25:16,800

there but you? Well, I didn't even know that. Oh okay. I didn't know that, I was a rookie, I didn't know what's up. Anyhow so I had a guy, I got

190

00:25:16,800 --> 00:25:21,300

ten hours out of it and after work I had to go down

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00:25:21,300 --> 00:25:23,290

paint on an old ship

192

00:25:23,290 --> 00:25:31,230

down on the dock, but the worst thing about it was I was ready to go up for my rate to get my petty officer rating and

193

00:25:31,230 --> 00:25:38,080

once you get a captain's mast your not eligible for like three years or something and

194

00:25:38,080 --> 00:25:44,740

so I never made my other rate. If I would have made my other rate, I'd probably stayed in the reserves and

195

00:25:44,740 --> 00:25:52,970

stayed in for twenty years. Yeah. But I didn't make the rate and it pissed me off and when I was due to get

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00:25:52,970 --> 00:26:01,430

out, I got out. That was it, but I've probably got called back up for the Vietnam War if I would have stayed in,

197

00:26:01,430 --> 00:26:11,810

because I only would've been 41 years old at that time. I would probably have had to go back in Vietnam. This is a Vietnam jacket but it ain't mine. Oh okay.

198

00:26:11,810 --> 00:26:18,580

A buddy of mine gave me this. The fact is now I run around with all Vietnam guys right now

199

00:26:18,580 --> 00:26:36,680

mostly. Right. All the guys my age, they're all dead and gone. I'll be 86 next week. So I'm in good shape, except I'm a little slow to get up and get around and everything, so.

200

00:26:36,680 --> 00:26:43,760

This is when I went in. Oh wow. That's when I shipped over in March of '52.

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00:26:43,760 --> 00:26:51,270

Take that later. Yeah I'll take some pictures of that. So did you know when you got over there how long you gonna be there when you got

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00:26:51,270 --> 00:27:09,350

to underway, why? Well yeah, I knew I would be getting out within a... I knew that I went in in January and I enlisted in April so I knew I'd be getting

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00:27:09,350 --> 00:27:18,830

out in April, but Harry Truman was the president because FDR died and he froze the hitches he froze everybody. Everybody in the service had to put in

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00:27:18,830 --> 00:27:19,670
another year

205
00:27:19,670 --> 00:27:27,980
automatically. So that meant I wouldn't go, I couldn't get out. I had to stay in that other year. Otherwise, like I said,

206
00:27:27,980 --> 00:27:41,880
I would have been out almost before I got in there. So how long were you in Hawaii then? I was there from January the 10th, '51 until

207
00:27:41,880 --> 00:27:47,430
October the 10th, '52. So more than a year and a half.

208
00:27:47,430 --> 00:27:54,950
Yeah. Straight, did you have any breaks, did you come home at all? No. Wow, so after a month of being married you had

209
00:27:54,950 --> 00:27:56,480
to be gone form her

210
00:27:56,480 --> 00:28:10,070
for a year and nine months? Yep. Wow that's a long time. Yeah I lived here in town then. I was at my own business. Yeah I came back and we built a

211
00:28:10,070 --> 00:28:18,350
new house here then and had a kid and went on down the road like everybody else. Okay. But it was a little... That's about

212
00:28:18,350 --> 00:28:27,880
the only sacrifice I had, because I had good duty, I had it made. You know, in Hawaii and no boot,

213
00:28:27,880 --> 00:28:29,560
no mess, no nothing.

214
00:28:29,560 --> 00:28:39,740
I had a good job and I struck under some good guys over there. Bunk and he had married

215

00:28:39,740 --> 00:28:48,850
an Australian woman. I used to run around with him a lot, go to their house and we used to go down -- and he had a car, a new car, '51 Studebaker

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00:28:48,850 --> 00:28:59,750
and I knew... got to know I guy over there that was a prison guard during World War II, when they [inaudible] and he

217
00:28:59,750 --> 00:29:14,090
knew where there was pineapple plantations and we'd take his car and go on Sundays when we were off, go out and steal pineapples, get bananas, and

218
00:29:14,090 --> 00:29:23,690
we had a good time, I had a good time over there, I really did. How did you get home? Ship, I went over by ship and came back by ship.

219
00:29:23,690 --> 00:29:35,610
How were you received when he got home? Nothing, zilch, I took a train, it payed your way,

220
00:29:35,610 --> 00:29:56,450
They gave you so much a mile to get home. I went and checked "I'll fly home". A hundred and fifty-something dollars to fly home, I said "shit". So I took a sleeper... a red-eye home, sat up the whole way and [inaudible].

221
00:29:56,450 --> 00:30:15,540
Got home on a train. I got my train in Dayton and called my wife, she wasn't around. Called my mom, my mom came down and got me, I come home, and the next day I went to work. That's it. Nothing, I man you didn't have anyone looking for Korean War veteran.

222
00:30:15,540 --> 00:30:24,780
Yeah. There was nothing at all about it. I just came back and went to work.

223
00:30:24,780 --> 00:30:30,440
I came back the 10th and went to work on the 11th. Wow. I had \$100 in my pocket from

224
00:30:30,440 --> 00:30:36,880

what they gave me and then of course Ohio - did you get any money from, did you go to? Yeah.

225

00:30:36,880 --> 00:30:41,430

Well they had a bonus money and I got \$300. Oh okay.

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00:30:41,430 --> 00:30:52,130

That's all it paid then, I got that, so. I didn't get until like '54 or '55 something like that. Okay, so I mean it didn't seem like too

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00:30:52,130 --> 00:30:56,840

much of a jump for you. You came home and the next day you started working. Was it hard for you to adjust at

228

00:30:56,840 --> 00:31:01,900

all, going from that daily regimen you had and? I didn't think so, I don't remember so. Okay.

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00:31:01,900 --> 00:31:04,580

Because I was self-employed. Right.

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00:31:04,590 --> 00:31:15,380

I had my own business, I never worked for anybody expect those two years in the Navy. The guys I was learning under, they called us strikers

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00:31:15,380 --> 00:31:21,230

you're striking for a rating and I had two guys that they were peaches.

232

00:31:21,230 --> 00:31:29,400

You know, I come in in the morning do what I want to do and they found out I was a mechanic and all this

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00:31:29,400 --> 00:31:37,980

[inaudible] stuff so they knew I was in the repair business and when they knew that then all officers got on board.

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00:31:37,980 --> 00:31:45,200

They'd bring in their toaster or one of them would bring in their sweeper and one of my pet jobs was the

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00:31:45,200 --> 00:31:52,660

admiral daughter had to Crosely car. They were just new then, a Crosley car. You probably never heard about them.

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00:31:52,660 --> 00:32:00,280

They were made in Cincinatti - WLW Crosley and they had trouble with the motors leaking.

237

00:32:00,289 --> 00:32:12,380

They weren't made out of cast iron engines, they were aluminum engines and they would leak water and so I had the aluminum sealer

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00:32:12,380 --> 00:32:17,740

here at the home that we fixed appliances with and so I was sent home and

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00:32:17,740 --> 00:32:25,679

got some, so I'd fix her car all the time. That put me in. Yeah. You know, so I pretty much did... when I was there

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00:32:25,679 --> 00:32:35,909

I pretty much did almost what I wanted to do. Okay. Yeah, I had it made. Okay. So have you stayed in contact with

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00:32:35,909 --> 00:32:40,270

any of the guys you deployed with? No. Do you attempt at all?

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00:32:40,270 --> 00:32:50,520

Well I did I did my chief and another guy there that I knew - there was

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00:32:50,520 --> 00:32:58,260

two or three - one married an Australian girl and he came back to San Diego and I drove out to San Diego.

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00:32:58,260 --> 00:33:07,110

When they decommissioned Midway, I went out there in '91 and I seen him and this other guy came see one

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00:33:07,110 --> 00:33:17,700
time. He was driving through Ohio and he stopped. He had a new '55
Buick and he stopped and to see me.

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00:33:17,700 --> 00:33:27,600
But I never, the rest of them, I never kept track of any of them. I
knew where they were some of them Walnut Creek and

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00:33:27,600 --> 00:33:36,659
California different places, but they never contacted me. Two years is
not really too long time to be... especially being on a base.

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00:33:36,659 --> 00:33:44,179
He had... I don't know many thousands of guys we had there, but we
were just in that repair section, you

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00:33:44,179 --> 00:33:54,409
know. So was just in there, maybe 40 50
guys it was mustered, right there together so and

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00:33:54,409 --> 00:34:01,500
the guys in the submarine, we never got to know any of them, because
we just went down there and worked on them. They were on them, we
didn't.

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00:34:01,500 --> 00:34:11,869
Had 80 guys on the sub, on each sub, but we never got know any of them
so. I never kept track of any of them boys when I got out, no.

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00:34:11,869 --> 00:34:25,179
And non of my reserve guys in the cruises either. I recognize them
here now and I
can't remember their names, but I was friendly,

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00:34:25,179 --> 00:34:37,490
we had a good time and we went and did everything. Got into all kinds
of shit, but I never remember any of them. Okay, so since you

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00:34:37,490 --> 00:34:42,409
out, when you got out, you came home and started
working, you've been doing that? Yeah ever since, I put in

255

00:34:42,409 --> 00:34:44,720
seventy years in

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00:34:44,720 --> 00:34:47,750
appliance business. I had my own store. still here.

257

00:34:47,750 --> 00:34:56,500
Down here six blocks from here. My daughter runs it now and I gave it to her. I didn't sell it to here, I gave it to her

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00:34:56,500 --> 00:35:07,140
and I was there. These guys I talk about now said "yeah, we've 30, 35 years then we're going to retire". I said "I put in 70 years", but I couldn't

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00:35:07,150 --> 00:35:27,460
retire. I didn't have any social security. Yeah. I never worked for anybody, you know so. I retired in '92, went on social security in '92, I was 65... 62.

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00:35:27,460 --> 00:35:40,740
And then I worked part time until Two-oh-oh-one, 2001 and I had a ticker tag me, chainsaw and my daughter came

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00:35:40,740 --> 00:35:54,640
down and she said she'd like to - I didn't have a son I only had one girl - said "boy, I'd like to run that". I said "good you can run it while I'm in the hospital. I couldn't do anything for 5 months.

262

00:35:54,640 --> 00:36:05,420
So she ran it and she goes "I like this". I said "you like this?". She said "yeah". I said "good I'll just give it to you". It was worth about, oh couple hundred thousand was all.

263

00:36:05,420 --> 00:36:19,060
I said "here you can have it, you can have everything but the truck. I'll keep the truck". So she's been running it ever since now for ten or fifteen years. Oh okay. And she's got

264

00:36:19,070 --> 00:36:28,950
[inaudible] G.E., Maytag, and Hot Point, and Crosely. I learned her how to repair stuff too, so she runs

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00:36:28,950 --> 00:36:36,750

calls and repairs and reuses stuff and everything. Okay, so how did your experience with the military

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00:36:36,750 --> 00:36:46,680

affect your life do you think? Affect my what? How did it affect your life? I don't.. it didn't have any affect on me

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00:36:46,680 --> 00:36:52,970

if you mean emotional or psychological or anything like, no.

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00:36:52,970 --> 00:37:01,660

I didn't think anything about it. I just went in, did what they told me to do, got out, didn't bother me a bit in no way, shape, or form. Okay,

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00:37:01,660 --> 00:37:06,710

are there any lessons that you learned like life lessons you learned from being in the

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00:37:06,710 --> 00:37:12,150

military? Well I learned how to weld and solder, which I didn't know how to do. We did a lot of

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00:37:12,150 --> 00:37:20,790

welding there and soldering and I learned that, but the rest of my trade I learned, I didn't really

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00:37:20,790 --> 00:37:33,090

use it out here. You know, because it was all sheet metal work and I didn't, wasn't involved in that out here. Although, I did build a house in '55 and

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00:37:33,090 --> 00:37:38,859

I did do... I did use my experience there. I put all my furnace duct work in

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00:37:38,859 --> 00:37:48,150

and the plumbed the whole house, soldered everything, everything else. What I did learn I

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00:37:48,150 --> 00:37:56,670

did use quite a bit of it when I built my house. Okay so what is your what's your feeling about the

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00:37:56,670 --> 00:38:06,160

military now? Oh I think it's a good deal although they don't draft. It's a job now. It's your main job and

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00:38:06,160 --> 00:38:12,680

you go in for the College or the money and money - I don't care what you talk about - money is

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00:38:12,680 --> 00:38:35,069

everything and as long as you're healthy. But I think that the service is great today. I mean it would be nice if everybody went and get some training, get them ship shaped up, but that's not going to happen. But since they draft

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00:38:35,069 --> 00:38:41,740

it's a job and now we get guys here now, you know they're kicking them out. the Navy's kicking them out. They've got 14, 15

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00:38:41,740 --> 00:38:53,020

years and they ant to get their 20. They're out, it's the job, they get the pink slip. That's what it is now. That's what it's going to be like. If the government

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00:38:53,020 --> 00:39:06,289

wants you, they want you. If they don't want you, out you go. So anyhow, but the military, I think it's great for guys to go in and

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00:39:06,289 --> 00:39:13,250

get some education, get some money, get to go to college or get a job, get a trade

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00:39:13,250 --> 00:39:22,130

whatever, I think it's great. And all that, the V.A., a lot of them holler about the Veteran's Administration and I don't. The V.A. is the

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00:39:22,130 --> 00:39:27,990

greatest thing they've ever done for military. You get the guys hollering about

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00:39:27,990 --> 00:39:37,230

this and that and you have to wait and do this and that and I don't believe it, you know. If your go down there and do

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00:39:37,230 --> 00:39:40,880

what you wanna do you can get it done.

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00:39:40,880 --> 00:39:51,579

It's always good to go in with a good attitude, you know, and don't go in there sour. You go

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00:39:51,579 --> 00:40:00,490

in there sour and your going to get some sour treatment, you know. But I go to V.A. I don't use the V.A. for primary care, but I

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00:40:00,490 --> 00:40:11,009

do for my ears and my eyes and stuff and I go to Richmond and I also go to Dayton. The V.A. is a great thing for the military and everybody who has been in the military

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00:40:11,009 --> 00:40:27,980

should sign up for it, whether they use it or not. Of course most of my people I know, they've got General Motors insurance and they've got this and that. They don't use it. I have insurance too, but

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00:40:27,980 --> 00:40:38,589

I still use it and it's just great down there. Is there any life lessons or not life lessons, I'm sorry, any message you'd like

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00:40:38,589 --> 00:40:43,900

to leave for like future generations who may view this, because it's going in the Library of

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00:40:43,900 --> 00:40:50,940

Congress to be archived, is there any message you'd like leave for anybody? I don't follow you, leave a message

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00:40:50,940 --> 00:40:53,900

of what? Any kind of message for future generations you know younger people who

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00:40:53,900 --> 00:41:07,099

may see this, you know any kind of message about your service or about how you know how I feel about anything. No I think what you are

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00:41:07,099 --> 00:41:13,599

doing is great and all these other people trying to keep things together so that

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00:41:13,599 --> 00:41:16,769

people do remember what went on.

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00:41:16,769 --> 00:41:25,150

You know today, how many school kids know about the Korean War? It's been over

70 years, 60 and it wasn't a war any

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00:41:25,150 --> 00:41:29,960

how, just a scratch or something. So I read a lot and

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00:41:29,960 --> 00:41:41,450

all military. I've been all through the Civil War. Now I'm reading mostly World War II, Bataan Death March, Correggidor, 8th Arm...

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00:41:41,450 --> 00:41:53,770

8th Air Force over in Europe. Those guys, the guys that are in now ain't doing nothing. There's certain ones that have to do

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00:41:53,770 --> 00:42:03,830

things, you know. I don't know if you know or not, but only 12 out of 100 saw any combat in World War II. Vietnam

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00:42:03,830 --> 00:42:19,849

War, 18 out of 100. And it took 25,000 rounds to kill one man in Vietnam. So you know what

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00:42:19,849 --> 00:42:26,779

you're doing there [machine gun noise]. But here in our post,

305

00:42:26,779 --> 00:42:52,499

I don't know anybody that shot a gun. Actually shot a gun or killed a guy, I don't know anybody. I got two guys, one shot one 55 sitting out here in the yard and on guy was in logistics, you that's supply.

306

00:42:52,499 --> 00:43:04,919

They were in Korea, but they just did what they were told to do, they didn't... You can't go out and start shooting out here unless somebody tells you, you know...

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00:43:04,919 --> 00:43:17,999

But I think that it's good about... Hi buddy... any body who can record any history about World War II, well Civil War too,

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00:43:17,999 --> 00:43:25,479

but there's a million books out there, geeze, millions of them on World War II, World War I.

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00:43:25,479 --> 00:43:31,679

But how many kids go to the library and read stuff? Everything now is tap, tap, tap, tap.

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00:43:31,679 --> 00:43:49,279

Which is great, it's all coming to that. But I think it's nice that guys are still going in the service, even though they're all volunteers now.

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00:43:49,279 --> 00:44:02,519

I think it's a great idea to go in. I think it's nice that we have some people around that still want to do something for history, you know.

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00:44:02,519 --> 00:44:06,119

Because it's soon forgotten, that's for sure.

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00:44:06,130 --> 00:44:14,130

Just like Ohio State. Boy yesterday you get... everything. Today, what's Ohio State? Everybody forgot about it.

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00:44:14,130 --> 00:44:27,130

So they won a national championships, so it's over. But somebody might remember it, some guys that played 50 years form now, but you know. It's really really easy to forget things.

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00:44:27,130 --> 00:44:34,890

That's like the Korean War. It's been over so long. See they don't celebrate it anymore for 50 years. They have

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00:44:34,890 --> 00:44:47,210

things for.. You know the Korean War Memorial is in, for Ohio is in Dayton, you know. It's a state memorial, but after 50 years they don't have any programs or anymore, they're done.

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00:44:47,210 --> 00:44:51,540

Of course they had some stuff down there at...

318

00:44:51,540 --> 00:45:03,140

Korea gave some metals away here last year. We had a couple guys that was eligible for it. You had to be Army. You had to be boots on the ground to get it.

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00:45:03,140 --> 00:45:10,900

Of course, Navy they don't pay any attention to. Navy ain't nobody.

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00:45:10,900 --> 00:45:17,319

I've got a few other things here. Okay we'll check those out, but thanks for doing the interview Henry and thank you for your service.

321

00:45:17,319 --> 00:45:18,879

Okay, yeah, thank you.