

**Oral History Interview of
Dilford Carter**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall
April 28, 2016
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*General Southwest Collection Interviews***

© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

**Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library**

15th and Detroit | 806.742.3749 | <http://swco.ttu.edu>

Copyright and Usage Information:

An oral history release form was signed by Dildford Carter on April 28, 2016. This transfers all rights of this interview to the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

This oral history transcript is protected by U.S. copyright law. By viewing this document, the researcher agrees to abide by the fair use standards of U.S. Copyright Law (1976) and its amendments. This interview may be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes only. Any reproduction or transmission of this protected item beyond fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the Southwest Collection. Please contact Southwest Collection Reference staff for further information.

Preferred Citation for this Document:

Carter, Dildford Oral History Interview, April 28, 2016. Interview by David Marshall, Online Transcription, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. URL of PDF, date accessed.

The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library houses almost 6000 oral history interviews dating back to the late 1940s. The historians who conduct these interviews seek to uncover the personal narratives of individuals living on the South Plains and beyond. These interviews should be considered a primary source document that does not implicate the final verified narrative of any event. These are recollections dependent upon an individual's memory and experiences. The views expressed in these interviews are those only of the people speaking and do not reflect the views of the Southwest Collection or Texas Tech University.

Technical Processing Information:

The Audio/Visual Department of the Southwest Collection is the curator of this ever-growing oral history collection and is in the process of digitizing all interviews. While all of our interviews will have an abbreviated abstract available online, we are continually transcribing and adding information for each interview. Audio recordings of these interviews can be listened to in the Reading Room of the Southwest Collection. Please contact our Reference Staff for policies and procedures. Family members may request digitized copies directly from Reference Staff.

Consult the Southwest Collection website for more information.

<http://swco.ttu.edu/Reference/policies.php>

Recording Notes:

Original Format: Born Digital Audio

Digitization Details: N/A

Audio Metadata: 44.1k/ 16bit WAV file

Further Access Restrictions: N/A

Transcription Notes:

Interviewer: David Marshall

Audio Editor: N/A

Transcription: Cindy Stanukinos

Editor(s): Katelin Dixon

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Dilford Carter. Carter talks about growing up in the Corpus Christi area, attending the University of Arkansas, and being drafted. Carter primarily discusses his experiences in the Korean War as a marksman.

Length of Interview: 01:57:54

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Family background, genealogy	5	00:00:00
Boxing	8	00:08:38
High school	12	00:17:55
Industry in Corpus Christi, oil and gas	13	00:21:43
World War II during childhood	15	00:25:19
Early interests in biology	18	00:31:41
Favorite classes, early interest in writing	20	00:37:46
Finishing high school, running track	21	00:42:02
University of Arkansas	23	00:44:51
Getting drafted	27	00:53:01
Marksman in the Korean War	29	00:59:39
Challenges, limited warfare	31	01:03:37
Combat	33	01:08:10
Weaponry	39	01:21:13
Sniping technique, unconfirmed killings	43	01:29:09
Procedure in sniping, effectiveness	47	01:37:57
GI Bill	51	01:47:44
Fort Sam Houston	53	01:55:30

Keywords

University of Arkansas, Korean War, United States Military, sniping

David Marshall (DM):

The date is April 28, 2016. This is David Marshall interviewing Dilford Carter at the NSRL, Natural Science Research Lab at Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, and Dilford, let's just begin with your full name.

Dilford Carter (DC):

It's Dilford Campbell Carter. Campbell is from my paternal grandmother's maiden name.

DM:

Oh okay. And then when and where were you born?

DC:

Born in Abilene and the reason for that was, my father, who was a physician, was doing a semester's work in surgery at University of Chicago, and the family was, didn't want me born a Yankee, so my mother went to live with my father's sister and her husband, my Aunt Nama and Uncle Judge Overshiner, who lived in Abilene. So I was born in Abilene, and so when my father finished in Chicago, he came and picked us up and we went—back at that time we lived at Robstown, which is now, sort of, I mean, it's hard to tell when you leave Corpus and enter Robstown, kind of thing, but then it was fifteen miles or more from Corpus Christi. Corpus Christi, when I was—before they built a naval air station, well before they, I guess, before they developed oil exploration in that area and had a population of maybe 30-35,000.

DM:

Really?

DC:

So it wasn't that big. In fact, Robstown and Corpus Christi weren't that far apart in population so that every Thanksgiving there was a high school football game between Corpus Christi and Robstown.

DM:

[Laugh] Big rivals, huh?

DC:

Yeah, yeah, and so I think Robstown, I think their team was called Cotton Pickers or something like that.

DM:

Cotton Pickers [laugh]?

DC:

[Laugh] I wouldn't swear to that. Anyways—

DM:

But you never had to live in Chicago?

DC:

No, never, never.

DM:

Okay, came straight down to Robstown. Okay, by the way earlier, off, before we started the recording, you said something about you used to not call it—when you were young you didn't call it the Civil War, what did you call it?

DC:

Well, it depended on the age of the person talking about it. Some elderly women called it “that recent unpleasantness,” but generally it was the War of Northern Aggression or the War of Secession. And there are different names for the battles, in the south: Antietam is referred to Sharpsburg and in the north it's Antietam. Well the Union won, so the Union names pretty much stuck.

DM:

Right. And the Union called it War of the Rebellion for a while, you know, they're records are the War of the Rebellion Records, so that's interesting, the different names that were used. But anyway, can you tell me a little bit about your family background, where they came from, were they from Texas originally?

DC:

Well, my mother's family came to Texas in about 1830.

DM:

Okay, that's pretty early.

DC:

And they're—the—my mother's maiden name was Pennington. The Penningtons had kind of moved along with the flow, you know, west. My great-great-grandfather Richard Pennington, well Pennington's came to America before 18—before 1640, I know that, but therein my father's family came to America somewhere between 1615 and 1625, so 1625 being the latest date. They had kind of moved with the populations that moved into, you know, new lands, moved west and so. But my great-great-grandfather Richard Pennington had married Hannah Stewart Boone,

Daniel Boone's sister. And so—although he didn't go with Boone across the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky, they did follow eventually. So anyway—

DM:

So you've got a bit of frontiersman in you there, huh [laugh]?

DC:

Yeah [laugh], got some of those restless, you know [laugh] still, you know, the saying was that Daniel Boone was that if he saw three people together, it was a crowd.

DM:

[Laugh] Time to move [laugh].

DC:

Time to move, so I'm kind of like that, you know [laugh].

DM:

Oh okay. So tell me about growing up in Corpus Christi, or Robstown, whatever—were you out a Robstown then?

DC:

Well, we moved, I don't even remember living in Robstown because we moved to Corpus Christi in '31 I guess. I was born in 1930. So I think in '31 we moved to Corpus Christi and Corpus Christi was a little bigger than Robstown, and it had a hospital and so my father wanted to live someplace where there was a hospital.

DM:

Well, let's see, there wasn't a very big population, you said thirty something thousand, I believe.

DC:

Yeah, I think the first time I remember somebody saying the population or giving a figure for the population, it was 35,000, but I can't remember whether I was five years old or six years old at the time.

DM:

You were born right at the beginning of the Depression, then, born in 1930.

DC:

Yeah, it was at the beginning, and so I started to school at Ferment [?] Elementary School, and there were so many students there because in 1935 or '36, something like that, they'd made some

big oil discoveries there and so they were, there was a lot of exploration, a lot of drilling, at the time, and so a lot of people moved into the area because there was work there, and the school had two sessions, the morning session and the afternoon session, and you went to one or the other. And there weren't enough classrooms, so some of the classes met in the hallway and then, but there wasn't enough room left in the hallway and our class met under a hackberry tree in the school yard, and my folks decided that that wasn't going to work, [laugh] so we moved to Menger Elementary School area, and so I started out in the middle of a fall semester there at that Menger. And so in those days, you know, there was a pecking order that we developed, and so I had to find my way [laugh].

DM:

A newcomer in to the school?

DC:

Into the pecking order, and so it generally meant that this was determined mostly by bluffing and fist fighting and stuff like that [laugh]. And so anyway, so anyways, you know, so that's how I got to Menger Elementary.

DM:

Oh, tell me about the, in one of your short stories you talk about learning to box.

DC:

Oh, well, yeah, my mother thought I should take piano lessons, my father—and I had an older half-brother, my father's first wife had died in about 1926 I think she died, and then my father married my mother in '28 or something like that. But my brother James was, my half-brother, and he was eighteen years older than I was, and so he and my father, neither one had any musical talent at all. So they were kind of skeptical about music lessons, anyway, the piano teacher after several sessions told my mother—gave her the money back [laugh]! And said to take money to teach me, it was petty larceny, and he couldn't accept it because I had absolutely no talent, no, at all, for music. And so this—some itinerant boxer had kind of run out of his luck and money in Corpus Christi, and I think my father had patched him up after some disastrous match there. Boxing was more popular then than it is now, you know, and so on Saturday night there were boxing matches in Corpus Christi, and there were travelling boxers that travelled around, and you know, these weren't major league boxing matches but boxing was a lot more popular. And so this, and so he didn't have any money, and so I think the deal was that he would give me boxing lessons to pay off the deal and during the Depression, a lot of times, my father saw a lot of people that couldn't pay and some of them would pay in other kinds of things. I remember somebody paid my father in two and half dollar gold pieces. Of course gold was, it was illegal to own it then, you couldn't spend it on anything but he had, apparently he had, and these were two and half dollar gold pieces. And so, anyway, he paid my father, and then my father had those

forever and I don't know what happened to them. I think my younger brother Ren [?] probably got them when my mother died.

DM:

I wonder how old they were, two and a half dollar gold pieces?

DC:

Oh well, they quit minting gold pieces in, what, '32 I think? '32 or '33, oh yeah, they were—I've got several but they were minted from—there was that Indian—two and half dollar gold piece with the Indian head on one side, and it's impressed into the—I've forgotten what you call that—recessed into the piece, and I think they struck those up until '33.

DM:

Okay.

DC:

When Roosevelt closed the banks and they confiscated all the gold, my father said that there was this three-day bank holiday and that the feds went into the banks, opened up all of the safe deposit boxes and removed all the gold. And you had so many days to turn in your gold, you know, and they had gold certificates, and to turn in the gold certificates as well. That's how they caught the guy that caught the guy that kidnapped the Lindbergh baby, remember?

DM:

I don't remember that story.

DC:

Well, the ransom was paid in gold certificate.

DM:

Golly.

DC:

But this—

DM:

The guy thought he'd never get, no one would ever get in to his safe deposit box I guess, so.

DC:

Well, no, it wasn't in the safe deposit box. See, what they did was, they paid him, this was after gold was illegal and gold certificates were illegal. They paid him these gold certificates so he

needed—he was almost out of gas, and he used a ten dollar gold certificate to buy gas. He hadn't been spending the money. And so that showed up, the guy at the service station turned it in and that's how they caught him.

DM:

Wow, I need to reread that story; it's been a long time. Golly!

DC:

Well anyway, that—I forgot how we got off on that.

DM:

Yeah well, you were talking about your dad receiving money in various forms.

DC:

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah well one time he got a couple of big tow sacks of turnips. We had turnips stored all over the house [laugh]. And we, I still like turnips, and somebody later told me you could tell how the economy was doing, how people felt about it by how many—how much turnip seeds were sold in the fall for next summer.

DM:

[laugh] Really? Golly!

DC:

Yeah, he said, "You can always tell how people feel about the economy based on how many turnip seeds you sell" [laugh]. Anyway, we ate turnips there for a couple or three weeks in every way imagined.

DM:

Well did you become a good boxer?

DC:

Well, you know what, in fact, when I first went to high school, folks wouldn't let me box in the Golden Gloves tournaments there. But we had a boxing club in high school my first year there. And in those days there were twelve grades in school but you only had high school for three of them: 10, 11, and 12. So in the tenth grade, I—and that was the last year we had the boxing club there—and so we had a pretty good boxing club, it was a club sport, it wasn't a regular public high school or, what is it, University Interscholastic League or whatever they call it, UIL!

DM:

UIL.

DC:

It wasn't a UIL sport, but it was a club sport, and other high schools had them as well. But the last match, I remember we kind of had a—I wouldn't say it was a regular school district, public school district like UIL, but anyway, I didn't make the, I didn't make the whatever you call it, team because of this fight I had with this guy, red-headed, but he was Hispanic, but he had red hair and he was a head-butter, you know? He always get you where the referee was on that side and then he'd head-butt you, get you in a clinch, head-butt you [onomatopoeia for head hitting table] man, and I told the referee and he said, "Oh, I didn't see it." And I said, "Well he always gets me between, you know, you and him, and he keeps butting me in the head." My chin was bleeding, and so, but finally I knocked him out of the ring, he went through ropes out in the chairs there, ringside, and so the referee waved me to a neutral corner, and I started to the neutral corner, and something in my head, you know, took control, [inaudible] cortex or something. As I turned around as he was climbing back through the ropes, I went over there and I hit him in the top of the head as hard as I could. Knocked him back in to the chairs, so I lost that round. So, anyway, I lost the round, I lost that match, so I didn't make it on to the final—

DM:

But you got the last shot in [laugh].

DC:

Yeah, now that was worth it [laugh].

DM:

What high school was it? Was there one high school in Corpus?

DC:

Well, there was the separate but equal high school.

DM:

Yeah, yeah.

DC:

Solomon M. Cole, and then there was Corpus Christi High School

DM:

And the Corpus Christi High was where you were?

DC:
Yeah.

DM:
Yeah, okay.

DC:
Yeah, the students from—well there was no Title IX, the actually didn't have women's athletics like they do now, it was just boys, you know? So the students from Solomon M. Cole would come over and use our track, for example, and they played on our, on our football field which was the stadium, it was the one stadium there for Corpus Christi, and so they played their games on Thursday night, we played Friday night, and we'd always go to their games and they'd always come to ours. So it, there was a, a certain camaraderie because we worked out together a lot at sports, particularly in track.

DM:
Okay, did the oil production down there change the demographics much?

DC:
Oh yeah, yeah.

DM:
Okay, how did it?

DC:
Well, a lot of Yankees moving in, a lot of people from other parts of the country moved in there, particularly from the north.

DM:
Pretty much a post-World War II thing any—oh no, this was before the war!

DC:
Yeah, this was before the war. So, there were people that came from all over, you know, Michigan, Midwest, Illinois, Chicago. I dated a girl for a while from Chicago. She—I don't know what her father did—she a Jewish girl and [laugh] her name was Barbara Berman, and she later was on Broadway and she made a number of movies, was in several movies anyway, her stage name was Barrie, Barbara Barrie.

DM:
How do you spell Berman?

DC:

I think it was B-e-r-h maybe in there, something like B-e-r-h-m-a-n (sic Berman), something like that.

DM:

M-a-n, sounds like a German-Jewish name, yeah.

DC:

Yeah, they were from Chicago and, but her mother never let me in the house. They lived in an apartment, and so they lived back in the corner of this, they had a courtyard in the middle and it was kind of a squared-off U shape, and they lived in the corner apartment, and so I'd go pick her up there, and so her mother would come to the door, opened the door, see me, and she'd just shut the door. And I'd be standing there, like—and I'd hear her say, "Barbara, your goy is here."

DM:

Goy! [laugh]

DC:

[Laugh] And then I'd, she give her this talk before she opened the door and let her out, you know, about "I don't know why you can't date a nice Jewish boy." And so she'd, "Mother!" and she's, "I don't know why you can't date a nice Jewish boy! Why don't you date Irvin Braslaw [?], he's a nice Jewish boy, he's going to be a dentist," you know, and she says, "Well he has crooked teeth," "So? You can fix the kids' teeth," you know, something like that [laugh].

DM:

[Laugh] Well, to your credit, you didn't just leave.

DC:

No, no, no I was kind of sweet on her at the time. Well, you know—then after—oh this was when she first moved down here, she didn't know anybody so it was easy for me to get a date with her, but later on, you know [laugh].

DM:

[Laugh] Oh, besides oil production in Corpus Christi, was there any other big economic activity, was there any shipbuilding or a lot of shipping?

DC:

Well no shipbuilding but they built a—there was some refining there, of course, and then they, there was a zinc smelter there and carbon black plant, and let me see, what else? And I don't think there was—it's, I don't recall. There were built up on upper part of Nueces Bay—

DM:

What about offshore drilling, was there any offshore drilling?

DC:

No, not then. It was all, you know, vertical wells. And the wells were not that deep. Interestingly, some of the—some of those fields discovered there are still in production.

DM:

Mm-hmm, wow.

DC:

So, there, of course, you know, in those days, the oil, the price of oil was fixed. There were the hot oil police that went around and made sure that you were not undercutting the fixed price of oil. That was after the, the—Roosevelt's NRA, not the National Rifle Association but the National Recovery Act.

DM:

Right, right, Recovery Act, yeah.

DC:

Fixed the price of oil along with a lot of other commodities. And you couldn't violate that without running the risk of going to jail [laugh]. So there was no supply and demand setting the price. You know that price stuck until the 1970s.

DM:

Really?

DC:

Well, then it was, I've forgotten whether it was \$3.35 a barrel or \$3.45, it was one of those, \$3.35 or \$3.45 a barrel and after the, you know, we got in to that Arab Oil Embargo, there was a lot of counter—"Well, we can't drill anymore wells if, you know, if we can't sell oil for more than \$3.45 a barrel. And so they set a price for new oil at \$7.50 a barrel and then in eighties, all of that finally went away. But there were production allowances, you'd drill a well, and after I got out of the army I worked for shell oil company on there for a while.

DM:

Oh, you did. Okay.

DC:

You drill a well and then they'd go out and test a well to see what it would produce, and wells were classified as oil or gas wells. And if they produced a certain percentage more of gas than oil, then it was a gas well and different regulations applied.

DM:

Okay.

DC:

And so nobody wanted a gas well, everybody wanted an oil well because it—anyway, that was the way it was until after, until finally in the eighties then they finally did away with it. You know, Congress does stuff like that, and it takes forever and ever and ever for it to go away. Can you imagine, I mean, most people don't know that prices on a lot of stuff were fixed [laugh].

DM:

When you were eleven or twelve years old, the war broke out, World War II.

DC:

Yeah, when I was eleven.

DM:

Yeah. How did that change the economy of Corpus Christi, did it go to wartime, more of a wartime mode, or was it still all about oil and gas?

DC:

Well, you know, our economy there had been improving some with the discovery of oil and then with refineries there and then that zinc smelter and some other industry in the area. None, I mean except for Sangus [?] was mostly chemical kinds of industry. But the economy had been in improving some in that story about Everett Jones, and this was, I was nine years old, and so the economy had begun to improve some, and by the time I was 10, in 1940, our economy in Corpus Christi was not bad, it got a lot better. But as a kid you don't understand anything. [coughing] Excuse me. Except when I was ten years old, a lot of the kids could, their parents could afford bicycles, I'll have to send you that story about the bicycle.

DM:

I remember something about a bicycle, I don't remember which story it was.

DC:

Well, there was one before ten, it was a story about a bicycle, wanting a bicycle, I didn't get a bicycle, I never had a bicycle [laugh].

DM:

Maybe it's not, maybe it's something else I read, I can't—okay.

DC:

Any way I got—instead of bicycle, I got a 14 shotgun.

DM:

Okay! Well that's pretty good!

DC:

So, that made it even better.

DM:

I hadn't read that one, but I'll mention here while the recorders running that I have several of your short stories here and they're very well written, and so I'm going to keep these in the archives, so someone who's listening to this will know to go and find the short stories under your name, so that'd be good. But I'm surprised that Corpus wasn't just redone by the war.

DC:

Well, yeah, it grew from, you know, 35,000 when they built the naval air station there to 75—80,000 within a period of ten years, you know. So there was a lot of really rapid growth.

DM:

Was there any kind of manufacturing armaments or planes?

DC:

Uh, no there was a—I remember we shipped a lot of scrap metal out of Corpus Christi, and I'd see these ships with the Japanese flag before we got in the war digging up scrap metal there. So every week or so there'd be a Japanese in port.

DM:

Wow, okay, that would be an interesting thing for a kid to be able to watch these big ships come in from all over the world in Corpus.

DC:

Well, yeah, I'd go with my brother, my older brother, we'd go down and go fishing there in the ship channel or on the, there was some rock jetties there to—that they put in there after the 1919 hurricane, and it was, you could walk along some of these jetties and so we'd go there, he'd take me there and we'd go fishing. When we were fishing around the ship channel I was always interested because there were always ships from various countries coming into port there.

DM:

Well even though this was a naval air station that was based there, did they have a harbor or an area for naval vessels?

DC:

No, it was strictly air, strictly pilot training.

DM:

Yeah.

DC:

There—then—we had some foreign students there as well. There were quite a number of people from the UK [**United Kingdom**] came there for pilot training. And they had basic and then advanced pilot training there. They had a dive bombing range over one of those islands, Matagorda or something.

DM:

[Laugh] I bet you can find some scrap metal over there, though.

DC:

Probably so, I mean it was restricted forever, you couldn't go to Matagorda [laugh]. Might not be able to go there now either.

DM:

[Laugh] Did you ever see the facilities there at that naval air station? I always wondered, did they have a mock carrier top or something out there to fly off of?

DC:

Yeah, they had a runway marked off like that, yeah. They'd do carrier landings there [laugh].

DM:

[Laugh] I've always wondered if they had those and if they kind of tilted or, you know, because the ship would do that.

DC:

Well, no, I don't think so, not there, that came later I guess. I can't imagine landing on a carrier, but I knew a guy that was an ecologist named J—Ingless [?], was his last name, Jack Ingless. He graduated from pilot training in Mobile, Alabama, and there's a bridge across we call the Mobile Bridge there and somebody told him when he graduated he had to fly under the Mobile Bridge because it was a tradition, you know, when you get your wings you fly under the Mobile Bridge. And so he was naïve enough to believe that, and he'd never seen what it looked like under the

Mobile Bridge but, so he's going to fly under the Mobile Bridge and he drops down there, just above water, and he sees these cables crossing underneath the bridge [laugh].

DM:

Shoot! [laugh]

DC:

And somehow he's got to navigate between these cables.

DM:

Did he make it?

DC:

Yeah, he made it, he made it. But he got caught [laugh].

DM:

When you were a kid there, did you have any specific interests that would indicate that you would later be a biologist?

DC:

Well, I was always interested in, kind of in animals. And—

DM:

Did you do any collecting as a child?

DC:

Well, not like scientific specimens, no, but I always knew where to find a Natrix water snake or a mud turtle or something. In the second grade, I put the snake in this teacher's desk and she had somehow offended me, I've forgotten what the, what the offense that triggered the snake, but she'd—before that she'd told my parents, my mother anyway, that I would never, never get out of grade school that I'd reach the age of sixteen before, you know, the sixth grade. And if that happened, and it happened with some students—see there was no special ed in those days, you know. So if kid—and you had to pass, you know, if you didn't pass you had to repeat the class. And Woody Woodard was one like that, he reached sixteen and so he had to quit, because— [laugh]. So anyway she was a redheaded teacher, and it always affected me with redheaded girls after that, had auburn hair. And so she told my mother that I'd never get out of, you know, and reach the age of sixteen and I'd have to quit school. And I found that very offensive, and anyway she had done something and so at recess in the afternoon—we had morning recess, then lunch, then in the afternoon we had afternoon recess for thirty minutes or something—so, and we were in these temporary buildings and they were kind of, they were framed wooden buildings and

right next to this street that separated the school ground from cultivated fields, and there was this irrigation drainage ditch just on the other side of the street, so we weren't supposed to cross the street, of course, but all of [inaudible] ran across the street down in to the irrigation ditch, and I found this *Natrix erythrogaster*, and it had just molted, and I mean it was beautiful, and so, of course I was just a little kid in the second grade, it seemed like an awfully big snake, but it was big to me—probably wasn't that big. So I came back across the street, sneaked into the classroom, and this teacher—I can't think of her name, I meant to ask my mother before she died for her name and then I forgot. She'd always take her stuff off the desk and put it in the center drawer, and these desks, then, were real wooden desks and she put it in there and close the door. And so, I slipped in there and I pulled that drawer open and I stuffed that snake in there and there wasn't any way for that snake to get out until she opened the drawer, and so and then sneak back out of the classroom. Nobody saw me, I didn't tell anybody, so when we all came back in we had to stand by our desks and she came in and so then she told us be seated. So we sat down and she opens that drawer and that snake comes out, hits her right here in the chest, and right up over her head and she's screaming bloody murder, and all the little girls are screaming and climbing on top of their desks, and the little boys are laughing. And so once she recovers her composure, she gets up, doesn't say a word, gets up, walks over to the door, walks out, closes the door, locks it. Locks us in there. She goes down there and gets Mr. Agee [?] and I think I told you that story about Everett Jones, and Agee followed me from grade school to junior high through high school. And he was always the assistant principal, always in charge of discipline, you know, and so anyway she, and he comes down there. So he starts quizzing all of us, and nobody saw me so nobody could rat me out, not even Norman Jennings, you know, who was always the teacher's pet. And so finally it came time for us to go home, and so he let the little girls leave but the little boys had stay and there was a wall, about, well to a little kid in the second grade it was chest high, but behind that was a space with some coat racks on it where you could hang your coat, you know, on the chance that it got cold and you wore a coat to school. So there were these coat hooks that and Agee was so, so frustrated with all of this, he couldn't any information out of any of us, he would hang us on these coat hooks, so he'd hang us up there like this and then we'd be face to face with him, he wasn't a very tall guy you know [laugh], trying to break us, you know. Finally 4:30 or 5:00 parents started calling wanting to know where their little boys were [laugh and taps on table]. So anyway, he finally let us go but he never, and of course I didn't tell anybody I did that until I was thirty years old.

DM:

[Laugh] That was a nice, comfortable distance [laugh]! Pretty good story, oh man. Well, you weren't afraid of snakes then and critters, so that was good for your later work. How about your classes? Did you have any particular interests, any subject interests that stood out beyond the others?

DC:

Well I liked biology, that was, you know, there—we, I think there was more history and—I mean we started Spanish in grade school and a lot of the older people living there spoke only Spanish. They were old enough that when they were of school age, it wasn't required that anybody go to school so there—and they never learned English.

DM:

Yeah, okay, did you pick some up from them by the way, as a child?

DC:

Well, my, we had a maid that worked for us, Sylvia. And so my father forbade her to speak English to me, and that worked as long as my father was around, but if my father wasn't there she'd break into English with me. But I picked up some and then, we started, in the third or fourth grade with Spanish lessons. And then history, I always liked history, and geography, English, you know, I didn't do that well in English, like I told you I didn't. I barely made a C in that creative writing course I took at SMU [**Southern Methodist University**].

DM:

So is this just a natural knack, this writing ability? I mean it's really good writing. It's very creative.

DC:

Well, I, you know, I must have had some interest in it because I did take this creative writing course at SMU, and and it was writing and we were reading. I remember reading the, what was that story? "Green Mansions," which I'd always thought was kind of weird. But we read some weird stuff in there and then wrote a bunch of stuff, but I didn't do well in it.

DM:

Well, maybe it's just a natural knack, maybe it has something to do with your personality and how you think through because it's very colorful.

DC:

They're a—well I, of course, I've published, you know, a number of papers in mammology then I was editor of the feature articles of the *American Journal of Mammology* for a while.

DM:

But now this writ isn't written like the typical scientific paper, you know? It might have been like your papers [laugh]. I haven't read your scientific papers, but there's a lot of humor mixed in and a lot of vivid, you know, real life kind of information, so yeah, it's not sterile. Anyway, it's good reading, so I just wondered where you picked that up, I guess here and there.

DC:

I guess. There were some authors that liked better than others, and I probably, you know, may have tried copying some of them in the beginning. Always liked reading Hemingway.

DM:

Yeah, right. Yeah that might have been some influence right there. When did you graduate from high school?

DC:

In 1948.

DM:

'48, okay. And then what did you do right out of high school?

DC:

Well right out of high school—well, I went to college.

DM:

Oh you did?

DC:

Yeah

DM:

Where did you go?

DC:

University of Arkansas. I was on the track team there.

DM:

What did you run?

DC:

Ran the, well, 440. Quarter mile and then mile relay and then I did run the 220 low hurdles, so, and—

DM:

Those are two fairly grueling distances because it's almost a sprint, it's a long—440's a pretty good distance for almost—

DC:

Oh yeah, it's yeah, it's murder. Well, you know I wasn't quite fast enough for the 100 yards or really 220, but I could do the 220 hurdles almost as fast as I could do straight 220. So I was just, you know, I could do, I think I could do, you know, in the 100 yards, I could do 10.3. But that wasn't fast enough, even in high school, you know, because there are guys who can run a 9.9 and they're—so I guess that's how I got in it.

DM:

Did you go on scholarship or walk-on?

DC:

Well part, but it was room and board. Well, you know it wasn't that much money then in sports. There wasn't that much money in football, you know, and football is always the money maker in college sports.

DM:

Well how long were you at University of Arkansas?

DC:

Well, I was there only one year actually, I—Arkansas, I liked it in a lot of ways, and they were, you know, there weren't a lot of people interested in it, but we'd had a scout from University of Arkansas visit Corpus Christi. And so—and I could have played football, but I didn't want to play football but the girls wouldn't go out with you if you were a jock.

DM:

The girls what?

DC:

Girls wouldn't go out with you if you were a jock.

DM:

If you were a jock [laugh]?

DC:

Yeah man, if you were a jock you were, it was, well that was because of the football team, you know? And so then I decided I didn't want to live in Razorback Hall, which was the athletic dorm, so I took my meals there but if you live in the dorm, if you were a—there was a lot of freshmen hazing by the football players. And I remember I was enlisted—the first snow storm, the SAE [**Sigma Alpha Epsilon**] House was right across the street from Razorback Hall, and the tradition was when the first snow, the freshmen all made snowballs for the upperclassmen and they snowballed the SAE guys into the house, wouldn't let them out of the house. I was thinking,

you know, I didn't know anything about the snow [chair creaking] because it didn't snow in Corpus Christi. So I was thinking, Snowball? How would that keep them in the house? So it was a football player at fullback—or half back?—fullback named Muscles Campbell in Arkansas along with Clyde Scott, who was a seven-year collegiate ballplayer. He had been recruited by Navy during the war because Navy had Doc Blanchard and something Davis playing there. And so their only chance to beat Army was to have some super athlete like Clyde Scott who is—equal the world's record in the 100 meters and the 100 meter dash, had held the record of the 120 yard high hurdles, something like that, he was super athlete [laugh]. And anyway that, but I was making snow, I was assigned to make snowballs for Muscles Campbell, and so I'd hand him several snowballs, these guys would try to come out of the SAE house, and man, they'd be peppered with these snowballs. And so, Muscles said, "Tex, what the hell is this?" And I said, "Snowball" and he crushes it in his hand, he said, "Where's the rock?" [laugh].

DM:

[Laugh] No wonder they wouldn't come out. Now what is SAE?

DC:

Sigma Alpha Epsilon

DM:

Epsilon, okay, yeah, okay [laugh].

DC:

[Laugh] There—well my mother, there was another kid from Corpus Christi going to Arkansas, and so he was a year or two ahead of me and his mother and my mother knew each other and so I'm sure that it was because of that that his mother had pressured him into inviting me over to the Sigma Chi House at, you know, at open rush. And so, I didn't know anything about fraternities, so anyway, he invites me over for dinner and so—but he doesn't come pick me up, you know, but it doesn't dawn on me that, yet, because I was really naïve. And so I go over to the Sigma Chi House, and so and I go in there and I'm talking to these guys, and so they say, "Well, you know, what are you doing here?" and all that stuff and anyway they find out that, you know, I'm a jock and man, I mean, the dinner bell rings and they all just leave me.

DM:

Whoa!

DC:

And go into dinner, you know, so I thought, Boy screw this. So I leave, go back to Razorback Hall, and so but, it—anyway it was hard to get a date if you were a jock because, I mean, there was this one guy, can't remember his name, he was the freshmen quarterback there, wound up a

pretty good football player, and was All Southwest Conference there one or two years. He [laugh] he and I both had 8 o'clock classes, I'd run in to him and he'd say, "Hey, Texas, walk me over to—" wherever it was so I always hated that because we'd pass some chicks and he'd say, "Man I'd like to fuck her," [laugh] and he'd ask them if they were a pretty good fuck, you know, stuff like that, and that's why you couldn't get a date.

DM:

Oh golly!

DC:

It was these guys screwing everything up, and so after that I knew some guys that had gone to SMU, and so I talked to the track coach down there, and so I transferred and went to SMU after that, but I was ineligible for one year and then I got drafted.

DM:

Right, so much for that.

DC:

So much for that.

DM:

Yeah, well when did you get drafted?

DC:

In 1950.

DM:

Had you declared a major or anything at that point?

DC:

Yeah, biology.

DM:

You were in biology, right away?

DC:

Yeah.

DM:

Right off, okay.

DC:

When I first started. And you know when I went to the University Arkansas I had no idea that—there was some guy in the athletic department that figured out your schedules, you know, and assigned teachers that were easy on jocks, and so I wound up in this English class with a guy named Poindexter [?] and he liked boys, and this quarterback said, “Hey Texan, come here, you need to sit on the front row here, right in front of Poindexter’s desk,” and he knew Poindexter, I didn’t know who that was, but I said, “Why?” he said, “Oh, we’ll make a good grade that way.” Well, it came time for the final and Poindexter invited the two of us to come to his office and he’d help us study for the exam, and so I told the this guy, “You better show up there, don’t leave me there alone.” “Oh no!” he said, “I’ll be there, I’ll be there,” and of course he didn’t show up, and it was Saturday and we had that exam on Monday I think, and so he didn’t show up, and so Poindexter and I kind of played ring around the desk there while he was filling out this exam. He filled one out, and he said he was going to, he gave me an exam, he said “It’ll be—” you know if you can, if you can answer all these questions, do all the essays, then you’ll be all right on the exam. And so we went through the exam, and I answered all the questions and stuff, and while he was doing that he was filling out another exam for me to give this guy and so I gave it to him. So we went in for the exam, and so this quarterback was there for about fifteen minutes, got up, turned his exam in and left. And so I thought, God, man he filled that out fast. Well it was the exam that he gave us!

DM:

Oh.

DC:

You know, that was the exam. And when I saw it I thought, Man this is just like the one I—you know, but I didn’t bring that one with me. And so, he said, “Tex, is everybody in Texas as dumb as you are? What did you think he was doing that for? That was the exam!” So, but, you didn’t always get the best teachers, you got the ones that were sympathetic to jocks or liked boys or something like that [laugh].

DM:

Yeah, right, right, yeah, golly. That’s a lot to go through, so that was at the University of Arkansas, though?

DC:

That was at the University of Arkansas.

DM:

So I guess SMU was a breath of fresh air after that?

DC:

SMU was different. Well there, when I went there, there were only 3,500 students at SMU, it was real small. Well, at Arkansas was 7,500, but I had visited UT, and at that time they had 18—19,000 students, and I thought, That's too many for me.

DM:

Right. But you ran track at SMU also?

DC:

Yeah, but like I said I was ineligible.

DM:

Out, you were out, yeah. Did they still have you workout and all of that?

DC:

Oh yeah, yeah.

DM:

That's not good [laugh]!

DC:

We had regular schedule.

DM:

Yeah, okay, and when did you say you were drafted?

DC:

In 1950. The Korean War started on June 25, 1950, and I had just started the fall semester when I got my draft notice. And there was no deferment then, your number was called and you went, which I think really was a better system than—after that, you know, they went to, like for Vietnam, there were deferments for everything, you know if you had too many, if you had kids, married, and all that, you didn't go—if you were in college you'd get a deferment.

DM:

Yeah, there were a lot of grad students during the Vietnam War, a lot of PhD's came out of that 1970, '72.

DC:

But in 1950 that wasn't the case. They did let me finish the semester.

DM:

Right, oh did they?

DC:

Yeah

DM:

Okay, so you went out in what, January or so?

DC:

Yeah, as soon as the semester was over, then we had Christmas break, and then we went back for three weeks to finish up the semester and take final exams and stuff like that. As soon as I, that was like the nineteenth, twentieth of January, I went home, and first of February I reported.

DM:

So you were about twenty-one by this time?

DC:

I was twenty, I turned twenty-one in basic training, but I was twenty when I went in.

DM:

You went in to army infantry?

DC:

Yeah, well, it took a while to get to the infantry, but we went to San Antonio, Fort Sam Houston, and they gave us a bunch of tests and stuff. We spent about three days and they tested us for all kinds of stuff, IQ tests and stuff, so I scored fairly high on the IQ test, and so they said, "Nah, you don't belong in the infantry, you belong in the REMF, so I didn't want to be a REMF."

DM:

A remp?

DC:

A REMF, R-E-M-F.

DM:

What's that?

DC:

Rear-echelon motherfucker. [Laugh] You know, I had picked up all of this stuff from my brother who was in World War II.

DM:

Oh yeah [laugh].

DC:

He was in the infantry, he was in Fox Company in the 141st Infantry, graduated in the 36 Division. He and a bunch of his friends from Robstown had joined the National Guard before the war even started because they thought, Well if we have a war, we all want to go together. So all his friends joined the Texas National Guard, and then they got called up in 1940, so anyway, went to San Antonio, they gave us all these tests, and so they sent me off first to Fort Lee, Virginia. And so we took the regular infantry basic like everybody did, but then in your advance basic, they sent me over to learn how to be a clerk or something. So I put in a transfer to the airborne, and so I was told, "Well, you have to finish advanced basic before you can transfer," so then we finished that, and we had this questionnaire, Where do you want to go? And so I asked the sergeant, I said, "Is this for real?" And he said, "Well yeah, kind of, where do you want to go?" And I said, "Well I want to go Korea" and he said, "Well make that your third choice" [laugh]. He said, "Nobody gets their first choice, but everybody gets their third choice."

DM:

Golly, how strange! What were the choices?

DC:

Well, you get to write them down, so I wrote down U.S., Europe, and Korea. And I got Korea.

DM:

Well, did very many people get Europe during the Korean War?

DC:

Oh yeah, yeah.

DM:

Did they? Wow.

DC:

There—most of the guys I took basic with wound up going somewhere else, they didn't go to Korea. There was a guy named Cantu [?] that I had gone to high school with until he dropped out in the tenth grade—well he had got expelled in tenth grade, and so he never came back—but

Cantu and I wound up on the ship to Japan together, but I think, I don't think any, I didn't know anybody else in my basic company that went to Korea with me, they all went somewhere else. It was like in the—this questionnaire, you know, What branch do you want to be in, so asked this sergeant about that, and he said again, "Well what do you want to be in?" I said, "Oh, I want to be in the infantry" and he said, "Why?" "You know, I had a brothers in the infantry, I mean couldn't go home after this, you know, if I [laugh] had been in a shower unit somewhere." Anyway, said, "Well make that you're third choice." So I put down artillery and armor and infantry and I got infantry.

DM:

[Laugh] Well it worked that way.

DC:

Yeah, well, when I got to Japan, we went through the Tokyo Repo Depot where we got our assignments, and that's, I wanted to be in the infantry, and so I got assigned to the rifle company in the 34th infantry regiment, which had been decimated in Korea and had been returned to Japan to resupply and to build it up and get replacements and stuff like that, and then we spent some time training there together before we went back, before the regiment went back to Korea. So I was one of the last men in the company, and so the position was open for designated marksman and so I thought, Man, that's a job for me.

DM:

Why did you think that? Were you a good shot?

DC:

Well, I was reasonably good shot, probably not the best shot, but a lot of that depended on your ability to, you're really hunting a man, you know. Because when we were fighting back and forth and, you know, moving back and forth and tagging and retreating and stuff like that, a lot of it was you'd be attached to a platoon for some action and then send some platoon sergeant to come down, find you and say "Carter, lieutenant says get your ass out of here and kill that son of bitch before he hurts somebody." And that kind of thing—

DM:

Someone's taking pot shots—right, right.

DC:

—taking a machine gun and holding you down and keeping you pinned down or something so then you'd have to stalk the machine gun position, and it might be 4—500 yards away and you'd have to get within range which was usually, you know, you'd shoot anywhere from 200-400

yards—400 if you could get a good shot, you know, but you'd have to work around until you, you know, stuff like that.

DM:

Right, well, the most hair raising thing, I thought, of the story you wrote was the sniper against sniper thing. You never know if you are in the sights of a sniper, here you are a sniper, but you never know if you're in their sights.

DC:

Well, yeah, and during the winter when our lines were stabilized, we were on Heartbreak Ridge, and the enemy was on Heartbreak Ridge and we were about anywhere from 800 to 1,000 yards apart, our mainlines, and there it was real sniping. You were, you would look for guys, and my spotter was the artillery FO, forward observer, a lieutenant, and so they're—I, you know, we didn't have rules of engagement like they do now because nearly everybody we saw was a combatant, you know, so you see them, you'd kill them. But in order to call in artillery, you had to have a certain number people in a—together, in a group.

DM:

Right, right, right, we're not going to waste a shell on that guy.

DC:

Yeah, we're not going to—well, one of the things was Truman had limited artillery ammunition, they had limited the number casualty you can have in a day. Crazy stuff like that.

DM:

Limited warfare, yeah.

DC:

You know you get Washington, you know, micromanaging war, and it's not going to come out good. So that was one of the problems when we took Heartbreak Ridge.

DM:

Well, you know what, that's a good point, you were right there at the beginning of this limited warfare concept, what are—that's kind of not a great place to be. You know, you were asked to fight a war and you're held back.

DC:

Well, originally Ridgway was in charge there of the—in Korea. He replaced Walker, you know, and when Walker was killed in an auto accident, he was Patton's exec in Europe when Patton was killed in an auto accident. And they—spooky.

DM:

Sounds like they angered somebody in Washington [laugh]! Conspiracy theory.

DC:

I don't know. [Laugh] And Ridgway wanted, he wanted to continue on the offensive and so we were limited in artillery, he figured that, you know, wouldn't give us enough artillery ammunition to really mount a major offensive. Couldn't go back to the Yalu because we didn't have enough artillery. But, and I don't know if you ever saw the movie *Pork Chop Hill* with Gregory Peck?

DM:

Quite a while back, yeah.

DC:

Anyway, if you ever see it again, he's calling—they take the hill and he's on the field phone back to battalion, he needs reinforcements because he's lost a lot of men, he didn't know if they could hold against another counterattack. And he's told he can't get any until after midnight. Well, it doesn't mean anything if you didn't, if you weren't there and knew that midnight you start over on casualties.

DM:

Right, so statistics thing.

DC:

So after midnight they would send some more reinforcements up the next morning and start a new day.

DM:

Good grief, man.

DC:

And so with Heartbreak, like you'd take the hill—I wasn't in on that action, that was the 7th Division—but they would take it and then they would run out of ammunition and it'd be a fist fight and stuff like that—hand-to-hand, bayonets and trenching tools and throwing rocks at each other. So then they'd call for reinforcements, but they wouldn't send up any reinforcements, and they get pushed off and so the next day, you start over.

DM:

Man!

DC:

You go back again, and so that's how it got the name Heartbreak.

DM:

Yeah, good grief, wow. So well if they couldn't lob artillery over there they called Dillard Carter up there to take some shots [laugh].

DC:

Which wasn't a bad deal because, you know, everybody else was trying to dig into that frozen soil and build bunkers and stuff. We replaced the 7th up there, and the 7th always had, they didn't have a—they weren't real good about digging in. If you replaced them you always knew you were going to have to dig in, you know. There was never enough ammunition and stuff like that. So anyway, you just look for people to kill all day.

DM:

Mm-hm, yeah, instead of digging a foxhole.

DC:

Well, we had foxholes but we were fortifying with bunkers and building some real fortification up there.

DM:

Did it require a little bit of a mental change or anything like that, to be a sniper or to go in to a combat situation? You'd never been in that before, so—

DC:

Well, you know I think Korea was just a continuation of World War II, we had the same weapons, fought the same way. There—you walked everywhere. Helicopters were just making an entry, and they were used only to pick up wounded really.

DM:

Right, right, and really small affairs too.

DC:

Yeah, they were small, and they'd carry two litters outside, you know, the cabin on the helicopter. It was just one man deal or two, whatever it was, I think there was a medic and a pilot and stuff in there, I never got evacuated so. The one time I got wounded, we were surrounded, so couldn't go in sick hall, and unless you were critically wounded and you'd get a helicopter in, you had to stay there too [laugh].

DM:

[Laugh] Oh man!

DC:

There were was a time where I could go in sick hall, and I didn't go and the medic had sewn me up and [laugh]—

DM:

Well it sounded like, from one of your short stories, that you didn't really want to go to a MASH [**Medical Army Surgical Hospital**] unit anyhow.

DC:

Well you don't want to go to MASH, no, nobody wanted to go to MASH. Everybody said, "Oh well, payday, they'd get paid by the Chinese." [Laugh].

DM:

[Laugh] Did the Chinese or the North Koreans take any potshots at these evac helicopters? It sounds like a tempting target.

DC:

Well yeah, they would. If they had to land on top of the hill where they could see them, they would. But generally they tried to land behind the crest or something like that. And whenever we'd take a hill, we'd always clear an area and try to clear it fairly flat, hidden behind the crest, so that—but there weren't a lot helicopters, a lot of guys didn't get evacuated, you know, by helicopter. In a lot of places where you are, you had to carry, they had to carry them down by litter to where they could be picked by a chief so it—and you were there. It wasn't like, you know, you had a base someplace where you'd hang out and knew there would be a Kentucky Fried Chicken place and McDonald's and you'd get a hot shower and a go get a beer and no PX [**Post Exchange**]. Nothing like that, you were, the whole time I—after the war, Congress enacted a combat pay for infantry. If you were in combat you got paid, hazardous pay, and so I know I was already out of the Army when they did this and working for Shell Oil Company, and I got paid for ten months and twenty-six days of combat.

DM:

Really?

DC:

And I had, I had waived my rotation, if you were in combat, they did institute this rotation system, it depended—if you were back down in Busan, you could be there three years before you were eligible for rotation. But if you were in combat, nine months of combat, it made you

eligible, but I had waived my rotation, so I was on my second tour, but we put on winter clothing in October, and in March I got to take a shower.

DM:

Oh wow [laugh].

DC:

That was the only shower I took the whole time we were there.

DM:

Wow

DC:

And when you're in combat, you're in combat. It didn't mean you were fighting tooth in nail every day, it just meant you were on the line, you know, and you were patrolling all the time, and another thing about designated marksman was you got to go on a lot of patrols, but you never had walk point [laugh].

DM:

Yeah, mm-hm. There are some pluses. Well this was sure good preparation for biological fieldwork, wasn't it [laugh]?

DC:

Yeah, yeah [laugh].

DM:

That must have felt like a breeze after being on the frontline in Korea.

DC:

When—Knox Jones happened to be with a MASH unit.

DM:

Is that right? I didn't know that.

DC:

At the same time, I didn't know it then but he was with the MASH unit. He was working on that hemorrhagic fever stuff that rats carried there. If you got hemorrhagic fever and you survived, then you got sent back to Japan, and you lived high on the hog and gave blood. That was the only way to treat it then, you know, they gave you blood transfusion if you hadn't—

DM:

[Laugh] So you hoped for Hemorrhagic Fever [laugh]?

DC:

It was a real soft deal for guys that survived.

DM:

Well, he was already a biologist, I guess, if he was assigned to—

DC:

He, yeah, I think he'd graduated, I think he'd already had his, I think he graduated. I believe he went to UK [sic Knox graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln] for his undergraduate work, wherever he went I think he was out of college when he went in because he was an officer, and he was there trapping mouse and drinking booze with the other guys and chasing nurses and other stuff.

DM:

Well, I hope you gave him your take on MASH units [laugh]?

DC:

Oh yeah, do it, yeah. But I was saying that we got to take a shower, and three of us got to go back to take a shower. The shower unit was twenty miles behind the lines, maybe a little farther. But we had to carry weapons with us, and so I didn't want to carry my good rifle with me, and Cuddy [?] was one of them and Brownie [?] was another guy, and so Cuddy was a machine gunner, and so he borrowed someone's M1—M2—carbine and I borrowed somebody's M2 Carbine and Brownie did the same thing, and so Brownie and I were the only two guys in the rifle company that had ever set foot on a university campus—he and I had both been drafted out of college, but nobody else in the company had ever been to college. So we hitchhiked back to this shower unit, we found the place, it took some time to get back there, and we took a shower, and man that hot water felt good, then the hot water heater broke down and we had to rinse off with cold water right out—and they were pumping water out from under this frozen ice across this reservoir, and so it was four degrees centigrade. So when we finally got dried off and had to put our clothes back on—these were clothes we'd put on in October and this was March, and I remember my, this wool shirt, I took my thumb nail and scraped that, all the grease and dead cells off the collar, and it just curled out there and I went, "Oh, golly, I got to put this filthy shirt back on!" And so I said, "We got to get some clean clothes somewhere here." This is a big Quartermaster Depot, so I said, "There must be a way we can get some clean clothes here." So anyway, the guys at the shower unit said, "No, no, you've got to put those back on," so we put those filthy clothes back on, and you can imagine if you wear clothes for six months, you know, and out, living out in the dirt all the time, you kind of get dirty.

DM:

I'm thinking about parasites. Did you get parasites?

DC:

Nah, well, not in the external.

DM:

Yeah, did you get worms or anything?

DC:

Yeah, I got, I got, yeah I got a good crop of Ascariasis. And those—anyway, we're, and someone had stolen our M2 carbines, M2 was a full automatic. And all these guys, all these REMFs back there always wanted full automatics, you know, like they were going to get over run by the Gooks at any minute. So, and they had left these M1 carbines, you know?

DM:

[Laugh] Nice enough to leave you a gun.

DC:

Yeah, from World War I, you know, didn't even have bayonet locks on them. So, everybody was griping, we were, I mean we were ticked off, man. We didn't know how we were going to explain this when we got back to the guys we borrowed the M2s from because only officers and some guys in the weapons platoon had carbines, everybody else had, you know, M1 rifle. And I think I might have borrowed mine from, an M1 carbine from Smitty [?], the 1st platoon leader. Anyway—

DM:

You borrowed your M2 from?

DC:

Yeah, M2 from, yeah, I'm sorry. Well, walking down this street, as it were, in this big depot there, I look inside this tent and I see a guy I had taken basic with.

DM:

Taken a what?

DC;

Had taken basic training with, I knew this guy! We'd been in basic together.

DM:
Okay.

DC:

And so I said, "Hey Greenbaum!" And so he looks up and he said, "Carter, what are you doing here?" I said, "Well we were up on the line there, we just got to come up and take a shower." So he comes out to talk to us and he's got on these starched, you know, fatigues and everything, of course they've got an oil heater in there going full blast, and so it's hot in their tent, it's nice and warm, you know. And he comes out and he talks to us for a few minutes, and I said, "Hey, listen, what are you doing here?" And he said he was in charge of clothing and stuff and said they did the laundry and they had these bales of clean clothes and stuff and I said, "Great, we need some clean clothes. We put these things on in October, we just got to take a shower, we got to put these filthy clothes back on." He said, "Well, I can't help you there. This stuffs all accounted for. We send clean clothes up to you every two weeks." I said, "No you don't." He said, "Well, you must be selling them." I said, "Selling them? Whow sell them?" And so well, he said he couldn't help me, but Cuddy was kind of easing around behind him and Brownie as well, and all the sudden Brownie grabbed this guy and Cuddy's had his trench knife against the guys throat, and I said, "God Greenbaum, this is the part I really hate, you know, we took basic together, I couldn't do it, but Cuddy doesn't know you. If you don't give us any clean clothes, he's going to cut your throat. He kills guys every day that didn't do anything to him. And here you're screwing us around over clean clothes." And Cuddy kind of raked that trench knife across his throat so he could feel it and a little drop or two of blood came down and he said, "I'll get your clean clothes." And so anyway, he had us outfitted, we looked like replacements, we had new everything.

DM:
[Laugh] what about your guns? Did you find any M2s?

DC:

Well, on the way back, by the time we got started on the way back it was getting dark, and so we got up close enough to the line and the trucks had to run with these cat eyes, and so it was just little slits, had these covers over the headlights, little slit that pointed the light down, You could see—you couldn't, looking straight ahead you wouldn't see anything, but if, five, ten yards in front of the truck, it was lighted on the road. This guy was driving forty-five miles an hour and the road is frozen, and everything was frozen and so we said, "Hey, are we going too fast?", "Nah, there's nobody on this road now," and so I was riding in the cab and the other guy, Brownie and Cuddy were in the bed, up against the back there because it was cold flying down the road at forty-five miles an hour. I had, you know, I had everything on, a helmet, a parka, and everything, you know. You had—you start off with underwear and then you've got long johns, and on top of that you've got wool shirt and wool pants, and then on top of that you've got a

fatigue shirt and field pants and all this held up by suspenders. And then a pile jacket, a field jacket, a parka liner, and a parka, so you're, you know—

DM:

Trying to stay warm.

DC:

And he said, "Nah, there isn't ever anybody on this road" and we were barreling down the road and we ran in to the back of a stalled 6-by—another truck, and I go through the windshield.

DM:

Golly! But you had your helmet on?

DC:

I had my helmet on and all these clothes on, and I wind up against the cab of this other truck thinking, God, how did I get here? Anyway, in the confusion, I find three M2 carbines!

DM:

Really?

DC:

And so I said, "Hey, hey, I got these three M2s, dump your M1s and let's get out of here."

DM:

[Laugh] On foot?

DC:

Yeah and so we walked the rest, it was 2 am before we got back to our company.

DM:

[Laugh] Everything turned out all right [laugh]?

DC:

Yeah, yeah [laugh].

DM:

That's funny.

DC:

Yeah the M2s we got were even better than the ones we'd—you know they hadn't seen any action, so they were in pretty good shape.

DM:

What did you use as a sniper rifle?

DC:

Well, I used a—the designated marksman rifle was an M1C and it had—you could mount a scope on it. And with the M1, the spent cartridges shot straight up, ejected straight up the receiver. So the scope is offset to the left. And on these M1Cs, there was a—on the left side of the receiver, was a, kind of a dovetail piece of steel attached to it and then the scope dovetail over that, and you—there were two half wingnuts that were used to tighten it on there. And it was all machine, so it was really pretty good because it, if you take, and I always take the scope off it if I wasn't using it, so and put it back on, and it always held it's zero okay.

DM:

Mm-hm, otherwise was the gun the same as an M1, same weight, same—

DC:

Yeah, yeah it was the same. It had a flash hider on it.

DM:

Did you have a different, a particular type of cartridge that you used?

DC:

No, it was a .30-065. I'd gotten a bunch from the same lot so—

DM:

So you could be consistent.

DC:

Yeah, but we didn't have any matching ammunition.

DM:

You didn't need an extra powder charge for distance or anything like that?

DC:

No.

DM:
Okay.

DC:
Later, after I killed that general—

DM:
The Russian?

DC:
Yeah, somebody sent me a Winchester Model 70 with a 10 power scope on it. Really, really neat rifle, never got to use it though.

DM:
Did you use, did you have some kind of a tripod mount or anything up there in the front? Did you just make up a mount?

DC:
No, no, yeah, you'd—however you could, you know, get in to position to shoot, it'd—

DM:
Yeah, what was your longest shot?

DC:
I made several at a 1,000 yards. And so, I couldn't tell you how many, you know, you'd think you'd remember all those things, but you don't.

DM:
How about confirmed kills, do you know?

DC:
You know, I didn't keep the kill log and the way a confirmed kill works is your spotter writes up the kill report, and it goes to the—really it's a shot report and it's—there are confirmed kills and then there are probables. And probable doesn't mean a whole lot because you don't know if you really mortally wounded this guy or if he fell down or you scared the shit out of him and he fell down, you know?

DM:
Right, yeah, yeah, right. Now the spotter is an officer, is that right?

DC:
Yeah.

DM:
Okay, lieutenant?

DC:
All those that, you know, if you don't have a spotter, you have to have an uninterested—well, uninterested, I guess the spotter's interested—but you have to have a non-shooter observe it and write up the kill report that goes to the company Commander and if he accepts it, usually he accepts it if it's confirmed by the spotter.

DM:
Is this spot—this spotter is also giving range and everything else?

DC:
Yeah, and you know, we didn't have all that neat stuff then where now there's an app for cellphone that will give you the shooting detail, you know, and you can even. I think there's—what is it, you use to give you the wind, you know, velocity and stuff like that, and [inaudible], tells you, you know, how many clicks here and there.

DM:
Carry your cellphone there.

DC:
Well, there's, even better than that there's a scope now that's a digital scope that you put the radical on what you want to shoot, if it's a enemy soldier, you set the radical on here and you fix that in the scope, and let's say it's at the 1,000-1200 yards, something like that, and you're shooting at center of body mass, so then you've got it fixed, then the guy may be moving around and stuff like that. But then, after, it's like a still frame, and you fix the radical on the still frame, that's where you want to hit this guy. Then you make it live and you depress the trigger. You release the trigger, but it doesn't fire until the radical hits the point that you fixed it at. And then the rifle fires.

DM:
That's all modern stuff though.

DC:
Yeah, it's [laugh]—

DM:

Too bad you didn't have that but maybe it's good because the enemy didn't have it either.

DC:

That's right. So we had to kind of—we had to, you know, had a notebook with distances and estimated wind velocity and stuff like this on there.

DM:

You don't that those records though?

DC:

No.

DC:

You want to take a guess on how many confirmed and how many probables you had?

DC:

Well, I think it was—ell, I think it was thirty-two confirmed, but like I said, those are the ones that had a kill report. There are, I watched these twelve guys coming out of this bunker every morning, and they would walk down this trench that was parallel with the main line, the ridgeline, and then they'd hit a trench that was perpendicular, it was a right angle, we could look down and there was a position I could get at and I looked down that trench, and it was about a 100-150 yards up over the crest of the hill. And they'd come out from this forward position every morning, walk parallel to the ridgeline, and then you could just see their heads as they were walking through this trench, it was fairly deep. And they they'd turn, and they'd go up this trench that you could look down if you got in the right place. So I'm watching for about three days, and every morning, early in the morning, just as it'd get daylight, they'd leave that advanced position, it was kind of like a listing post. And so I kept looking for a place where I could look down that trench they walking on, and it just happened that it was in a position over where the 1st platoon was, a guy named Sanchez had a, it was a BAR [**Browning Automatic Rifle**] man. One of the rifle squads there, and he was, this kid, his English wasn't all that good because he kept sneaking in to the U.S. and they'd catch him, and they'd deport him and he had an aunt that lived in Los Angeles, and so they'd always catch him, and so he wanted to be an American.

DM:

This was Sanchez?

DC:

Sanchez.

DM:

Sanchez, yeah.

DC:

He was the BAR man, and so I got to give you a little background on Sanchez because—anyway, he'd get deported and so he tried to join the army, and they wouldn't take him because he wasn't a U.S. citizen. And somebody said, "Listen, go down to the post office, register for the draft and they won't ask you if you're a US citizen, just tell them you want to register for the draft and then maybe they'll call you up." So that's what he did, and he got drafted and nobody again ever asked him if he were a U.S. citizen, see?

DM:

I guess once he's served in Korea, he's then a US citizen [laugh].

DC:

Oh yeah. [laugh] Then he—and this guy, like I said, he wanted to be an American so bad, I mean this was his dream, to be a real American. So anyway, I said, "Sanchez, see that trench over there? Every morning just as it gets daylight, twelve men come out of that bunker over at that point, they walk down that trench that's parallel to the ridgeline, and then they come to that trench that's perpendicular and they go up that thing. You look right up there and see all of them. So tomorrow morning, when they come out of there, let's catch them in a rundown on that trench that's perpendicular. You've got about a 150 yards, let's do it like a baseball rundown." And so he thought that sounded pretty good, so he zeroed his BAR in, they have a twenty round magazine, and so I said, "Now the idea is you'll empty that magazine in front of these guys as they're going up there and turn them back down, and I'll pick off one as he comes down it, and we will try to turn them back up, and when they turn back up, then you cut off in front of them, try to hit a guy or two, but, you know, turn them back down, and let's see if we can't get them all." And so he thought that sounded pretty good, so next morning I got down there early before daylight. When it got to be daylight, the guys come out, walked down this trench, they turned, they start up that thing, we wait till they get halfway up there, and he lets go of a full twenty rounds from that BAR and these guys turn and start back down and I fire a round or two and turn them, they go back up and we work them until we've got them all.

DM:

Really?

DC:

So that's an even dozen.

DM:

Wow!

DC:

And so—

DM:

Were those confirmed?

DC:

No, no, they were not because we were both shooters and—

DM:

Right, right, you didn't have a spotter with you or anything.

DC:

Yeah, lieutenant didn't get up that early so [laugh].

DM:

How many did you have in your magazine, how many shots?

DC:

Well, eight, but sometimes I'd just load one at a time. I just, you know, a lot of times I'd keep them in my breast pocket of the wool shirt, keep warm and load them one at a time if we ever were sniping.

DM:

When you were sniping, did you ever take more than one, shot at more than one person? I mean were you able to do that at a distance?

DC:

Well, usually if you hit one, then the others were spooked.

DM:

Yeah.

DC:

One time this, we were watching these three men working on this trench, and so they were deepening the trench, and they were getting rocks out and stacking up there on top of the trench, and so you couldn't get a very good shot because just the top of the shoulders and the head

would show, but they'd never stay there long enough. But we'd been watching them for a while, and I happened to turn around, we were inside this bunker, and that's why snipers now have those silencers, those sound suppressors on those rifles if they're shooting inside a room, you know. The sound is deafening, it'd blow out your eardrums, so that's for their protection, not necessarily to hide the sound from the guy you're shooting at—who's maybe a 1,000 yards away and wouldn't hear you anyway! So, but anyway, I happened to look around, and there's, I see these legs and boots there in the opening to this bunker we're in, and the little trench that comes up there—the bottom of that trench was higher than the floor of the bunker we were in so, and, but if you were standing in that thing you were highlighted, sky lighted that above the bunker. So I said, "Hey, you, get your ass off the skylight before you get somebody killed, we're working down here," and so, his head pokes into the opening there and all I can see are these stars all over this helmet. And he says, "Oh, I'm sorry, you're absolutely right." [laugh].

DM:

Who was it?

DC:

It was a general, so anyway, I think it was our division commander, but I wouldn't swear to it. He could be the corps commander for all I know. He had an entourage, a bunch of colonels with him. Anyway, he wanted to know if he could come in and watch us, you know, when he found out what we were doing. And I said, "Sure," and he and two or three of the colonels came in and filled up this bunker we were in. And so I explained to him we were watching these three guys working on this trench over there, and we were going to shoot one of them in a little while, whenever we, you know, they took a break or we got a good shot. And so they each took a look through the spotting scope which was 60, I think 60 power scope, and you could see them pretty good with that. And so they, anyway, eventually one of the guys stands up, stretching like this, and so I take a shot at him. Well, I miss him, but the guy next to him stands up, and I hit him, you know.

DM:

Looks like you did it on purpose.

DC:

And it's a head shot, and if the bullet hits at the base of the skull, base of the brain and cuts that basal part of the brain, brain stem back there, it's like when you wring the neck on a chicken. You, it, we called them kickers because they flop around like that, you know. So this guy flops out in this other trench where, to the side of that thing where you could see him, jumping around like that, and the general takes a look at that, and he thinks this is incredible, you know? And so I said, "Well, you know if you, if the bullet hits the base of the brain and the brain stem there, that's what does that. It produces the kickers like wringing the neck on a chicken." He said,

“That’s amazing, that’s amazing!” And all these guys take a look at this guy flopping around there, and the guys, even the guys colonels outside, want to come in and take a look, everybody takes a look. And so, anyway, they leave then and the lieutenant says to me, “You know now, you didn’t hit the one you were shooting?” [Laugh].

DM:

[Laugh] I’m glad he didn’t say that till they left!

DC:

[Laugh] Well he didn’t want me to get a big head. [laugh].

DM:

Well do you usually aim for the chest?

DC:

Yeah, well at that distance you, yeah.

DM:

What if they have some protection, was there a flak jacket or anything like that?

DC:

Well, we didn’t, no we didn’t have any body armor then, that was before. Later in the Korean War, after I left there, they started outfitting guys, rifleman, with body armor but we didn’t have any.

DM:

Well, then did snipers have to do headshots or what?

DC:

Well, at that distance it’s, you know, they’re a—you got a much better probability of hitting somebody at center mass than you do in the head. And you just don’t, I never, I’d always aim for center mass. Sometimes I’d be a little high and hit a guy in the head but I wasn’t trying to hit him at a 1,000 yards. The general rule of thumb is don’t try for the head at 400 yards or greater.

DM:

Okay, what is the procedure? Wow is it that some people are able to pull that trigger without screwing things up? You know, I mean it seems like, it seems like buck fever would be a real problem when shooting a man, like just a little tension, seems like you would need everything calm, I mean is there a way of doing that or is it just the way you are?

DC:

I think it's probably the way you are, a lot of guys, there's a lot of difference between thinking about it and shooting at somebody in combat.

DM:

Right.

DC:

You know, if you're in combat, you don't have time to think about it. If you're watching somebody for thirty or forty minutes for three days or something like that and thinking about how you're going to kill them, it's different. And a lot of men didn't like that. And so, and weren't good at it, but if, you know, when you're watching somebody, and you're thinking, you know, you're going to stop a beating heart here, and it's going to be his beating heart and it's kind of like, you watch a guy for a little while and it's kind of like you know him, you know, you may seem him two or three days in a row and you think, One of these days I'm going to kill you and when I get a chance. So—

DM:

Did it become easier as it became more routine?

DC:

Well I, you know, funny thing, it's like that line from Hemingway in that *On the Blue Water*, you know, the hunting a man. "There's no hunting a man and those that hunt armed men long enough and like it never care for anything else after, thereafter," something like that, you know. It's a—if it's, it just happened to be one of those things I was good at. And it didn't bother me. And then that, you know, there is, you've got to shoot a lot, you know, and you've got to really know how the trigger feels and how it releases, and I've missed a lot of guys, you know?

DM:

Well is there a—did you have a particular procedure, like you would hold your breath, you would exhale as you pulled, that kind of thing?

DC:

Well yeah, usually, if you can you take three breaths and hold it and then the—when you're fingers across the trigger like this—

DM:

At a 90 degree, okay, okay.

DC:

This has to be pointing straight parallel to the barrel of the rifle.

DM:

Okay. The lower part of the digit has to be parallel to the rifle, your finger's at a 90 degree angle, basically.

DC:

That's the best way not to pull it to the right or push it to the left.

DM:

And then you just pull back.

DC:

Yeah.

DM:

Instead of using finger action you're using arm action, then.

DC:

Well, no you're using your finger, but your triggers right in here and this part, and this part of the digit is pointing at what you're shooting at.

DM:

Right, gotcha, gotcha. It's stable.

DC:

Yeah.

DM:

The lower part of the finger is stable, and you're just squeezing that, okay.

DC:

But you've got to know how the trigger releases and so you've got to do a lot of shooting so that, and then when you start your trigger release. I got a bad shot in on an impala in Africa because of this, I started—once I started my trigger release, it started, and this impala took a step forward so that, and I didn't follow up on it.

DM:

Oh, okay.

DC:

So because I was already in the trigger release. And when the trigger released, it shot the—it hit the impala, you know, behind the heart, back of the ribcage there, it was a long shot, but the impala, anyway I lost the impala because he got in with some cape buffalo and the cows and they had calves and we couldn't pursue it. But that—

DM:

Unless I'm misunderstanding, it sounds like there was really nothing else you could do, you were in follow up and you, if it moves, you can't help that.

DC:

Yep.

DM:

Is that—

DC:

That's kind of the way it is, once you start your trigger release, I had—there's a, you've got to become one with your rifle, so it's just an extension of your person and the—once you start that trigger release, it's not like, Okay I'm going to pull the trigger now, you know. Nowadays, they generally in sniping, I think they use a two-stage trigger which works as the, you have the first stage, it's not like a set trigger but you have—the first-stage is, you know how a digital camera works when you're going to take a picture, you press down on the, and it focuses and then you take it. That two-stage trigger works kind of the same way, you, and first-stage maybe two pounds or 200 quarter or something like that, and then you can set your second staging whatever you want to, maybe an eighth of a pound, half a pound. And so just touching it's going to release it then, but so—but for real accurate shooting, nowadays on those sniper rifles, they have those two-stage triggers that make it a lot easier to, you know, get off good shot. It's come a long way, you know, not everybody liked designated marksmen. Smitty, the 1st platoon leader, he liked to have me go with him, but 2nd lieutenant leader Greene, he didn't think much of me and he thought they were a nuisance, and the 3rd platoon leader was kind of the same way.

DM:

He didn't like you, and he thought what was, what was a nuisance?

DC:

Well the 2nd platoon leader, this guy's name was Greene and had three e's in the name, had an e on the end just to make sure he had enough e's. He got, he was an ROTC lieutenant to graduate from Louisiana Tech, I think it was at that time, at Ruston?

DM:

Ruston, yeah.

DC:

And he was the only, only platoon leader probably in all of Korea that did his whole tour of duty as a second lieutenant, he was a career second lieutenant. Never got promoted. And so finally at—I told the company commander who was a, who had been an ATO [**Alpha Tau Omega**] pledge, and I'd pledged ATO at SMU before I got drafted, you know, and so that kind of ended that. Same thing had happened to him; he'd pledged ATO and gotten a battle field commission and then when the war ended he wanted to stay in but he was a captain then but it was a—they take a regular army, they reduced him in rank to sergeant first class, I think, in the regular army. And then when Korea started again, he managed to get a regular army commission as a first lieutenant, and so he's a first lieutenant. He's our company commander that—this was a real rotten deal that a lot of guys hated, and that is that a lot of reserve guys were coming in as replacements, and so the company, battalion, regiment would get maxed out in grades, and there's a TO&E, the Table of Organization and Equipment, only allows for so many sergeants, you know, or so many lieutenants, and so many captains. And so our company commander maxed out in captains so he was stuck in grades as a first lieutenant, and so I was stuck in grades as a corporal even when I eventually became the platoon sergeant for the 1st platoon, I was still just a corporal because it was maxed. We didn't have any—and these guys would all come in and serve and they'd always be sergeants.

DM:

Yeah, golly, man, [laugh], anything else you want to add about Korea?

DC:

Oh it was—I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

DM:

Would you, did you come back as a different person?

DC:

Oh, yeah, well I'd grown up, you know.

DM:

Yeah, yeah.

DC:

You know, it was the best thing that ever happened to me, getting drafted.

DM:

You always hear that post-war guys are—make such good college students, you know? You went back to college I guess on the GI Bill?

DC:

Oh yeah, well, I went back to SMU and got a bachelor's and a master's degree from SMU, but I had the GI Bill, but GI Bill was based on serving twenty-four months, because originally we got drafted for eighteen months, because they thought, Well, ah, it won't take long for us to take care of the North Koreans. Well anyway, it didn't turn out that way, and so after I was already in there they increased it to twenty-four months and so the GI Bill was based on serving twenty-four months. But after I had come back from Korea, and that's a funny thing when I came back—my father, I got an emergency leave or I wouldn't have come back—but my mother who never wanted me to go anyway, you know, and so she was fretting the whole time, and my father had a brain tumor, it was malignant, anyway they had—and so he was not going to live really. So anyway, my mother went to the Red Cross and so they came up and pulled me off the line and had me on my way back, so—and I didn't know why, all I knew was it was an emergency leave, so I didn't know until I got back to San Francisco and had got to call home that it was my father. So, but he didn't die for three months after that, so I had six weeks of leave. So anyway, when that was up, I was going back to, had to report back to Fort Sam Houston for reassignment, my mother was just beside herself, you know. And of course she'd gone through World War II with my brother James and, you know, in those days he was in, he went to North Africa, he was in North Africa, made the Salerno landing in the first wave in Italy, fought up through Italy, made the Anzio breakout, made the landing in southern France, and crossed the line into Germany. I mean, you were there until you got killed or wounded so bad they sent you home or the war was over. So—

DM:

She'd been through a lot.

DC:

Yeah. So anyway, it was time to go back, my mother was just, she was so afraid they were going to send me back to Korea, which was where I really wanted to go, but—because I was in line for a battlefield commission, which I really wanted, but there were three options that I could have taken, one was a reserve commission. I didn't want that because the company command said, "You don't want that. That's what he took and you don't want that." He said, "Then there's the regular army, it's harder to get. Then there's one where you can get a field commission and an appointment to West Point," so that's what we were trying for. But I had to wait until I get promoted, couldn't go as, wouldn't work as a corporal, you had to be a sergeant see? So we were waiting for another sergeants to get killed so there'd be an opening, you know? Anyway, go back, it's two or three days before my mother, she's talked to our congressman from Corpus

Christi there, and so that wasn't, she'd talk to him several times before that. Now I think it was three days before I was supposed to go, and so I said, "Mother, he's not going to do anything, you need to talk to somebody that can do something. Why don't you call LBJ's office? Wait a minute, better than that call George Parr." You've probably have never heard of him, George B. Parr was the Duke of Duval, he was down at Duval County, lived there in San Diego, county seat of Duval County, and his father had taken the part of the Hispanics in a range war back in 1904-5-6-, something like that. And he had lead the Hispanic Revolt, anyway, they had won. And so after that the Parr family controlled politics in Duval and Starr County and a couple of others around there and even up around Dallas. So he was the one that got LBJ elected to the Senate. LBJ was running against, he was in Congress and he was running against Coke Stevenson, who was the, had been governor of Texas and so at that time, I mean if you won the Democrat primary, you were in because there were no Republicans. So, but there were two parts of the Democrat Party, there were liberals and the conservatives. And so after they, the first count and Coke had won by a few votes, George Parr remembered that they hadn't counted one of the boxes. And they counted it, and when they finished counting that, LBJ won by seventy-eight votes. And that's how he got his nickname, Landslide Lyndon, and the joke was then that Lyndon was walking through the cemetery with some of his friends, or his aides, and they were copying names off of the tombstones, and one of his aides said, "Lyndon, I can't read make out the name on this tombstone," he said, "Well you're going to have to, he's got as much right to vote as anybody else in the cemetery!" [laughter]. But I said, "Better than that"—and I knew George Parr because I'd dated his daughter, Georgia B. off and on there.

DM:
Georgia?

DC:
Yeah, her name was Georgia, he had one child, and her name was Georgia B.

DM:
Georgia B.?

DC:
B. George Parr, his middle initial, I don't know what his middle initial was, but it was George B. Parr, and so Georgia B. We always called her Georgia B.

DM:
Are you talking about just the letter B or was it—

DC:

The letter B, yeah. I said, "Better than that, call George Parr down in Duval County," so she called him, and so when I report there at Fort Sam Houston, there's this lieutenant at the desk there, and so I hand my orders to him. and so he looks up at me and he's got this folder, and he's looking at this folder and he looks at me again, looks back at that folder, looks at me a third time, he said, "Who the hell are you?" And I report again, you know, and so he said, "I don't mean that, I mean who are you?" I said, "I don't understand the lieutenant's question sir." "I've got a telegram here from the Secretary of the Army telling me to reassign you to the Fort Sam Houston, I'd just like to know who the hell you are?" So I said, "Well, I'm really nobody, you know, I'm just who I said I was." So they didn't know who the hell I was, so they didn't know what to do with me so they decide the safe thing would be to make me representative of the Post Commander of Military Funerals, so until they found out I was nobody like I told them, that's what I did. And I went in to the sergeant major's office there and I was told to report to him for assignment. So I report to him, I get a black armband, and he said, "You got any medals?" And I said, "Well, you know, I—no, not really, I just, regular things there, you know, Korea," and so he opens up this drawer and takes out all these ribbons, you know, and they're together like, you know, put on there. And he slaps the table, desk, and he said, "Here, when you go to a funeral, you were these." [Laugh].

DM:

[Laugh] There's your promotion, I guess.

DC:

[Laugh] Oh, that was terrible duty. You only got one funeral a day, and you didn't get one every day, you know, so somebody else did the same thing. Finally, they found out that I really wasn't anybody important, so they made me the permanent CQ [**Charge of Quarters**] in the enlisted detachment, which was kind of the catch-all company and included guys waiting for dishonorable discharge and waiting for a room at the 4th Army Prison, you know, because—

DM:

That doesn't sound like great duty either [laugh].

DC:

Oh man, and I had to live in that barracks with all these criminals and another guy, also from my regiment in Korea, he and I pulled twenty-four on, twenty-four off, and so that's what I got after they found out I wasn't anybody. Football team also was in that barracks, in that company, the bakers that baked bread for the whole post were in that company.

DM:

That's an interesting mix.

DC:

I mean, it was just a catch all of people in there.

DM:

That's a strange way to finish your service, after what you had done. When did you get discharged?

DC:

I got discharged in November of '52.

DM:

Okay.

DC:

See, I didn't even serve out my two years. Well—

DM:

Did that mess up your GI Bill?

DC:

Yeah it did, it did.

DM:

Well golly, even after combat and everything.

DC:

Yeah, those guys that went to, you know, went to NATO headquarters in Paris got—

DM:

Got a better GI Bill?

DC:

They got the full GI Bill and the only hazard they ran into was—

DM:

Crossing the street [laugh]?

DC:

Well, yeah, that and venereal disease [laugh].

DM:

Oh man, I'm going to pause this a second.

End of Recording



© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library