

Gray County Veterans Memorial & Archive

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Orville K. Anstaett

September 12, 2014



INTERVIEW
YEAR

Orville K. Anstaett
2014

GRAY COUNTY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Orville K. Anstaett

DATE: September 12, 2014

PLACE: Cimarron City Library, Cimarron IS

INTERVIEWER: Kathleen Holt **TECHNOLOGY: George Martinez**

PROJECT SERIES: Korean Era Oral History Project for Gray County

FUNDING: This project is funded in part by a Kansas Heritage grant from the Kansas Humanities Council (KHC) for the “Gray County Korean War Veterans Oral History Project.” The Kansas Humanities Council is a nonprofit organization that supports community-based cultural programs, serves as a financial resource through an active grant-making program, and encourages Kansans to engage in the civic and cultural life of their communities.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Orville K. Anstaett was born in Ohio on June 9, 1931. His family farmed near Holcomb, Kansas. Even as a child, Orville wanted to fly. He was ready to solo at age 16 and knew he wanted to go into the military rather than farm. His great grandfather had been in the military in the 1870s. His paternal grandfather was in Spanish American War, his father in World War I and he had two brothers in World War II. One brother served in the Philippines. Orville himself enlisted September 1, 1951 in the Pilot and Pilot in Command division of the 5th Air Force and served in both Korea and Vietnam through September of 1979.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Flight combat; Korean War; Vietnam; Stresses of combat

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW: The memories Mr. Anstaett shared were ones that often evoked strong emotion. It is with the greatest admiration and appreciation that we receive these interesting and informative tales.

SOUND RECORDINGS: Digital

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 72:09

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: None

TRANSCRIPT: 34 pages

ORAL HISTORY
Orville K. Anstaett
Interview Date: September 12, 2014

Interviewer: Kathleen Holt (KMH)
Interviewee: Orville K. Anstaett (OKA)
Sound Technician: George Martinez

(KMH) – Okay. This is Kathleen Holt and I’m here with Orville Anstaett from Ingalls, Kansas -- currently from Ingalls.

(OKA) – Yes.

(KMH) - This is September 12, 2014. We are at the Cimarron City Library about 12:30 this afternoon. Orville, if you’ll introduce yourself, we’ll just start talking. We’ll forget the formal part then.

(OKA) - I’m Orville Anstaett from Ingalls. What else do you need?

(KMH) - The date.

(OKA) - Hum?

(KMH) - What, oh, this is -- I said this is September 12. Oh, what’s your birthdate?

(OKA) - Ninth day of June, 1931.

(KMH) – All right. Well, Orville, we’re talking about this -- I think we’ve talked about this interview for the Gray County Veterans Memorial. Tell me when you were in the service and about that period of your life. How’d it happen?

(OKA) – Well, I was going to graduate from Holcomb in 1950 and I wanted to go to jucco, but I was helping my dad farm around here. We had land out east of Holcomb where the packing plant’s at.

(KMH) – Hum.

(OKA) - And I’ve always had a hankering for the military and for the Air Force, I mean. I started flying when I was a kid.

(KMH) – Oh?

(OKA) - At fifteen years old I had my hours of dual. I was ready to solo.

(KMH) – Wow.

(OKA) - But I couldn’t solo until I was sixteen, so down through the years, I’d flown. See, in 1951, I said I didn’t want to farm. I wanted to go to military. My great grandfather

was in the German, Spanish German or French German War, back in the 1870s. My grandfather-- I'm talking about my dad's side -- he was in the Great War before the Cuban, down in Cuba, you know.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(OKA) - And then my dad was in World War I, and I had two brothers in World War II, and I had a brother involved in the Philippines; and then I was in Korea and Vietnam. I had a brother that served in Vietnam, and then I had a nephew that served on several -- we got a military history.

(KMH) – Yes, you do.

(OKA) - And, I just wanted --

(KMH) - Just take a moment. I appreciate this. It's hard to talk about and I'm really glad you're willing to do it. You do have quite a history, don't you?

(OKA) - Yeah, it's uh . . .

(KMH) - That's something. Were they all -- anybody else in that batch flying?

(OKA) - Well on my mother's side. She had two brothers and Uncle Pete died of cancer back then. Now it'd be colon, known as colon cancer. Back then they didn't know what it was.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And, Uncle Barney. Pete didn't have any kids, and Uncle Barney had a son and a daughter, and his son turned out to be, part of the invasion fleet over in France, but I don't know anything more about it.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Point behind this, Grandpa Blackburn was a veteran of World War I.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - But he served here in the States. He was what they called a "muler."

(KMH) – Oh.

(OKA) - To carry the mules.

(KMH) - Oh yeah.

(OKA) - They used a lot of mules back then.

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah.

(OKA) - And he took care of the unit. They called him a “muler,” and there was another name that went to it, but there’s a lady --

(KMH) - Uh huh. That’s right.

(OKA) - In the presence – okay? (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter) What if I cover up my ears? (Laughter)

(OKA) - It isn’t all that bad, but there’s a lot of military history. People in -- our side -- it’s my dad’s side of the family that was in the military -- and so kind of a tradition I wanted to be part but I wanted to fly. That was my aim. I could care less if somebody offered a million dollars, I don’t want that. I want to fly! I mean that’s --

(KMH) - Uh hum. You just had a passion.

(OKA) – You know it’s -- yes, it’s a passion. You just don’t -- So, dad said, “If you want to go to school, go down here at the jucco, community college,” and I went down and made my enrollment, and they wanted to know if I was a – ‘cuz I was a little huskier then. They wanted to know if I wanted to play football. I said, “Yeah.” I said I’d go out, and they put me on the red shirt team. You know that’s the practice.

(KMH) – Oh, yeah.

(OKA) - And two practice sessions of that, and I said, “Hey, there’s better combat than this and I want to get back!” (Laughter)

(Laughter)

(OKA) - So, after practice, I went down -- and there used to be a café in the corner of Main and Fulton. It was the Sinclair Station. I think it’s still there, right next to it is a law firm, and in there there was an Air Force recruiter, and I visited with him. He said when do you want to go, and I said “I’d leave right now.” He said, boy, we can’t do that, but he lined things up, and they put me on a train the next day.

(KMH) – Wow.

(OKA) - He gave me a berth, you know, to Kansas City, so I wasn’t all that unfamiliar with the military, ‘cuz I had a lot of background and I knew pretty much what was bull hockey and what wasn’t. So we got in to Kansas City and they took us up and gave us a rough breakfast. I think at that time it was gravy and biscuits, you know, with a glass of milk. I went through the process, and they had all the branches in the military around there. And there was processing and visiting around. You know, the Marine Corps recruiter over here heard that I had two brothers, he came over and he tried to get me to enlist in the Marine Corps. Anyway I went ahead and -- they flew us out to Parks Air Force Base in Oakland, California for 13 weeks of basic training and they took us through a career selection process. What do you want to do? You’ve got three choices. So I wrote down: pilot training, pilot training, pilot training. You know, the guy looked at

me. I'm kind of a smart ass, excuse the expression, but I said, "What's the matter? Don't you get the program?" (Laughter)

(Laughter)

(OKA) - So, he -- okay he's nothing but a one-striper, but then I didn't have one! Anyway I had no problem, finished that basic and come home and then was shipped to Williams Air Force Base in Arizona. That's an advanced training base, and so they sent me down to well maybe it was that base. I'll think of it. I'll bring it up later -- for primary training and selection and they shipped us up to Williams and that's where they had jet transition, but during this time, they was looking for pilots for the Mustang, the P51s. Do you know what that look like?

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And I went ahead and volunteered for that. Instead of the jets I wanted that one, so they sent us over to Luke Air Force Base which is across town. I went through six weeks of training in tactics and then they loaded us on a boat and sent us to Korea.

(KMH) - Wow.

(OKA) - You know that -- hey, I was gung ho! Nothing was gonna . . .

(KMH) - Yeah.

(OKA) - I'm a "get them all!" Anyway, we landed in Yokohama, Japan, and went to the Repo Depot at Fuchu and from there, they sent us into Korea, and they tied me up with the 21st -- excuse me 25th Fighter Squadron in the 51st Fighter Group. At that time, we was based at the K10 in Korea -- that Busan down here on the southeast coast and the first five missions -- Well, we got there; got checked in on one day and the next day they had us in a briefing to go out on a strike and of course at that time we formed what they call a "four finger" formation. This is the flight leader and this is his wing man.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And this is an element leader and this is his wing man.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So we had to, even though we learned this in flight training, we had -- when you get into a combat zone, you know, we held back and covered his tail.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - We covered his tail and if a situation arose then we expand our coordinates. If not, we took it back with us. But all our missions were close air support or targets of opportunity. A target of opportunity is a train or a truck convoy or a column of troops.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Whatever it happened to be and there it was -- you go -- your element leader rolls in; his wingman, he rolls in. He goes in. There's two seconds and that gives time for everybody to get out of the way. So when you come in here, you're not going to shoot him down. You're having the leader --

(KMH) -- Yeah.

(OKA) - So we went and we make on targets of opportunity -- you went on as many -- until you ran out of ammo.

(KMH) -- Wow.

(OKA) -- So people -- at that time -- it really -- it wasn't a thing to worry about -- what you killed and what you destroyed. That was your job.

(KMH) - Uh hum. Uh hum.

(OKA) - But I look back at it and they were human beings, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - They had a belief, an ideology. They had a way of life, a culture, and this came later on in life, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) -- I am beginning to have reflections on . . .

(KMH) - Uh hum.--

(OKA) - But anyway, I'm sorry. And then we were sent out on strictly ground support missions.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And that's where you had a main line of resistance and we were on this side, and they were on that side -- similar to what it was in World War I or World War II. But it was irregular and it wasn't the troops lining up and getting ready to go over the top or anything like that.

(KMH) -- Right.

(OKA) - So we had a hundred yards -- this is the line . . .

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And we're here. And we had a hundred yards that we stayed away so we didn't involve our U.N. troops in that.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So we kept flying through the support area at 10,000 feet and we'd get the map coordinates to where it was at, and then the people on the ground -- then we wouldn't have to we would roll in -- we'd roll in as we were in formation.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Going over this way, and never going over . . .

(KMH) - Oh, okay.

(OKA) - Peeling out -- you may have heard it.

(KMH) - Oh yeah, okay.

(OKA) - And we started our firing pattern. After we roll out, we started our firing pattern, at about a thousand feet, and we were coming down pretty straight. So as your, ordinance hit here and you start to pull up the ordinance that is leading the air craft out here.

(KMH) - Oh, okay.

(OKA) - And so we get about a half a mile in expenditure of ordinance.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(OKA) - And there -- different from Vietnam. We went back for the second helping to do it. In Vietnam, you only made one pass and you hauled ass. I mean, that's the way it was.

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah.

(OKA) - Because they had it. We went ahead and expended ordinance on the targets. If we got rid of the target first pass, we went back into orbit at 10,000 feet waiting for a call, for a different map coordinate.

(KMH) - Oh.

(OKA) - You know what a map coordinate is?

(KMH) - Yeah, yes.

(OKA) - And then if we got one, we went there, and then if we expended sometimes -- I think maybe only happened once or twice to me -- they, we repassed it. They expressed

to “cut ass” – “cut ass” method. You come down and get as low as the ground you can over the enemy troops.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And that usually gives them a time break or they'll haul ass. They'll get the hell out!

(KMH) - Oh I see. So, yeah.

(OKA) – Yeah. Haul ass and get the hell out. Well, the typical mission lasted about six hours.

(KMH) – Wow.

(OKA) - And then we had to make sure that two things. Um, if you had, bowel trouble, diarrhea . . .

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - You know they didn't want you to go. And of course you had to watch your liquid intake so, even though we had relief tubes . . .

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - But even at that -- a lot of guys comeback, depending on the mission, you know, I mean, they had dirtied their uniform.

(KMH) – Right.

(OKA) - Okay, we didn't look at it as, as a sin, or you know, baby faced ya'.

(KMH) - Right, right.

(OKA) - We all knew what that was about.

(KMH) - Right, right.

(OKA) - And sometimes we flew two missions a day. A couple of times we threw three missions and they were what they -- close air support. Our troops are in trouble. And then there was days we didn't fly at all. And then there was days the weather kept us from -- we was grounded, you know. So we lived in tents and we had two pot belly stoves that were fired by diesel fuel and K10. The Sea of Japan coming down along the coast of Russia and down is one of the coldest places in the world -- at least we thought so! We went to bed. We took off our shoes if they were dirty, and if they were clean, we probably left them on. Left our coats on. It was cold that got in, come up close to the – 'cuz the canvas does not keep out the cold, so we kind of crowded up towards these stoves, and these stoves run 24 hours a day.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And we had a sleeping bag, and we had a couple of blankets. I usually took most -- I think I took my boots off most of the time, and then put on an extra pair of socks. Sometimes you'd run around with three or four pairs of socks, you know.

(KMH) – Wow.

(OKA) – So – eating. We spent -- what was it – about 10 days we had nothing. Supply couldn't get through and ate nothing but C-rations and I can tell you in one word I think of the C-rations! (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter) Oh my gosh.

(OKA) – Well, it was just a supply situation and we got that straightened out, but I spent 115 missions in Korea.

(KMH) - My goodness.

(OKA) - And --

(KMH) - Was your base in Korea or in Japan?

(OKA) - The base was in Korea.

(KMH) – Oh.

(OKA) - We went, we was at K9, K10, K14, and K42, I believe it was. They moved around depending on how the line moved and then when it destabilized, we were staying at K14 up at northwest of Seoul.

(KMH) – Oh, okay.

(OKA) - So we moved into that area and then we were pulled back because at that time, before that time, they had the F84 and the 86s and the F80s that was taking over a lot of that, but they still used that for close air support to eliminate enemy activity.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - On this side of the like --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So, we moved from there and gave a lot of the Mustangs to the South Koreans.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And they sent us over to Tachikawa in Japan and we went to the school, the Transitional School there for jet traffic, jet air craft. And I transitioned into an F84. Now

an F86 had wings come back this way. The F84 was one of the first jets, so it had straight -- and that didn't last long and they sent me back to the States. I went ahead and went into another training facility.

(KMH) - Wow, no break? Oh, I mean --

(OKA) - Well, yeah. You always had a break.

(KMH) - But I mean --

(OKA) - Most of the time when the breaks was offered, I didn't take them because I was enjoying -- but anyways it's just that one part. I don't want -- I'm not going to talk about it.

(KMH) - Right, right. Okay. Okay. Could you back up a little bit, when you were in your tents then, what did you do if it was raining and you weren't on a mission? What did you do? Just -- did you have K-Rations?

(OKA) - Sleep.

(KMH) - Sleep, yeah.

(OKA) - Sleep or drink beer.

(KMH) - I see.

(OKA) - And if the weather was going to be a day or two long, you was out chasing women.

(KMH) - I see. Are you not going to talk about that part either?

(OKA) - I liked to have a good time on that! (Laughter)

(Laughter)

(OKA) - But that was the feeling when you got down to it. You're in combat, you got three choices. You're either flying; you're not flying, or you're drinking and chasing women.

(KMH) - I see.

(OKA) - Okay. You look at drinking. Now some of the guys got loaded up. My upbringing didn't allow that, but I had my share of the beer.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(OKA) - And without a doubt, I had my fun when I was chasing the women.

(KMH) - Yeah?

(OKA) - You know . . .

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - And so you had the typical -- Okay, that's enough about that.

(Laughter)

(OKA) - I mean, you're a lady and you don't need to hear . . .

(KMH) - (Laughter) I told you, it's your interview! (Laughter) Tell me about contact from home at that time.

(OKA) - Excuse me?

(KMH) – The -- tell me about -- what was your contact from home?

(OKA) - My mother mostly and most guys –

[BREAK FOR DISCUSSION OF SCHEDULING]

(OKA) - Oh, mother would write probably twice a week. I got one letter from my dad all the time that I was in the service. He was just the one that – he'd got to get out in the field. We farmed up north of Gano.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(OKA) - It was north of Garden City.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(OKA) – And I had two brothers at home, but I got one letter from him and I still treasure that letter.

(KMH) - Yes, yes.

(OKA) - Cuz it's one -- and I had a sister in the Philippines that was married to an Air Force tech and I heard from him and my sister in Cincinnati -- I don't know if I ever heard from her. My brother Jack, I don't recall. My brother Charlie. I probably got one. I know I got one from Charlie, because we took a -- in 1955, they had a typhoon that hit Iwo Jima and I had two brothers who was on Iwo . . .

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - And I took a cargo with troops in there to make rehab and when I wrote home and told them – 'cuz it wasn't classified at that time, you know.

(KMH) – Right.

(OKA) - And so Charlie, my brother Charlie wrote me a letter and wanted to know, you know, what it was like, what the beaches was like. Suribachi is it -- wanted to know if the area was roped off, which it was.

(KMH) – Right.

(OKA) - You know this is -- this path has been cleared. Don't go in here . . .

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - It's unsafe. You know there's a lot munitions that were stored in Mt. Suribachi.

(KMH) – Right.

(OKA) - There was still a lot of . . .

(KMH) – Right.

(OKA) - Booby traps that was around --

(KMH) - Right, right.

(OKA) - All of this and there's old weaponry around. You left it lay because it was booby trapped. It could go off. We had people -- you got up a sign, that said "Do not enter." You know, dangerous, blah blah blah, and if they went in, they'd find something; they'd pick it up and then -- well, that was the end of us, you know.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - Somebody had to go back in there and bring them out.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - But Iwo was a dangerous place. They leveled it out and made a B29 base for emergency when they was bombing Japan. So we go to see Iwo and what Charlie saw, what Pat saw, all of that was gone in 1950. What Charlie saw and what I saw was that -- all I could tell him was here is the beach. Suribachi is on the south side of the island which looks like a pork chop, you know, and . . .

(KMH) – Yes.

(OKA) - That's the only thing I could relate to him, but the mere fact, that I got to be there . . .

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - Where they had been, you know --

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - And they fought it, you know. To me, that was -- Yes, I was kind of cocky, you know, I had my tail feathers sticking up in the air and --

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - I was proud of the fact.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - But that was a typhoon that pretty much tore it up in 1955.

(KMH) – Wow.

(OKA) - And we was down there for 45 days.

(KMH) – Wow.

(OKA) - So from there, I went back to Japan and they transitioned me back into F84s and that was just routine training -- you know, targets and then they sent me back to the states and I went to McLaughlin down in Texas and served as an instructor in T28s for a little over a year or something like that. By 1959 I think I left Laughlin and they sent me back to Japan, and I was over there for two years and flew recon over North Korea. We wasn't supposed to go over China, but then we all did, you know. Inevitably we did -- I did see the river. So easily, we went over maybe, five or 10 miles and we were alerted in the F84 by radar in the aircraft -- you know that we gotta come up, and we turned around and hauled -- excuse me, and left. So that was one of the things we did for quite a while in Japan. Then they sent us up to Yokota and they transitioned into C46s. That's -- was a World War II cargo plan, bigger than the C47. And I flew a little bit in that and they sent us back to the states and we got to Hickam in Hawaii and -- I liked Hawaii, you know. I guess I lied a lot and then pulled some wool over some eyes. Anyway, I got to stay in Hawaii for eighteen months.

(KMH) - Really?

(OKA) - Yeah at the -- that's where I learned to really -- pile it up. (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter) So, did you go in the office or were you still flying when you were in Hawaii for eighteen months?

(OKA) - I was still flying. I transitioned there into a C97 which is a four engine air craft. It was a modification of a B29 and I transitioned into that and flew right seat, co-pilot on that for about a year, a little over a year and a half, I think it was.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And then they had a call in 1960 -- no, the rest from 1959 until 1963 when the Cuban crisis came up. I mean it was just routine. I mean, we were flying and filling in

time and we were called in and went to MacDill in F82s. Now that is what they called a twin Mustang.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - They were in the process of phasing them out, but they still two squadrons of them, and I volunteered into the F82 during the Cuban crisis. And, that being over, I couldn't stand the idea of being state side duty, you know, and so, I volunteered for the Far East, South East Asia.

(KMH) – Hum.

(OKA) - And they sent me to Saigon, That's where we landed, and I got assigned to the 50 --- Uh, 25th Fighter Group, squadron, the first fighter group, and that's where we had the AH1s That was a Navy plane developed in World War II, propeller driven, but it would carry the world in it., I mean it, I carried 10, 250-pound bombs and two, 150-gallon gas tanks, plus I carried six machine guns, 50-caliber machine guns.

(KMH) – Wow.

(OKA) - That's the kind of airplane it -- but it was developed, designed for close air support.

(KMH) - I see.

(OKA) - And so I flew that over there for a little over 127 mission and I came back to the States at Travis Air Force Base in routine military duty. And then you, you keep up your flying time that they had. I had a secondary job as a maintenance officer, and the guys out on the line that knew -- doing the maintenance, they knew the site more than what I knew.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - But there had to be an officer there to say, "You got it done." They say, "Yeah," so you signed it off, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - If it wasn't done, it was my tail that was in a sling.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So, that went on, I think, for almost two years, and I was in the point I was thinking about, you know, I've had it. This is nothing but I had a commanding officer who was a Lieutenant Colonel, and he called me in one day and he was chewing on my butt because I was lackluster, you know, and he said, "You've got a choice." By choice he says "You can go to South East Asia." I said, "I'll go." He said, "Don't you want to hear the rest of it?" I said, "No, I'll go. Well," I said, "tell me something. What was it?" He said,

“Well, we was going to let you go. Let you discharge,” I said “No, I’ll go to South East Asia.” So that was my second tour.

(KMH) - Oh my.

(OKA) - South East Asia and I was over there -- I extended for 90 days after the initial tour and I flew the A1H aircraft. That’s the one I’m telling you about that had all the bombs and all that.

(KMH) – Oh, okay. That big one.

(OKA) - And I moved from that into the O2s which is an observation and O1. The O1 was a 170, military version of a Cessna 170 civilian airplane.

(KMH) – Hum.

(OKA) - So I flew them for the extension, the 20 days that I volunteered to stay. So it was just things like this that you try to run back and cap some of these things. You get in the air just where you, oh heck, get bored, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - It’s not an activity -- we was putting up with a political situation that was affecting the military in ways that -- guys were getting disgusted. They cut our flying time and when they cut our flying time, they were losing experience, losing our edge if you will.

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah.

(OKA) - And some of the guys did quit.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - But the Panama thing was just a very like nothing to worry about, and it was not – I’m even going to take the time to talk about it because it’s just --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - It was in and out, but in a -- I might be jumping ahead. If I am, I’ll give you the opportunity to ask questions. In 1979 they said, “That’s it.” I was a Lieutenant Colonel at that time, and I had a chance to go to Leavenworth and to go to school to learn all the administrative horse hockey.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And I could stay in and go on into flag rank -- that’s colonel, generals and all that.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Or, I could stay and do what I was doing, but lieutenant colonel, that's it. No more. So I was a lieutenant colonel for about seven years, and when they brought me up and they did the interview, "Do you want to go? You've got a chance. You can go to Leavenworth," and I had to think. "No, I'll just stay where I am." Well you know that your time is up.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Now, people put glory into flying, and, yeah it's nice to go out and fly. You don't have to worry about anybody shooting at you or getting an airplane and going out and flying around the country here, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - You can lower it and let the breeze blow through. I mean that's all great.

(KMH) - Yeah. Take a break.

(OKA) - Sorry about that.

(KMH) - You're all right. You take your time. This is quite a story for, let's see here, you have six . . .

(OKA) - You got any questions?

(KMH) - 25 years, 28 years, that's a huge chunk of your life.

(OKA) - Nah, I counted it as 29 but whatever it is, you know it's --

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah, 29 years.

(OKA) - You got any questions? I mean, I just, I gotta' back off a little bit.

(KMH) - Okay. How -- So, when you first were in Korea, about how old were you?

(OKA) - I was 20.

(KMH) - Early 20s.

(OKA) - Well it was 1952 so I was 20 years old, you know.

(KMH) - Yeah.

(OKA) - You had -- everybody says -- if you was born in 1931 they start counting my age in there, you can't -- when you come out of the chute, you weren't a year old until -- you had to wait in 1932, so I guess that's where confusion comes in

(KMH) - Oh.

(OKA) - You follow me?

(KMH) - Oh, yeah. One. Yeah. Yeah.

(OKA) - You got to be out a year before you're a year old.

(KMH) - Yeah, before you get to be a year.

(OKA) - Yeah, so I was 21.

(KMH) - Yeah.

(OKA) - Full of it -- vim and vigor!

(KMH) - Yeah, that's right.

(OKA) - You know -- I'm not going to die! You're not going to shoot me down! I did get shot down. I think I told you about it, didn't I?

(KMH) - No. You did get shot down?

(OKA) - Yeah, I got shot down.

(KMH) - Oh, I thought you said you didn't.

(OKA) - Yeah I got shot down. I got hit in the radiator. It was a liquid cooled engine and it had an air scoop underneath that brought the air up and cooled it. This was a radiator, but on ground fire it got hit on one of the cooling lines. It punched a hole, and the hole was you know, like punching a hole in car radiator.

(KMH) - Sure.

(OKA) - It's going to leak out.

(KMH) - Sure.

(OKA) - And it leaked out, 'cuz it's under pressure. It's under 210 pounds of pressure. So it pushed it out, and the engine slowed up and quit. I was too low to bail out, so I called what they -- I did what they call a "zoomie," you know, 'cuz I had air speed. I wanted to get as much altitude as I could . . .

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(OKA) - But when you bail out, you got to have at least 700 feet.

(KMH) - Wow.

(OKA) - Or three seconds.

(KMH) – Wow.

(OKA) - Because you don't want to chance getting tangled up 'cuz your shot getting back in there -- so I was too low, and I had to ride it in -- to come in --

(KMH) – Oh.

(OKA) - So, what I knew then, excuse me --

(KMH) - Was this in Korea?

(OKA) – Yeah.

(KMH) – Okay.

(OKA) - Um, I knew I had to ride it in, 'cuz I couldn't bail out of it. It was too low. If I had bailed out, you know, the chute wouldn't have had time to open, and I would've been a dead duck. So I opened the canopy, and -- what did what they call it -- ride the tail stall. Normally an air plane comes in to land like this.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - I came in, carried the tail --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - as low as I could, as long as I could, and I'd slowed up enough that when I hit the ground while the airplane, the scoop underneath the airplane --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - wanted to dig in. I wasn't going to fast enough, you know, where it dug in and flipped me over.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(OKA) – Which usually happened.

(KMH) – Right.

(OKA) - And because I had the canopy open and the airplane was kind of wrecked -- if it had been closed, I might have had a hell of a time getting that canopy open and getting out.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - So I got out. I was on our side of the lines.

(KMH) - Oh good.

(OKA) - Then some of the Marines or the Army, whatever was there -- had them both -- they used an anti-tank weapon to shoot the airplane, to blow it up, so there's nothing there that, if we had to go back, North Koreans get a hold of.

(KMH) – Right.

(OKA) - It wasn't worth repairing anyway.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) – Yeah. So that was --

(KMH) – Wow. So they just blew it up?

(OKA) – Pardon?

(KMH) - Then how did you get back to your unit?

(OKA) - The troops, I mean, they rescued me and a jeep took me back to an O1 landing strip observation high way. And he picked me up and he took me back to K14.

(KMH) – Wow.

(OKA) – And I got back there and did a debriefing and managed to consume a half a bottle of scotch, and I got sobered up enough the next day that I was on the board to go. But I wasn't scheduled to go ground sport on the -- scheduled for -- I was overhead -
-

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(OKA) - I was supporting them, guarding them.

(KMH) - Good, good.

(OKA) - So, interesting life, when you get in the military. But the hurt -- you don't know what it's like to --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - To see the people that you killed, I mean.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Now I look back at it . . .

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Then, it didn't make any difference.

(KMH) - Right, right.

(OKA) - That was our job.

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah.

(OKA) - But now that I look back -- I dropped napalm. I had the napalm tank under each wing; I had a two second delay. I dropped this and two seconds later I dropped this one, and that was kind of a liquefied gas that detonated and it spread out . . .

(KMH) - Uh hum

(OKA) - And it consumed all the oxygen. It burned everything in its path.

(KMH) - Wow. Yeah, yeah, let me ask you this. That's -- Did the Army provide, or I mean, the Air Force, did the service provide, um, at that time, because I know they do now, when you came back, was there support for that?

(OKA) - Yeah, they sent us, what they call rest and recreation. They sent us to Japan.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(OKA) - Most of the time they sent us up to Tachikawa, a short ways from Tokyo, and after they'd go to Yokohama, some of the bigger towns.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And you know, what a guy did, I mean I don't have to tell you this --

(KMH) - Uh hum. Uh hum.

(OKA) - What we did, we usually had a week to ten days that we could do whatever we wanted to do, and kind of gave us a new outlook on life. I mean we looked up, you know, we felt good. We got rejuvenated.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - We ate steak and C-rations, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - We drank scotch instead of our beer and stayed --

(KMH) - Uh hum

(OKA) - So, yeah. That came after ever 20 missions. They gave it to you or if you were shot down, why you took 30 days.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So when I got shot down, I got 30 days of whatever I want to do in Japan. Hey, get on the train, I could go to Yokohama. I could go to Hiroshima. I could go to Nagasaki. I could go to Yokota. I could go anywhere, to see the country, and I mean it's free.

(KMH) - Uh hum. Uh hum

(OKA) - I could wear civilian clothes.

(KMH) - Uh hum, and did ya'?

(OKA) - You damn right I did!

(KMH) - (Laughter) I was getting that . . .

(OKA) - Yes.

(KMH) - Yeah.

(OKA) - Well, you knew the time was getting short.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Some guys had the attitude if -- well they're walking their last mile. I don't want to go back. There were some guys deserted.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And there was other guys that, well okay, I gotta go. We all fit that category, you know. I mean it --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Report in to dispatch at Tachikawa and catch a flight back to -- at this time, they had sent us up to K40 which was north and east of Seoul.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - 'Cuz they'd been flying out of K14 which is on the west side of Seoul.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So they loaded us up and they sent us back over there. We flew routine in the - that's what it was, you know, recon missions.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Keeping our flying time up, doing our target practice -- you know, engaging in fake combat with Navy aircraft. We flew a lot of missions with them. We were co-mingled.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And it had to be, and there was a lot of rivalry, you know. I mean Marines. There was you're a lady, and us fly boys -- you're still a lady.

(Laughter)

(OKA) - And there was a Navy and, you're still a lady.

(KMH) - (Laughter) I think I'm gonna have to step out.

(OKA) - (Laughter) No, no!

(KMH) - My dad was a Marine and he would tell stories that my mother would make us leave the room. (Laughter) I think he must've been around that time too.

(OKA) - Well, there was a rivalry, but when you got down to it, you know, I mean it -- when I went in I had the Marine Corps Aires that was flying cover.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - He made sure that the North Koreans weren't getting close.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And then I walked over and they got the jeep, and that's when the Marines -- I think it was the Marines, they used anti-tank weapon, you know, to fire a rocket into the airplane and they used a well, what I meant -- it was an explosive, but it was -- incendiary, so it would burn.

(KMH) - Uh hum

(OKA) - So I had the world of experience in that state side duty. I liked it overseas. I went in to Germany in 1960 -- what was it? 1961 and in Germany I flew into Greece. I flew in to England which was a common. I was in and out of Spain, North Africa, Tripoli, Bengasi, and then Cairo. I was in various places in Africa. This is when I transitioned to cargo air craft. I mean they had those planes. I was in South Africa, Johannesburg. I was in Bengasi, Tripoli.

(KMH) - Wow.

(OKA) - I've been in to Israel three or four times; Lebanon, I did a lot of flying there in the Mediterranean and Europe.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - I didn't do all that much in the Pacific. Japan was a point of -- now I did volunteer, but was not accepted for transition training into the B-52.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - But prior to that, prior to going back to Japan, they had the B47 -- the first -- you remember that?

(KMH) - No, but --

(OKA) - Well, it was the first jet bomber --

(KMH) - Oh okay.

(OKA) -- -- operational jet. Okay. I volunteered for that and I wasn't accepted 'cuz the cooler had been filed up. I'd have to wait, you know, until the next class.

(KMH) -- Oh.

(OKA) - And I was anxious.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So, I volunteered down for the new B52 coming across, and they had the same problem. They had more candidates than what they needed, you know, 'cuz aircraft was only coming off the line I think -- two weeks, something like that so, so, I flew a miscellaneous air craft pretty much the same all around, but I did have the opportunity you know, to go into west Africa, Nigeria, Liberia. Got into Ghana; got in to Sudan at that time. Been into Ethiopia, of course. Egypt, then into Jordan, Saudi Arabia. I gotta tell you about Saudi Arabia. One time -- over there, they have their public executions. They did at that time, did it on Friday afternoon. That's when they do their thing, and I was down town Riyadh along with a couple of other guys, and they was having a public execution, so we thought -- well hey. It really wasn't encouraged to watch, but you know. They wasn't going to take a -- so we mingled over there and watched and we seen this one guy coming up and he put his left hand, right here, and a big ole guy had to -- he looked like something out of King Arthur's time with the big axe --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) -- - cut off his hand. He was a thief. The medic was right there to take care, you know, to sew it up, you know, but he had no left hand. That's how they disposed of thieves. They also had public beheadings. Now I didn't see one. I did not see one 'cuz when I saw that, I . . . Bluuh . . .

(KMH) -- Yeah.

(OKA) - I lost it, you know.

(KMH) – Wow.

(OKA) - But they had public executions. They had hangings, public executions. We saw bodies still hanging by the rope and it turned us away from even going into town. Now they moderated, modified their attitude over it a little bit, but how much? Remember that's 1979, but I've been gone, so I don't know. But in Southeast Asia -- the culture, I'm talking about -- Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma -- all that -- It's -- at that time, it was so primitive. I mean it was -- taking another life meant nothing.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - It was very tribal.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) – Encroachments -- you said something against my family --

(KMH) - Oh yeah?

(OKA) – -- where they used the spear, or they had a lot of blow guns over there at that time. They had a lot of bow and arrows. You get up at highlands and that's what they had up there. You know, I mean it. We didn't -- as long as we were in uniform, we had no problem, but of course, being in a combat zone, you didn't wear civilian clothes.

(KMH) – Right.

(OKA) – But they were very cruel to themselves and their families.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Almost like the Muslims and there were a lot of Muslims there -- the daughters, was all pre-arranged marriages, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And pre-arranged sexual encounters, this sort of thing. And if a daughter misbehaved -- I'll leave it that way 'cuz you're here.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - She was cast out. You know how she made her living. That's her problem, of course. They turned to prostitution and narcotics usually they did.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So they were very primitive over there, very, very brutal beatings. In the military, their military, if you had any rank at all, they could take it out on you, you know. I've got one more stripe than you do, I can slap the crap out of you, or do whatever, you know, it was almost like the Japanese in World War II. I mean that.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) – But that too was starting to change when I left that part of the world.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - But the most, thing that gets to me, as I look back now, it, people --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) – - that I killed, you know --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - I, I don't know if I could do it today or not. I say that if they needed me, I'd go back, but I don't know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - You don't understand.

(KMH) - Yeah, it's almost impossible. I think it's an experience you can't --

(OKA) - It's okay.

(KMH) - You know Orville, when I think of -- you were a 21 year old kid, really, even at 21, you were a kid. You grew up in Kansas. I think in a lot of those years -- that's why I think about that for such a formative time of your life. Everything was unfamiliar and different, and you thought you knew what flying was about. But that's how you grew up and you -- I hear you say these things about the world, and I think, oh my gosh, that was a kid that went there and flew that plane, you know?

(OKA) - That's why the guys now are having a hard time of it -- lack of support from now on and the activities and actions of the federal government and the research that they put on them. We had restrictions put on us, you know. They go on in -- the jet jocks had a lot of problems because they were designated a route. The same thing, it's like you got one route from the west coming into Cimarron.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - North Vietnamese -- they do it, you know, and this is what they set up. You see that line of trucks down there, but your mission was not to get the trucks. Your mission was something else -- a power plant, so you had to fly right on by and they was shooting them down by the dozens.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - You had to go in at a certain altitude at a certain speed. Politics, that's the thing I was getting at -- trying to get at. It's how it destroyed a lot of good military people.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - I think about -- sounds silly to you but, I think about the guys that I flew with.

(KMH) - You're all right. You take your time.

(OKA) - I don't mean to be a bawl baby.

(KMH) - Hey you know what? You deserve to be a bawl baby after a certain time of life, you get to be it. These were hard things.

(OKA) - Oh you know, it affects the way that I react on the city council there. I don't say much as long as everything is going along, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - There's no point in three or four people saying the same thing, you know.

(KMH) - Right.

(OKA) - So I just shut up, you know, and okay.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And I occasionally I make a comment, but I try to wake up -- I have, sleeping problems.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And I have to take medication to sleep.

(KMH) - Uh hum. Let me ask you something kind of off on that -- were there friendships you made from that time that have stayed with you?

(OKA) - Just one.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(OKA) - We tried to avoid close friendships.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - If you had somebody in your flight, that you were real close to, and it had become aware at headquarters, you know, they moved one of you to another tent.

(KMH) - Oh.

(OKA) - They moved one of you to another flight.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - They discouraged close because when you lost a good friend --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) -- -- that you went out drinking with and whoring around with, the whole nine yards you know --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - It affected your attitude when you come in to a combat zone, yeah.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So they discouraged all of that.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So, that was from that period of time, but, the state side period of time, yes, I got a good friend that we stayed in contact with. He lives up here at Natoma, Kansas, and he was the last one I had when I was separated from Mt. Home Air Force Base in Idaho.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Yes you had the intermediate friends when you was in Tokyo or you was in another place of R&R, you know. Y -- it was kind of like, "Hey, what'd ya doin?" "Oh I don't know." "Ya thirsty?" "Yeah, let's go get a beer," "By the way, what's your name?"

(KMH) -- Oh.

(OKA) - You know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - You really didn't -- you bonded more to the organization and to your air craft, and the mission. I mean that's the thing that you really bonded in. You take 'em and had your wingman got to bail out, your first impulse is to give him cover, all the way down, but you can't do it.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - You got a mission profile that you've got to follow all you can do --If you're tired, emotionally --

(KMH) -- Yeah.

(OKA) - The close friendship, it ruins the integrity, of the balance of the, of the flight.

(KMH) - Right, right.

(OKA) - So you gotta put out of your mind that man may be dead before he ever hits the ground.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Or he may go to POW camp.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So they tried to discourage them close --

(KMH) - I see.

(OKA) - That's it.

(KMH) - I see.

(OKA) - I can stand another bottle of water if you've got it.

(KMH) - Hey you bet. We do. Were you single all that time?

(OKA) - Yes.

(KMH) - Thank goodness. (Laughter)

(OKA) - I didn't get married till --

(KMH) - On behalf of your wife -- (Laughter)

(OKA) - Well, my wife. I didn't get married until 1970 and I had a good friend by the name Ronnie. -- what was his last name? In Garden, and Ronnie died. Ronnie died of a heart attack at 38 years old. I'd been friends with him you know, and I -- His kids, his youngest daughter was just a little more than a toddler. He had four, and I don't know, I just took a liking to him when I was home on leave. You know, we kept in correspondence and Ronnie passed away and I kept in contact with my wife and two kids, you know, this sort of thing. In 1970, I was home on leave to visit them and, while they were getting along, they were struggling.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Struggling very hard, so anyway, we got married. The bad part of that was that, my next duty station, I couldn't take them with me.

(KMH) - Oh.

(OKA) - So I had to leave them there. Okay. That's fine. Ronnie's parents was there. He had a brother that was still there and the kids were going to school, so it wasn't as if they was left out in some place they had never been.

(KMH) – Right.

(OKA) - I mean, they had that. And so we got back together a couple of times before I retired, and when I was up in Idaho, they were in Garden City, and that was part of the reason that I said, you know, I don't want to go on with education. I've had it up to here.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - I've regretted that ever since, but there again, I loved it. I loved the uniform. I loved what I was doing. I wasn't ready to quit and I think that they called me today, which they won't, you know that, I would --

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - I'd go back and do it, but the ensuing years from 1980 -- I'm going to back up a little bit. Them years between 1970 and 1980 weren't all that great, you know.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - I mean it was duty style and that's what it was.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - You got any questions, go ahead and ask them.

(KMH) - No, I've been asking them.

(OKA) - You know anything he -- or if he's got any questions, you know.

(KMH) - Yeah,, I think -- I guess -- if you think back on your life, that's such a huge part of your life, what do you think is the, central thing you learned from it, or what would you say, if I had to sum up my life in the military, this would be it, this is what I figured out there.

(OKA) - That's kind of hard to answer 'cuz there's two phases to it. One of them you learn is humility, and humility comes when you have the opportunity and look back and see the damage you've done and you get thinking about it. The second thing is adverse, not adverse, but advanced hostility, hostility comes because you have got -- just remember, when you got a hold of the stick in that airplane, it's you and the airplane, whatever happens. It depends on you, and you looking at everything with a hostile eye because everything you see out there in the combat zone is wanting to put you down there.

(KMH) – Right.

(OKA) - So you look at all of them as enemies and when you, you --

(KMH) – Yeah.

(OKA) - You have uh -- pets or not. [Pause] They had a lot of Vietnamese civilians come in. They did the laundry and the housekeeping, made up the bunks and all of that, and you looked at them with a hostile eye, a suspicious eye because what was making your bed that morning could be that night, he's throwing a hand grenade in there. So you looked at them as very much on guard, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - I mean you didn't, you did not feel at ease, even at the cat houses, which I mean were numerous. I had these much reservation. You might think I'm bullshitting you to an extent. Pretty much a Puritan would not lived over there. I didn't want to be in a position where I contacted something, whether it was through sexual encounters or whether it was out in the jungles, something, I didn't want something to take away what I was doing.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) – 'Cuz I loved it. There was a lot of guys just like me. They loved it, you know. I mean --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - That's their life.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And it was my life.

(KMH) - Uh hum. Um hum.

(OKA) – So --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - I look back at my training days and I remember three of us went before the cadet selection over there at Williams Air Force Base. That's where I went just as soon as I got out of boot camp, and they took us in one at a time for interview. I almost blew it. They had two lieutenant colonels and a colonel on the board. A lady is present, so I can't -- When they asked me the question, "What kind of a pilot I would become," and it's not fit for her to hear it -- I mean I just blurted it out, and they had to talk --

(Laughter)

(OKA) - And I kind of stuttered a little bit, and I said "Well, I'll probably be the best of the best" and they said, "Sound a little over confident!" I guess that's what they thought, but

they was very much taken back by my first reply, and I thought about it a lot of times, and when they [whispering].

(Laughter)

(OKA) - Anyway they approved. That was a big thing, but they had me worried there for a little bit, you know.

(KMH) - Uh huh

(OKA) - I thought, "Oh boy, I blew it," you know. I've always been pretty much outspoken, sometimes to the point that I don't think enough before I --

(Laughter)

(OKA) -- answer your question, and that was one of them that had the opportunity, but I think probably in retrospect, it did me more good. It showed determination. I graduated in the top 15% of the class you know. Okay. What's the big deal? Top 15%. There was only 13 of us in there so, not even one of us -- so, anyway, I had a good time at it, at the end. I flew the aircraft. I wore the uniform. I've still got my uniform. I can still wear it.

(KMH) -- Wow.

(OKA) - I went to the -- after I got out. I did recruiting duty for the Air Force right there in Garden City.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - They had a little visitor center . . .

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - I did recruiting duty there for I think -- what was it -- for five or six years, you know.

(KMH) -- Wow.

(OKA) - And I bought myself a new dress blues that --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Not that I've wore it. I just, wanted one, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Some people, they want a pocket knife, and they don't use it.

(KMH) - Right, right.

(OKA) - They just want a pocket knife. Okay I've got it. They stay clean. They stay covered up, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - It's a -- I'm proud of it.

(KMH) - Uh hum. Uh hum.

(OKA) - And when I think back how few of us in comparison to the number of us in this country have actually worn a uniform.

(KMH) - Right.

(OKA) - You know.

(KMH) - Right.

(OKA) - And that means something to me --

(KMH) - Yes.

(OKA) - But not too long ago I got into -- I'm 82 years old -- came close to fist cuffs, 'cuz some son of a gun -- I kept, kept it clean! -- was offering disparaging remarks about our flag, and I hustled up to him like a bulldog, and I guess that's why he backed off, you know. I mean, hey, you gotta -- anyway, he retracted his marks. Again, not fit for a woman to hear.

(KMH) - Wow.

(OKA) - So, go ahead with any questions you may have.

(KMH) - Um I guess I have --

(OKA) - You know I mean other -- I can ramble about things but, yeah I know that the interview has to have more substance than this.

(KMH) - I don't know. I think it's a great interview, don't you? Yeah, tell me about coming back, what was that transition like after all that?

(OKA) - I'm glad you asked that, because when we came back from Vietnam the second time we encountered -- you've heard about the programs. A lot of guys switched into civilian clothes when they landed for refuel at Hickam. But knowing max air craft was 141 or C97 it landed in Travis more than likely, personnel on there was returning, military personnel, and all these -- out there --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Are cocked and primed and ready and going out, they had the rotten tomatoes. They had the rotten cabbage heads or lettuce heads. They threw eggs, all kind of stuff. There was even some that had taken a condom and had put -- urinated in it, you know. And they tied it like a balloon. As you walked by they had it in their hands and they would have it back here and they'd throw it. Yeah, we had all that.

(KMH) - Really?

(OKA) - Oh yes.

(KMH) - And that was where?

(OKA) - It was right there. They was outside the gate where we caught the bus to go to Oakland or San Francisco or, wherever you know, for departure. And whatever they had in their hands, they threw them. And all kind of remarks, of course. The ones you heard was the baby killers you know, and --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - Which hurt everybody, more than anything else, you know, because there's -- better than not, but the whole thing is, it wasn't our choice. Well it was mine, but for the most part, it wasn't our choice to be there, to be involved.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And the happenings that happened there -- yes, when you get into warfare, you get into combat, you get where firearms are going off, there are going to be innocent people killed, but at the same time, you could not tell whether this guy that made your bed in the morning was a Vietcong at night.

(KMH) - Right.

(OKA) - And that's where you come in with this suspicion, the hostility.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And yes there was little ones, I mean it's -- it's -- it's. Wow.

(KMH) - Hum.

(OKA) - So that's a bad part of the thing. The first time I come back from Vietnam, I landed at Travis, got off the airplane, walked out, got a cab, and went to Oakland. No problem. That was in 1965. The second time in 1968 was when we -- and, to this day, maybe this sounds kind of harsh, but of all the people that I know, and of those that I know, show disrespect to the flag, if they come to my door, bleeding and wanting a glass of water, I would kick them out. I have no mercy.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - So, in the other -- in times in other places in the world I've been most of them were -- I flew in on mercy relief, something of that nature, I took in --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - diplomatic personnel. There's stops for re-fuel or something, and I had a lot of opportunities to explore Europe.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - I learned the Japanese language. I took time to learn that.

(KMH) - Wow.

(OKA) - Today, if one come through the door, and we started talking, I don't think she'd be able to understand me 'cuz I haven't had anybody to talk to.

(KMH) - Right.

(OKA) - Over the years, and you know --

(KMH) - (Japanese) *Hi! Domo origato*. That's it, for me (Laughter)

(OKA) - (Laughter) But I've forgotten so much. I've had to. I mean there's no opportunity to have anybody here -- Oh when was it -- two, three years ago -- some folks, one of them could speak English, hardly speak but get across. I was walking up the house, and they, stopped by and they were asking, you know, how to get to Pueblo, Colorado, and recognized the language right away. I tried to talk to them and, you know. (Laughter) So, I got 'em. I got 'em straightened out, you know, as to --

(KMH) - Yeah.

(OKA) - How they could get there.

(KMH) - Oh wow.

(OKA) - I appreciate these little opportunities here. I'm -- there's a lot more to the history of it that. I -- some of it might be of interest -- a lot of it would be of interest.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(OKA) - And there's some of it there that -- just don't want to talk about it, okay?

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah. I really appreciate your doing this. I do. It's really a fascinating story, and, you know you think of it as not significant but even like your story of coming back and the difference from '65 to '68 that's really a story that is the real history, you know. It's not what it says on paper, but it's the real history.

(OKA) - Well you wonder why it ever had to be, but I mean that's a question. Why, why did it have to be that way? Why do we have to have that kind of activities starting out there in Ohio and then, spreading? Why?

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah. Why do you think it had to happen?

(OKA) – I think that we just had -- I think it was not the same kind of war. I think -- let's take this one off the record.

Note: After the interview, Mr. Anstaett stated that he felt good after the interview and may have other stories to tell at a later date.