

# Gray County Veterans Memorial & Archive

## ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

**Donald R. Dunham**

August 23, 2014



INTERVIEW  
YEAR

Donald R. Dunham  
2014

## GRAY COUNTY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Donald R. Dunham

DATE: August 23, 2014

PLACE: 202 Moore Street, Copeland KS 67837  
(Dunham residence)

INTERVIEWER: Kathleen Holt

TECHNOLOGY: George Martinez

PROJECT SERIES: Korean Era Oral History Project for  
Gray County



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### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Donald Dunham was born in a house in Copeland, Kansas, July 22, 1936. He lived in Copeland all of his life except for the two years he was in the service from July 1959 – May 1961. He served in the 6<sup>th</sup> Artillery, A Battery of the U.S. Army and achieved the rank of SP4.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Being a cannoneer, firing a mounted howitzer, driving a 27-ton tank; the military after Korea; military food.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:** Mr. Dunham was recovering from heart surgery. We thank him for taking the time for this interview. His wife Karen was present for the interview.

SOUND RECORDINGS: Digital

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 53:36

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: None

TRANSCRIPT: 26 pages

**ORAL HISTORY**  
**Donald R. Dunham**  
**Interview Date: August 23, 2014**

**Interviewer: Kathleen Holt (KMH)**  
**Interviewee: Donald R. Dunham (DRD)**  
**Sound Technician: George Martinez**

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**(GM)** - Slight test, if you can just, uh, speak, you don't have to speak towards the microphone, uh . . .

**(DRD)** – Yeah.

**(GM)** - It's really sensitive, so if you just speak to her. . .

**(DRD)** – Okay.

**(GM)** - It should pick it up . . .

**(KMH)** - Just tell me uh, you were born here in Copeland?

**(DRD)** – Yeah.

**(KMH)** - Were you born in a house, hospital?

**(DRD)** - Yeah, well house in town here, actually.

**(KMH)** - Uh huh, out in a farm house. Uh huh, were your parents -- did they come here, or were they born here?

**(DRD)** - Uh, dad was, uh, originally from Oklahoma, and mom was uh, right north of town here, Jesse Lawson's daughter.

**(KMH)** – Oh, Okay. Oh, Okay.

**(DRD)** - See there was, quite – 14 or 16 of them.

**(KMH)** – Wow.

**(DRD)** - There was three -- I come from a pretty good size family.

**(KMH)** - Yeah, was your dad's family that big?

**(DRD)** - No, there was only, let's see, five.

**(KMH)** - Ah, yeah.

**(GM)** - Ok, we're good.

**(KMH)** - Ok, we're recording.

**(KMH)** - Alright, I'm Kathleen Holt. I'm here today with Donald R. Dunham, of Copeland, Kansas. We're in Mister Dunham's home and we will be talking about his experience in the U.S. Army. Donald, would you go ahead and tell me who you are and what your birth date is, and where we are today, just to inform the interview.

**(DRD)** - I'm Don Dunham, I'm here at my home, and my birth date is 7/22/36.

**(KMH)** - Ok, have you lived in Copeland all your life?

**(DRD)** - All except the two years I was in the service.

**(KMH)** - Wow, so when did you go into the service? What year?

**(DRD)** - '59, I think.

**(KMH)** - Uh-huh. How old were you then, about?

**(DRD)** - Oh gosh, fifty nine, I - I suppose I was, twenty what, two or three

**(KMH)** - Huh. Did you -- what, what made you go to the service?

**(DRD)** - Well it was on a draft, I just come up for the draft.

**(KMH)** - Oh, Okay, so you got the letter?

**(DRD)** - Yeah.

**(KMH)** - What'd your mother say? Were you married? Were you living at home?

**(DRD)** - No, I had, we'd been married just short time.

**(KMH)** - Uh-oh! That must not have been pleasant, what'd your wife say?

**(DRD)** - Oh, I -- she handled it pretty good. She was working in Dodge.

**(KMH)** - Oh, Okay.

**(DRD)** - She worked for the, oh, unemployment office there.

**(KMH)** - Oh, Okay.

**(DRD)** - So she stayed with that about the first year, then she moved to Oklahoma, Lawton, Oklahoma.

**(KMH)** - Oh wow, for a job, or were you based there?

**(DRD)** - No, I was based there.

**(KMH)** – Oh Okay, so she got to go with you then.

**(DRD)** - Uh hum, yeah. She didn't work while we was in the service, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh-huh.

**(DRD)** - She has ever since.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh, well she got good experience there!

**(DRD)** - I guess.

**(KMH)** – So, tell me about getting the letter, what, what was that like and what went on there? Just describe that.

**(DRD)** - I don't really remember other than, uh, the big joke, you know was, you'd been chosen by your friends and neighbors.

*(Laughter)*

**(DRD)** - To that, I don't know which one of the friends and neighbors chose us!

*(Laughter)*

**(DRD)** - But that's, basically all I remember about it, other than I had to report in uh, you know, catch a bus in Garden City, and uh, we went to Colorado, Colorado Springs, but, I can't even remember the name of that -- anyway we started out there in -- we was going to take basic there. We was only there I think three or four days, and they didn't have a big enough roster, so they, they flew us to Fort Worth, Texas.

**(KMH)** – Oh, wow.

**(DRD)** - And, from there on well, we took a bus to basic at Fort Hood, and then after basic, well, we went to -- I went to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and went through I guess what you call cannoneer school, and oh I don't know, I'd finished it after I'd, I was, discharged from there.

**(KMH)** – So you were there the whole rest of the time and . . .

**(DRD)** - Yeah, uh hum.

**(KMH)** – Huh, and was your job, what, after that?

**(DRD)** - Well, it, they called it, you know, those cannoneers. I drove a 27-ton tank.

**(KMH)** – Oh?

**(DRD)** - And, they were um, uh, actually a mounted howitzer.

**(KMH)** – Okay.

**(DRD)** – Shelled -- it shot a 155mm, uh, projectile or shell.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** - And, it was generally, it had its fun days.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** - And, some days you'd enjoy it, but, basically I guess my attitude was bad.  
*(Laughter)*

**(KMH)** – *(Laughter)* You didn't want to be in Fort Sill?

**(DRD)** - Uh, it wasn't -- it wasn't all that bad, but you know -- the only thing that kept Lawton on the map, was the soldiers.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - And some of them, you know, was real appreciative of it, of the soldiers, but, some of them, you know . . . There were, was signs were “Dogs and soldiers keep off the grass” and that kind of stuff, you know, but, it wasn't, all that bad really.

**(KMH)** – So, do you mean there were, there were attitudes expressed like when you were in store and things?

**(DRD)** - Yeah, but you know, you have them few every, in everything you do.

**(KMH)** – Yeah.

**(DRD)** - And you know it's just, just people.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, huh, I want to back up just a little bit, um, you said you flew to Fort Hood, was that the first time you'd ever flown, or had you flown before?

**(DRD)** - Oh, basically other than just fiddling around here was, I had a friend here that, flew airplanes.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** - And uh, time or two there, but, those planes that we flew from uh, uh, Colorado to Oklahoma were junkers, I mean, I think there was three plane loads of us, and two of the three planes had problems getting down, you know, wheels wouldn't come down or something wrong with them and . . .

**(KMH)** – Really?

**(DRD)** - One of 'em come in on the fall, had, I was pretty lucky I guess. So the one I was in, had no problems, but, a couple of them was -- had problems getting in.

**(KMH)** – Hum, were they um, leftovers from World War II or?

**(DRD)** - I don't know what they were. They were military planes.

**(KMH)** – Huh, goodness, and then what was Fort Hood like? What, what happened when you got there? What, what was the process?

**(DRD)** - It was just, basic training, you know is, um, a lot of marching and dismount drill, and, you know, just trying to get you in shape.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - And uh, oh, we had a few classes and, then when uh, we got out, when I got out of that, that was in, in Oklahoma. That was all, pretty much. A lot of it was classes. In fact, you know there's times it was so hot that we, had to set up camouflage nets, you know, and sit in bleachers, for classes because it was too hot to, out in the open sun, you know.

**(KMH)** – Wow.

**(DRD)** - But, uh, we all survived.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, were you, were you in pretty good shape when you went, or was that tough?

**(DRD)** - Pretty good shape, been working on the rail rig here for Elvin Dave Lapps and . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - And, I wasn't fat and pussy like I am now but, *(Laughter)*

**(KMH)** – *(Laughter)* Um, when you went there, do you remember anything, like, of course, um, Karen didn't get to go with you, but do you remember what the food was like, what the, living in the barrack was?

**(DRD)** - Yeah, yeah, oh, there was some of the food you know was kind of bad, but most of it was, you know, pretty edible. But, the, worst thing was, they called baked chicken, and the, old cook would take a, chicken you know, and set it's legs up, and take a meat cleaver and, and, put it in half, and then he'd quarter that, and then he'd take the side of that cleaver and smash it, you know, and put it on a, like a cookie sheet and throw it in a big oven and, oh a little more than warm but . . .

**(KMH)** – Oh my gosh.

**(DRD)** - But it was, it . . . and, oh no, I complained one day I was on KP and, and uh, he said well, the chicken they got wasn't any good, you know. Well we took, I took one home one time and it was, it was plenty good!

**(KMH)** – Yeah.

**(DRD)** - It was the way it wasn't cooked, you know.

**(KMH)** – Oh man, so you got KP duty then?

**(DRD)** - Oh yeah.

**(KMH)** – Yeah?

**(DRD)** - Yeah, we had a, first sergeant that had a little trouble with the duty roster, and every time somebody go in and complain, and have a problem, well he'd just, start all over, well, my name was pretty well at the top, so I'm pretty sure I pulled more than my share of KP! *(Laughter)*

**(KMH)** – *(Laughter)* Oh no, oh no, did you peel a lot of potatoes?

**(DRD)** - Yeah, but we had a potato peeler.

**(KMH)** – Oh?

**(DRD)** - But uh, we got in trouble with that, to where -- you know, you're just supposed to run, throw them in this -- it was a big ol' stone bowl, and it spun around, and, me and another kid, decided to leave them in there, so we didn't have to pick the eyes, you know, and they were, pretty small when they come out!

**(KMH)** – *(Laughter)* New potatoes!

**(DRD)** - And, I was in trouble with that, but, uh -- the biggest thing for getting in trouble was cleaning the grease traps. You know, in the, under the sinks they had big ol' traps that trapped the grease before it went into the . . .

**(KMH)** – Oh.

**(DRD)** - Sewer system.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** - They'd get pretty bad. Uh, you know, that much stuff that they would -- had in -- You're washing dishes and stuff like that. It was not a real pleasant job, but, you knew somebody messed up enough that they kept 'em washed out pretty good.

**(KMH)** – I see, did you ever get, get latrine duty or were you always in the, in the kitchen?



**(DRD)** - Oh yeah, in, in basic we did, 'cuz they always left a, a – oh, what do they call it? The barracks guard, see . . .

**(KMH)** – Oh?

**(DRD)** - And uh, and you done all that.

**(KMH)** – Oh.

**(DRD)** - In the barracks, we was, oh, in, Fort Hood, most of the barracks were all wooden, barracks you know, they were just a, pretty much of a shell, you know. And the dirt blew through them when it was . . . but then when we got in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, well they had the, brick. We had like four, four batteries in uh, service battery, in one building.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** - One big building, and then that was all one mess hall, and uh, that was, probably, the worst KP, because, you know, you had, it lasted about all day.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, yeah, so then you would have classes, or you would have marching, or, I assume firing, did you . . .

**(DRD)** - Yeah, we had, you know, you qualify with a rifle, and uh, we had, oh, as long as we were within basic, you know, it was mostly just a rifles, and some of them just pistol deals, but, most generally it was the M-1 rifle, and uh, that's all I had done. I wasn't really a gun -- cared much about a gun, and still don't really.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - Then when we got in to, Fort Sill, well I was on those, big guns, you know, mounted guns and . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - We done -- we was in a school support outfit and we done quite a few, uh, retirement -- you know, we'd take, we had what -- a towed gun and then the self-propels, and we'd usually take, anywhere -- usually three to six of them you know, for one of those retirement parties, you know. And we'd shoot a volume of shells.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - And we went to Reese Air Force Base one time, and done -- with six guns and six trucks, and done a, retirement party for some old boy there. But, that was real good due to the, the Air Force. You could go in to the mess hall anytime you wanted to and get something to eat and, and it, they weren't real picky about what you wore to town or anything like that, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Oh.

**(DRD)** - You know, the Army, you didn't they were not in favor of just letting up your uniforms, you know!

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - And if you wore shorts, you wore short sleeved shirt or whatever, you know, that was with, that part of uniform, but the Air Force, it, they didn't care. Later pretty much, pretty lenient and, so, I don't know. I know I had a flat tire on my truck, and went in to, get it, get some patching and he said we don't patch them in here. He, throwed me a new tube and put her back together!

**(KMH)** – Oh, wow.

**(DRD)** - So, I suppose that was on the count of the air planes, more or less. You know it; you don't want to take a chance with a patched tube.

**(KMH)** – Yeah.

**(DRD)** - And so that just covered everything.

**(KMH)** – Huh.

**(DRD)** - And I guess that's the way it was all the way though the, Air Force, I didn't, I don't know, but that's pretty much. . .

**(KMH)** – Hum, hum.

**(DRD)** - The way it was there.

**(KMH)** – So were the, air force and the army base both at Fort Sill? Is that why?

**(DRD)** - No, they were just Fort Sill was mostly artillery . . .

**(KMH)** – Oh ok, but you had to go for this presentation, so you were at Air Force?

**(DRD)** - No, it was a retirement deal.

**(KMH)** – Oh I see.

**(DRD)** - See we took the guns, the big guns down there.

**(KMH)** – Yeah.

**(DRD)** - I suppose the Air Force didn't have that kind of equipment, you know.

**(KMH)** – Yeah.

**(DRD)** - For, a shoot off or whatever, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Huh. Huh.

**(DRD)** - We just, we didn't, was what they called TDY. You know it's "temporary duty." We, we went over one day and uh, I think stayed, two days and back, the next day. Yeah.

**(KMH)** – Hum, hum.

**(DRD)** - It was, in a, you know a convoy of . . .

**(KMH)** – Okay, hum. So tell me how did you get the job that you had? So did you get that at the end of basic or after that? How did they know where to send you and what to assign, what duty to assign you?

**(DRD)** - You know I don't really, uh, don't really know. Or you know, I mean, just kind of happened I guess. But I was a, I started out truck driving. I drove a truck.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - And then of course, I had a driver's license, you know, for trucks and the tanks and jeep or whatever. And I could drive any one of the vehicles. I drove for the, captain for, off and on. I was a, I guess a relief driver. Whenever the, his driver was gone, well I -- I'd drive him but, and then, oh on, some of the deals you know where they took truckloads of troops somewhere and that kind of stuff.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - Well I drove a truck, and then. . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - And I drove a, I really don't -- I was a, assistant driver on the tank, with . . . and -- then he was -- he got out and his time was up, and then I took over that tank.

**(KMH)** – Oh.

**(DRD)** - Every place one of those tanks went . . . It was a long; it was in, you know kind of motor pool area or about that area. Somebody had to walk in front of it, and so . . . That's kind of where I got started I guess, was leading that -- through the motor pool -- and then, of course we could -- we had to help with some maintenance and stuff. You were pretty well schooled on it before you ever start driving them.

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** - And . . .

**(KMH)** – Now they walked in front 'cuz they couldn't see what was in front of them?

**(DRD)** - Yeah well that and you know, make sure it wasn't going to run over somebody or something.

**(KMH)** – Oh yeah, huh.

**(DRD)** - And uh, it was very far while the jeep was in front, not a lot, when we went out to, to the range, well, there was jeep leading the convoy out in the, in, both ways.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - And, it was --

**(KMH)** – Do you have any idea what those, um, tanks or, were worth at the time?

**(DRD)** - That was in, prize tag was all over them, but I don't remember what it was.

**(KMH)** – Huh.

**(DRD)** - I really don't.

**(KMH)** – I wondered about that, what about, the shells and things like that, well, I mean, when you went out in, on a firing range, was that . . .

**(DRD)** - A lot of that was, old ammunition, you know.

**(KMH)** – Oh, Okay.

**(DRD)** – 53 model ammunition, a lot of it was 53, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Okay.

**(DRD)** - And I suppose it -- They was use, using up a lot of it. I don't know, but, see they had an am -- ammunition dump right there.

**(KMH)** – Oh Okay.

**(DRD)** - And we, I did also ammunition hauler, too but, the, sheep farmers around there, uh, kept their sheep in there. They keep the, weeds and grass down, you know.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - They couldn't mow or anything in that deal, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum. Uh hum. Oh yeah. Huh . . .

**(DRD)** - They, they pastured it with the sheep and . . .

**(KMH)** – Wow, um, so you really . . . By '59 was there talk at all, yet, about Korea? Or that was kind of passing? Was Vietnam an issue yet?

**(DRD)** - Oh, not really, and mostly it was Korea.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - And, we thought the result, that we . . . The outfit was going to go before I got out, and uh, I don't know . . . It, it was, of course. It's the worse place in the world, I guess, from rumors, but I mean. It was rumored that we was going to ship, you know, right away and, and uh, we never, got any more word from it. But, we were also in a, what they call a strike outfit, and we had 72 hours to load everything on the rail car; be ready to go. And, so we, you know, had to put all those tanks on rail, rail cars and, and, pack your duffle bag and put 'em in those canisters and everything had to be ready. And we'd done that about, probably every three months, and uh, of course it was all kind of uh . . . nobody got to excited about it because they didn't think it was really the real thing, but if it would have been, we was ready to go, I mean.

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** - It was all done, you know, the way it was supposed to be and . . .

**(KMH)** – Hum, about how many men? In that unit?

**(DRD)** - I don't remember.

**(KMH)** – Huh.

**(DRD)** - You know that, we had -- see our, like a battery was split, and we had the driver and pretty much maintenance, in the firing part of it, and then we had the FDC or fire direction center, which is, you know, in the other part.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** - Had each, each one had a, had an FDC and a firing deal. . .

**(KMH)** – Okay.

**(DRD)** - And then, they had and FDC, forward observer deal, you know that, that they had their own. . . Seems to me like they had one whole battery of, that same stuff, but, you know basically, they went out and found where you need to be, and a lot of the time we was, we would probably been, oh, anywhere from five to seven miles, from the actual action.

**(KMH)** – Okay.

**(DRD)** - And we'd shoot over the troops, you know, the ground troops, and

**(KMH)** – Okay, so FDC, is that like the, uh, person who's going to decide, what'd you call that?

**(DRD)** - Fire direction or . . .

**(KMH)** – Okay, so was it, behind you or in front of you, or both?

**(DRD)** - Oh no. They was in front, in front of us. See, they'd go up there and, and calibrate all this, and then they'd call back, to the guns, and, we'd set our sights, and fire, usually fire one round, you know to, for location, and then, then they'd fire a whole bunch or whatever.

**(KMH)** – Okay and then how did you know if you hit it?

**(DRD)** - They, they were, they had an AFO, you know, or a forward observer that . . .

**(KMH)** – Okay,

**(DRD)** - He was up far enough, where he could see what was . . .

**(KMH)** – Okay, so he went . . .

**(DRD)** - And he'd call it back to FDC and they'd compute it, and then they'd call it back to, to the tanks.

**(KMH)** – Okay. Was it -- was there a computer involved in that?

**(DRD)** – No, not, no computer at that time.

**(KMH)** – At that time, just kind of manually?

**(DRD)** – Yeah.

**(KMH)** – Hum, Okay.

**(DRD)** – In fact, just telephones, they were, you know, you had to, they was the old crank phones.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh, and what was your specific job then? Did you drive the tank?

**(DRD)** – Yeah.

**(KMH)** – So you weren't loading the . . .

**(DRD)** – Oh, you know, I'd have to help load it.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** – You know, when, I mean load the -- We had a, lazy susan type thing, in the, back, and then underneath. Well there's, you know, I don't know how much, you know, but quite a few -- and, we just, we just load whatever that, uh, activity, you know, required for.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** – I mean if they wanted us to shoot, six or ten or whatever, and he'd take, those, shells and, lay em on a tray, and pull 'em apart, and then they had bagged the powder, inside of 'em, and when, when FDC would calibrate the, distance, and then they'd call back and tell us to either shoot a, like a three or a seven, charge.

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** – And you'd pull out, like with the three, you'd pull out the difference, you know and, they were all stringed together and tare that off and, put it back together, and just shoot that.

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** – And then the, they had a, a fuse that uh, you would set, it was either time delay or air burst or whatever you wanted, whatever they was, though was (Unknown), they wanted, and . . .

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** – It was, I'm sure it would be, was modern, you know, communications and stuff, it'd be a total different deal.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – The days before I got out, well that was what, what I done was, uh, we had the old cast iron tanks, that weighed, twenty seven ton, combat loaded and they, they'd come back, they came out with uh, new aluminum, deal, by the time I got out, and so we, we run uh, comparison, races, you know, over the hills, loaded and unloaded, and, that kind of stuff, and the, aluminum ones they was so much lighter and, so much faster, but, they did have a little problem with keeping them together, you know, aluminum would strip out or break out just

**(KMH)** – Uh hum. Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – They were rough. They were full of cracks.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And they were rough riding, you know, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** – Kind of shake themselves to pieces.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, um, tell me about inside the, inside where you drove, was that, what was that space like? Large, small, crowded?

**(DRD)** – Oh, it was, everybody had a -- There was a seat for the driver of course, and then one for the gunner, and then, there was a, oh probably and eight foot, circle in the

center of the turret, where, your uh, you had guys – maybe -- I don't know, usually two guys I think. One guy was loading and one guy was uh, you know, putting whatever they needed in the shell, but, the, on them you'd, they were, oh just a, kind of an automatic -- what they call a breach, you know. You just shove that shell in there, and uh, of course it would recoil back, so you wanted to get out of the way of it.

**(KMH)** – Oh?

**(DRD)** – But, uh, then it would kick the shell back out, you know, just the shell casing.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And uh, it would uh, but the canon, the, the -- can't even think of his name now. But, he would -- had a hand wheel, and it, they would set, aiming stakes out, and he would look through this periscope, and he would turn this, the top part of the truck, till, those lined up, and that's how he got his, he'd set his coordinates on this, periscope and then, he'd traversed it, till, they lined up, and that's, the way they got. . .

**(KMH)** – Wow.

**(DRD)** – The location where they was going to shoot.

**(KMH)** – Wow, huh.

**(DRD)** – But that was one of the first jobs, you know, when they got in was, to, zero that in and set those stakes, had to set two stakes you know. Oh I don't know, probably, 30, 40 feet out in front.

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** – Of course I'm, probably pretty sure that if, in a combat situation, you probably just shot! (Laughter)

**(KMH)** – Yeah! (Laughter)

**(DRD)** – And we had some of that where you'd look down the barrel, see, and, and he would pick the target.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And then just shoot, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – That, that would've been a, more or less a direct, uh, right in the middle.

**(KMH)** – Right.

**(DRD)** – Situation you know.



**(KMH)** – Yeah.

**(DRD)** – But most generally, we were, way back behind the troops and shooting over.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, huh, um, did, after you, left, so what, what happened, toward the end? How did you know you were going to be done and get out?

**(DRD)** – Well I didn't really, I had put in for an early out to help dad harvest, and I had done give up on getting it and I was out in the field when uh, the old man's jeep come out and got me and, told me that I had, had eight hours or something like that to clear the post. So I had to, go around you know and make sure I didn't have something checked out of the . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – Auditorium or, some place like that, clear all that, and uh, then, of course had to go through a physical, check your ears and everything, make sure that, that, of course. . . He said that, my ears was good, not put anything bigger or smaller than my elbow in them. And I don't think that was right, but I was anxious to get out. I wasn't gonna' (Laughter) create any problems, but, now I wear these hearing aids and still can't hear.

**(KMH)** – Is it, from the sound of the shells, some of it?

**(DRD)** – Oh, I suppose some of it, but then, you know, beating on pipes and stuff, in the years after I got out, you know, and . . .

**(KMH)** – Oh yeah, yeah.

**(DRD)** – 'Cuz I went to uh, went to work for Dave and Alvin. Well I worked for them before I went in, and then when I got out, I did for a while. Then, brother and I – Well, I guess my brother bought them out before I got out.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And then, he decided he wanted to be a school teacher, so, he went to, being a school teacher, and, or went to college -- and, and I'm still here I guess. Of course, I don't do anything now, but, I've got that heart problem.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – I don't do nothing. Only, sit around here and, I go to shop every day.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – The shop's on that block over. . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And the café most days.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – You gotta go down there and see what's going on!

**(KMH)** – That's right, you do --did you use any of the things that you learned then, then back in the drilling business?

**(DRD)** – No, not really.

**(KMH)** – No, haven't had occasion to fire a Howitzer? (Laughter)

**(DRD)** – No. (Laughter) No.

**(KMH)** – Um, so what did, where, Karen was on base then? She had eight hours too or?

**(DRD)** – She was in an apartment.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** – Uptown there.

**(KMH)** – Oh Okay.

**(DRD)** – I had, more or less -- we lived off post.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh, but at least you didn't have to clear that in eight hours.

**(DRD)** – No.

**(KMH)** – Yeah.

**(DRD)** – No that was, it was, where we was living was uh, pretty nice little duplex, you know and, and there was always somebody looking, uh, you know, for the -- There was one, the first one we lived in, was, a little bitty. I guess it was one room, as I remember. I know, if anybody come to eat with ya', you had to pull a table out of a, kind of a corner, to get more than two set at tables.

**(KMH)** – Wow.

**(DRD)** – And, of course your bedroom and, bathroom, but --

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And then, these, this, uh, a friend of mine was, they were living in, actually it was Karen's friend too, but, I mean, they were living in this duplex, and it was, it was

reasonably a light mood. It was really a nice place and, so we moved over there, and stayed there 'till we was out of there.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum, about how long was that?

**(DRD)** – Um, I don't know, better part of the two years, you know.

**(KMH)** – Wow.

**(DRD)** – Of course, I don't remember how long, how long.

**(KMH)** – Did you make it back for harvest?

**(DRD)** – Huh?

**(KMH)** – Did you make it back for harvest?

**(DRD)** – Yeah.

**(KMH)** – Yeah.

**(DRD)** – Yeah.

**(KMH)** – Wow.

**(DRD)** – Yeah I got back here in time to uh, help harvest, but . . .

**(KMH)** – So then you were out, right? That was just your two years?

**(DRD)** – Yeah well we had a summer camp.

**(KMH)** – Okay.

**(DRD)** – See I had a, there was two different years we had summer camp, and, I went, to Guernsey, Wyoming, the first year, and of course, my granddad died. But -- while I was up there, so I got out that little early, and then the next year, well, I went up there to see a, to check in you know. Once they got in Dodge uh, and he, he thought maybe I could just fill out some papers and, and, so I didn't have to go the second year.

**(KMH)** – Huh, so you had two years reserve?

**(DRD)** – Four years of reserve.

**(KMH)** – Four years of reserve, huh.

**(DRD)** – I was two years in -- there was two years I was active, see, and then, two years in, basically. I was inactive, and all you did, you just had to go to meetings, ever, every two weeks or something like that.

**(KMH)** – Oh Okay.

**(DRD)** – And that's what I filled out, these deals. They wouldn't pay mileage that far, 'cuz I had to go either Dodge, Garden, or Liberal.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And uh, so, I got exempt pretty much from that.

**(KMH)** – Huh.

**(DRD)** – And yeah and some situations, I guess they had to go to summer camp, but I didn't.

**(KMH)** – Huh. So, let's see, if you got out, active, in '61 and then you were four years beyond that, right? '65. Was Vietnam ever an issue in that time period?

**(DRD)** – Not really, I don't think, no.

**(KMH)** – Huh, Okay, and you couldn't get drafted again, I suppose.

**(DRD)** – Yeah, as long as you was in the reserve, you could.

**(KMH)** – Oh, Okay. So they could've called you up.

**(DRD)** – Yeah, um-hmm.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, Okay. Um, did you keep in touch with any of the guys that you served with?

**(DRD)** – Well, I did for, with, there was a, one kid from (Unknown), that we met in Garden City, you know, when we was going in, and, of course -- See there, they pretty much uh, in basic or, when they formed a, a battery, well they done that alphabetically.

**(KMH)** – Okay.

**(DRD)** – And uh, his name was Shepard so, we were, he was in service battery and I was in A- battery, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Ah.

**(DRD)** – Uh, it was all on the same building and, he spent a lot of, weekends there at the house, with Karen and I, he, uh, got out. We, I hauled quite a little bit of uh, material, for the well rig, from uh, Kearny, Nebraska, and I stopped up there, seeing them, but I haven't seen him now, and I don't know, how many years. I was up there here about a month ago. Oh it's been longer than that, but, uh, we was right in (Unknown) and, we tried to find him and, he wasn't in town I guess, 'cuz we never did find him, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Oh, huh.

**(DRD)** – One of his boys, uh now, owns a drilling company in (Unknown).

**(KMH)** – Oh wow. Huh, he might have been influenced by you.

**(DRD)** – Huh?

**(KMH)** – He might have been influenced by you.

**(DRD)** – (Laughter) Well I doubt it, because I never did know his boys, you know, they, they grew up and. . . .

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** – Him and I kind of went our separate ways and . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – I'd like to see him, you know now, but just, just a guy that originally had the drilling company. Well he, we, usually meet, every year at the, convention you know.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** – And he kind of keeps me clued in as to what was going on up there but . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh huh. Huh.

**(DRD)** – I haven't, I didn't go to convention, last year, probably won't go this year.

**(KMH)** – Hum, were you active in, either American Legion or VFW? Anything like that?

**(DRD)** – American Legion, yeah.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** – But, uh, you know the, they've got uh, dates, you know, and so I wasn't, actually, I was associate member, for several years, in the, Legion.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And uh, with, didn't make any difference in what you done or how you done it, you just did your credit for the year you was in there.

**(KMH)** – Huh.

**(DRD)** – And uh, now they've changed that, and so I'm, been a regular member for, I don't know how many years.

**(KMH)** – And why was that? Was it combat required or something?

**(DRD)** – I don't know really what the reason for it was, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** – It, it must've been or something like that, because, there was, there was several of us, not several of us, two or three of us that uh, was never overseas or involved in combat, that, that was . . .

**(KMH)** – Oh.

**(DRD)** – Associate members, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Huh, hum, ah, let's see. . .

**(DRD)** – But I've been a, full member till, oh the last year I haven't really done my share, but uh, I've had this, I just ain't any good, I just can't do much of anything really.

**(KMH)** – Tell me this, when you look back over your whole life, and your career and stuff, how do you describe that period of your life? How do you feel about it now?

**(DRD)** – Oh, I don't know, I, you know it, it, it was duty that I don't think anybody ought to fight it. I mean, when it's your turn, go do it, and it wasn't, you know a lot of complaints about, you know what it does but, other than, I don't feel that it was a loss of time necessarily, and yup, it's a, you know, been -- it was an experience.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** – And I think a lot of these young guys, that are out here on the streets, you know, creating problems and, doping and, all that kind of stuff, uh, if, of course they've changed it so much too, but uh, they could do a lot of growing up in uh, you know during this, in this issue . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And uh, of course a lot of them come back out of there, mad at the world, and, and --

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – But, if you know, it's, it's just like these, you know every day, well there's something going on you know and, this, cop you know that just shot that young boy there.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – It's going to cost, the, country how many million dollars you know, and there, it's an excuse it looks to me like, 'cuz there's those people coming in from, all over the world, you know, uh, protesting that . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And that's getting, to me, I mean that, seems little like the people that we've been a trying to help, you know, it just, coming in there and creating problems, and I, I'm really not in favor of, you know, fighting locally. I mean, were, that's what's happening in these foreign countries, they're fighting one another. Basically that's what we're trying to do here.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, yeah, so you mentioned growing up, a time to grow up, is that what you feel like in your life, that kind of contributed to that and help that?

**(DRD)** – Uh, yeah, a minute . . .

**(KMH)** – Yeah.

**(DRD)** – You do some heavy thinking and . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** – And of course you're away from home, it's a different, uh, environment.

**(KMH)** – Uh huh.

**(DRD)** – You know, and, but yeah, I think it's, then, you know, what do, discipline was a lot tougher.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – Now right now, you know, I know of one situation, where, the, they felt like the discipline was too rough and they got him out of the service.

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** – And he had some, guys that was, that couldn't, what they said, they couldn't adapt, you know.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And, true enough, they couldn't, they had, I know we had one guy there that, in our outfit that would, he wanted to stay in so bad that, he was wanting in the Army.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And in fact, I think he volunteered, but he had a real nervous, situation, and he'd chew his finger nails far back, it'd bleed at night.

**(KMH)** – Oh.

**(DRD)** – While he was sleeping, you know.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And they tried everything, and he'd wear gloves, he'd uh, tape 'em up, everything else, but he'd, he just couldn't get over it, doing that.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – They finally let him out, but, he was kind of heart broken over it, 'cuz he wanted to be in the Army.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum. Hum.

**(DRD)** – And it was, he, he, he was, it was something that I suppose, over the years, he might have finally got, equipped but . . .

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** – The Army wasn't gonna' . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – Put, put up with it or try to. . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – They didn't have any facilities for it, you know.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, yeah, were you ever, like, home sick for here? Was it enough of a contrast?

**(DRD)** – Oh yeah, everybody gets home sick I'm sure.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum. Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – But of course, we hadn't been married very long when, but one time I know I rented a car and come home on a long weekend, and uh, of course I had some, a couple of buddies that wanted uh, see Boot Hill, so they all, shared in the car rent, you know.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – But uh, yeah you, of course – See, I'd never been anywhere, only maybe, Colorado, on uh, vacation, .you know, or something.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And uh, of course then I, see after Karen, moved down there, well then --



**(KMH)** – Tell me when. . . *(Pause)* Okay, go. Okay, we were talking about, um, you're first child was born while you were in . . .

**(DRD)** – Uh hum.

**(KMH)** – Uhm, at Fort Sill, we were talking a little bit about, guys being home sick and what that was like there. What a contrast. How did you communicate in that time with your family? How'd you keep in touch with what was going on back here?

**(DRD)** – Oh, maybe just phone calls with Karen more or less.

**(KMH)** – Okay, so, once you were, once you were at Fort Sill and she lived down there, did you all, you mentioned that you had come back once with your buddies, did you come back very often?

**(DRD)** – No.

**(KMH)** – Okay.

**(DRD)** – No it was, oh it was about a 300 mile drive, I suppose. It was something like that, but, it was, wasn't really long on cash, you know like . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – Some of the kids probably now a days, but, uh, it was uh, after she moved down there, well it was no problem, you know, never.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, yeah.

**(DRD)** – But her, then her mom, asked you know, of course, when we had to bring the baby home every once in a while, and so she'd, she'd help out with the finance of the trip, 'cuz she wanted -- she said it was cheaper for us to come home than it was for her to go down there, see . . .

**(KMH)** – Ah, good, yeah, um, so, were phone calls, long distance phone calls outrageously expensive? Or were you able to make 'em once in a while?

**(DRD)** – No, they were, I don't remember, but, you know it was all pay phone most generally.

**(KMH)** – Yeah.

**(DRD)** – Pocket full of change, but I don't really, know what it cost.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, okay, tell me, were there any stories, funny stories, things that happened that you remember, and I'm thinking specifically about the armadillo, tell me about that.

**(DRD)** – Well there's, like I said -- It was that fire guard, you know, walk fire guard, and until you was qualified with a rifle, well, you carried your wooden rifle, and uh, just, you know, walk around there, and, that thing following ya', and rattling along there, and it's, dark and quiet and, it was a little spooky but --

**(KMH)** – So you were out by yourself, walking a perimeter of some kind?

**(DRD)** – Yeah, just walking around the barracks.

**(KMH)** – Okay, with your wooden, rifle . . .

**(DRD)** – But see, those barracks wasn't very far apart and that would, and each barracks had a fire guard that was walking around. . .

**(KMH)** – Oh Okay.

**(DRD)** – And then of course it was up to us to get the troops up the next morning, you know, get em, get 'em to go on a, those uh, our, barracks, the top half of it, was, oh, U.S. Army, which was drafted.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And uh, I think there might have been one that was a, RA but, most of 'em were just, were draftees, and then the bottom part was a, there was a, Puerto Ricans, and, usually get some jabbering when you start getting them out of bed in the morning, you know.

**(KMH)** – Oh.

**(DRD)** – Most of them, you know they're, they jabber with their own language, we couldn't understand that, but . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh huh, so how long was your night shift then?

**(DRD)** – Oh, I don't remember, we, seemed like it was all night, but I don't -- I know it wasn't because you know, even when we got in the regular outfit, well your guard duty was, I think two on and four off, but uh . . .

**(KMH)** – Hum.

**(DRD)** – This probably was the same thing. I don't remember.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum. So tell me what happened this time. You heard somebody or something coming behind you?

**(DRD)** – Well that was this armadillo!

**(KMH)** – Oh, oh.

**(DRD)** – You could hear him rattling and, like, like I said, every time, seemed like every time I looked back, see what was back there, wasn't nothing there, but, uh, he'd kind of wait on you to turn the corner and then he'd catch up again.

**(KMH)** – *(Laughter)* He was just keeping you company, huh?

**(DRD)** – Yeah, I guess.

**(KMH)** – Any other stories you remember?

**(DRD)** – Oh, not much of any.

**(KMH)** – Yup, well if -- you've talked a little bit about how you feel about that time, if you -- what kind, what kind of lessons do you think you took away from that period and how might those have influenced your life?

**(DRD)** – Oh I don't know, just, it was just time to grow up I guess.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – But, of course, you know I was older than a lot of them too.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And, so, I suppose that made it, quite a little easier. Plus, plus the fact you know, we kind of grew up on the farm and we didn't have a, you know, we didn't have extra money until we got old enough to work out, and, which, we did pretty early, you know, as soon as we was big enough to run a tractor, well we . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – Worked for neighbor farms and --

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – Like Elvin and Dave and I, Jack worked for them too.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And uh, it uh, I suppose it just, just growing up, you know.

**(KMH)** – Uh hum, uh hum, did you know . . .

**(DRD)** – Of course, it, it was time you know, I got married and --

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And uh, we had to figure out something.

**(KMH)** – Yeah, yeah.

**(DRD)** – But it was, you know, come, then when you get out, well, you know, you've got nothing. You got to, start scrounging, used furniture and, find an old place to live and, and uh, a job, and. . . Of course my job was waiting on me, so I didn't have a problem with that, but --

**(KMH)** – Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – And I think most the places, was, you know I think if you had a job when you went in, well you had a job when you got out, and . . .

**(KMH)** – Uh hum. Uh hum.

**(DRD)** – So that's all you guys are doing, is just driving around the, listening to stories huh?

**(KMH)** – Yup. Yup, yup. We um, the, we got a small grant, from the Humanities Council, those people -- and uh, our problem was we did three interviews, last um, I think you can turn it off, um . . .