

Gray County Veterans Memorial & Archive

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

**Dwight J. "Jack"
Dunham**

September 13, 2014



INTERVIEW
YEAR

Dwight John (“Jack”) Dunham
2014

GRAY COUNTY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: **Dwight John (“Jack”) Dunham**

DATE: **September 13, 2014**

PLACE: **2500 Post, Dodge City, KS 67801 (Mr. Dunham’s mother’s residence)**

INTERVIEWER: **Kathleen Holt**

TECHNOLOGY: **George Martinez**

PROJECT SERIES: **Korean Era Oral History Project for Gray County**



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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Dwight John Dunham was born and raised on a farm south of Copeland, Kansas, on June 21, 2913. Early on, his family decided he should be called Jack rather than J.D., a name to which his mother objected. After serving in the U.S. Army, he attended college on the GI Bill and later taught for 24 years at Southwestern Heights near Plains, Kansas, where he still resides.

Mrs. Jacqueline Dunham provided the following was inducted into military service on June 11, 1957 at Fort Smith, Arkansas. From June 13, 1957, he was stationed at Fort Polk for 13 weeks of Basic Training. In September of 1957, he was assigned to 311.10 Infantry Comm Spec for 10 weeks special training at Fort Gordon, Georgia. In November 2957, Mr. Dunham was sent to Fort Knox, KY and from there was stationed in Korea from December, 1958 until December 16, 1959. He was then assigned to the U.S. Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. He separated from Sam Houston June 10, 1960, and was discharged from Active Duty – Reserves June 10, 1963.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Military service, radio repair, Korean environment, flying over DMZ, Communications home, Fort Sam Houston, GI Bill and college

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW: Mr. Dunham was recovering from a cold. We deeply appreciate his taking the time for this interview. His wife Mrs. Jacqueline Dunham was present for the interview.

SOUND RECORDINGS: Digital

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 75:46

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: None

TRANSCRIPT: 32 pages

ORAL HISTORY
Dwight Jack Dunham
Interview Date: September 13, 2014

Interviewer: Kathleen Holt (KMH)
Interviewee: Dwight Jack (DJD)
Sound Technician: George Martinez

(KMH) - I'm, Kathleen Holt. I'm here this morning with Jack Dunham, formerly of Copeland, now of Plains. And we're in Dodge City today, at a relative's home. It's September 13, 2014, about 9:30 in the morning. Uh, Jack you wanna' start by telling us your name and you birth date and that sort of thing, and then we'll just get started.

(DJD) - My name is Dwight Dunham, I go by Jack though. It's something that was pinned on me when I was first born, and I live in Plains, born and raised in Copeland, and like she said, I'm now in Dodge City with, my mother-in-law's house. We I guess we, should say that I, my whole name is Dwight John Dunham, rather than Jack. It was just a nickname that was pinned on me, and uh . . .

(KMH) - What's your, what's your birth date?

(DJD) - Oh, June 21, 1935.

(KMH) - O.K., good, I have to ask, what's the story of Jack? Was that a relative or, you just look like a Jack when you were born or?

(DJD) - I, I really can't tell ya'. Uh, they, they was gonna' name me first John Dwight, and uh. At the time I was born, we lived on a farm, south of Copeland, and my folks lived there, and my grandmother lived there, and there was three aunts that lived there and an uncle, and when I was born, they decided that if I was going to be, John Dwight, they was gonna' call me JD.

(KMH) - Oh.

(DJD) - These aunts did, and my mother knew a fella' by the name of, that they called JD, and she didn't like it.

(KMH) - Oh. (Laughter)

(DJD) - So, she, when she made out the birth certificate then, she just turned the names around.

(KMH) - Oh.

(DJD) - But, Dwight was named after, I was named after a friend of my dad's. And that's how I happen to know that, and then John is an old family name that's gone on for years. My granddad was John, and before him, there was a couple other Johns, and

but anyways, that's that was then when they kind of decided I ought to be Jack, if Mom wasn't going to allow JD, well it had to be Jack.

(KMH) - I see.

(DJD) - And, these three sisters that, are dad's, they were very, very dead set that I wasn't going to be called Dwight. I don't know why, but -- (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter) They were looking out for you?

(DJD) - I guess, yeah, so.

(KMH) - Well let's fast forward to your military service, how is it that you joined the military?

(DJD) - I was going to be drafted because at that time there was a draft, and I was told, that if I would enlist, I could get to go into the branch of service that I wanted to go into. And so I went to Garden City and there was a recruiter up there and he'd, given me a whole spiel of stuff and come to find out, it -- he -- most of it was not true, and uh . . . But I wanted to go into what they called diesel engineering which was a schooling to where you learn to be a mechanic on locomotives and that's what I thought I wanted to do and then I could work at the rail road when I got out. Well, when I went in to enlist, well the guy, said that he'd have to make sure that I could get in to that particular area, and asked me to come back in a couple of weeks. And so I come back up again, later, and he said, well, we can't get you in that right now, but he said there will be openings and you go ahead and enlist. Go to basic training, and then we'll get you into this schooling when you get out of basic training. Well that's the last I ever heard of that!

(KMH) -- Wow.

(DJD) - And so they sent me to Georgia, to go to a, a signal school down there and learn to operate diesel generators.

(KMH) - Hum

(DJD) - That would generate electricity for hospitals and so on, and so that's where I went, and I tried to get out of that and get back in diesel automotive, but that didn't ever work. They never -- they couldn't even hear me.

(KMH) -- Wow.

(DJD) - I went to the IG and everybody else, and they said, well you're just out of luck. We can't get you in there, so, that's how I happen to get into that.

(KMH) -- Wow. What other kind of fibs did he tell ya'?

(DJD) - Oh, he told me all kinds of things. You can go to basic training where ever you want to, and they, that wasn't true.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - I was -- I was not allowed to go. I went to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, and was -- duct-, inducted there, and given and issue of clothing and so on. And then they loaded us on a bus and took us to Camp Polk, Louisiana.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - And that was supposed to been what they call the hell hole.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) – Swamps. There was a swamp right next to our camp, and we never, I never went in it, but there was some of them that would go over to PX and then they'd get drunk and come back and try to get across that swamp and they'd never make it.

(KMH) - Oh wow.

(DJD) - They'd fall in and then come on dirt, dirty and stinky.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - But when I finished up there with my basic training the thirteen weeks, then I went to Camp Gordon Georgia and that was the signal school, where I went to that generator school. I was there eight weeks, and then I, was shipped to Fort Knox, Kentucky, and they, put me in charge of some generators that they had that they used in training, that uh -- these generators were supposed to been out in the field, and you - - supplying electricity for, radios and what have you that was being used out there. And they were training -- tank operators, and gunners, and I went down there, with that in mind, but when I got there, the generators wasn't any good. They wouldn't run. There was, no way I could get them to run, and so I sent them off to get them fixed, and one day, the company commander came in to my, shop and, he asked me what I was doing, and I told him nothing.

I was just waiting on my generators, and he said, "Oh you can't do that." he said, "You gotta have something to do." So he sent me up the radio shop to drive a truck, and this truck was supposed to be just to go out and service radios on those tanks that was being trained in. And he told me to get in this truck and drive down there, so I went down, and got a closed delivery van type truck, and they set up a radio in the, shop in the back end of that truck, and I supposed to drive it out there, but they was going to take a man with me to do the repair work. Well, I decided that wasn't any good. I, I could do that any old time. So, I was in for three years so, I'd make the best of it. So then I started putting in transfers to do overseas. I wanted to go to Germany, and every time I'd put one in, why it'd come back unapproved. Just company commander, he said, "Well, why don't you learn to work on radios, and you can work on them on that truck and you don't have to have a guy a long with ya'." So I did a little bit of work and learned how to do some work on the radios and what they called first test on work. And I then got to sort of, proficient enough to where I could work on them radios.

Well I was still trying to get out of there. I wanted to go overseas, and I wanted to go to Germany, and I wasn't able to make it. Every time I like I said, every time I put in a transfer, they'd, send it back. Well finally, they sent one back, and had orders for the Far East. That was in Korea, so, I came home for leave before going over there, and I drove from home to, Fresno, California, where my sister was living at, at the time. And she was to have a new baby, but she hadn't had it yet, and, so I -- then I went from their place. I took the train and went to Fort oh; now the name has skipped my mind. It's in Seattle, Washington, though, and so I was there about a week processing and getting all the shots that I need to go overseas.

And they loaded us on a troop ship and sent us to Korea. Well, we got into a typhoon, about, three days out of Japan, and oh it was rough. And, as fate would have it, they had assigned me to work in the mess hall on this ship, that had dependents and officers on it, and just so happened that when I went in there that day, there was a Negro cook that was the head of that particular department, and his name was Dunham, and he took a liking to me. And we he said "Don't go down there in that hole where those, all them guys are sick down there." He said, "Don't go down there." He said, "I'll fix you up here" So he made me a palette or -- to sleep on the floor of the mess hall.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - So I did that, during the time that we was in that typhoon.

(KMH) - Wow, wow.

(DJD) - Which was -- It was real rough, but we finally got out of that. We got it back in the, we went into Yokohama, and went through a processing there again. And then they loaded us in a plane and flew us to -- No, they didn't. They put us on a boat and sailed us over to the western edge of Korea near Soule. And there we was unloaded from the ship and taken inland. Then I sat there in the processing center there, waiting for an assignment 'cuz they didn't have no place for me to go, they said.

And finally they said to go to what was called the 15th Aviation Group, and this aviation group, our main program -- the main thing that we did was flew air planes along the DMZ Zone, and take pictures of what the Koreans were doing on the other side of the DMZ Zone. And then they'd report this back to headquarters, and this was in -- kept in their records down there. We didn't know what was going on all, all that much, but we also had helicopters, and these helicopters were made to move officers and troopers from the line company. It's what they call line companies that was up next to the DMZ.

We was back about five miles, and they would take 'em up into the, next to the DMZ to where there was Koreans coming across that DMZ Zone all the time. And we'd have to chase them back and that was part of their job and I was to, maintain the radios in all that air craft, and, got to where I could do pretty good job on that, but if there was something that was way beyond my control, I had to go to Soule, to what they call the depot. And we'd re -- they'd repair the radios and we'd bring 'em back. So I did a lot of flying when I was over there, both fixed wing air craft and helicopters. And I had a

company commander that was quite a proficient fella with the, with the flying a fixed wing air craft, and he taught me how to fly, so, I did a lot of flying while I was over there, by myself, but I didn't get credit for it.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - So I enjoyed flying. I always wanted to fly, but never got to do it, but uh --

(KMH) - That was your first time?

(DJD) – Yeah.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - But then 13 months later, I was allowed to come back to the states. I still had five months left in the army, and my active service anyway. And I was sent to, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and that was supposed to be the country club of the Army. That's -- that was really nice down there. It was a medical center.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - Where they train all the doctors and stuff.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - Medical doctors, and so, I didn't have a job to do there, so they put me in charge. Medical instructions and I had all kinds of charts and so on, they used in the class room to teach these guys that were in medical training. And I just issued these charts out when the comp -- when the instructors come in to get them, and then, I maintained the inventory that was all the time. And I had a couple of PFCs that worked under me. By that time I'd, gotten up to being a, what they call an E5 specialist, and I was a, equivalent of a sergeant.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And but I had these PFCs that worked under me and they did most of the work. I didn't do much. I wasn't supposed to, so they said anyways. But I finished out my five months there, and got separated from the service, but I was still obligated for three years of Reserve.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And that's part of this information I've got here, that I didn't have to go active service. Since I'd served, three years in regular Army, I didn't have to go to the Reserve meetings, and now, if you went in for two years, you had to serve with your active reserve.

(KMH) - Oh O.K.

(DJD) - But I didn't have to, and so then at the end of my career, why, they gave me discharge. By that time I was married and had other fish to fry. (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter) And then after, then what did you do next?

(DJD) - I went to work. I had worked before I went in the Army for my uncles in the drilling business -- drilling irrigation wells, and when I come home, they wanted to quit that business and go into farming. And so they sold the company to me and I went to the Credit Union in Montezuma and borrowed money to buy that company. And so I did. That cost me \$17,000.

(KMH) - Wow, wow.

(DJD) - I bought that company and I ran it for, let's see, that was in '61 when I bought it, and I ran it, till what was it? 1963? No, '65, I guess it was. I sold it to my brother, and then in '66, January of '66, my wife and I started back to college, and so --

(KMH) - And how'd that come about?

(DJD) - Well, I had allergies real bad, and I couldn't be around to farm that much. And in the following year -- and it wasn't fair, because I had my brother in as a partner with me at that time and it wasn't fair to him to go out and do all the work and me sit at the office. So, I decided I'd let him have the company and I needed -- I wanted to go back and finish my degree anyway. And so, that gave us an opportunity to do that.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And so we bought us a little old trailer house and moved to Hays. That thing was built in the South and it was -- real thin walls.

(KMH) - (Laughter)

(DJD) - January was cold. We froze. Water froze in the kitchen sink while we were in bed. (Laughter)

(KMH) - Oh my gosh.

(DJD) - It was cold. Well, then we decided to get a different trailer and so we traded it off and got one Northern made trailer that was a little more decent to live in.

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah, so your wife went to work and --

(DJD) -- Yeah.

(KMH) -- Yeah.

(DJD) - She went to work in, well she did a couple of jobs, and until she got on the computers, and she was a key punch operator.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - And she did, made these cards, at that time, well the computers run off a card.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And she'd punch those cards, and then the computer took up the whole room. It was a big ole thing, and she did that until I finished my degree, and then, we decided that both of us wanted to stay and get our masters. Since I had this GI bill, I, I could do that. And her dad told us, he said, "Now, if you do that," he said, "I'll help you through that." Well, we were, we were, able to kind of keep it, going ourselves, he didn't have to help us, but -- We did finish up our master's degree together, there in '68 when, no . . .

(KMH) - And what was it in?

(DJD) - Mine was in industrial arts and hers in business.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - And I was, hell had in mind, at that time I, I had wanted to be a draftsman, and I went to, first semester back in college, I took a semester of drafting, well, didn't take me long to figure out I didn't want to spend the rest of my life behind a drafting table, so, so I switched over to go into education, and so finished up my degree with, industrial education, and then we decided, the two of us would get our master's and so we went, both of us went into an area they call junior college curriculum, and we were, with the idea that we'd teach in junior college

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - Well, we found out real quick that I couldn't do that because I didn't have experience to teach.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - And so, but anyways, I had a job offer in Leavenworth, Kansas, to go up there and teach, and I also had a job in Vaughn, New Mexico. (Laughter)

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - What a place, we she was pregnant at the time, and, we asked about it, I, doctor down there in the hospital, he said "Well you can go, either way you wanna' go for a hundred miles" there we were

(KMH) - Oh wow.

(DJD) - Out there in the middle of no place.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - Well we weren't going to do that. So then we got an offer from Leavenworth, Kansas, and I went up there and interviewed for that job and they sent me a contract to teach, but in the meantime, we'd come home. Was it for Easter?

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And we saw in the paper there was an opening in Kinsley, at the Southwestern High School. So I called. We called the superintendent and he set us up for an interview. And we went down there and they said -- well they'd let us know. So I come back, went back to school that weekend, and on Monday morning, the head of the department called me and he said "I've got a note, from your superintendent." I said, "I don't have no superintendent." He said "You do now" (Laughter)

(KMH) - Oh wow.

(DJD) - They hired me, and so that's where I went and then I spent the rest of my teaching career there.

(KMH) - Wow.

(DJD) - Taught 26 years, of active teaching, and then I did four years of, substitute teaching, but in that, in that four years, I'd found out that I could count my service record toward my retirement

(KMH) - Oh.

(DJD) - So with three years active service, I could count full time on that, three years of inactive service. I could get one year credit for that, so that gave me four years, added to my 26, so I could retire at 30 years.

(KMH) - Wow, wow.

(DJD) - So, that's what I did.

(KMH) - Would you say the GI bill was, instrumental in that?

(DJD) - A lot of it, it was instrumental in master's degree.

(KMH) - Yeah.

(DJD) - And because it made things available to me that it wouldn't have been otherwise.

(KMH) - Yeah, isn't it interesting that you took such a long way around but you ended up almost back at home. 'Cuz how far between Copeland and Plains?

(DJD) - Twenty two miles.

(KMH) - Yeah, that's remarkable.

(DJD) - Yeah, we, we've always, we stayed right there. Uh, they said that that was a rather unusual for you to come back close to home, but I had a friend that told me, he said, that was the superintendent. And he told me, he said -- no, I said -- No that's not unusual. He said that a lot of people come back as close as they can get to home.

(KMH) -- Hum.

(DJD) - And uh . . .

(KMH) - Hum, well I want to come back and, and flesh some of this out.

(DJD) - O.K.

(KMH) - Um, tell me about -- had you traveled out of Kansas before you took that first trip off to Arkansas.

(DJD) - Not really, no.

(KMH) - So what was that like, I mean had you been on the train and stuff?

(DJD) - That was, that was one, that was an experience. They flew us to Arkansas, and got us down there and that wasn't so bad, other than it was raining the whole time we was down there. Wet. It was terrible, messy, and we stayed in the barracks, most all the time 'cuz it was too wet to be outside. And then they'd load us on a bus and took us to Camp Polk, Louisiana. And that was terrible down there. That June, July and August, it was hot at that time. Then we hit a hurricane one time while I was down there and that, lasted about a week. And I got heat strokes, twice and I'd pass out in rank and have to doctor up again. So, I got to where I didn't have to march any.

(KMH) -- Wow.

(DJD) - Every time they'd go on a march somewhere, they'd load me on a truck.

(KMH) - Oh, were all the, I bet with your allergies, that was in that, kind of damp and --

(DJD) - Oh I, I had a terrible time. Yeah, humidity in that was about 90% or better and when I got out of there, I went to Louisiana, and it wasn't -- or, or, Georgia -- and it wasn't much better. You know as far as moisture is concerned and that was in November. Went down there and I was there for till June or till December, rather and finishing up that eight weeks training there. Then I went to Fort Knox, Kentucky, and that, that wasn't bad. Pretty good duty down there.

(KMH) -- Hum.

(DJD) - Weather was pretty good.

(KMH) - What was the food like?

(DJD) - Not, not real bad. Uh, when we was in Louisiana, our cooks cooked on coal stoves and the worst thing about that was at the end of the meal, we had to go ahead and clean out the inside of those stoves where the soot was, and that was a horrible, horrible duty. I just hated that, but the food wasn't all that bad.

(KMH) – Hum.

(DJD) - In Korea we drew real good food because the biggest majority of the people in our company that I was assigned to were officers and they drew better meat and so on for the rations than did enlisted guys.

(KMH) – Hum.

(DJD) - And so we got real good food over there.

(KMH) – Hum.

(DJD) - But we hardly ended up a call to pull any KP duty over there. The Koreans did all of this.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - The civilian Koreans.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And so, we didn't have to do that, we stayed . . .

(KMH) - Was it Asian food or they cooked mostly . . . ?

(DJD) - No, it was American food.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - We still had -- the guys in charge of the mess hall were still the American soldiers, but they fixed food the way the Americans would.

(KMH) - They wanted to.

(DJD) - Yeah, it was. It was good food.

(KMH) - So, I'm, I'm curious to know. First time on a ship, when you took off from Seattle . . .

(DJD) - Oh, horrible! (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter)

(DJD) - Before the ship ever started out, there was guys hanging over the edge of the rail, puking up their guts 'cuz it was making them sea sick already. They weren't . . .

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah, that must've been something. (Laughter)

(DJD) - (Laughter) It was. I never!

(KMH) - I think about a Kansan, Kansan --

(DJD) - Yeah, I never did get sick.

(KMH) - Oh.

(DJD) - That I don't know, there's something about it that I just, it didn't bother me that much.

(KMH) - Huh, lucky.

(DJD) - Yeah. I was lucky. Now it would've been if had been down there in that hole on that ship when that typhoon come along, but uh . . .

(KMH) - Yeah.

(DJD) - That, because there was so many people sick down there and it stunk to high heavens, but I didn't have to be down there, so. . .

(KMH) - Yeah?

(DJD) - She's got her *[referring to comment from wife]* -- guard duty.

(KMH) - Uh huh, you had to do, you pulled guard duty?

(DJD) - Oh yeah, when I was in Korea, we had a high fence that run our compound where we kept the air craft and so on, and there was always tools and things like that. And them Koreans wanted that stuff.

(KMH) - Oh.

(DJD) - And we pulled guard duty. We often had guard duty at night, and too keep the, to see if we catch the Koreans that was coming in and I never got an opportunity to do it, but there was a number of them that did get, caught, and they were -- I don't know whether they jailed them or what they did with them. But they, the story was -- I don't know if it's actual true or not, that if you shot one of them that you got a carton of cigarettes and \$2 and got shipped to a different company.

(KMH) - Oh.

(DJD) - So that they wouldn't process through.

(KMH) – Right.

(DJD) - And catch ya', so, we, I don't know whether they did or not. I didn't.

(KMH) – Huh.

(DJD) - I wasn't in on it, so --

(KMH) - Oh yeah, most everybody?

(DJD) - Yeah. And I did at the time, but, after I got out I quit, but uh . . .

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - After we got married.

(KMH) - Good influence. (Laughter)

(DJD) - She told me, she said "You don't know how bad you smell, and make us smell" Well I did.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - But one morning I woke from -- there's a guy beating on the door to fix the drive shaft for him, for an irrigation well, and uh -- I didn't have any cigarettes, had to go down town to get some and, I decided I didn't need them right then. So I went over and worked on this man's shaft for him and got him going. And then we went to church. As a result of the day going as it was, why, I'd gone all day without a cigarette. Oh well. Shoot, if I can get a long one day without one, why surely I can quit. So, I just quit.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - Was able to stay off it, so . . .

(KMH) - Wow, that's good, so, you didn't know Jaqueline when you were in, then were you already dating or?

(DJD) - Oh, we'd, we'd known each other all our lives really.

(KMH) - O.K.

(DJD) - Um, her dad and my dad were buddies and run around together before either one of them were married.

(KMH) - Oh O.K.

(DJD) - They only lived four miles apart, and so, it wasn't really a, what would you call it? There weren't no formal introduction because we . . .

(KMH) - Oh I see, uh huh.

(DJD) - -- Had known each other for a long time.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - But we never dated until high school, and she went her way to college and I went my way. We -- I dated her good friend and she dated my good friend, and we never got together that way. And after we come, after I come home from service, why uh . . . My drilling business, we had, we had a calendar that we handed out every year, and everybody liked those calendars. And she come, she was working then at the time, for Panhandle Eastern in Liberal, and she come home on weekends and wanted one of them calendars. She come by the shop and I gave her one and, just for something to do, I asked her to go to a show with me and so, one thing led to another.

(KMH) - I see.

(DJD) - Then I've got an aunt that was a school teacher. And she was Jaqueline's third and fourth grade teacher, and she always said that she thought that I would go with Jaqueline.

(KMH) - Ah, she had you fixed up, huh?

(DJD) - Yeah, she thought she did, and but yeah, one thing led to another, next thing I knew we got married, so --

(KMH) - Yeah. Tell me about what it was like being that far away from home with your family. How'd you communicate?

(DJD) - It was. It was pretty eye opening to start with -- when I was in basic training. My only sister got married while I was down there, and of course I couldn't home, come home for the wedding, and that was a long old day knowing what was going on at home. Then when I went to Korea, why, my brother just younger than me decided to get married, and I couldn't come home for the wedding. And my grandmother died. I couldn't come home for that.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And that made a pretty, long, stretch out of that, I just, I just didn't feel good at all about all that, but, I lived through it.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - So uh . . .

(KMH) - Did you communicate mostly by mail?

(DJD) - Mostly yeah, while I was in Korea, they gave us what we call an R&R, and we was able to go to Japan and spend a week or so there, and just kind of . . . R&R stood for "relax and recuperation." And so I, I went over there one week, spent a week in Tokyo, and while I was over there, why I telephoned home.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - And talked to my brother, and so, we, my brother and I were real close at the time, and of course we worked together then later in the drilling business.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - So he --

(KMH) - I bet that was hard, was that hard to hear him.

(DJD) - Oh yeah.

(KMH) - . . . Hear his voice.

(DJD) - Hear his voice, but, yeah, but I, I enjoyed the visit with him. I did. I was allowed only three minutes, and so, that was on a, some kind of a, telephone deal. I don't know just what it was, but it was military and they paid for it.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - I didn't have to pay for the phone call.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - But they were allowed to set how much time to talk to our family and so . .

(KMH) - Wow, boy -- you think about email today, or, or Skype or whatever now.

(DJD) - The first month I was over there I told you my sister was pregnant.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - When I went to Fresno that time and I found out that the baby was born the day after I sailed from Seattle.

(KMH) - Oh, wow.

(DJD) - And so there was year before I got to see my first, nephew, or niece.

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah.

(DJD) - Of course I had another brother that got married, and he had a little boy at the same time, and just, just about a month I guess, after the, little girl was born.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - And when I came home from, overseas though, the two kids was walking by then and, they were in mother's cabinets, unloading everything out. (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter)

(DJD) - Had quite a time with those kids I, that was something you know. I'd come home . . .

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - Wrestle around with those little guys.

(KMH) - Wow, what was it like coming home?

(DJD) - You know, that was a different experience too. Since I was a, E-5 sergeant, I could fly home. So they'd load us in the airplane -- this was in December, and it's cold and damp and dirty and so on. And they -- and one of them old cargo planes and, they had equipment underneath, and we just, was in the upper deck of that plane. And they took off all of a sudden; they threw the brakes to that thing and turned it around. They didn't have enough speed, so went back and hit the run way again and, they railed her up again and here we go, and that old plane was -- there was no lining inside the plane. It was just shell on the outside and rattling and rumbling. But anyway, we finally got off the ground and went into Yokahama. And we were to board there, get an airplane to fly us on home, and we got there and it was iced in. They couldn't fly out, so we sat there for two days just waiting on the airplane and the word fly. Then they loaded us on the, on this, it was a civilian airplane, and a big four engine job. And we flew from Yokohama, then to Wake Island. We were all in winter clothes you know -- bundled up, cold. Well when it landed on Wake Island, of course the guys come out to service the airplane in Bermuda shorts. (Laughter)

(KMH) – Oh. (Laughter)

(DJD) - We got off that airplane and they told us to leave our coats on the airplane 'cuz -

(KMH) - Oh wow.

(DJD) - It was just too hot. And it was hot. And then we -- our next stop was in Honolulu, Hawaii, but we was only there just long enough to go through what they customs. And they probably, I don't know, we may be there two hours, but we didn't get out of the air terminal. They loaded us on another plane; then they flew us on to San Francisco and that's when we, that's where we landed here and then I flew on home to Garden City. Got in there, and uh -- different experiences

(KMH) - And who met ya' at the airport?

(DJD) - My brother.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - It was kind, it was kind of a big deal. I called home and told 'em I was coming in, and what time I'd be there, but they didn't get what time, what city I was coming in to, so one of my brothers come to Garden City to meet the plane and the other come to Dodge City to meet the plane! (Laughter)

(KMH) - Oh. (Laughter)

(DJD) - When I flew in to Garden City, and then come on home, they didn't know where I was at. (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter) They have a big celebration?

(DJD) - No, not really. It was, about Christmas time. Cuz see when I got home, it -- I think it was the 17th or 18th of December.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And it was Christmas time and all the kids was coming home anyway, so --

(KMH) - Anyway, yeah, yeah.

(DJD) - It was kind of a celebration at that time. My parents had moved in to take care of my granddad, and because grandmother was dead, why he needed somebody to watch after 'em. So they moved in there, and so I stayed there with them, for -- until we got married, which was what? About two years? Three years? Two years, I guess.

(KMH) - Hum, hum, O.K., back up again, to, R&R in Japan, how'd you get around with the language and stuff like that?

(DJD) - Oh that, that wasn't any problem. Them people over there was teaching. They had enough English to where you could talk to them.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - And transportation wise, why, we just called a taxi and that, them taxis, the town was all laid out with railroads through town, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - That was the way they got around before the war. And so there's tracks literally all over everywhere, and we'd go in every direction, and these taxis over -- they was jeeps, ex-military jeeps, and they'd load you in that thing and they'd just take off. And, we had a guy with us and he was in a hurry to get somewhere, go somewhere, and he called that driver, he said to, he said, "Bolly bolly!" It meant "hurry" and . . .

(KMH) - Oh.

(DJD) - So, I mean that driver took off and he'd go through those intersections where those tracks go like this, and that jeep of course, was following them tracks. I didn't know whether he was ever going . . . (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter)

(DJD) - It was kind of scary but we finally got there, got to where we were going anyway, but --

(KMH) - So did ya' eat Japanese food then?

(DJD) - Yeah we did some, but we were, in what they call, the Kishine Barracks, and that was a military place where we could stay.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - And they had, KP food over there, and so we ate there most of the time, but when we'd go out in the evening and go to shows and stuff like that. We'd eat Japanese food.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - That was kind of different.

(KMH) - And what kind of shows?

(DJD) - Oh they were mostly, oh, girls singing and things like that. It wasn't uh --

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - It wasn't a movie or anything, but --

(KMH) - Oh yeah.

(DJD) - It was those, you know, type of things.

(KMH) - Did, was there any kind of entertainment like that, like television or movies, at that time back in Korea?

(DJD) - We'll yeah, after Korea, we had the USO people come by every once in a while. And we had television but it wasn't any good.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And you couldn't hardly see it, but yeah the USO come by every once in a while and show, had some gals singing and some other things, but uh. . .

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And we got movies all the time over there and . . . During time that I was there, why I run the movie projector, showing the movies each night, and so, we we were entertained enough.

(KMH) - Uh hum, was -- How real was the, in your unit, how real was the war? Were there injured people there, or coming and going, or cycling through?

(DJD) - No, not . . . Or you were kind of behind all on your own, and then they'd come back . . .

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - But our company was on an abandoned air field over there that was it was lived out by the Koreans to start with, but then, it got attached to us and we stayed there.

(KMH) - Uh huh, any particularly memorable stories or, events or, things that happened that you've told the stories of?

(DJD) - Well, I know, one time, and this is kind of a scary experience for me, I'd never flown in a helicopter. And these helicopters, were were very temperamental as far as the radio concern was because sometimes they worked; sometimes they didn't. And so, this one helicopter was not working right when the guy was flying it. It worked fine on the ground. So he wanted me to go with him, and he'd show me what it was doing. Well I got in that thing. It's got -- there's nothing but a glass bubble in the front of ya' and you're strapped in the seat and that monkey decided he'd, take off! Why, he just raised that up off the ground and stood over sideways to when he got above the runway, and then he just took that up like that. And there I was looking right into that concrete run way, and oh that, I thought he was going to dump me right there on my nose!
(Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter) My stomach just turned over.

(DJD) - Oh, I didn't mean to . . . tell you for sure, but I made it in, made it. Got, got up in the air and then I figured out what was wrong with the air plane. But they took me back and I fixed what was wrong with it. But it, that was a, real scary experience. And then another time, why we were flying up there and, this guy said "Did you ever, ride in one of these -- in what they call an auto rotation?" And what this was, was when the plane faltered, and an engine failed, why you could turn the props backwards, and they'd turn, and let the plane down easy like, and I told him of course. I had never done that, and he said, "Well," he said "We're going to have fun here." And he, there was an old Papa San on the rice patty loading rice trolls on his cow, and so, this Lieutenant Lapinsky was flying, and he, he shut that thing down and, turned the props the other way, and of course, when you did you did that, why, it just made a horrible sound, and, when he did that, that old cow down there got spooked, and she took off and . . .

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - Run right off from underneath her. . . thing that she had on her back where the (Unknown), that all made that old Papa-San mad as all heck. (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter)

(DJD) - But he put the power to it then, of course and pulled it out of it, but uh . . .

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - But that was another scare falling out of the sky. I didn't know whether he was going to ever get that thing going again or not, but he finally did.

(KMH) - Wow, wow.

(DJD) - We had all kinds of experiences over there. One time the kitchen caught fire. They decided they was gonna', get the fire department in there. Well, the fire department was clear down the road. It wasn't anywhere near us and by the time they got up to us, we had it all put out. But we, some of us guys, started bailing whatever and what have ya'. We uh -- well they would get it put out before it did an awful lot of damage. Most of the buildings at that time -- then, after we took over that air base -- were stone, mason buildings they, made out of cinder blocks and so on. So there wasn't much to burn to them anyway.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - They might have been bad, but uh. . .

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - Now as far as sleeping quarters, we slept in what they call -- we called them "hooches." They were little round top buildings, but they were only about 20' wide, or maybe a little wider. And then long -- they stretched out for a couple hundred feet, and they -- we'd line bunks on each side, and in the winter time, it was colder than the dickens, and they had stoves that sat -- oil type stoves that sat, three or four different, depending on the length of the building. So we had to keep warm that way. But I woke up one night, I had my, my sleeping bag unfolded and on top of my blankets to try to keep warm and, when I woke up next morning, there was snow in m, blankets and stuff.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - So it was cold, by then it got cold over there.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - But the buildings was not tight enough to where it kept snow out of them, so . . .

(KMH) - Yeah, were you issued just the standard wool blankets? Or did you get extras or --

(DJD) - Yeah, those, those military, those Army blankets, yeah.

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah.

(DJD) - They were issued, each of us, each of us two of 'em, but that wasn't enough

(KMH) - O.K., you ready?

(DJD) - Uh huh.

(GM) – Go.

(KMH) - O.K. Jack, let's go back to, when you got to Korea, what were you're first impressions?

(DJD) – Horrible. (Laughter)

(KMH) – Horrible.

(DJD) - The load us on, on little ships, to bring us from the big ship onto land. And then when we got up there, they put us in trucks to haul, to take us to the processing center where we would be distributed out to where -- different places, and it was colder than dickens, close to Christmas time, in December. And these trucks had tarps over the back end of 'em, so you couldn't see out. Well I had to see what was going on, so I pulled the tarp back, and looked out. My first scene was a Papa-San with his little horse and a cart in the middle of an intersection and he was urinating out of it and he was right in the intersection.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - That was an eye opener, it really was. But I could smell it well, before we even got on the land, you could smell it. Oh it's a terrible smell out there and all this was. My clothes even when I got home from Korea, my clothes were all smelling. And mother just couldn't stand it. She had to do laundry, and so --

(KMH) - Did it launder out? Why did it smell so bad?

(DJD) - Oh it would eventually yeah, but. . .

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - It stayed in there for a while.

(KMH) - What was it from?

(DJD) - From the human waste, mainly, and just, just horrible smell.

(KMH) - It was the sewer system?

(DJD) - Yeah, wasn't a sewer system really, 'cuz the human waste from the, bathrooms that we had on post. They, they were a hollow underneath and them guys and their buckets come dip that stuff out and carry it off, and a little late -- a little later on, we finally got some nice restrooms that had showers in them and so on, which didn't do that anymore. And they had lagoons off to take care of it, but the people went out there to them lagoons and dipped it out of there, and take it.

(KMH) - So they used it for, what they . . .

(DJD) - Fertilizer and rice patties.

(KMH) - Oh I see, so it was just in the environment.

(DJD) - Oh yeah.

(KMH) - Huh, so you had were they like; were the latrines like outhouses then?

(DJD) - Yeah some, later on they were, I'd start with they weren't really, but uh --

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - Later on, I don't know, is there, probably, three or four months before they finally got those nicer restrooms.

(KMH) - What was the shower like then?

(DJD) - Well, when we first got over there, there was nothing but a tent, with a wooded floor in it, you went in there and, like they have on M.A.S.H.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - And then, when we got this newer place, well we had regular showers then.

(KMH) - Oh.

(DJD) - And but we always wore -- uh. Oh, you call them flip flops now. We always wore those in there because the fungus and so on were pretty bad. So you, we tried to keep from getting our athletes foot and stuff like that.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - So, got them . . .

(KMH) - Did they, how'd you learn about all that stuff? I mean, did they, was that part of your basic training? Did you have special training for going to Korea?

(DJD) - No, really not, they just, we just got over there, it was an eye opener, you know you, you learn it by being there.

(KMH) – Huh.

(DJD) - And no, we weren't, we weren't trained at all for that.

(KMH) – Wow. Um, well what was the, what'd you notice, I mean. I'm thinking, O.K., you're maybe a year away from being on a farm in Kansas, and then all of a sudden one day you're in, Korea. What was the life like? What were the cities like? What . . .

(DJD) - There wasn't many cit-- There weren't much city life over there. Um, we had our compound where we stayed and worked was just an air strip and an, on, on the other side of the road -- There was a road that run through it they called the MSR which was a Military Supply Route, and on the other side there, was where the state air craft and everything was kept on one side. But, every time there's a place like that around, those Koreans built buildings around it, and they'd have little villages right around there and so, they were right there next to us all the time.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - Those people you didn't need to worry about, 'cuz they were North. . They were not North Koreans. They were South Koreans, and they, they welcomed ya'. There, and uh -- and a lot of them worked on base.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - They did janitorial work and cooks and, all kinds of stuff. Laundry ladies -- talking about those, they'd take a -- take your laundry, and you'd give it to them and they'd take it out, and wash it at the -- at the creek, and beat it on stones, and clean it up. It was hard on your clothes, but boy, they got them clean.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - And then they'd starch them to where they, they, you couldn't get your leg in the pants, 'cuz they stuck to you. (Laughter)

(KMH) – Really! (Laughter)

(DJD) - You had split the open to get your leg down there.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - But they were really starched to perfection, and . . .

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - It cost you a carton of cigarettes, a month, and they wanted Viceroy Cigarettes.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - Because they were more valuable on the black market.

(KMH) – Uh huh Viceroy huh?

(DJD) - Viceroy, yeah, that was a kind of mentholated cigarette, but uh --

(KMH) - Were they, American made?

(DJD) – Yeah.

(KMH) - Uh huh, huh, what about candy and stuff like that, did you . . .?

(DJD) - Oh, we had a little PX there, and you could get things like that on that PX, but if we bought it, generally we'd give it to the little Korean kids.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - 'cuz, they all wanted it, and so, we'd usually give it to them. And then, we had a, one little Korean boy that stayed with us all the time, and we called him Johnny. Of course I think there was about, oh a couple of thousand "Johnnys." They, this one kid was an orphan and, he just kind of took up with us and stayed with us all the time. But he'd let them kids on in the villages know that there was candy available, and he -- so, they'd come around begging for candy all the time. And and of course, anytime you're around a place like that, you've always got the business girls around there too.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - And they was -- when we changed from walking over in our area where we stayed, across the MSR to the -- to work, those business girls were out there on the street, campaigning and what have ya'.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And so, but you'd, they'd tell ya' they was, in love with ya' and all that kind of stuff.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - We just got to where you had to ignore it, and if you didn't, well they'd just pester the devil out of ya'.

(KMH) - Uh hum, what about the little kids? What happened to that orphan kid?

(DJD) - You know, I don't know what happened to him. He stayed there all the time I was there, and he'd, he'd helped around, did different errands and stuff for different GIs and he generally had, somebody he more or less stayed with.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And uh -- but the other little kids, they had to stay off of them, the military base. They couldn't come on the -- They'd catch you though when you crossed the road and go down to work.

(KMH) - Um.

(DJD) - And that's when they wanted their candy and stuff.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - But, poor little ole' guys. Uh, usually the really little ones that was just getting to where they could walk good didn't wear anything from their waist down. They'd have a t-shirt on maybe, but they didn't have any underwear and they just went naked underneath and if they needed to go, they go.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And that was, in the winter time. That's kind of a funny thing. They had little shops, around, you could buy all kinds of trinkets and stuff, but those Koreans, they had a table that was sat there in front of the shop, and they had a blanket that went around and covered underneath the side of that thing.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - Then they'd build a fire underneath that table, and they'd keep the fire down, of course, but uh . . .

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - That kept it warm. They'd crawl up to that table, and put their legs underneath there, and that's . . .

(KMH) - Ah.

(DJD) - That was kind of way to keep warm.

(KMH) - Wow, so was there a lot of evidence of the war? I mean how were the South Koreans faring in that war climate?

(DJD) - By the time I got there, they weren't too bad. Um, there was a lot of evidence of destruction and so on, you know buildings, just partially there.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - Stuff like that, but they were -- they were -- Koreans were doing fairly well, but they're still primitive as all get out. There was . . . their houses, they would be built on a, a platform above the ground, and they heated that house by putting fire underneath the floor.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - And the house was made out of twigs and mud, and there wasn't anything that was a wooden structure on the villages.

(KMH) - O.K., O.K.

(DJD) - Now we had, pretty decent buildings out there.

(KMH) – Huh. Wow. O.K. So, tell me about your career. How'd you make your rank?

(DJD) - Well, when you go in, and you go in as a buck private, and we were paid accordingly. You didn't have any rank. You didn't have any, privileges much to speak of, and then the time you was in there -- just as, when you finish basic training, and then you was promoted to what they call a PFC, a private first class. And you got one stripe, and that was just automatic. But then from then on, it depended on, what you were doing. Uh, what the demand was for that particular job, and so on. So that you could make rank from that, and they, they more or less give it to ya', if you'd earn it, and you -- some of, after you got up to be a, about an E4, well then you need to take a test. They had a test for ya' but when I, got over there, I was a PFC when I got there. And I was a PFC for quite a little while, and then the company commander called me one day and, and told me my job called for an E5, which was a sergeant, but he said I can't give you that because, you haven't been through the E4 yet. So, I went, went through the E4, which was, they called then. They called it a Specialist Four, and I was that for about, oh, I wasn't that very long. I went in to R&R and when I came back, when they decided I ought to be an E5. So, when I got back, I had a new rank waiting for me, so --

(KMH) - (Laughter)

(DJD) - So I got it, I got promoted up from that, and then I never got a bit, I never got out of that four . . .

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - Except with this, what it was called "proficiency pay." Uh, you could take a test on what you were doing. If you scored well enough on that test, they'd give you another; I think it was a \$100 a month.

(KMH) – Hum.

(DJD) - And so I took that test, I didn't know what I was doing, but I took it and, passed it, so I got the extra money.

(KMH) - Oh good, good, what?

(DJD) - When I went in, I was getting \$78 a month, and when I got out, I was on, I was making a little over \$300 a month, which was -- I was, living pretty good then.

(KMH) - Good pay, huh?

(DJD) – Yeah.

(KMH) - Did you get any kind of like, overseas bonus put in?

(DJD) - Yup, well, it wasn't really a bonus, just overseas pay they called it.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - And it was a little more but it wasn't all that much, I think.

(KMH) – Huh.

(DJD) - I think during the time that I was over there. I think it was only like, oh \$20, \$25 a month, or something like . . .

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - I don't remember now for sure.

(KMH) - Did it take all that to live on, or did you send any home?

(DJD) - Oh yeah, by the time you buy your own smoke and do your laundries and --

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - Any entertainment you wanted, well you had to pay for that out of that.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - So, you had to kind of watch your dollars, but,

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - It wasn't all that bad.

(KMH) - Did you get care packages from home?

(DJD) - Oh yeah, my mother was real good about sending stuff over there.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - And you, some of the stuff wasn't any good after you got it there, you know. She'd send a box of cookies over. Well there was nothing but crumbs when they got there, 'cuz handlers were uh . . .

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - But uh. . .

(KMH) – I'll bet you ate them anyway.

(DJD) - We did, yeah, with a spoon! (Laughter)

(KMH) - (Laughter) That's cool, what was it like, having your first Christmas over there, by yourself?

(DJD) - Oh, it was pretty lonesome.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - Pretty lonesome. No family, of course, you was just the same as everybody, you know.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - Nobody was home and, everybody wanted to be home, but it just wasn't possible, they couldn't send us home.

(KMH) - Uh hum, uh hum.

(DJD) - Yeah, it was pretty lonesome.

(KMH) - Yup, I imagine not being able to make phone calls and contacts, letters were, did you write letters home?

(DJD) - Oh yeah, I wrote, pretty much every night I'd write to somebody. You know, particularly my folks, and then I wrote to my sister, who, at that time she was living in Fresno, and and I have an aunt in Denver who I wrote to quite a little bit; another in Pueblo, I wrote to her quite a bit, but I had a cousin that was a -- he was in the Air Force, stationed in France, and I wrote to him, occasionally too, and uh . . .

(KMH) - Uh hum, any surprises, any like, kind of, odd circumstance, did you bump into anybody you knew, or anything like over that time?

(DJD) - I don't remember anybody I bumped into over in Korea, other than I was stationed with a, there at the company I was in, my best buddy was from Jetmore.

(KMH) - Oh really?

(DJD) - And he was - we wound up getting together after we got of the service quite a bit, and he was a, kind of a cowboy guy. His folks had a ranch up there, but they separated while we were over there, and, when he come home though, his mother gotten most of that ranch and she'd squandered it off.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - And he never had much after that, he tried, but he just couldn't make it.

(KMH) – Huh. Did you maintain contact with any people from that time?

(DJD) - Not really, I don't recall now, that I did, but --

(JD) - Alex, Alex.

(DJD) - Well, that's when I was stationed in Texas.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - Well one of the, the PFC that worked with me in that, training aids area, his name was Alex Hamilton, and I'd made an acquaintance with him, afterwards. We got out, he come by and see us one time in Plains, and uh. . . But that's the only one I can recall right now.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - Other than, the boy in Jetmore.

(KMH) - Uh hum, were you active in veterans groups?

(DJD) - Yeah, when I got out of the service, I joined the American Legion in Copeland.

(KMH) - Uh huh.

(DJD) - And I belonged to that until we went to college, and I dropped out because I just couldn't afford all that. And so, I dropped out of it then, and then, I didn't join again for, they didn't have any active, service there in Meade, in Plains. So, I never joined up back with them again, but then when, we started coming to Dodge, there were folks living up here, then I joined the VFW out here.

(KMH) - Oh, uh huh.

(DJD) - And then afterwards, well, that's kind of a funny thing that the head of things had date setup when you could join the American Legion, and according to my service, I couldn't belong, because I wasn't in service at the right time. They had a vacant spot, between the Korean War and Vietnam War, that you could, weren't eligible to join it, and I thought that was kind of funny, but, a fella' down in Plains, he was a member of the American Legion, buy they didn't -- he was active over at Meade, and he told me, he said, "If you put in, an application to join," but he said "Don't put your years of service down." He said, "I'll get you in." Well I thought, that's a long shot. . .

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - He did; he got me in.

(KMH) – Wow.

(DJD) - So I'm now an active member in the American Legion as well as the VFW.

(KMH) – Huh.

(DJD) - And so . . .

(KMH) - That's interesting, how about, summing up, your whole experience, when you think about your life over all, where does this fit in and what . . .

(DJD) - Well, as far as my service life is concerned, I really didn't care for it that much. I didn't, enjoy it, all that much either, but yet, the experiences that I had while I was in there, I wouldn't ever trade it for anything. You know, they were worth quite a bit, and my memories, come back from a lot of that, and I, I really, really think it was worthwhile.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - But even though it was three years more or less wasted, but, I didn't do all that much, you know I, like I say, it was kind of an experience.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And a greater appreciation for America. Oh yeah, make you really, know the country here.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And the best part is right here in southwest Kansas. You know, I never been in any place, in all of my travels and so on like that, I'd still come back to southwest Kansas.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - Have you ever been back, to Korea?

(KMH) – No.

(DJD) - Japan?

(KMH) – No.

(KMH) - Ever wanted to?

(DJD) - Oh, I wondered sometime about going back, over there, but I don't know why, I, there's nothing over there for me.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And what, was there then, is not there now.

(KMH) – Right.

(DJD) - And so I don't think I'd care anything about going back that much.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - I, I would, like sometime, to go back to Hawaii, because I wasn't there long enough to enjoy any of it, but she says she don't want to go back, so. (Laughter)

(KMH) – Oh. (Laughter)

(DJD) - She's been over there, and I, I've had --

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - I was, just when I was there that one night.

(KMH) – Yeah.

(DJD) - And it was late at night when we were there, and there wasn't much going on, so. . . .

(KMH) - Huh.

(DJD) - Tried to talk you into, staying in the service.

(KMH) - Oh did they? Try . . .

(DJD) - Did what?

(KMH) - Tried to talk you into staying in the service?

(DJD) - Oh yeah, a major down there, at, San Houston, Texas, he wanted me to stay, he said, "If you go with me." He was a doctor.

(KMH) - Uh hum.

(DJD) - And he said "If you go with me" he was being reassigned to a, that bigger hospital in, Virginia, Maryland.

(KMH) - Walter Reed?

(DJD) - No it was at the. . .

(KMH) - Bethesda?

(DJD) – Bethesda.

(KMH) – Ah.

(DJD) - I believe it was, and he was being reassigned there and he said, "If you come, re-enlist, and come with me down there, be my stand-by generator operator," 'cuz they had to have a generator, you know, to work, in case the power went off later. Or he said, "If you do that," he said, "I'll guarantee you, by the time you finish your enlistment of six years," he said, "I'll have you at the top rank of the enlisted men" which would've been an E9 and, that's a, well, sergeant major, really. And uh -- but you would've been in specialist class, but I don't know what I'd be. Um, but, I'd had enough of it by then. Then I'd had that offer to buy that drilling business and so, I said I'd come home and do that.

(KMH) - Yeah, in all that time, you, did ever get time to come back to visit?

(DJD) - Oh yeah, I was home, when I spent all week at home, right after basic training, and then while I was at Fort Knox. I came home for Christmas, and then, after I was being shipped overseas -- why I came home for about . . . I think it was three weeks, before I went overseas.

(KMH) - Ah.

(DJD) - And then when I come back, I was home about a month, before I had to show up in San Antonio, and so I got several times to come home.

(KMH) - Finish that, oh yeah, yup.

(DJD) - You had, that was on your own expense, and so you had to save money to get, to be able to do that, if you didn't save your money, you couldn't come home.

(KMH) - Oh yeah?

(DJD) - You didn't have no way.

(KMH) - How'd you get here?

(DJD) - I had to get --

(KMH) - And did you drive? Did you train? Fly?

(DJD) - Well, I had to drive. When I was in San Antonio, Texas, I had a car down there, and I had one when I was in Fort Knox, Kentucky, too but I didn't . . . Well, I took one down when I was in Georgia. I took a car down, but I couldn't keep it there, and so I had a friend that was in (Unknown) to Florida in the Air Force, and he had leave coming, and so he brought my car back home, and uh . . .

(KMH) - Wow.

(DJD) - So I didn't, didn't have one then the rest of the time, but it was just as well. Uh, that was so horrible down there, and it was a convertible car.

(KMH) – Oh.

(DJD) - And the canvas top would just, pop down there, you know.

(KMH) – Yeah?

(DJD) - Because of moisture.

(KMH) - Yeah, yeah.

(DJD) - Had a nice pair of Florsheim shoes in the trunk of the car and I went out to get them out one day, and that -- just full of green mold.

(KMH) - Oh my gosh.

(DJD) - It ruined them shoes.

(KMH) - Goodness, goodness. Any other thoughts we didn't cover?

(DJD) - Well, can't think right now. Probably thing of something tomorrow. (Laughter)

(KMH) – All right, well, give us a call! We'll be back. All right. Thank you so much. Thank you. We got a lot of good stories from you.

Dwight John Dunham
SN 17501237

Inducted in to Military Service

11 June 1957

② Fort Smith Arkansas

13 June 1957 stationed at Fort Polk La
Basic Training 13 weeks

Sept 1957 311.10 Inf, Comm Spec, 10 weeks
special Training Fort Gordon, Ga

Nov 1957 to Fort Knox, Ky for 13 months

Dec 1958 to Korea for 13 months

Returned Dec 16, 1959 for San Francisco, Calif

Assigned to US Army Medical Center
Fort Sam Houston, Tex — San Antonio

Separated from Sam Houston

10 June 1960

Discharged from Active Duty - Reserved.

10 June 1963

Awards

Marksmen Badge (Rifle)
Expert Badge (Rifle)
Good Conduct Medal
(2) Letter of Appreciation