

The background of the cover is a photograph of the Gray County Veterans Memorial. It features a tall flagpole with an American flag in the center, flanked by two semi-circular structures with columns. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a clear blue sky.

# Gray County Veterans Memorial & Archive

## ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

**Paul H. Meadows**

October 18, 2013

INTERVIEW  
YEAR

**Paul H. Meadows**  
**2013**

**GRAY COUNTY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

NAME: **PAUL H. MEADOWS**  
DATE: **October 18, 2013**  
PLACE: **Cimarron, KS (611 N. Second St.)**

INTERVIEWER: **Joyce Sullentrop**

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

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**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**

**Paul was born on September 14, 1929 at his home on the prairie farm, 5 miles north of Neal, KS. He attended schools at District #9, a country school, (grades 1-8), Hamilton, KS (grades 9-10), Tonavey, KS (finished 10<sup>th</sup> grade), Neal High School (grades 11-12). After graduating from Neal High School in 1947 (which was the last graduating class at Neal), he moved to Toronto, KS and did odd jobs until 1948 when he attended Business College in Chillicothe, MO. He went to work for Santa Fe in August of 1949 and moved to Syracuse, KS. On July 2, 1950, he married his wife. He was drafted into the Army on April 13, 1951 (which was Friday) and served two years. After he was discharged on March 23, 1953 from the Army, he went back to work for Santa Fe and, again, moved to Syracuse, KS with his wife. He & his wife then moved to Cimarron, KS in September 1953, where he still resides. He retired from Santa Fe in January 1991.**

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:**

**Germany after WWII; basic training; new wife at home; Army pay; traveling in Europe; communicating with family**

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW: **This interview was transcribed by Paul’s daughter Janet Meadows.**

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 53:09

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 17 pages

**ORAL HISTORY**  
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**INTERVIEW DATE: October 18, 2013**

Interviewer: Joyce Sullentrop (**JS**)

Interviewee: Paul H. Meadows (**PHM**)

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**JS** – Before, you said that you really didn't want to go and then you were drafted?

**PHM** - Yes. Well, I had gotten married and I didn't notify the board about it, but I was drafted anyway. That was kind of why I didn't want to go because I had just got married. But anyway, I went. I'm glad I did.

**JS** – And you were surprised when you got the notice?

**PHM** – Yeah, I really was.

**JS** – And you didn't want to go because you had just got married?

**PHM** – Yes, that's right.

**JS** – Were you aware of what was going on in Korea at the time?

**PHM** – Yes, I was. Actually I took my basic training in Fort Jackson, South Carolina and every company that had trained before us went to Korea. But when we got our orders, it was for Germany.

**JS** – OK.

**PHM** – I was over in Germany for a year and a half.

**JS** – But you thought that you might go to Korea.

**PHM** – Yeah, I kind of figured I was going because that's where every company before us had been going when they finished basic training.

**JS** – And when you went in, did others from your community, were they drafted also?

**PHM** – Yes, they were. There were some that I had went to high school with and in that vicinity that actually took basic training with me.

**JS** – Can you describe your experience with basic training? Was it your first time away from home or traveling?

**PHM** – Well, no it really wasn't the first time. I went to Chillicothe, Missouri to go to Business College and from then on, I was away from home. Basic training was quite an experience. It was from April to August in South Carolina. It was pretty hot down there. And, uh, we took infantry training, basic training, and we walked everywhere, we didn't ride anywhere. So, I lost about 20-30 pounds because of basic training.

**JS** – And what did you think of, you grew up hunting with guns?

**PHM** – Yes, yes.

**JS** – So the training?

**PHM** – Well no, I mean, it was an experience, but I was used to firearms and stuff like that. It was different firearms that we used hunting.

**JS** – And were there other people from your area that went through training with you?

**PHM** – Yes, yes there was.

**JS** – But there were young men from all over the United States?

**PHM** – Oh yeah, they were from everywhere. Yeah, you got acquainted with a lot of people. That was an eye opener to get out that far away from home. People are different everywhere.

**JS** – Was there a particular individual or particular experience that you remember from the?

**PHM** – Basic training?

**JS** – Um-huh?

**PHM** – Not really. I made a lot of friends when I was there, course I never saw them again after that.

**JS** – So how did you find out that you weren't going to Korea?

**PHM** – Well, I didn't know until our orders came out, where we were going to go when we finished basic training. Course, I got, they notified us where we were going to go and then we were going on leave for a couple of weeks and then we shipped out to Germany. Back then, we rode a boat instead of flying.

**JS** – I wondered about that.

**PHM** – We were on a boat for two weeks going over and on a boat two weeks coming back. Going over, I was sick most of the time. Coming back, it didn't seem to bother me. Kind of odd, but.

**JS** – And you said you were just married, so your wife, did she join you in Germany?

**PHM** – No, she lived with her mother for a while. Course, we/she got pregnant, so we had a baby while I was in basic training and I never saw him until I got to come home on leave.

**JS** – Oh my.

**PHM** – But she worked. We were poor people. She had to work to help. Of course, she got an allotment from my army time pay.

**JS** – Do you remember how much you got paid?

**PHM** - \$99.00

**JS** – A month?

**PHM** – Yeah

**JS** – Oh my!

**PHM** – Yeah

**JS** – Alright

**PHM** – It wasn't very much. Well, I only got about \$30-40 myself because of the allotment. Well, and I owed the bank there at Neal some money and I had a class E allotment going to them to pay that note off. It wasn't very big, but it takes time.

**JS** – So in the two years that you were in, you didn't get a raise?

**PHM** – Oh, Yeah. I don't remember what I was getting when I got out. The more rank you got, the more money you made. I didn't make much rank, so...

**JS** – So when you arrived, where did you, uh, embark from the ship? In Germany or?

**PHM** – Bremerhaven, Germany.

**JS** – OK, and then they put you on trains?

**PHM** – Yeah, on a train.

**JS** – And what was the base that you were at?

**PHM** – I was at uh, well it was a German Tank Camp. They call it "Concern" over there in Germany. A little town of Böblingen. It was close to Stuttgart, which is a big town in Germany, about 20 kilometers, which that's what they use over there, about 20 miles from there. I was in a signal outfit that we would go on maneuvers. What we did was furnish communications for the Air Force. We would go to places with them. I am not real familiar with what information we were sending, but that's what the deal was. We trained with the Air Force.

**JS** – So, would/was the Air Force just flying?

**PHM** – No, no. They were, it was up in rural Germany. I don't know what the Air Force did up there, but we camped with them. I never did find out. No, there wasn't any

airport or anything like that. It was on bivouac, we kind of played soldier, you might say. But it was a learning/training experience was what it amounted to.

**JS** – Was that what you did the whole time?

**PHM** – Well, I did on the start and then, I didn't, the code was, well, here it was the Morse code that I learned on the railroad, that's why I wound up in the signal outfit, but it was, what do they call it, it's been so long ago, it was a different code, and I really didn't like it. But there was a jeep driving job that came open that the guy that had it went home. So, I talked to my CO, and told him I would like to do that. So, they let me do that. What I did, I drove the 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant, our 2<sup>nd</sup> in command at our company. Then, I ran errands. People come in, I would go to the train station in Stuttgart and pick them up and bring them back to the base. And then if they were going home, I would take them to the train station where they could leave and ship out to go home.

**JS** – So did you, you didn't have any of the German language. Did you learn some when you were over there?

**PHM** – Oh, a little bit. Just enough to get by. That's about it. Some of it, I probably shouldn't have learned, but..

**JS** – Well, we won't go into that.

**JS** – So you were there from '51 to '53. So the Korean War, there had been peace in Korea?

**PHM** – Not yet. They were fighting in Korea then.

**JS** – OK, but did that influence or affect whatever you were doing or did you know? Or could you know, I guess?

**PHM** – Well, I... Not that I'm a coward, but I was kind of glad I went to Germany where they wasn't fighting.

**JS** – So how did you know about the Korean War? Was there daily news that you would read about?

**PHM** – Well, it was/went from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War. The eras of those years. Which they call that the Korean War in the 50's. Yeah, I kept up on the news as far as the war.

**JS** – You were able to write your wife and she was able to write you, but not necessarily call?

**PHM** – Well, we didn't, because like I said, we were poor people, we didn't have the money to do that. No, we wrote letters all of the time. Other than that why, 'til I saw her. Her and her brother and his wife came and picked me up. They sent me to

Breckenridge, KY to be discharged when I got out of the service. They came down and picked me up.

**JS** – With your son?

**PHM** – No, she didn't bring him.

**JS** – He would have been what a year, year and a half?

**PHM** – Yeah. He stayed with his Grandmother.

**JS** – He probably didn't even, well he didn't know you?

**PHM** – No, not really. I hadn't seen much of him. But anyway.

**JS** – OK, so when you were in Germany, if you had leave and I am assuming you had leave, would you travel in Europe?

**PHM** – Yeah, I wish I would have traveled a lot more than what I did. In fact, I had 37 days leave time that I cashed in. But, I went to Amsterdam, and Holland. We went to Paris and we went down to Bavaria where Hitler's, one of his hideouts were. Pretty fancy deal to be a hideout. Yeah, I wished I would have traveled more, but I didn't have enough money to do too much traveling.

**JS** – Did you travel by train?

**PHM** – Yeah. Everything over there was by train.

**JS** – So WWII ended in '45. So was Hitler's, his home was up in the mountains, is that the one that you are talking about, the Eagle's Nest?

**PHM** – Berchtesgaden, I think they called it. Yeah it was.

**JS** – So was it open so people could go in and look at it?

**PHM** – No, it really wasn't. We didn't get to go in it but we were there where it was. And it was beautiful country over there, too. Germany, snow it just fell and just stacked up. There was no Kansas wind.

**JS** – OK, so when you went to Paris, Paris would have been recovering from German occupation in WWII. What was your impression there?

**PHM** – Oh, it was interesting. We saw the, we went up on the Eiffel Tower and ate lunch at a restaurant about half way up. And, what do you call it, that big arch. We saw quite a bit and went to a show there. We didn't do really too, we wasn't there too long but we went there just to kind of say we had been there, you know. But we had a good time and it was something that we would have never have seen otherwise.

**JS** – Right.

**JS** – And Amsterdam?

**PHM** – Yeah, we mostly just sightsaw up there. The canals and everything. We rode those boats, you know, you take trips on those canals around thru the city. We did that. That's about the size of it, just sightseeing.

**JS** – Um-huh?

**PHM** – Just kind of say we had been there.

**JS** – And you said earlier, before we started taping this, that you were glad that you had gone.

**PHM** – Oh yes. Yeah, Yeah. I probably shouldn't say it, I kind of felt like it was two years of my life that was just wasted, but it really wasn't. At the time, I thought that, but now I don't.

**JS** – Well, you were just newly married and had a child. You probably wanted to be back home.

**PHM** – Yeah, Yeah. A long ways from home.

**JS** – How old were you during WWII?

**PHM** – Well, I was born in '29, so I wasn't old enough to go. I had a brother that was in WWII, at the very end of it. I don't think he was in any fighting, he was in the army. In the peace action part of it, I guess you could say.

**JS** – Well, when WWII was going on, in your community, people talked about the war?

**PHM** – Oh, Yeah. I was in high school actually. I graduated in '47, so it started in what, in '43? So a big part of it was pretty much over, by the time I was old enough. That's why I wound up in the Korean War, I guess.

**JS** – And then, you were aware of the Korean War when you were drafted, of course?

**PHM** – Oh, yes.

**JS** – Would you read the newspapers/ listen to the radio or?

**PHM** – Oh, yeah, both. We didn't have TV back then.

**JS** – Right.

**JS** – And, would you say your family was a military family? Had your father served?

**PHM** – No, no. My brother and I were the first ones in my immediate family to go to the military/army.



**JS** – And what did you learn about people or, I guess, human nature?

**PHM** – I think every country has a different, you know, lifestyle. I had some good German friends while I was over there, they worked on our base, the PX and things like that, that we got acquainted with them. Germany is a beer drinking country, well this month they have an Oktoberfest over there that's quite a party. We attended one of those, anyway.

**JS** – Well, Germany was just still, I mean it was really recovering from war?

**PHM** – Yeah, I tell you, Stuttgart there was worlds of bombed out buildings there, you know. They had kind of cleaned them up, the trash, but the walls and stuff were still there. They hadn't rebuilt anything to speak of. They just had cleaned out the rubble from the bombings. For some reason, they bombed it pretty heavily during the war, WWII. That was quite a sight to see, you know, you could image what went on there.

**JS** – What did it make you think when you saw a city that had been bombed that much?

**PHM** – Well, I'm glad it wasn't where I lived.

**JS** – That's true.

**PHM** – Yeah, it had to be terrible over there during the war. I've read stories and everything, you know, about it. Some of what the guys went thru. But, it all turned out better, we'd hoped, anyway. Still there was a lot of destruction and deaths that were really unnecessary.

**JS** – I guess that's what war is.

**PHM** – Well, yeah, that's true. That's what war is.

**JS** – So when you were a jeep driver, was that most of your time there, you drove a jeep?

**PHM** – The biggest part of it, yes.

**JS** – So one day, was basically, you would get?

**PHM** – Yes, I would check with our office, our local clerk, and he would tell me what I needed to do or where I needed to go, or one thing and another. We had a German tailor that had a room in a barracks there, but he took the cleaning out in the country or to a little town that had a dry cleaners on it. I would take him and all the clothes, we would load all of that in my jeep and we would take it out to that cleaners, and I would wait on him to do it or drive around and look at the country over. I forget the name of the little town that we would go to. It was fairly close to this little town of Böblingen that we were stationed at.

**JS** – Are you saying Bob-linken?

**PHM** – Oh Yeah, B-o-b-l-i-n-g-e-n, Böblingen.

**JS** – Oh, OK. So was he taking military uniforms?

**PHM** – Oh yeah. It was our clothes that he would take out there. Uniforms, well they would wash our fatigues, but the dress clothes they would dry clean.

**JS** – What other services did you have? I mean, you certainly ate, lived, and everything there. You had a PX?

**PHM** – Oh Yeah. Well, we had a movie theater and you know, about everything most posts have.

**JS** – But when you were out with the air force, was that any different, was there a base out there?

**PHM** – No, no, we were camped out in the country. We were on bivouac they called it. We lived in pup tents when we were out in the country. And we had a mess tent where they fixed our food for us, and everything. Of course, the latrines, we dug a ditch. That was the latrine.

**JS** – But, that was just a very small part of your tour?

**PHM** – Oh, Yeah. Well, that's what I did mostly, though. When we'd go on maneuvers, I'd drive this 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant out there. It was kind of interesting. Then, there was an American zone, and a British zone, and so forth. But, when we'd get out of the American zone, he would drive the jeep and I'd ride.

**JS** – Really!?

**PHM** – He couldn't do that in the American zone. I would set there and have a first lieutenant driving me around over the country. But we would go on the autobahn, which is that main highway. I'm sure you've heard of that. But, we would usually go to the British zone for these maneuvers for some reason. I can't tell you why, but that was where we would go, as a rule.

**JS** – So what did you think of the idea that there were different zones? There was a British zone, a United States zone. Was there a French?

**PHM** – I think it was a Russian, I believe.

**JS** – Right, which would eventually turn out to be East Germany.

**PHM** – That's true.

**JS** – Well did you feel any of that tension with the Russians?

**PHM** – We never really were close to that over there. I never did get to Berlin or anything, where the wall was and all that good stuff. I don't remember if I saw any Russians, I didn't know that they were Russians.

**JS** – And what was the food like?

**PHM** – It was pretty good. Sometimes it wasn't too good.

**JS** – And the movies you saw, they would have been movies that were released in the United States?

**PHM** – Yeah.

**JS** – Do you remember any of those?

**PHM** – No. I didn't go too often. We had a movie theater there on the post. I would go once in a while, me and my friends. I don't remember any of the shows we saw. Just something to do when we had time off.

**JS** – Was it sort of boring?

**PHM** – Not really. There was always something going on.

**JS** – Could you see the effects of the war as you drove around the countryside?

**PHM** – Oh Yeah. There was bombed out stuff everywhere over there. It kind of makes an impression on you, to see what went on.

**JS** – And the German people, did you have much contact with them?

**PHM** – Quite a bit. We'd go to Stuttgart on pass and eat in restaurants and one thing and another. I never will forget the first time a bunch of us went to a restaurant and ate. I ordered Wiener Schnitzel, which is veal. It came out with two fried eggs on top of it. Of course, there was a friend from Kansas with us, a Sergeant, who spoke real good German. This waitress came up to me and said something to me. I had no idea what she said, and I said no. I thought she asked me if I didn't want the eggs. She got real mad. I ask him what she said. She had asked me if I didn't like them or if they weren't good. Course, I didn't mean that, I just didn't want them on my meat. Anyway, that was kind of a learning experience right there. You learned to get by with enough German to talk to people. A big majority of them spoke English anyway, over there. Some of them didn't. It's kind of like here, the Mexicans, some of them don't speak English. That's kind of the way it was over there. They got acquainted during WW II with the soldiers and learned English.

**JS** – Any experiences that you remember vividly during that time?

**PHM** – Not really. I would say it was kind of hum-drum, day in and day out. It was a job. We didn't have any real exciting things to me that happened. It was just, we did our job and that was about it.

**JS** – Well, then when you, you came home with your company, right? I mean you all came home at the same time?

**PHM** – No, no. We came home individually.

**JS** – Oh you did?

**PHM** – We came into the company individually too.

**JS** – Because it was what you called the “bastards”?

**PHM** – Well, any of them. People were coming and going all of the time. Some of them still had duty to do after I left. No, I left by myself.

**JS** – Did you keep in contact with any of the friends?

**PHM** – Some of them. I had a good friend from Oregon and I had a good friend, well two good friends, from New York that were in my company. We did things together when we'd go somewhere. I talked to them quite a bit after we got out, but haven't heard anything out of them forever now. I don't even know if they are still alive or not.

**JS** – But you didn't have a group of people that would have a reunion every so many years?

**PHM** – No, no. Nothing like that. I know a lot of the army companies did that, but we never did. In the VFW & Legion magazine, there was one time I saw an article that somebody from that company had written in, wanting information about something, I don't remember what it was now. But that's the only time that I've ever seen that 75thAGL come up. Course that 97<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion, that was a big outfit, it was 4-5 companies like ours, but we were attached to them. We were stationed, they were stationed there at Böblingen where we were. Like I said, it was an old German tank fort or camp.

**JS** – Oh, so then, the United States army just came over and?

**PHM** – Yeah, and took it over, per se.

**JS** – OK.

**PHM** – In fact, we had trucks with a mobile units on them for communications that we pulled with a trailer with a motor to furnish electricity to run it. We had a motor pool, and I worked in the motor pool some, too, after I got the jeep driving job. We had an older fellow/sergeant there that was in charge of the motor pool. I helped him, did office work,

paperwork and stuff like that, when I wasn't out driving. We worked on those units there in a big shop we had.

**JS** – So when you got in to the army, went through basic training, did it impress you that the army was so organized and efficient?

**PHM** – Well, to a certain extent, yes. It's quite an operation to do what they do.

**JS** – Just to move the people around, alone!

**PHM** – Yeah, you don't know how they keep track of you actually, as many as they are, the soldiers and everything.

**JS** – Is there anything else that you want to say about your military experience. You already said that you learned a lot about different kinds of people and you used what you had before, like the code, you used that in the army?

**PHM** – Yes, the telegraph.

**JS** – Um-huh?

**PHM** – I did, yes, for a while. When I first went to the company they had school, kind of like the telegraph school I went to in Missouri. Well, I had to go through that school to learn that, what did they call that? "the American code" or something?, it was a different, it was a radio signal. Where on the Morse code, it was a dot dash dot dash. This was called the continuous wave. It was different. It was the same, but yet it was different, if that makes sense. I really didn't care too much about it and that is why I finally changed and got this jeep driving job, which I really enjoyed it.

**JS** – Did you learn or acquire any skills while you were in the army that when you came home that you could apply?

**PHM** – Not really. In fact, I went back to work on the railroad. Really, when I was drafted, I didn't think I liked the railroad, what I had learned so far. But I didn't know what else to do and I still had a job. They kept my job open, so I went back to them. It worked out and I stayed 41 years. Well, actually it was 39 years cause two of those years I was in the army.

**JS** – So when you came back, it was just an easy transition?

**PHM** – Yeah, Yeah.

**JS** – And what did you do on the railroad specifically?

**PHM** – Well, I worked in the depots. I was an agent/clerk. I wasn't a train man.

**JS** – So you weren't riding the train?

**PHM** – No, no.

**JS** – And where was this in?

**PHM** – When I hired out, they sent me to the Colorado division, when I got the job, I envisioned working in the mountains. I'd never been to Colorado but once, well they sent me to Syracuse to take 6 months training, apprentice they called it. So I did that at Syracuse, which I thought was the end of the world.

**JS** – It still is, probably.

**PHM** – It sure wasn't Colorado. But, after I got promoted to operator/agent, I worked from Dodge City to up north of Colorado Springs. Stations all up through there, relieving vacationers. You work on the extra board until you get enough, it's a seniority job, seniority where you can bid on jobs when they come open, somebody quits or they bid in another job, and their job would come up for bid. I was still on the extra board when I was drafted. When I came back, there were a lot of people younger than me in seniority that had permanent jobs, but I had to go back on an extra board.

**JS** – So did your wife travel with you when you went?

**PHM** – No, she didn't. She stayed home all of the time that I was gone.

**JS** – And where did she live?

**PHM** – At Toronto.

**JS** – So she stayed in the home area?

**PHM** – Yeah. She stayed with her mother. I had a sister that was married and lived in the Bartlesville, OK. She got a job with Phillips Oil Company down there and she lived with my sister there in Bartlesville until I got home. Course, we moved to Syracuse when I got a job there. We live there until we moved to Cimarron.

**JS** – When you were working on the railroad, it was really the heyday of the train, right?

**PHM** – Yeah. When I went to work, the steamers were still running.

**JS** – Why did you chose to work for the railroad in the first place?

**PHM** – My wife's brother had went to work for the Missouri Pacific back there in eastern Kansas. That kind of enticed me to learn, to go to school to learn the telegram. Which, back then, you had to know to get a job. It's a lost art anymore. That was why I did that, because of what he had told me about it. I had been going with my wife, and she decided I needed to do something to get a permanent job if we were going to get married and have a family. I wasn't to enthused a first, but after later on, I was glad things worked out the way they did.

**JS** – Well, it was a good secure job.

**PHM** – Oh yes, Yeah. And actually, retirements better than Social Security. In fact my wife worked most of her life and paid into social security. But when we retired, she could draw more money on my pension than she could by just drawing social security.

**JS** – Well, you certainly saw a lot of changes. What was it like with the big steam engines?

**PHM** – Well, it was real interesting. Every year, well here for the last 6 or 8 years, on my birthday, my kids, we go somewhere and we ride a train. We go to Colorado where the narrow gauge rails, they call it. It's all steam. We been to ...

**JS** – The one at Durango?

**PHM** – Yeah, Durango. That's a beautiful trip up to Silverton. The first one that we went on was from Antonito to Chama and that was a beautiful trip too. Then we went to Santa Fe and rode a train from Santa Fe to...(my mind went blank). It wasn't a very far, about and 18-20 mile trip.

**JS** – So do you ever go to Dodge City, get on the train and go anywhere?

**PHM** – No, I really haven't. I rode the train quite a bit. When I went to work for the railroad, I didn't have a car, and I'd ride the train, we had a local passenger train back then, to my jobs where I was going to be and stay there.

**JS** – Well now my neighbor tells me that they've cut back on the crew and .....

**PHM** – Yeah, it's amazing. When I went to work, they had 5 people working on the train (engineers, fireman, 2 brakemen, and a conductor). Now, they do it with 2 people.

**JS** – I know!

**PHM** – I don't know how they do it. Course, I had retired when they started doing that. Seemed like every station that I worked at, they'd close for some reason.

**JS** – So when did you retire? What year?

**PHM** – January of 1991. I was working at Dodge City at that time and they closed Dodge City station. I took an early retirement. I lacked 9 months of being old enough to get full retirement. I could have went to Kansas City or Albuquerque for that 9 months to finish out my time, I had plenty of service. I took a reduction in pension and went ahead and retired. They gave me a buyout though, too. About a year and a half's pay on a buyout. I figure, that 9 months, that buyout will take care of that.

**JS** – Right. So you're glad that you made that decision?

**PHM** – Oh Yeah.

**JS** – And retirements been good for you?

**PHM** – Well, Yeah, it has. I haven't accomplished too much.

**JS** – Well, you are not supposed to in retirement.

**PHM** – Well, no.

**JS** – We'll need to wrap this up because it's about an hour of your time that I have taken. After you got out of the service, and then, of course, the Korean War, well the police action had been sort of decided, and then we moved into Vietnam, and then of course, in more modern times, we've been in war after war after war, did you have any thoughts about what the war meant to a nation, or what it meant to the young men, and now young women, that go into the service?

**PHM** – Well Yeah, you can't help but think about it. Course, the army is altogether different. We didn't have women in the army back when I was in, like they have now. I had a grandson that was in the army. He went to the National Guard and then he was activated into the army. He was in about 8 years. He was stationed in New York. My son and I went up there, flew up there to see him one time. We'd go to the PX and get drinks and food. There was as many women as there was men, running around in their uniforms. I was kind of surprised. It was a little different than what I had been through. He kind of rubs it in me, he made sergeant when he was in. He calls me an underling, a PFC.

**JS** – Did he go abroad?

**PHM** – Yeah, he spent some time over there in Iraq. He wasn't over there but about 5-6 months, but he was over there.

**JS** – As a veteran, there are certain benefits that you have?

**PHM** – Oh Yeah, quite a few benefits.

**JS** – We now hear a lot about how the veteran's hospitals and things like that sometimes don't function well. Has the veteran experience been a good experience for you?

**PHM** – Oh Yeah, when I took my physical to go into the service, we took it at Kansas City. They stripped us down in a big room and gave us all kinds of examinations. When they checked my blood pressure, there was a whole bunch of us, undoubtedly it was high. They made us lay down on benches around the room, on our stomach with our arm hanging over and every once in a while, they would come by and check our blood pressure. After a while, they would say "well, you were good to go". I didn't realize that I had high blood pressure. Like I said, I was in the hospital in Germany operated with appendicitis and they didn't say anything. And then, they gave you a physical when you get out. They didn't say anything, but when I went back to work on the railroad, my blood pressure was too high to work. So, I had to go to Topeka to the Santa Fe hospital for two weeks to get my blood pressure down where I was able to go to work. But, the doctor in Syracuse, he was an ex-army doctor, and he told me I



needed to file a claim to for that, “you may not get anything, but as you get older it was just going to get worse”. Anyway, I did that and went to Wichita to the VA hospital and took a physical. They gave me a 10% disability for high blood pressure. I got out in March and in August, I started drawing \$12.95, 10% a month. I’ve drew it all these years, now, it’s \$129.00. Cost of living went up.

**JS** – So how did they treat high blood pressure then? Did you take medication?

**PHM** – Pills, medication. Well, in fact, I take high blood medicine now. I take 8 pills a day, for some reason. My blood pressure has been normal forever.

**JS** – Probably because you take those pills.

**PHM** – Yeah, I’m sure it is.

**JS** – Well, you mentioned a Santa Fe hospital. You mean Santa Fe had a hospital?

**PHM** – In Topeka. At one time, they did. I don’t think they do anymore. In fact, I spent two weeks down there. I wasn’t sick. I’d get out of the hospital and go uptown and go to a movie. As long as I got back in time to take my medication. They would give me medication. In a two week period, they got it down where it was low enough that I could go back to work. It didn’t cost me anything. Santa Fe owned the hospital.

**JS** – So the closest VA hospital to you now, is where?

**PHM** – Wichita. I was just down there here a while back and got a shingles shot. Everybody says you ought to have one of those.

**JS** – I know. They say that.

**PHM** – I tried to get one here, but I’d had to pay for it if I did, but if I went to the VA, it didn’t cost me anything.

**JS** – Does your children live around here?

**PHM** – I have two daughters that live here. I have a son that lives in Offerle. And I have two kids in Wichita, a boy and a girl that live down there.

**JS** – OK.

**PHM** – Yeah, I go to Wichita quite a bit to see them. Course, I still have my folks, they had a little farm back there. It was just a quarter and I still have that.

**JS** – Oh, my gosh. Do you have someone farm it for you?

**PH** – No, it’s all pasture anymore. It was half pasture and half farm ground when my folks got it. But, after Dad got where he couldn’t work, they let it go back, all of it, back to pasture, so we rent it out every year for pasture.

**JS** – Is there a home on it?

**PHM** – There's a big old stone house.

**JS** – Oh really?

**PHM** – Yeah, it's still standing there. My mother lived there until she passed away, by herself after Dad passed away. But, nobody has lived there since. It's just stood there. Like old homes, it's deteriorating.

**JS** – OK, is there anything else that you want to say that you think might be? These tapes, of course, are valuable because as people get older, their experiences sort of fade. Young people aren't interested in it at the time, when they hear these stories. But, then the tapes will serve researchers well.

**PHM** – That's understandable. It's a good deal, really.

**JS** – So, any words of wisdom?

**PHM** – Well, not really. Just do what you ought to do and take care of things.

**JS** – I think that's a work ethic or a way of life for many people. But, when I did the WWII veterans, they would say that when they went to basic training, they just encountered so many different ways of thinking about life, you know, as they met different people from different parts of the country.

**PHM** – Well, that's true. Everybody is different, from different places. Well, I had guys from New York in our company and they talked different. Some of them weren't too smart, I didn't think. In fact, when I was driving a jeep, one of them, he was a mail clerk. I would have to take him to Stuttgart to get the mail and bring it back. He was always wanting to drive that jeep. There was a back road that we could take to get down there, and it was about the same distance, but it wasn't on a main road. One day he kept after me, he wanted to drive the jeep. I thought, well, I'll let him. We went out on that back road. Well, he just yanked it in gear, he didn't clutch it or nothing. He didn't know beans about driving. I didn't realize that. And, then he didn't know how to steer it. I couldn't get him stopped quick enough to get him out of there. That was quite an experience. I couldn't believe that somebody of his age, didn't know how to drive, being in the army and everything.

**JS** – But, in New York City?

**PHM** – Yeah, Yeah. He was a New Yorker.

**JS** – Well, I think people from the deep south, too also.

**PHM** – I tell you one thing that I run into, at home, we didn't have colored people. Down there, man, that was the majority of it. But, I had some real good friends that were

colored people. I had never been around them, I didn't really know what to expect. But, you learn to cope and get by. We did, we got along fine.

**JS** – Don't you think that that is a valuable part of getting you out of your home community?

**PHM** – Oh Yeah. Yes, it's a learning experience. It really is. Like I said, I'm not sorry that I did it. At the time, I didn't think that I wanted to, but I kind of had to. You make the best of it.

**JS** – Could I ask why you didn't tell the draft board that you had got married?

**PHM** – I just never gave it a thought. We had other things on our mind, at that time.

**JS** – Right.

**PHM** – When I got notice for induction, I went and talked to them and told them then. It didn't make any difference then, we didn't know it when you were picked to be inducted.

**JS** – OK, it's over the time, I've kept you too long, so I am going to turn this off.

**PHM** – Well, I've enjoyed visiting with you.