

A photograph of the Gray County Veterans Memorial & Archive. The memorial consists of two circular structures made of reddish-brown stone, each with four columns and a curved top. In the center, a tall black flagpole holds an American flag. The background features green trees and a clear blue sky. The entire image is framed by a dark blue border.

Gray County Veterans Memorial & Archive

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Russell K. Schartz

October 18, 2013

INTERVIEW
YEAR

Russell K. Schartz
2013

GRAY COUNTY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Russell K. Schartz

DATE: October 18, 2013

PLACE: Cimarron City Library, Cimarron KS 67835

INTERVIEWER: Joyce Sullentrop

PROJECT SERIES: Korean Era Oral History Project for Gray County

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

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Mr. Schartz enlisted concurrent with receiving his draft notice and was in the U.S. Army Transportation Corps from 1953 to 1955. His rank was SP370. He served in Japan and Korea. Russell K. Schartz was born October 26, 1934, in Great Bend, Kansas.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Recruiting; life at Fort Benning; higher education with GI Bill; delivering mail

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW: In preparing for the interview, Russell cautioned that he was not very good with dates and details. He brought documents to remind him of dates and events. We appreciate his sharing his memories with us.

SOUND RECORDINGS: Digital

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 45:00

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: None

TRANSCRIPT: 19 pages

ORAL HISTORY
Russell K. Scharz
Interview Date: October 18, 2013

Interviewer: Joyce Suellentrop (JS)
Interviewee: Russell K. Scharz (RKS)

JS – What was your place of birth?

RKS – Great Bend. We lived at Belpre and Larned. That's where all of the Scharzes come from --was Ellinwood originally.

JS – And you said your birthdate is?

RKS – October 26.

JS – And what year?

RKS – '34

JS – Branch of service?

RKS – I was in the US Army.

JS – And then they ask for battalion, regiment, division, unit, whatever.

RKS – Well, that's a good question. I graduated from basic training. I took it in Fort Bliss, Texas.

JS – Well, that's important.

RKS – Well, I was in the Transportation Corps.

JS – Okay, a corps would be good. And what was your rank?

RKS – Well, it says a SP3. I think that's a sergeant, isn't it? Or corporal, one of the two.

JS – I don't know.

RKS – 28th of February of '55.

JS – Is that when you got out?

RKS - I guess so.

JS – Alright, when did you enter?

RKS – It ought to be before that, hadn't it?

JS – I hope.

RKS – See page 38. I don't have page 38. *[Looking through documents.]*

JS – Well, it must be that, 1955.

RKS – Effective date of separation, August the 19th, '55.

JS – Okay, and when did you enter?

RKS – It's got to be here somewhere. Because they transfer station to Fort Lewis, Washington when we were overseas. That's my birthday. Male. Caucasian, brown, I might have been brown hair. It's been a long time ago. Man, I've lost a lot of weight since I graduated.

JS – So how long were you in there?

RKS – Not quite 22 months. I got out a little early so I could help plant wheat or something at home.

JS – So you say about 2 years?

RKS – Yeah.

JS – Okay, so 1953 might have been when you joined? Right, if you're getting out in 1955?

RKS – Yeah, because I went to Fort Bliss, Texas. The dirt and wind blows down there terrible. And then I went back to that school, but they don't say anything about that.

JS – Okay, so there wasn't a war going on?

RKS – It had ended when I graduated. It was still going on, I think, when I went in.

JS – Okay. The Korean War?

RKS – Um-huh.

JS – So where did you do your military service? Here in the United States?

RKS – No, in Japan. I rode a ship to Korea for 22 months. And it was not a..... R&R. Here this is, R & R Center, 8095th AU. And here. It's got this other stuff down here. Fort Eustis, Virginia.

JS – Oh, okay.

RKS – And then, shipped over to Washington state and then over to Japan.

JS – Oh here. You were inducted November the 19th, 1953.

RKS – Okay. That sounds right.

JS – Okay, that's just to make sure we have that. Then there's just a series of questions I'll ask you.

RKS – Okay.

JS – You graduated from high school in 1952. And then, you joined in 1953. Did you enlist or were you drafted?

RKS – I enlisted. No, I think I was drafted before I went down there. What I remember about that, they went to Kansas City is where we took our physical. Then we got all done, the guy says “you got anything wrong with you”. “Yeah” I said “I’m flat footed”, so he took my shoes off. “You are flat footed!”

JS – But, that didn't keep you out of the?

RKS – No, no. They put you in a base where you didn't have to walk quite as far or something.

JS – Okay.

RKS – Because you know the war was ending down, you know, about that time.

JS – Were there other people, young men from Cimarron that were inducted at the same time?

RKS – Well, Charlie Rice, yeah, from Cimarron. He worked at Magouirk Chevrolet, down here. That was the only two. We ended up at Fort Bliss and he'd been in the National Guard or something. He was our main, what do you call those? Main soldier, that there the Sergeant that he helped, I mean. He had that experience. We lived in 5 man huts there and everything that had been of the German war, that's what we took basic training down there in. All you had to do was throw a little water in. It beat scrubbing the floors.

JS – Could you describe your basic training, what you did and what they trained you in?

RKS – Well, we were even short of rifles. They didn't have enough rifles to give us. We had to trade them off. They were running out of everything, it was a good thing that the war ended. We had to walk about 5 miles to where we got out and shot, the firing range and all that stuff.

JS – So they were teaching you the basics of shooting and fighting?

RKS – Right, and war. Like I say, we lived in 5 man huts. And, the sand down there blows very good.

JS – You said that before. Did you, then, choose an area to go into or did they just assign you to?

RKS - Well, I think I choose transportation corps, because that would be driving a truck or something, ought to be nice. But I never drove a truck. Transportation and that other stuff listed there. Like I said, I got shipped over there and then went to, because we had 6 weeks of basic training and that second school at Fort Eustis, Virginia, and then they shipped us to Washington, and then we shipped to ship over there.

JS – OK, so when the second school, was that in transportation?

RKS – Um-huh. That's where we went to transportation.

JS – So, what did you learn there?

RKS – Well, it covered a broad section because half our class went to Germany and the other half went to Japan.

JS – Did you have a choice?

RKS – No, no. They took them on whatever, because I would have loved to went to Germany, because that's where my relation comes from, to see what all that was like, but Japan was really good duty. We were in an eight story Shinko building, and it had been the, from England, there thing, located there. It was the only and that, I told you I couldn't remember a damn thing. It was Kobe, Japan was the name of where we went. It was a sea port and there was a base on in where we done some more training.

JS – A United States base?

RKS – Yeah.

JS – Okay.

RKS – And I can say that was the only building standing in Kobe.

JS – Because of the war?

RKS – Yeah, they had been bombed bad, bad.

JS – Okay.

RKS – Why that one building, but that's where. And this other place where we went, is where Japan started. Because we went up there seven miles or so, and that was where Japan originally originated back when it real was and stuff.

JS – Okay, so, they hadn't started rebuilding since the war, when you got there?

RKS – They had started some, but it was, first they built the base back there to be on, and come into to town. Because Kobe was a big town, kind of like, oh what's the one by Russia?

JS – All I know about is Tokyo and Hiroshima.

RKS – Well, Hiroshima was south and Tokyo was north. And if you get a map out, there was an inland sea there that was where we hauled troops from there to just inside of Korea there. We made two trips a week. They came back on R&R and stuff. I was the only soldier permanently stationed aboard. And then, we hauled ammunition over there sometimes.

JS – Okay, let me back up a little bit. When you went to Washington, you went on a train?

RKS – No, they flew us from Fort Eustis.

JS – To Washington?

RKS – To Seattle, Washington.

JS - Okay, and then did you board a ship?

RKS – Yep, um-huh.

JS – And that took you to Japan?

RKS – Right.

JS - How long was that voyage?

RKS – Oh, about a week or something like that.

JS – And was that interesting?

RKS – Yeah, well you know, you have guys in a bunch on bunks and they're throwing up and everything.

JS – All right, well that's interesting.

RKS – Um-huh.

JS – Okay, so you then got there. And how large, how many soldiers might have been on that base? Was it a large one?

RKS – Well, no, it was kind of in downtown Tokyo. That's where they signed all of the peace treaties and stuff. We went through a coordination thing there and went down to Kobe and rode the train down there to it and stuff. And like I said, I met a lot of fellow guys that was in the service that rode ships up there and got to say hello to them. We

made two trips a week. It would have been three days for each trip and one Sunday or something.

JS – And this would have been in trucks?

RKS – No. We hauled them on the ship over to Korea.

JS – Oh, I see.

RKS - They came back to Japan on R&R. We issued them uniforms, because they didn't have any dress uniforms in Korea or anything.

JS – Okay, and these were the ones that were stationed in Korea after the Korean War and they were, in essence, protecting that 49th parallel.

RKS – Right. And then, like I said, I think the war was on a little bit when I was first there. Maybe you can remember the dates?

JS – It was probably right, it's just getting over when you're...

RKS – Because we hauled ammunition over there and stuff. Like I said, those ships that I was on were all run by regular citizens, they were not soldiers. I was the only soldier aboard. And then we hauled maybe a 150 or 100 or something, they came over and got 5 days R&R. That's why I think, you know, that the war was still on for a little bit, because, I know, I went up later and there was Art Thomas here from Cimarron and Kenny Wiens. As Kenny Wiens is passed away now, but Art Thomas got to be like a Master Sergeant up on the front lines. You can see where the thing was over there, when I went. Right along where the international date board and all that stuff was.

JS – Well, the civilians that were running or piloting the ship. Were they Japanese?

RKS – No, no.

JS – They were Americans?

RKS – Americans.

JS – But not in the Army?

RKS – Not in the Army or navy or anything. Because like I said, when you get down there, they needed the soldiers and all that stuff to go by. China came into war about that time. That war had to still be going on right then, because they ended it in a few months, I think. That Shinko building down there, that's one name. There was always protestors and stuff when they loaded them troops out, they had to clear the docks so somebody wouldn't shoot them and stuff.

JS – So, it was the Japanese protesting?

RKS – No. It was, uh, well, you know, see over there I remember we hauled a lot of Canadians back, all different forces and they were probably the best sold.... I was trying to think, there was not Americans, they were other, Canada and nationalities like that there.

JS – But you essentially lived on the ship?

RKS - Yes. Outside of Sundays, because we took a day over and a day back. We sailed out of that inland sea there. I could look at a map and tell you what it is.

JS – Did you get to leave there and go have a furlough or something?

RKS – No. That time in, they sent me home a few days too early for this thing, so I had to spend about a week in Washington up there before I could get any discharge.

JS – So you went over right after you finished basic training and special training?

RKS – And that school, yeah. Because that would have been 8 weeks and 8 weeks, I think, so that's 16. Maybe it ain't that long because we got to go into to Mexico over there. Fort Bliss, Texas is right across.

JS – For fun?

RKS – Yeah. I mean it was all that because, Mexico and the United States haven't always been too good of things, you know. I can remember, well I better not you about all of that.

JS – So you were over in Japan at least a year and a half?

RKS – Yeah. Because, from that army time, like I said, because I got to come home on the way to Oklahoma City and caught a ride up here. We happened to be playing the Globetrotters here in Cimarron. I got back home and went down there and had an experience that always stuck in. I guess it's ok to tell you, of running into same sex people and stuff and peeping eyes looking at you. I had never been around any of that. That was quite an experience.

JS – You probably learned a lot, didn't you, in basic, just meeting different people?

RKS – Oh, yeah. Because, a lot of our, in that unit we were in, were from clear way north. Canadian border and stuff. Like I say, Charlie Rice was a sergeant so I got a few of breaks there.

JS – I wondered about that. And, what did you learn about the different kinds of people in the United States in basic training?

RKS – Well, one thing I learned, we did not, in fact there was a law in Cimarron at that time, a Black person could not stay overseas. *[overnight]* An awful lot of the cooks were black, they were being treated pretty good by that time, you know.

JS – I suppose there were no blacks in Cimarron?

RKS - No, no. That's what I'm saying. We never in school or anything, Dodge might have had a few or something. But, getting to see, and a lot of the other different people. There was an awful lot of the blacks where I was around, were cooks. They thought they were good poker players, but they weren't.

JS – Did you play a little poker?

RKS – Um-huh.

JS – So what would you do when you were in basic training and this other special training, you would have weekends off? Is that when you went to Mexico?

RKS – No, we didn't get any weekends off until the later part of that. Maybe we got to go down there once I think or something. It was a different experience and stuff.

JS – And you made friends. Did any of those friends go with you over to Japan?

RKS – No, I think I'm the only one that went to transportation school up to Fort Eustis, Virginia and it was a siding there. It's still there, like I say, they're building a, it's going to be a big museum there. That's Newport News, Virginia. It was close to it and there's a lot of navy people there and everything.

JS – Why did you choose the Army over the navy or air force? Do you remember?

RKS – Well, that was the least, because you had to sign up for 4 years, I believe in either one of them others.

JS – Oh, I see. And your dad was farming, right?

RKS – Farming, right.

JS – So you left the farm and then came back to the farm?

RKS – And was going to be drafted. I think I signed up before, because you got a little more choice when I went. This was all new. I didn't know what that transportation, I thought I was driving a truck and stuff, looking for something to do. I think Freddie Kramer was in about that time, and he went to a helicopter school. He stayed in the United States. There weren't too many here that went over. Like I say, Art Thomas and Kenny Wiens were over there from Cimarron. They went in at a different time than when I did.

JS – So if you were in Japan for a year and a half, what did you do other than the work? Did you travel at all?

RKS – Well, some. Like a said, we went up, there was a mountain there like there is at Tokyo that kind of dominated this area, but I can't remember the name of it. You could

look on a Japanese map. We rode a train from Tokyo, Japan down to a.....I can't remember the name of that, but you can look on a map and it will show you because it was inland a little bit. It wasn't very many miles, because there was no place, it was just all that. It was still level when I was there from the bombing and stuff. But there was a big shopping center that they had put up, like our shopping centers.

JS – But you didn't travel outside of Japan in that year and a half?

RKS – No, and I didn't do very much traveling in Japan. That trip down there and then I went up in the mountains, on the western side, they had ammunition depots that they took over for the Japanese when they fought that war. Like I said, it's not very exciting really.

JS – Well, no.

RKS – But it was nice seeing how people, and western Japan is a lot like the western United States. You could climb over the hills. And they had some entertainment, got to go to some of that.

JS – On the base?

RKS – Well, it wasn't on the base. This big building, we used several floors of it.

JS – Oh, that's right.

RKS – Got to put them in, they could go around. There was different things for them to do. I never went to much of that or anything.

JS – It sounds a little boring?

RKS – Oh, no, I don't think it was boring. See, if you didn't smoke, you could sell your cigarettes. Pick up a few extra bucks there.

JS – Oh, you didn't smoke? So you sold them?

RKS – Right. And there was other things like that. Beer.

JS – Like a bar?

RKS – There was a bar there, and some restaurants. I don't know what many of them people did, but they had tours, I think, for them. It was called R&R, rest & recuperation, for when they came back from Korea to Japan.

JS – Oh, I see. So that's where they did their R&R, rather than going to a city?

RKS – Yes. Oh, there was pretty good size town, but that was the only building that we were headquartered in, that hadn't been leveled down. Because it was really being rebuilt. On south of there, was where they bombed, the atomic bomb.

JS – During World War II, you were aware of the war?

RKS – Oh, yeah.

JS – And people that went off to the war and came back?

RKS – And see, my Dad, his youngest brother got to go into World War II, but my dad had seven children & farming and they didn't have to go.

JS – Right. And did you listen to the radio, or how did you find out about World War II and what was going on?

RKS – We listened to the radio a lot. And like I say, my folks and even my mom, they were all from Germany because there's a lot of celebrities, you know, in these towns. My Dad, that's one thing, "you're going into the service" he says "I didn't go" and he felt guilty about that, but they needed him on the farm. I probably could have stayed out, but he pretty well made it clear he wanted all of us kids to go in.

JS – And did all of the boys go into the service?

RKS – Um-huh. Some of them got in the Vietnam War and the war after that.

JS – And, when did you become aware of the Korean War? I mean it really wasn't a war, it was a police action?

RKS – Yeah, but still, we have 36,000 troops over there yet.

JS – I know. So it would have been the same process, you just knew about it in the community and people talked about it?

RKS – And this town seemed to have quite a few, it was connected with churches I think, exemptions you know.

JS – With the Mennonites?

RKS – Yeah, and some of them and some of the other churches. Like I said, Dad made it very clear. And my uncle, but he ended up in England. He's about 10 years older than I am, maybe 8 or something, flying and bombing over into Germany and those places.

JS – Schartzes from Germany, when did they come to the United States?

RKS - Well, a bunch of them, would be my great-grandparents, I guess, come to Ellinwood. And, Roble is the name of St. Peter and Paul up north of Ellinwood. That was my mom's maiden name.

JS – Their feelings about World War II, they weren't sympathetic to Germany?

RKS – No, no, no. I can show you a couple of people up north of town here that were. They plowed a swastika up there, I can remember that!

JS – Really!!

RKS – Really!

JS – Oh, my gosh! I had never heard that.

RKS – You hadn't? Well, we'll let their names out of here.

JS – Well, yeah. But they were farmers?

RKS - Up close to where we farmed up there and I can remember.

JS – I'll bet that was the talk of the neighborhood.

RKS – Well, they didn't make too many friends doing that.

JS – Did the year and a half in Korea go fast?

RKS – Yeah, it wasn't that, because like I said, I got to meet a lot of people I knew that was in the Navy and this was a port where the Navy pulled into a lot.

JS – And then, when you came home, did you go into the National Guard or anything?

RKS – Well, I think we were, I can't remember. But I'm pretty sure you had to serve some time.

JS – And then, you started farming?

RKS – Well, I went out to Colorado, Boulder, Colorado and got my wife and brought her back here. See, I thought she loved me but she just wanted to get away from her mother.

JS – Well, that's not good.

RKS – No. But we've been married close to 60 years. I guess it's working.

JS – Right. I would think so.

RKS – Her mother worked for the University of Colorado and her father was a mail carrier. He had a degree also.

JS – How did you meet her?

RKS – Through a family that moved out there. They were in the same class. Because I went and saw them, I knew them, and they introduced me and that was how we got introduced. So, the good Lord had something to do with all this, I think.

JS – Probably keeping you together for that many years too. So what did you learn from your experience in the Army, that helped you or didn't help you when you came home?

RKS – Well, I think, you know, I met a whole group of different people in the service. Being a little unit that we were, nobody kept track of the other people. I might have for a little bit there.

JS – But, no reunions or anything like that?

RKS – No, no, because the reunions were held by the people fighting more or less, them groups and stuff.

JS – So when you came home, did you join the veterans?

RKS – I belonged to the VFW and American Legion. Like I say, I'm pretty sure that I didn't have to go into, because it doesn't say anything about it, into the Army Reserve. I was seeing the other day, a lot of this Reserves in Dodge are permanently stationed you know, when you do something and at different times, go into training and all that, you know.

JS – Well, you said that your dad wanted you to go into service?

RKS – Yes, and I wanted to go too. I didn't think too much of these people, because of their different beliefs and stuff.

JS – So, did he give you any advice when you went in?

RKS – No.

JS – What did your mother think?

RKS – Well, I don't remember. At that time, there was not very much to do in Gray County. I should probably add that the other reason that I went to Boulder was the barber down here said we needed another barber. So I thought I'd go to barber school and then I could fill in on the farm these too.

JS – And did you go to barber school?

RKS – Um-huh. That was how I got to Boulder, CO and met these other people there. And I can't think of their names here in town.

JS – And then did you come back here and be a barber?

RKS – Yes.

JS – Oh, I didn't know that.

RKS – Yeah, I barbered about a year and then I bought the Ford garage, so it took me awhile to get back to farming.

JS – Okay.

RKS - I can always remember your sister-in-law, she's different.

JS – That's a good word for her.

RKS - She's ok, buying a car and claiming....

JS – Well, how long were you in the Ford business?

RKS – 10 years. And then I sold the building and that gave me enough to make a down payment and get in with my brother Joe in farming. Then we broke out of there. In 1980, we had about 17% interest and inflation. The next year you could buy the ground for half the price that you paid for it. I made it all work and come out. Like I say, I've done a lot of things in my life.

JS – Can you still barber, cut your hair?

RKS – Well, I still got a license, but I don't think I could stand there very long. I need to find something to do, because it's so boring not doing anything. Taking care of the yard and these kind of things.

JS – But you live here in town?

RKS – Well, we lived here while I had the Ford garage and then we moved out north of Cimarron, my son-in-law now lives on the place. Then we moved back to Cimarron.

JS – So is there anything else that you can think of from your time in the military that you remember and it is a significant incident, an event or person?

RKS – Well, I thought, when basic training got over and we had to go down to Meade to get back on the train, and I told you about the black guys came up and they were playing basketball. They're still around, what do you call them?

JS – Oh, the Harlem Globetrotters?

RKS – Yeah, we got to watch the Harlem Globetrotters.

JS – So when you went to Kansas City, did you go on the train? Or did you?

RKS – I don't know, probably, my memory is..

JS – But you were the only one from Cimarron at that time going in?

RKS – Well, we went to that base up there. What's it called? By Topeka.

JS – Oh, Forbes? No.

RKS – No, No. Still the Army's there.

JS – Fort Leavenworth?

RKS – No, that's on in further. Right east of, it's around there by Topeka. They still have ground there. I was trying to think what that building, they've closed that part of it down. But there's still Army there, but I think they're giving some thought about closing it all down now. Like I say when we got out of there, I think we got on an airplane in Kansas City and flew to Fort Bliss, Texas.

JS – So you didn't get to come home after your physical?

RKS – Well, for that, on the way, they let us get a ride and then had to go back down to Meade and get on the train.

JS – And then after your basic and special training, before you went to Japan, did you get to come home for a couple weeks?

RKS – No.

JS – No?

RKS – No, that was, like I said, that's why I think the war was still going on because a lot of these things, like I say, we didn't, we had to borrow guns and clean them back and forth.

JS – Did you find that a little odd that they didn't have enough guns?

RKS – Well, yes and no, but it was kind of getting ready to, we were still fighting a big war over there. Had a lot of people over there.

JS – Right.

RKS - General MacArthur, I think, was still in command there and stuff. Like I say, nobody shot at me and I always was wondering if I could shoot at...

JS – But you weren't armed?

RKS – No.

JS – Okay. And did your parents write to you and you would write to them?

RKS – Yes, we would communicate back and forth and everything. Like I say, one of the experiences out of that was meeting black people and finding out that there's plenty of good ones out there and everything. Because I told you about the other thing out there, plowing that swastika.

JS – Did they, the community, do anything or say anything about that?

RKS – No, it was just, they were a minority, those people. Because most people that were over here, they stood up for the United States. They came over here because it wasn't nice where they were living. She's got a book out here, that a guy come and spoke to us on, that was in the town's up through north of here. If you get a chance, you can ask her about it. It's really very interesting, the history and he got all of these things that we signed here a little bit ago showing that he had permission to use this in his book and everything.

JS – So he did some oral histories?

RKS – Yeah.

JS – In writing the book?

RKS – Right. Writing the book and how to do it. It was strictly, basically a family history, but it was up north of here. There was a lot of Catholics live up there and stuff, on 96 Highway and stuff. It was very, very interesting. I wish I had a, any tendency to do anything like that, but it was his family and it's a very interesting book. In fact, it was Germans also, you know.

JS – Right. Now, when you were in Japan, because you weren't on a base, did you, were there religious services for people or not?

RKS – Yeah, we had religious services there and confession. But it was, those were Japanese priests there, they didn't speak English so it was a lot easier to go to confession (laughter).

JS – Of course it was. You could probably have confessed everything (laughter).

RKS – No, we had the religious part. Being that was the old, old history of Japan there, was going up and seeing some of their things that were all close. We took a day or two and spent some time doing these different things.

JS – Did you much contact with the Japanese people?

RKS – Well, quite a few. Probably, not that much, but we had quite a few, because there was a lot of gals that worked in our thing as secretary's and stuff. And if, you could bring, but you better not try to bring a Japanese girl that happened to work in a house of prostitution or anything, because they weren't coming over, but I met lots of nice people in our building, we had lots of them working in there.

JS – Um-huh.

RKS – And we had at one time, oh, what's their name, famous people back in them days, and her husband came over there on R&, on their.....

JS – Oh, their tour?

RKS – Ship tours, yeah. Showing, you know. I'm very lucky, my experiences of the services besides that one I told you about and stuff, it didn't hurt my personality or anything. I don't think I done anything too bad.

JS – Um-huh.

RKS – But I did have, you was asking about that and I just hadn't brought it up, I had a girlfriend that lived at, by Zook up there where we come from, and we were getting pretty serious. She wanted to get married and I said "No, I'm not going to get married because, I may not do things that a married man, you know, being that way and other things". So about two weeks before I left, she got married to another guy.

JS – She showed you.

RKS – Because we knew their family and everything, from Belpre. Good people. No, I've tried to be a half decent, good person. I'm still working on trying to get to heaven.

JS – Well, God speed you to heaven. When you came home, you had been gone a year and a half, did you feel like you had missed out on things when you were gone?

RKS – No, not really. Because I didn't spend that much time after I got out of the Army to go out to Boulder, CO. Well the barber school, and the reason, here's one more point why I think the good Lord was in there, is Wichita had a barber school but it was full, I couldn't get in there. And I wanted to do it in this period, you know we had planted the wheat and all these other things when I came back here. So I went out there and I could get in barber school in Denver, Boulder didn't have a barber school. I don't know if we even got one in Wichita anymore, because women are cutting most of the hair.

JS – I think there may be a barber college?

RKS – Well, there used to be one in Wichita but somebody said it ain't there nomore.

JS – Well, that's quite possible.

RKS – Well see, Dodge City Juco I thinks got beauticians and that stuff.

JS – And who was the barber that was in Cimarron that sort of?

RKS – I knew you would ask that. He used to be right on the north side of, or on the south side of Highway 50 here, right behind them buildings that were there.

JS – Okay. Well, that's alright.

RKS - He's dead.

JS – Okay. Well, that's important to know. And you said that some of your younger brothers got into the Vietnam War?

RKS – Yeah, Vietnam and then, some of them was over on the edge of Africa there or some place. Well, my Dad decided for a few years that he wanted to live in Salem, Oregon. But they got out there and they came back every year, it rains too darn much and that's very depressing out there. I'm mean, seriously.

JS – I know.

RKS – So they moved back here and opened a bowling alley down here and in this period of time, I working with all this.

JS – Well I didn't know all that about the Schartzes. I just assumed you farmed and nothing else.

RKS – Well, he did. He came back and farmed.

JS – So, do most of your brothers live around here?

RKS – Well, Joe did live here, but he sold everything out and moved to Dalhart, TX because they still got water down there to irrigate with.

JS – For now.

RKS – Yeah, for now because they will pump her all out. And I was on the Southwest Area on the Aging, no that's what my wife does now. I was on the groundwater management district 3 out here, board and stuff, and that was several years ago. And we didn't even have water meters on at that time, because we over appropriated all this ground. Now we've been working with trying to get, and see, in Colby everybody agreed to give up so much water up there. Inches of water and it's working so we can make this stuff last a lot longer. And now, they're thinking about tapping into the Missouri River and bringing that water out here. That would be expensive water.

JS – I would think so. So that water use management, is that coming out of the government?

RKS – Well, see, ground water management District 3 covers our area around here, and if you over pump and stuff, they'll stick it to you pretty good the second time, they'll let you get by with it once.

JS – So there are officials or something?

RKS – Yeah, there are the state, our governor now, he had a meeting or two out here last year. We met over there at the new Garden City High School. He's concerned this ain't going to be a nice place to live when we run out of water because we're going to have a lot of unemployed people. Your feedyards will leave, and your packing plants will leave.

JS – And the river no longer exists. Well, of course, I've been away since about 1962. And when I come back, it looks much more desolate. I mean, the trees are dying.

RKS – Well, we've had a lot more trees die this last year or two, you know, with drought. But, with people, we've tried to put meetings together. I call it greed. You know, they're going to keep this water, they don't care, ain't worried about their children or somebody. I think it's our whole government that's our problem with that.

JS – Well, it's complicated, that's for sure.

RKS – Well, right now with this government thing they're doing and everything. And who do you believe, this stuff they tell you? Obamacare ain't no good, this guy says, and others says it is, and has its place. If it fits into your schedule, then it's good.

JS – It is complicated and I think we have a huge population and it's hard to really deal with that many people.

RKS – Well, my wife is on the ground water, or the Southwest Area on the Aging, with St Mary of the Plains, we got people working, trying to work on these things.

JS – So, would you say that you are political, I mean, that you are involved in political things?

RKS – I guess, yeah, to a certain degree.

JS – Always have been?

RKS – Yeah. Like I say, I got on the ground water management board because they needed somebody from Gray county and different things. And now, I want this to be a good place for our children to live. I got four of my daughters live out here. The fifth one lives in Dallas, TX and she makes all the money, she's a lawyer.

JS – Well, she would. Okay, well can you think of anything else, let me look at this.

RKS – Okay.

JS – I think we've covered, the one question that I haven't talked about is, did your experiences in the military, and admittedly yours was you know, after World War II etcetera, did that, does that effect how you think about war, I mean we're still involved in war?

RKS – Yeah. We got a whole bunch of wars over there and we still got 36,000 troops in Korea. And North Korea, you know, I was up on that line and saw some of this, nobody shot at me. It was after that, I think, when it ended. China's still there. I think that helps a lot to get involved. I was even on the Cimarron city council, I forgot about that, four years or so. The schools, the year I graduated we built this gym. It's still left up here. And now, Spearville's got one that same age, but they don't have air conditioning in there's. And they're finally building a new gym.

JS – It takes money to build, though.

RKS – You better believe it.

JS - Well, ok, can you think of anything else that you'd like to say?

RKS – No, like I said, I cannot be, because I was treated very good in the US Army.

JS – Do you have sons?

RKS – No, I have just five daughters.

JS – Okay, if you had a son, would you have advised him to go into the Army?

RKS – Yeah, I think so, because I think it's part of our country. The only troops that didn't get treated very nice, in my opinion, was the Viet Memorial veterans. We have a priest over at Ingalls that is from Vietnam now. He's a character. He came over here to become a priest because you couldn't become a priest over there. Because the communist run that place, you know.

JS – Right. Okay, well I think then, I'm going to turn this off.

RKS – Okay.