INTERVIEW **Jim Hardesty**

YEAR **2006**

GRAY COUNTY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Jim Hardesty
DATE: June 20, 2006
PLACE: Cimarron, Kansas

INTERVIEWER: Joyce Suellentrop

PROJECT SERIES: **Veterans Oral History Project for Gray County**

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:
Jim Hardesty was drafted into the Infantry at eighteen years of age. He graduated from high school in Meade, Kansas, and was inducted into service immediately. He trained in Texas, in one hundred degree heat for seventeen weeks and was sent to California, for more training. Because the war was over by then, he returned to Texas, where he served as a prison guard in the United States Disciplinary Barracks until his release from the service. He returned to Meade, where he worked at various jobs until settling into the grocery business. He and his wife raised five children and he is retired and lives, now, in Cimarron, Kansas, with his wife.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Entering the service and training for Infantry in preparation for an invasion of Japan; the dropping of the bomb to end the war and its effect on his life. His return to civilian life and his job experiences were discussed

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: 60 minute tape

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 1 hour

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 19 pages

ORAL HISTORY
Hardesty, Jim
Interview Date: June 20, 2006

Interviewer: Joyce Sullentrop **(JS)**
Interviewee: Jim Hardesty **(JH)**
Tape 1 of 1
Side A

JS - We just have the same questions that we ask everyone and then we will branch off to other things. First, I need to get your birth date.

JH - 12/20/26

JS - Almost Christmas, and you served in the Army?

JH - Yes.

JS - We will start with these questions and we'll go where ever it leads us. World War Two started in 1939 and we got in after Pearl Harbor. Do you remember hearing about the starting of the war or Pearl Harbor, what you thought and what your relatives thought?

JH - In 1941, I was living in Meade and I was in the drugstore there. Somebody came in and said the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. I went home and told my folks. We had radios but hardly ever listened to them. I went home and told them and my grandparents were there. Everybody was shocked.

JS - How old would you have been then?

JH - I'd have been a freshman. I was coming into that year. I'd have been about fifteen.

JS - Were there young men in the community that then started joining?

JH - Oh yeah, there were a lot of volunteers and, of course, they started the draft right away. Once you were eighteen you got a number, and when your time came, you went.

JS - Do you remember any conversations about that the war might last long enough for you to have to go?

JH - Yes, we thought it would be a long war. We weren't ready and we had to get ready. Through my high school years, you all of a sudden found there was nothing there. They weren't making cars. They were making them but you couldn't get them. Everything from then on was put toward the war effort. There

were a lot of things you couldn't get. At the time I didn't realize it was tough, but I guess it was. You couldn't buy tires, you couldn't buy gas, and sugar was rationed. A lot of things were rationed and you just lived with it.

JS - Did you keep up with the news of how the war was going?

JH - Oh yeah, it was pretty bad at times until we got to where we could do something.

JS - So you went in, in '44?

JH - No, I went in, in the summer of '45.

JS - The war was over in Europe?

JH - Yes.

JS - Were you drafted or did you volunteer?

JH - I was eighteen when I was a senior and I took my physical, but they let you finish school if you wanted to. One of my friends left at semester because you got to pick your branch of service. If you went when you were drafted, you had no choice. They told you; at that time all they wanted was Infantry because the foot soldier was going to finish it up. I went in, in May of '45 and took seventeen weeks of infantry basic at a camp in Texas. We were training for the invasion of Japan, which was going to happen on November 8th. On August the 9th they dropped the bomb and that finished them off, so they didn't take us over.

JS - What was your Infantry training like? I don't know that I have talked to anyone that was in that particular training.

JH - Pure hell, in Texas, it is one hundred degrees everyday. We marched and we marched and we marched for seventeen weeks. You'd walk out five, six, eight to ten miles, have classes and walk back. They didn't care whether you had water or anything. It was really tough. We were tough as nails. At that time they were drafting everybody that had a warm body because the invasion was going to be big. I mean big. I was training with some men that were about forty years old. They were really suffering. I was young and I was in shape. They even got one little guy that wasn't all there. They were just desperate because we were going to invade the Island of Japan which, they claimed, would have killed more people than all the other wars put together.

JS - Did you know that when you went in? Were you going to be prepared for that?

JH - We kind of knew it when we went in because the European thing was over with. It was all bayonet and small arms training and hand fighting. We were prepared.

JS - You went in May and that was to be in November?

JH - November the 8th, as I understood that the invasion was going to happen. That is what I was told.

JS - You would march out and go into the classroom and that was small arms and bayonet?

JH - Yes, everything, machine guns, grenades and bayonet drill.

JS - Were you familiar with guns at all, growing up?

JH - Just hunting.

JS - Then you lived in barracks?

JH - Yes, we would come in every night and live in barracks. We would stay out once in a while and dig a foxhole and stay in it. It was terrible.

JS - Was it hard to take orders?

JH - No, I was eighteen-years-old and kind of scared. I did about everything I was told. I didn't give anybody any trouble. I did my job.

JS - Were you with people from all over the United States?

JH - Yes.

JS - How was that?

JH - That was all right. You hooked up with different ones.

JS - Was there anyone from here?

JH - I hooked up with a guy from Wichita. We just went through everything together. When I went, I went by myself. I was the only one at that time. They used to kind of put you on a train and take you in. I was living in Meade and just happened to be the only one to leave at that time and went all by myself.

JS - Was that the first time you had really been away from home?

JH - Yeah, it was going to be for seventeen weeks that time and I would come home and go overseas.

JS - During basic training you didn't get to come home at all?

JH - After seventeen weeks, then we went back and they shipped us to Fort Ord, California, and we were going to ship over. Then, for some reason, they changed their mind and sent me back to another camp close to Fort Hood. I finished out pulling guard duty at a prison; an American prison, United States Disciplinary Barracks, and I was on guard duty, there.

JS - How long was that?

JH - About a year and a half.

JS - Really, and who would have been in that prison?

JH - Guys like me that fouled up, AWOL, murder and rape, whatever.

JS - Did you have any training for that?

JH - No, I just went in and started on the tower. Like anywhere else, you see the job you want and you try to go for it. I was going for the easiest job there was. I got to where I was a driver; Jeep driver for personnel or whatever was needed. Prison guard duty was just like prison, same thing. It was just like the barracks except one unit was for the hard core and that was single cells. That was pretty tough.

JS - You said you were with the tower at first. Were you ever around the prisoners, much?

JH - Oh, all the time. You were down there with them except on the tower you just sat there at a desk. You had to go down for what they called ration breakdown. We had to get all our supplies from South Camp Hood and we'd break it down. They had everything there, theater, library and everything. They tried to burn it down and riots just like regular prison.

JS - Was it a life threatening situation?

JH - At times, yes. They would try to get you to smuggle in stuff. Back then, it was Benzedrine inhalers. It had a waxy content and they chewed it and it kept them awake. They always wanted us to bring in Benzedrine inhalers. I wouldn't do that but they got them in. They made their own booze in there and stuff like that.

JS - Really, how would they do that?

JH - As long as you can get yeast and fruit, you can make booze.

JS - You probably learned a lot at that job.

JH - I did, yes. It was interesting. It got scary a time or two, but it was pretty well under control.

JS - You said they lived in barracks.

JH - Just regular barracks like the others.

JS - They didn't have cells then?

JH - Just one unit; there were four units and just one unit had cells. We called it the hole. The others were just guys that were going to serve their time. We didn't have trouble with them. The ones down where the cells were, they were single cells and that is where they kept the bad ones.

JS - Did you have people leaving, finishing their term, and other people coming in?

JH - Yes, just like any other base, just turnover. We served our time and we went on and guys came and took our place.

JS - Did the prisoners have work that they had to do?

JH - Some of them worked detail, yeah, the better ones. I'd go out and work detail once in a while.

JS - Around the base, you mean?

JH - Around the base, yes. We worked and cut weeds and built a sidewalk or a road or something.

JS - You said there were a theater and a library so they had that?

JH - Yes, they had that stuff there.

JS - They were from all over?

JH - All over, New York and everywhere.

JS - They would have been sent there by a military court, rather than a civil court?

JH - Yes.

JS - No one I have talked to has had this kind of duty.

JH - It kind of surprised me but when we got through all this training, they really didn't know what to do with us. There was South Camp Hood, Texas, where I trained and there was North Camp Hood, Texas, where the prison was. They were just twenty miles apart. We went clear to Fort Ord and they just sent us back here and we spent the rest of our time doing this work.

JS - Did you ask for the prison or did they just give that work to you?

JH - No, I had no idea what I would do. I had no idea where I was going or anything. That's just where we lit. It was pretty good duty. There were no reveilles; you just went and did your job.

JS - And did you live there, too?

JH - Oh yeah, we lived on base around the prison.

JS - You finished your basic and went to Fort Ord. When you came back did you get to come home?

JH - No, I didn't get to come home until I was out of the service. Once in a while I would get on a train and come to Wichita for maybe ten hours. I had a girlfriend there.

JS - Were you supposed to be doing that?

JH - I don't know but I was on maybe a two day leave. You could get the right train at the right time. Back then, it was all trains.

JS - You could just hop on a train, right?

JH - Well, I had to pay.

JS - You received mail and you were able to write home so they knew where you were.

JH - Yeah.

JS - If you had a two-day leave and you didn't, maybe illegally, hop a train to Wichita, what would you do with a leave?

JH - Go into Waco, into town. We could go into Fort Worth. Waco was about fifty miles. Killeen was a town about the size of Ingalls.

JS - There was not much there.

JH - Once in a while I went into Fort Worth. That was about a hundred miles. Really all we did was just go off base and drink a little beer and get some good food.

JS - What was the food like on base?

JH - Sometimes good and sometimes bad.

JS - When you were in basic training, you lived in a barracks. Was that hard to be in with a great number of people?

JH - It wasn't especially bad for me because everybody is there for the same purpose, to get it over with. Nobody liked why we were there.

JS - Do you remember where you were when you heard they had dropped the bomb?

JH - No, we were in training. I really don't know. I think we just came in from the field and they told us they had dropped the atomic bomb.

JS - You probably figured out immediately that your future would be different?

JH - We kind of thought so, yes.

JS - Did you make friends with people that you kept in contact with?

JH - Just one, the one from Wichita. The others went their separate ways and I never did because there are so many of them. You would go out here and meet guys and maybe know them for a month or two. Not all of us came back to Fort Hood for the guard duty. Maybe twenty or thirty of us came. The rest of the guys I trained with went off somewhere else and I lost contact.

JS - With the guard duty, sometimes you were in the tower, sometimes down in the barracks or drove personnel around?

JH - And we would go to South Camp Hood to get supplies, just whatever there was to be done.

JS - you didn't have one particular job?

JH - At the last I was just a driver because that was the easiest job. Guard duty was on four and off four for twenty-four hours. You'd go up there for four hours

and come down, then go up there for four more hours. We stayed in the barracks there for the time off.

JS - You tried to sleep then?

JH - You tried to, yes, but there were only about 1000 personnel and about that many prisoners.

JS - So you did have to be on your toes?

JH - Yeah.

JS - Were the prisoners that were in the cells out of the cells at certain times of the day?

JH - You'd go take them out and walk them around but it was so hot. You think about it being one hundred degrees day after day. You would take them out and they were hostile. You had to watch yourself very close.

JS - What about the riots?

JH - They just got upset about the conditions. They thought they weren't getting the good food and the weather was hot and everybody was irritated. They tried to burn down the theater. We had to call up some halftracks from South Camp and lined them up around the base. That quieted them down. Like any prison, they were unhappy about what they were getting. We didn't go down in there much. We stayed on the outside and tried to scare them. It was interesting being an eighteen-year-old kid pulling guard duty at a prison.

JS - Did you know much about the prisoners, their stories or anything?

JH - No, hardly any at all. I just didn't get that far. I went in there and did the job and left.

JS - What is the most interesting thing that you observed?

JH - The most interesting thing that happened to me, we went into one of the individual cells and somebody had made a piece that looked like an axe. They had taken a piece of tin and nailed it onto a two by four and handed it in to one of these guys in a cell. We opened the door and there he came out with that thing looking kind of like an axe so we ran like hell. We went to the barracks and got a mattress and the three of us came back with that mattress. He was hacking at that mattress and the cotton was flying. We got him down on the ground and nobody was hurt. That's the most exciting thing that happened to me. It was scary and afterward I thought, "I could have got killed." Other than that, it was just day-to-day stuff.

JS - You said that they made their own booze and that they wanted Benzedrine inhalers. Did some people, then, get them?

JH - Oh yeah, somehow they got them.

JS - Were they allowed visitors? Would visitors have brought that in?

JH - That could have been, yeah. I can't remember much about guys having visitors. Their folks were way off. I don't remember ever seeing anybody having a visitor. I guess it just wasn't allowed. I never thought about that in the past. They would make their own booze and bury it under the barracks. Every once in a while we would have a raid, and one time we found booze in the fire extinguisher.

JS - Did you shoot it out?

JH - As long as they could get yeast. We had to keep the yeast locked up.

JS - They just used fruit that they got in a meal?

JH - Juice from fruit, yes. They would just throw it all in together and let it start fermenting. I guess yeast turns juice into alcohol. I don't know what the process is.

JS - Why wouldn't that have been noticed by someone?

JH - Oh, they hid it. They hid it during the night. There were no guards down there in the night. We were all outside.

JS - It finally made you resolve that you were never going to be in a prison. If we could go back to the infantry training, could you comment maybe on the food, clothing and living conditions during that time? You were away from home for the first time and you were very young.

JH - Yeah, I was young. The food was a little suspect but I made it. The clothing was just regular old GI fatigues.

JS - Were you in charge of keeping your clothes clean?

JH - Oh yeah and taking care of your firearms. We learned how to tear them down and put them back together.

JS - And did you pull KP?

JH - Yes.

JS - What would you do?

JH - Peel potatoes and stuff like that and carry out garbage. Not a whole lot. They had special people that did that mostly because we were out training. Once in a while we would pull a little KP.

JS - Did you have any free time?

JH - When you are on base you could go about anywhere you wanted to go.

JS - What services were there for you?

JH - The PX where you could buy beer and candy and stuff like that.

JS - Do you remember how much you were paid?

JH - I am not sure but it seems like I was getting $60 a month. I was writing home for money.

JS - What did you spend your money on?

JH - Beer, Pepsi-Cola and candy. If it was bad you wouldn't feel it.

JS - It was that bad?

JH - At times, when you are a kid. My mother is a wonderful cook and sometimes they would throw out liver and onions. I wouldn't taste them. We ate a lot of goat.

JS - Really?

JH - Oh my yes, I could smell it five miles from camp.

JS - Was it tough?

JH - Yes and terrible tasting. We ate a lot of lamb. They called it lamb; I called it goat.

JS - You were used to beef and chicken.

JH - I got to where I could eat a little. You just about had to or starve.

JS - You'd have potatoes and vegetables?

JH - All the rest, yeah.

JS - What would you have for breakfast?

JH - Powdered eggs. I even got used to eating them. We could go to town. Killeen was only five miles and we could go in on Saturday or Sunday.

JS - Would you catch a ride?

JH - They had a bus. They would bus us off base to Killeen. I think that is the only town they went to. At Killeen you could go in overnight. People had garages with beds and things in them and they would rent you a bed.

JS - So Killeen sort of adapted to having a base close by? Were there like restaurants and bars?

JH - Yes.

JS - When you went to Fort Ord, you weren't there that long.

JH - No, I spent Thanksgiving there and I was back to Camp Hood by Christmas so it wasn't long. What we did out there was some more training, small arms training, Thompson sub-machine guns and stuff like that. We got off base some and went into Monterey and little towns around there. Monterey is about the only one I remember.

JS - Did you see the ocean for the first time?

JH - First time is right.

JS - What was your impression of going to the coast?

JH - I was just a little Western Kansas kid and I was in awe. We went into LA and I got to see Chinese Grumman Theater. It was something unbelievable to an eighteen-year-old kid. Homesickness was something you had to battle.

JS - How did you battle that?

JH - At first it was awful the first month. Then you get acquainted with people and it kind of eases off. It kind of tickles me when kids go off to college, but you go somewhere where you may never see your relatives again. After the first month, everything levels out and you are all right.

JS - What did you miss most other than cooking?

JH - The girlfriend.

JS - I have heard that some people were married when they went in. Were there people in your unit that were married?

JH - Oh yeah.

JS - Did their wives follow them?

JH - I never saw any wives around come to visit. There were probably a lot of them, as many marriages as there were, because they were getting into the older groups. It was tough on those older people, thirty-five, thirty-six or thirty-seven. They were out of shape.

JS - I don't think anyone had talked about this before. They were not drafted when they were younger?

JH - No, I think they had kids and their drafting was down the line away and they may have had businesses and they might have got deferment. See, I got a deferment for six months to finish school and the semester. Then I went, so these guys, for some reason or another, hadn't gone. There were farm deferments.

JS - I have talked to some about that.

JH - One farmer down at Meade wanted me to get a deferment and work for him that summer. I said, "No I want to go and get it over with."

JS - Because you knew if you just deferred it they would get you later?

JH - They would get me later, yeah. I didn't want to get in a place where I got a deferment. I didn't want that taste in my mouth. I thought it was all right to finish school, but I knew I was going in then. Even our coach left at semester, Coach Urban. Yeah, he left at semester and we had to get a new coach and three of my friends left at semester and they got in the Navy. They had to go in and say they wanted to go in the Navy. It sure wrecked our athletics. Three of the best athletes in the high school and the coach were gone. I finished it out and graduated May 19th and was sworn in May 24th. I started my training the first week of June in Texas.

JS - When you went in did you know you were going to be in there for a certain amount of time?

JH - No, just duration, whatever it took.

JS - And they would tell you when you were going to be released?

JH - Yes. In fact I was in a shorter time than I thought I'd be. Because the war was over, they started rotating them out. They tried to get you to volunteer to join the reserves. I said no. If I had I would have ended up in Korea. I don't know why I was smart enough to do that.

JS - That was something you were thoughtful about to have finished high school. Those that went in would have made it to Europe.

JH - That was over in '45 in May, wasn't it? Yeah, that is right.

JS - You went through a lot of training that you didn't use. The process of training, what do you think? Do you think that served you well or that helped you in any way?

JH - The discipline might have but I wasn't a bad kid anyway. I was a little wild but not bad. I wouldn't want to go through it again but it was an experience for an eighteen-year-old kid. It was really an experience.

JS - Was there a particular officer that you remember during that time?

JH - My platoon sergeant was an SOB but I think they were supposed to be. They wanted to toughen us up. Yeah, it was tough, all seventeen weeks of it. I sometimes wonder how I made it.

JS - Just the physical?

JH - Physical and mental stress, physical, especially. It was hot. One hundred degrees everyday like this like it is going to be today. One hundred in Texas was bad. Texas, at that time, was not good for anything but camps.

JS - Is that right?

JH - Oh yeah, Texas was full of training camps. You had Infantry, you had Air Force, you had tanks. Everything there was, was in Texas.

JS - Because of the land?

JH - Nothing but sagebrush.

JS - I didn't know that.

JH - Waco was a town like Dodge. Now it is like Wichita. Killeen was a town like Ingalls. Now it is probably like Dodge City or something. There was nothing but sagebrush.

JS - It was good for that anyway.

JH - I guess so. They had any kind of training camp that there ever was in Texas. You'd go to Waco sometimes and sometimes you had to walk down the gutter. Soldiers were so thick, there were so many of them you had to walk off the curb.

JS - What was that like, to have so many young men moving around?

JH - Oh, you were kind of in a daze. You were trying to find a good place to eat and trying to find a place to have a beer or two. Then you go back to camp and start all over again.

Interviewer: Joyce Sullentrop **(JS)**
Interviewee: Jim Hardesty **(JH)**
Tape 1 of 1
Side B

JS - There is information here that nobody has talked about. Is there one memory that stands out in your mind of your time in there? Think about that while I ask you, what did your parents think when you were drafted?

JH - Not a thing, because everybody was doing it. I had a brother that went two years before me.

JS - Did he go overseas?

JH - No, he was training to be a pilot and he was a pilot and the European thing was finished so they didn't ship him over. My mother had a husband in World War One and two boys in World War Two.

JS - So there was a tradition of the military in your family?

JH - Not really a tradition, just a must. You had no choice. My dad was a sailor.

JS - Was he overseas?

JH - No, he didn't go overseas either. He served in a subMarine unit but he never made it overseas. They were all from Englewood.

JS - You grew up in Meade?

JH - My dad was a traveling man. I went to Greensburg two times, Dodge City once, and Meade two times so we traveled a lot but I finished in Meade.

JS - Is there a fellow soldier, a friend or officer that you remember and why? When you think about your experience is there one memory that just stands out, other than what you have already said?

JH - Probably the last march. It was sixteen miles out, and very, very hot. There were a thousand men in a battalion and we went out in columns of two. We were the last company. A thousand men in columns of two are just like an accordion. We walked for sixteen miles and they had ambulances out there because kids were passing out in the heat. I was either running or sitting, falling back. I had my pack and my rifle strapped on my pack and it cut off the circulation and I couldn't lift my arms. I was dragging my rifle and my arms and I couldn't lift my arms because the circulation was cut off. It was a twenty-pound pack.

JS - What was in that pack?

JH - Everything you needed.

JS - So everyday you marched, you marched with the pack?

JH - Not always; sometimes you just had your rifle. You didn't take the pack all the time but this was the last big march. It was sixteen miles out and sixteen miles back the next day.

JS - When you were marching did you have periods when you would stop?

JH - Oh yeah, they gave us breaks.

JS - Did you have water with you?

JH - Yeah, we had water. They forced salt pills on you too.

JS - People would just sort of drop out?

JH - And they would pick them up and take them back to the hospital.

JS - Did you ever ask yourself why?

JH - Why did I stay with it?

JS - Why they were making you do that?

JH - It was something else.

JS - Probably when you think, you just think of that march.

JH - It was like an accordion. That's what got me. Those up front were walking a steady gait all the time. Here we'd come running along. It's funny to think about. We were the last company.

JS - So they would have been where you were going long before you got up there. How long would that stretch out?

JH - Oh, for miles and miles.

JS - Why were you in twos?

JH - I guess in a road that is all the room you would have. It was terrible.

JS - That is quite an impression to have of your training.

JH - Yes, that accordion. I think I was next to the last guy, too.

JS - Is there any other soldier that you remember?

JH - Just my buddy, that's all. He and I just hooked up and were joined at the hip.

JS - And you kept in contact with him afterward?

JH - Not a whole lot, I'd like to have seen him. He is in Wichita. I should go in and see him. Probably never see him again. One of us will probably die. I didn't keep in contact as much as I should, but we saw each other once in a while. If he came out he would stop in at the store. I had the IGA store down here. Joe White and I bought that store.

JS - That leads us to this question. When you found out that you were going to get out, did you know what you were going to do?

JH - No.

JS - What did you do?

JH - First job was for $35 a week at a bakery. It was $35 a week whether you worked fifty hours, sixty hours or seventy hours, $35 a week. Then I went to work at the service station down there and it was $35 a week. Same thing, just whatever it took to do the job. Then I went to work for my uncle in the grocery store down at Ashland. We had on-job training where the government would pay part of your wages and the employer would pay part. This was a grocery store. I was in training there as a meat cutter. They gave me a knife, a cleaver and a saw and paid me, I think it was $45 a month, and he paid me that much a month.

JS - Was this because you had been in the service?

JH - This was from the service, what they called on-job training. I guess it was if you didn't want to go to college. I didn't want to go to college. I didn't want anybody telling me what to do. That was one of my mistakes. I should have gone to college because I could have gone for about free back in 1948. I worked for him for I don't know how long and then I bought a grocery store in Meade.

JS - Then came to Cimarron?

JH - We are a long way from Cimarron. I went to work for Boeing in Wichita and came back out to Coldwater and went to work for Mr. White. I bought a store in Mullinville and I did really well in Mullinville. I lived there fifteen years and our kids went to school, most of them. I bought a store in Dodge and that was a bad experience and I went broke there and went to work for Gibson's. Mr. White came along and said Howard Fisher was wanting out of his business so we came over here and bought it. It was very successful here, a good business. Excellent business, a lot of Ingalls people trade over here.

JS - Let's go back a little. When you were in the bakery, what did you do?

JH - Everything, back then about every town had a bakery. We made bread, we made cakes. First thing you did was made doughnuts and take them to the cafes. I was supposed to come in about four o'clock in the morning and I never made it in on time once. I was courting my wife.

JS - Did she live in Wichita?

JH - No, she was a Meade girl. She was raised on a farm south of Meade Lake. Kaplan was her name and she'd keep me out late.

JS - But they didn't fire you?

JH - They didn't fire me, no. I just quit. I went to work at that service station because that was a lot easier. At that bakery you went there at four o'clock and stayed until it was done. We made bread and everything and sold bread out of the front of the store.

JS - After that you got into the grocery business?

JH - Yeah, after we got married we got into the grocery business and had four stores. My whole family was grocery men. My granddad had a grocery store in Englewood for fifty years. My uncle had a store in Ashland for about that many years and one in Hotchkiss, Colorado. We were all grocery men.

JS - When you look back at your experience in the military, did that carry over into your life in anyway or how do you view that experience?

JH - I think it made me tougher. I don't think I benefited from it. Maybe I did and don't know it.

JS - Like you said, it was just something you had to do.

JH - I just had to do it. Get in and get out. That was the main purpose of everybody, get in and get out. When we got home from the service, there was nothing there, no cars or anything. They started to make cars again, but you know during the war they would get a car once in a while. You could get on a list, which was a big joke. They finally started making cars. We didn't think it was tough at the time. Maybe it was. It was the same for everybody.

JS - You had been raised during the '30s.

JH - Yeah, I was raised during the depression. I was in Dodge in the dustbowl days. That was an experience.

JS - What do you remember most about that?

JH - It was just as black as a black cloud. My mother hung wet sheets in the windows. It was pure black dark. All you had was the light in the house. You'd look out and it was just as black as that. That was frightening. You thought maybe the world was coming to an end.

JS - You have lived through a lot of history.

JH - I have, yeah, the dirty '30s, and no more than got through that and the war came along. I've had a good life and have a nice family. I have got five wonderful kids and a wonderful wife.

JS - What have you learned living this life?

JH - I learned I might do some things different. I should have gone to college. That is my biggest regret because the only way you are going to make money in the grocery business is being the owner. I realized that quick. It is a tough, tough business. I would have gotten into something else with an education.

JS - What do you think you would have gotten into? You worked at Boeing?

JH - That was no good. I was a pretty good athlete. I might have gone into coaching. The grocery business was good to us, but it is so time consuming. It is six or seven days a week. I didn't do anything. I didn't golf, I didn't fish, just spent time with my family, which was the way to do it. We had five kids and she was

home raising kids and I was out making a living and tried to be home with the kids all the time. We took vacations with them. We have been a lot of places. We have been to Hawaii, twice. We went to Germany, England and on three cruises. We've been a lot of places.

JS - Like you said, you have had a good life.

JH - We have wonderful kids.

JS - If there was a young person today who thought they would go into the service, what would you say to them?

JH - Get in the Navy. It is the easiest.

JS - Yet you chose to finish high school instead of going into the Navy?

JH - Yes, but I could have come back and finished high school. I was just going to do it now.

JS - Is there anything else that you think some researcher in the future would be reading that you think it would be important that people should know?

JH - I just think they need to let the youth know what we did for them and how tough it was. I didn't realize how tough at the time, but it was, all the time we sacrificed so they could run around in hot cars. Is that jealousy there?

JS - You made the point that before the war, the people at home sacrificed. After the war they were still sacrificing so everyone was sacrificing.

JH - Everyone, you did without. We didn't think much of it then because we were eating. There wasn't such a thing as going to Dodge everyday. People supported their locals. I get kind of radical once in a while when I see how kids act sometimes.

.Interviewer: Joyce Sullentrop (JS)
Interviewee: Jim Hardesty (JH)
Tape 1 of 1
End