

**Interviewer:** Would you please state your name and when and where you were born?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Mary Francis Richardson Lusk, I was born in Clarksville, Tennessee, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1916.

**Interviewer:** Um, do you remember any of the soldiers coming back from World War 1?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No.

**Interviewer:** No? Too young. What, what do you remember about the twenties?

**Mary F. Lusk:** There was a big depression.

**Interviewer:** Um, how did your family manage during that period?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Because we lived on a farm and we had, you know, things from the farm, big vegetable garden, we had cows, we had hogs, and we just had all the necessities and my father was a, in charge of the office at Rudolf ... and Company, tobacco, they were tobacco people in Clarksville, and we had people to work on the farm.

**Interviewer:** So, your dad had like farm hands basically?

**Mary F. Lusk:** That's right, he did.

**Interviewer:** So, did this make it easier on the kids or did the kids still have to do a lot of the work?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well, basically we didn't do any of the farm work, we weren't, I suppose not old enough.

**Interviewer:** What kind of stuff did he have you do around, like chores, what kind of chores?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well at that time, we had help in the house, to help my mother in the house work because we had a family, two families of blacks living on the farm and gosh, they worked for fifty cents a day, if you can imagine and um, then he had black men working on the farm because tobacco was the big crop then and they worked in the tobacco and corn was another big crop and they did all of the work plus worked in our vegetable garden and my father at that time didn't do a lot of the work outside because he was working in town and also during that period there was no working from nine to five, you just worked from eight until you got your work done in the afternoon and also worked on Saturdays, so my father really didn't have any time to work on his own land. And um, my mother was sort of busy with four children but as I said she had a laundress, who did all the laundry and the ironing, and then they cleaned the house, all my mother did was cook but of course that was something that she enjoyed, and of course rear the four children so um, it was a busy time, but...a period in my life when we had so many luxuries, we only had one car and of course my father used that six days a week to travel into town, I'll

say and back home and um, they just, we just didn't have all the luxuries that you normally think of in this day.

**Interviewer:** Now could you explain where your farm was located in Clarksville?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Um, go out Memorial Drive and you will intersect at Warfeild Boulevard and Memorial Drive, continue on Memorial Drive and the first buildings you see on your right, at that intersection will be Richview Middle School. Our home was next door to Richview Middle School. It was a two story frame home with a colonial porch and um, as we were always told, growing up, that the foundation of our home was laid the day Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, making it have been built in 1865.

**Interviewer:** Now uh, did you enjoy growing up...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, sure!

**Interviewer:** ...on that farm?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Sure.

**Interviewer:** Now how, what was, did you guys mainly eat?

**Mary F. Lusk:** All kinds of vegetables out of the garden, plus we had our own hogs and my father butchered those hogs, of course he had help, the black help from the farm to help him do this. Same thing applies for cow, same thing applies for chickens. We didn't run to the store to get any of this, we were self sufficient.

**Interviewer:** Now um, about how many hogs do you think you had on this place at one time?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I have no idea, I just know that we had hogs.

**Interviewer:** Ok uh, so when do you think the worst part of the Depression was, what year? Do you ever remember one year being worst than the others or was it all just kind of...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** It all was, it was all just sort of hard work and responsibilities for everyone, and we had, we had enough uh, moneys to get the necessities of life but we didn't have enough money to where we can go down to the restaurant, well there were no restaurants to begin with, but you didn't go out to eat like you do today for instance. And you didn't run to the store for the luxuries of life.

**Interviewer:** There was no Walmart.

**Mary F. Lusk:** No Walmart, no, no Kroger.

**Interviewer:** What about, how aware were you in 1939 of Hitler and what he was doing in Europe and invading Poland and things like that?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well we knew things were going on that were not conducive to our way of life.

**Interviewer:** Did you like the way FDR handled things during that period?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yes, I thought he was a wonderful president and I thought he did, you know, the best for the country.

**Interviewer:** Do have any specific example, that you thought, one thing you particularly liked about him, in particular?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No uh, as much as I disliked what was going on, I thought the day of Pearl Harbor, he handled himself very well, when he said that December the 7th would be a day that would go down in infamy, and I thought that was very well said, and that's just the way it turned.

**Interviewer:** Now um, do you think that uh, oh uh , I'm having a brain cramp sorry, where were you on Pearl Harbor, do you remember the day?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I was in Columbus, Georgia, Davis was stationed at Fort Benning and uh, it was on a Sunday and my brother, my brother younger than I, was also stationed at uh, Fort Benning and he had come into Columbus to spend the weekend with us and the three of us were listening to the radio, oh about 12:30, and that's when we first heard about it, and both my brother and husband didn't even, they hardly waited long enough to say goodbye to me, they left and went out to the post because they didn't think they would be coming back, they thought they would just go momentarily, nobody had ever experienced this before but as it turned out they each went out to Fort Benning and did what they had to do, which probably meant taking orders, I don't know, and then came back home and you know, just life went on, course it was much more rigorous training from then on and you could tell things were going on and there would be a war, it was just who was going overseas first.

**Interviewer:** Now would you explain how your husband got to Fort Benning? You mentioned earlier that he was in the CCC's and you kind of go through that story of how you guys met and that whole...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well, uh, you want me to uh, tell you again?

**Interviewer:** Yes, ma'am.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, when he was sent to Clarksville, as a second lieutenant just fresh out of Auburn University, it was in the winter time and it was spring coming on. They had all the boys at the CCC camp, needed some recreation which they didn't provide, so someone came forth with the idea that baseball would be a good recreation for all these young fellows so, and then someone else told them about my fathers restaurant and that he had some land around it which would be just enough for a baseball diamond and the facilities that go with it so my father and my husband to be got together and made up a baseball team and in the beginning of it, he was

out on a Sunday afternoon out to my restaurant with my father and they were talking about the baseball and I walked in and dad motioned me to come over and he wanted me to meet Lieutenant Lusk, so we just escalated from there.

**Interviewer:** And then you said that he was uh, he was at Fort Campbell for a while...

**Mary F. Lusk:** No, no, no.

**Interviewer:** Or that he was there at Clarksville for a while in the CCC's and then he went to Oregon?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No, from Clarksville he went to Marital, Tennessee to another CCC camp and then on to Gatlinburg to another CCC camp, and you know the uh, entrance to the state park, to national park, I'm sorry, well the CCC boys built that while he was there, that was in 38' I'm going to say, but he went from there took a train load of Tennessee boys, around 200 of them I believe, to Elkton, Oregon and started another CCC camp. And he stayed there until 1941, when they started calling in reserve officers and being single, he was one of the first to be called, so he came back to this area and his home was in Garnersville, Alabama. And he went to visit with his mother, and it was around this time of the year, and he spent a week with her and then he came up to visit with me, and we decided then and as much as, he would soon be going in the military and we didn't know what would happen from there that it might be a good time for us to consider being married, which we did and May 31<sup>st</sup> of 41' and from then on we just moved around and where ever uh, he went where I believe the fellows were sent to an area in which had uh, military base and uh, relative to their home town, which is why he was sent to Fort Benning. And uh, he stayed, that turned out to be the home of the 4th Infantry Division and then about 19 uh, I may not be quite right with these dates, but about 1942 a military camp was built in Augusta, Georgia. Which was called Camp Gordon, well it was built for an entire division, which was a lot of men and the 4<sup>th</sup> Division was sent there, so to Augusta we went and we stayed there until 19 uh, forty... I guess it was, and then they sent them to Fort Dix, New Jersey. I'm leaving out all this, where they had amphibious training.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, we'll fill in the blanks.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Ok. And uh, we knew that they were leaving but you can't put your finger on just when they were leaving but they did. The entire division left in January of 1942, yeah 1942. And went to uh, England and, when was the D Day invasion?

**Interviewer:** June 6, 44'.

**Mary F. Lusk:** 44', now that's what I couldn't think of. But anyway, they sent them all to uh, England and they spent six months training for the D Day invasion. And they made that D Day invasion on June 6.

**Interviewer:** Let's go back and talk more about, we'll get back to there. Your uh, um, when you were in Fort Benning, you were telling me earlier that he would go on maneuvers...

**Mary F. Lusk:** Hm huh.

**Interviewer:** How long were these maneuvers generally?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, sometimes they were three weeks sometimes they were two months

**Interviewer:** And they would be in all different places in the United States?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Especially in North Carolina. I remember he went to a lot of them there. And some of them were out in the boonies of Georgia.

**Interviewer:** Now you say he was an Artillery Officer?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Hm huh.

**Interviewer:** And so what kind of, do you know what kind of stuff he was in charge of?

**Mary F. Lusk:** 155 mL guns

**Interviewer:** And like how many of them, do you know how many he had?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No, I don't.

**Interviewer:** Um, what kind of employment did you have?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I didn't have any, I was too busy...

**Interviewer:** Going back and forth. So go ahead and tell us about that, how he would go on maneuvers for a month or two and you would go home.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well we were fortunate, or if you want to call it that, for someone to not have any children, which made it very easy for me to just hop in the car and run home to my dad, and then he would always notify me when they would be back in town and I would get in the car and go back and sometimes I would just save our apartment or most cases it was a room and back then they had an interesting way of uh, sharing the house with the land lady. Which gave us cooking privileges but we only had a bedroom, but that worked out fine for us. And uh, so when he would go on maneuvers, I would go home, old home rather.

**Interviewer:** Now when he would go on maneuvers and you would go home, what were the, this is a kind of off the blow, off the wall question, but where, how were the roads like, you mentioned there were no interstates. How long would it take you to get from Fort Benning, Georgia to Clarksville?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I don't remember but it was a long time. I would usually travel to his home in Alabama, which is about 40 miles south of Huntsville, and it would probably take me 4 hours to get there and I would spend two or three days and I would come on up here to my parents.

**Interviewer:** And when you were home, would you help your dad in the restaurant?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, yeah.

**Interviewer:** You just kind of help out or was it

**Mary F. Lusk:** Hm, huh.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned earlier about the rationing. How was it, how much were you allotted in gas as opposed to a civilian family?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well, it was uh, we had these uh, tickets or numbers and you know, either you could use it up all now or later. But um, dad would give me some of his ration and I had enough to come up here but not enough to shall we say run around and go into Nashville or go into Hopkinsville or where ever, but I would have enough to get home and then to get back. I always thought of that before I left.

**Interviewer:** So you would, you would have to use these stamps to get gas along the way.

**Mary F. Lusk:** And I want to tell you an interesting story. My tires on my car were very bad and a realized that but you know, young I thought well I'll start out, if I have tire trouble somebody will certainly stop and help me cause I didn't know how to change a tire, but fortunately that never happened. And my grandmother lived in Hopkinsville, at that time so , while I was here , on one of my trips, my parents wanted to go to Hopkinsville and of course I wanted to go visit with my grandmother because she was almost 90. Well we did, and on the way back, we got a blow-out, fortunately I had a spare tire, so my father put that on, I helped him then we came on up a little further and had another blow-out, I really don't remember how we got into Clarksville, but that was all we had, somebody must have come along and helped us or loaned us a tire or something. So Mr. Bart McRenolds, I never shall forget this, was head of the uh, rationing board, or where they would ration the tires, so I went down to talk to him and dad was with me and he explained the situation that my husband was on maneuvers and I had come home to visit with them, he said she really, she's got to have a tire, he told him, so through that and begging I suppose, I got two tires, and I'll tell you, that was like two pieces of gold, so that's how I made and we drove that car for 7 years, we couldn't get another one, you didn't, you don't buy tires during war time, I mean cars.

**Interviewer:** So uh, um, what, just for the record what was your dad and mom's name, full name?

**Mary F. Lusk:** My father's name was Henry Percy Richardson. My mother's name was Leone Julia Richardson

**Interviewer:** And uh...

**Mary F. Lusk:** And the name of the restaurant was Richview.

**Interviewer:** And what road was that on?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well at that time it was Highway 76, the main highway to Nashville, now it's just called Memorial Drive.

**Interviewer:** And is the building still there or was it...

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh no.

**Interviewer:** No, so he farmed and then he would...

**Mary F. Lusk:** He worked in town.

**Interviewer:** And he had a restaurant.

**Mary F. Lusk:** He was a busy man.

**Interviewer:** Yeah apparently.

**Mary F. Lusk:** He really was but you know, then as I say you had to do many things.

**Interviewer:** Multiple things.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Um so, let's talk about when your husband went down to those amphibious training, you said you went with him, in Florida?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I did. Uh, huh. We went, it was in Appalachia, Florida

**Interviewer:** Don't say that three times fast, huh?

**Mary F. Lusk:** uhn, uhn. I don't know how to spell it. But anyway, this was only for four months training.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Mary F. Lusk:** And then he went back to Columbia. Columbia, South Carolina. And uh, we weren't there but a very short while, I don't remember what time frame, and then the entire division was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey. Which is near Trenton and uh, but that was our staging area. So, they left for overseas from Fort Dix.

**Interviewer:** Now how did you feel knowing that your husband was gonna go?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I was sad.

**Interviewer:** Did, was it ever like emotionally draining knowing he was gonna go and then he would end up staying and then he would go and come...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** It was hard on nerves.

**Interviewer:** Cause you never know when he was actually gonna leave.

**Mary F. Lusk:** And you know, when he went to duty in the morning, I didn't know whether he would be home that afternoon or not, because sometimes they just left there suddenly.

**Interviewer:** Now did you have uh, a close group nit of military wives?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh yes. Yeah, we were all together.

**Interviewer:** And how would you support each other?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well, just by being with each other and um, like when they did go overseas, my best friends' father was stationed at Salt Lake City, Utah, so we, Dorothy and I we had a pact that if and when it did happen, that she would drive to Clarksville with me and we would spend a few days with my parents and then I would drive out to Salt Lake City with her and spend a few days with her parents and then I would come back to Clarksville on a train and that worked nicely.

**Interviewer:** So you did do that?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yes, I did.

**Interviewer:** Was that immediately after both your husband left?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh yeah.

**Interviewer:** So immediately you packed up and started coming towards Clarksville?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Absolutely.

**Interviewer:** Because there's nothing there in Fort Benning for you?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No. Nothing anywhere for us. Most of us wanted, because most of us were bride and groom, and most of us just wanted to get home to our parents.

**Interviewer:** Now did you, did the enlisted men, their wives were they intermingled with the officers' wives?



**Mary F. Lusk:** No, they were pretty segregated.

**Interviewer:** Pretty segregated.

**Mary F. Lusk:** It's always been that way. I don't know how it is today because the military has changed so much, and my husband retired in 63' but then we were, were really segregated.

**Interviewer:** Um, when you got back, when your husband deployed and then after this trip with your girl friend to uh...

**Mary F. Lusk:** Salt Lake.

**Interviewer:** Salt Lake and back to Clarksville, what, you said that you work in your fathers...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Restaurant.

**Interviewer:** Yes ma'am. What kind of, you just would you know, be a waitress and bus tables and things of that nature? Was there a lot of soldiers from Fort Campbell coming in at this period or..?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well, I tell you, we had everything from top generals on down. My father really had a nice place and everybody just mentioned Richview Restaurant around this area, especially all the old timers shall I say, they all knew about Richview Restaurant because the food was wonderful. And see another thing, living on the farm, my father had all these vegetables grown, like corn, well, they would preserve the corn and green beans, and use some of it at the restaurant during the winter and later on they would freeze these vegetables, course I'm thinking about after the war now, but freeze vegetables, cook them and use them at the restaurant and you know, that was all we had commercially was canned things, canned vegetables and so forth, so this was very good and it was a treat for them.

**Interviewer:** Now um, the hogs he would butcher, would that meat be used in the restaurant also?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So he obviously had quite a bit of animals and...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** He did.

**Interviewer:** He practically had to have help, to run this restaurant?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh my goodness, oh yes.

**Interviewer:** Working a job and a farm, and a restaurant, he obviously had to have people to uh, to be there?

**Mary F. Lusk:** But you see another thing, most all of the men in the area were in the war. You couldn't find, you couldn't hire any men, hardly. We had one black man and he had lost a hand I believe, and I don't know how, but naturally he wouldn't, they wouldn't draft him so we had him to for the, one of my fathers' meats at the restaurant was barbeque, I mean real pit barbeque and that's a hot job firing that coals under there, which is no longer used, now used charcoal.

**Interviewer:** So, they would burn, he would actually have a pit in the back?

**Mary F. Lusk:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** And he would uh, cook the hog maybe overnight and they would keep throwing coal into the bottom of the pit?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Uhn huh. And they would barbeque chickens also.

**Interviewer:** And he did it all with one hand, huh?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yeah, he did. See, there's always a way.

**Interviewer:** What would you get paid at your dads' uh, did you just get paid room and board?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Basically, three dollars a night. Wasn't that something. But you know, I didn't do it for that

**Interviewer:** You did it to help your dad out?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I did. And I'd rather be with them, then any other place, so I was happy and another thing about the restaurant, we opened at six in the evening and closed at ten, six days a week., Mondays was a free day and my parents and I would get in the car and if we had enough gasoline, we may go to Nashville and have dinner or something, or go to a show and then come home, just for the recreation, just to get away. And we did a lot of things together and that was eighteen months was just I remember was some of the finest times of my life.

**Interviewer:** And it's better to be with family when your husband's away than being alone somewhere.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Absolutely, absolutely.

**Interviewer:** Now uh, go ahead, were you going...

**Mary F. Lusk:** I don't know, wasn't important.

**Interviewer:** I was going to ask, I didn't mean to interrupt, what I was going to ask was about the letters, was there good correspondence when you were at home and your husband was in England or...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Not really, it would take us about a week to get an e-mail, we couldn't pick up the phone and call back then and neither did we hop on a plane and go over there because there was no such thing and there was no coming home or going back, it was different than it is today.

**Interviewer:** So, you would get a letter and it would be what two weeks old, a week old?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Maybe a week old.

**Interviewer:** Um, and what kind of things would your husband tell you in these letters of what he was...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Not much, not much.

**Interviewer:** Because it was, like you mentioned earlier, it was censored.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yeah, he didn't tell me where he was, never, I don't know that they were allowed to but he would say, well Ed and I are doing this, so Ed and I went into town last night, or something like that. But he would be very uh, evasive about things and about what they were doing.

**Interviewer:** Now...

**Mary F. Lusk:** I'll tell you another thing, e-mail was about this long, so you can't get a lot of writing in that.

**Interviewer:** So, it was quick. Did you ever see things in the newspaper about his unit after they did participate?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, absolutely. When they made the D Day Invasion, that was all over the papers. I did not know, I had no earthly idea, that they were even contemplating being on the D Day Invasion, because that was a killer. But my husband said here's how we planned it, he had a battalion or what did they call it then, can't think, anyway, he had all his fellows under him and uh, this ..... just drove him, drove them, steered them right on up to the coast, said they were in water no higher than knee deep getting off the boat and running on to the land, this was in France and he said this was about 1:30 in the afternoon. I don't know why that time stuck in my mind.

**Interviewer:** Did he um, did he talk much about this invasion later or after...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** You know, they never really talked about it a lot. Um, in 1950, course this is getting ahead of the story, but in 1950 he was stationed in Germany, supposedly for three years so by that time we had a little 3 year old son, well the 3 of us went on a ship, took us ten days to get there, to Brangmahaven and um, three and a half years later, we came home, because while we were there, the Korean War broke out, and we had our choice of coming home as dependants, of coming home at government expense but they would not send us back, and that was in June and we had only arrived there in January, I thought hmm, I'm not going home.

**Interviewer:** I don't blame you.

**Mary F. Lusk:** I'm not, I'm going to stay here, so I did, and I was so thankful that I did because at that time it would have been expensive for a lieutenant to have sent two of us home and then, I mean, send us from home back to over to Germany.

**Interviewer:** When he, when he landed, do you know what beach he landed at?

**Mary F. Lusk:** There was Utah and what's the, what was the other one called...

**Interviewer:** Juno, Sword, Utah, Omaha.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Omaha!

**Interviewer:** Okay, he landed on Omaha. And when he, when he uh, when they actually fought past this and started doing other things, pushing into France and later on into Germany, and he would write you, was it the same old thing, there was no...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** You don't divulge any information.

**Interviewer:** No emotion in his, his way of speaking or writing rather?

**Mary F. Lusk:** (shakes head no)

**Interviewer:** So how was that on you?

**Mary F. Lusk:** It was pretty tough.

**Interviewer:** Because here you are at home, your husband's been gone...

**Mary F. Lusk:** Not only did I have him but I had two brothers over there and one of them had already been wounded.

**Interviewer:** In Sicily, you were telling me. So, you knew the, you were not new to the fact that he could be wounded or killed...

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh he could be killed...momentarily. Maybe I wouldn't know about it for a week. And I remember my parents got a telegram with, I don't remember whether, I think it was three stars on it, when my brother was wounded, this is when he was stationed, my husband was stationed in Fort Dix, New Jersey, so they called me and told me about it. Well, I knew that the division would be leaving Fort Dix for overseas at just anytime but I also felt like I just wanted to be with my parents for just a short while, so I hopped on a train in Trenton, and at that time a train was coming through Clarksville and I came down here and spent the weekend the my parents, course we didn't hear anything, we didn't hear anymore about my brother and um, or maybe it was a month later, but we knew, we felt like in that period of time if he wasn't alive,

we'd also know about that. So I was anxious to get back to my husband because I didn't know whether he would be there when I got back or not. Fortunately he was.

**Interviewer:** You poor soul, you were running all over the nation.

**Mary F. Lusk:** That's why I couldn't, listen, one year when we were living in um, uh Columbia I believe it was, we moved 44 times. Now at that time, all of my personal belongings, had no furniture, no pots and pans, or anything except what we received as wedding gifts, but I put everything we both owned in the trunk of the car, that was the way I traveled. It was, you talking about gypsies. That's the way we had to live. But then it got better.

**Interviewer:** When he got rank, when he got promoted?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well, after the war and all that but I'll tell you about that somewhere in here.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so then after you went and comforted your parents for awhile on...

**Mary F. Lusk:** On a weekend.

**Interviewer:** ...when they found out that your brother had been wounded, you went back up to Fort Dix, and how long was it before your husband actually deployed?

**Mary F. Lusk:** About two weeks.

**Interviewer:** So you had two solid weeks with your husband before he left, what kind of things did uh, families do during that time period to say goodbye?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Before the day...oh, well, really there wasn't much you could do. Um, I will tell you this, it must have been longer than two weeks but it certainly wasn't much longer, I'm gonna say three at the most because my oldest brother who I told you was in defense work up in Baltimore, Glen Elle Martin, mother got on a train in Clarksville, and rode up to uh, Baltimore and spent a week with my brother, hoping that my other brother who was stationed in Fort Dix, couldn't get away for just 24 hours to come to, to come say, to Baltimore to say goodbye to her and you know that happened, when he left his unit to get down to Baltimore, his um, I'm going to say sergeant in command, told him, he said you know you are certainly taking a big chance because we'll be loading anytime, now this loading would have been for overseas and my brother Elle said, it doesn't make any difference, he said I know that I'm going overseas but I would love to see my mother on more time. So he went down there and spent an afternoon with her and then got the next train right back to Fort Dix. You know they were loading those ships when he got back. And then he didn't see her anymore for four years. So, I get emotional when I talk about it.

**Interviewer:** So your husband and your brother were at Fort Dix?

**Mary F. Lusk:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** Now did they see each in camp, in that camp very often?

**Mary F. Lusk:** They would come in and um, my brother Elle would come in and visit with us and get a home cooked meal and uh, maybe we would ride into town and go to a movie or something, just to be together.

**Interviewer:** Now he wasn't in the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No he was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored, he was an infantr..., and infantrymen. In fact his job in North Africa was to drive the jeep for General Eisenhower.

**Interviewer:** Really?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Now I'm talking about back in 1942. That was a long time ago.

**Interviewer:** So what kind of thing, was there ever a dynamic were your husband, who had never seen combat yet, at that point, would ask your brother things, who had seen combat?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No at that time, my brother had not seen combat.

**Interviewer:** Oh, he hadn't, ok.

**Mary F. Lusk:** But my brother was overseas for four years, and my husband only eighteen months and...

**Interviewer:** Because, go ahead.

**Mary F. Lusk:** ...and then, when the war was over, my husband was, his outfit 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, was one of the first to be sent back to the states to be redeployed and sent to Japan. This was in June of 45', well as we all know, the war had, a bomb having been dropped on Hiroshima, made the war in Japan end in August of 45'. My brother was still in Germany, just sitting there and waiting to come home, they had what you call a point system, and I have never really understood this, but he had so many points because he had been there almost since the war started, and while my husband got to come home before he did and my mother couldn't understand it and on her dying day, she didn't understand that either. And it didn't seem fair but it was just one of those things that happened because my husband and all the unit were only suppose to be here a month and then they were going on to Japan for another war, and it ended.

**Interviewer:** Let me uh, ask a couple questions about...

**Mary F. Lusk:** I'm alright.

**Interviewer:** I know we are skipping around a bit but it's ok...

**Mary F. Lusk:** That's alright.

**Interviewer:** Um, what about scrap drives or aluminum drives, did you buy war bonds?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh yeah. My husband and I did that all through the war.

**Interviewer:** And did you ever cash them in later on when they were...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yeah, after the war.

**Interviewer:** Um, so was it, it was obviously common for people to buy these things. Did you ever meet anybody that was kind of against it or...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No, I never did because I think that the officers were encouraged to have the enlisted men buy the war bonds so they could not, in my husbands' case, he could not afford to not buy them or to buy them and cash them in, it wouldn't have been ethical or correct.

**Interviewer:** Right. So, let's go back to uh, when you were, when your husband had gone overseas and he participated in the D Day Invasion, did you realized the magnitude of that invasion after it happened or was it kind of like ok, we're doing another thing in this war, but the repercussion thought didn't hit the home front until later on?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No, no and I think everyone else probably had the same feeling, we didn't know, we didn't realize what was really going on. You know, we didn't know anything about war, now realizing that the First World War was in the teens and I was a baby then so of course I didn't know anything about it. My father was not in it so, I just didn't know. But I'll tell you, being in one, living through one once, you'll never forget it.

**Interviewer:** I'm sure one's enough. Um, what about blue and gold stars, did you ever display a gold star like on your dad's restaurant or house?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No, no, I'll tell there an organization here in Clarksville called the Gold Mothers but see we hadn't lost anyone and although my brother was wounded, we'll he came out alright and survived it but this was for the mothers' who had lost a son.

**Interviewer:** And they would get these banners to put up in their windows when they...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** (Nods head yes)

**Interviewer:** Did you see a lot of those in Clarksville?

**Mary F. Lusk:** You know, I really can't remember, I'm sure that they were all over the place, but um, I really don't remember that part of it.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember where your husband was when the war in Europe ended, what town or city or um...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I believe they were down in the Italian Rivera. They were all, all over the continent, were just sitting there, the war was over, there was no fighting and they were just sort of relaxing, waiting to come home. And of course they did not, the division my husband was in, they did not realize that they would be sent home for the beginning of the end in order to get to Japan, as quickly as possible.

**Interviewer:** Well when the war ended in Europe did your husband, was your husband, did they still use this e-mail system, where they...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, yeah.

**Interviewer:** So just because the war is still going on in Japan...

**Mary F. Lusk:** They still had it.

**Interviewer:** ...the still had to use it because you know... so do you think he knew that he was going to Japan when...

**Mary F. Lusk:** I don't think they did at that time.

**Interviewer:** ...but when he came home...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, they definitely knew then, definitely.

**Interviewer:** And where was he suppose to go , where was he suppose, was he suppose to go to the west coast and then deploy out of like uh, San Diego or something like that or..?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Probably, I don't, I just don't really know.

**Interviewer:** After he got home, what uh, where did he land?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I think they landed in Charleston, because I met him in Atlanta I think.

**Interviewer:** And did you uh, what was it like to be reunited with your husband after..?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, it was like looking up and seeing a stranger, he had been gone so long.

**Interviewer:** And you had been married and together for about a year?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, no, about two years.

**Interviewer:** Two years before he left so it's not like you got married and he left, and you didn't know him, you knew him but how did the war change his appearance?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I don't really think it changed his appearance at all. Maybe he lost a little more hair.



**Interviewer:** What about his demeanor?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Now one thing this is, we went to a hotel in Atlanta for dinner the first evening I was there, all he wanted was lettuce, he asked him to bring him a big plate full of lettuce, he sat there and if I remember correctly, that was all he ate. He said he hadn't had lettuce since he left here, since he left the states.

**Interviewer:** So he was craving it apparently.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh yeah, apparently, because they had sea rations and all of those things that are no good. Life was tough out there.

**Interviewer:** I'm sure he ate enough spam out there to last a life time.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh don't you know it!

**Interviewer:** Did your dad have a telephone or a radio.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh. Yeah, he had both.

**Interviewer:** What kind of, did your husband ever get like a call, ever get like a call, in that eighteen months, get to call home?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No. They just didn't do things like that.

**Interviewer:** Completely different than now, apparently.

**Mary F. Lusk:** I just, well when friend of mine, sons or daughters go join their servicemen in an r and r place, huh r and r? What's that? There was none of that.

**Interviewer:** It's for the duration, your husband was there and your brothers were there for the duration. Like do you ever remember when your husband was gone sitting by that radio, was it in the house or was it in the restaurant?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, we had one in the restaurant as well as in the house.

**Interviewer:** What kind of programs would you all listen to?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Probably Amos and Andy. You ever heard of those?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I know who they are. Now would you, was it , would it, would you ever get war reports that was...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yes, but you see everything was censored.

**Interviewer:** So they would generic kind of?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Um, hmm.

**Interviewer:** Kind of weeks after it kind of happened.

**Mary F. Lusk:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** So what your telling me is that you guys didn't really have a firm grasp on what was going on over there.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Not really, communications aren't what they are today. You know, now, if a bomb is dropped in Iraq or something, we know about it because CNN is right there, we'd know about it almost before that bomb is dropped. And there it may take weeks for us to hear about it. Now we heard about, very quickly, about the D Day Invasion, but we didn't know which divisions were in it until maybe a couple of days later.

**Interviewer:** And to further demonstrate how much you didn't know, you didn't even know your husband was in England, when he was there right?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, I, I knew he was England, yeah.

**Interviewer:** But you didn't know where in England or...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I didn't know where until he got back home.

**Interviewer:** So the radio didn't really help you all that much?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No, no.

**Interviewer:** What about getting a telegram, were you ever frightened, were you ever...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, naturally, when you get a, I never got a telegram, the only one we ever got, the family, was when my brother was wounded.

**Interviewer:** Did you know any of your girl friends that got a telegram, maybe their husband died, or..?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I did, I did.

**Interviewer:** How did they react and did that affect you seeing what they went through?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well, it was very frightening and it was very sad because um, one of my best friends husband was a forward observer and he was killed on D Day, just as he got into France. I never shall forget that because we were all upset about that, very sad.

**Interviewer:** Was this a Clarksville man?

**Mary F. Lusk:** No, no um, he was from um, oh where were they from, I don't know, I forget.

**Interviewer:** But they were good friends of you and your husband?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yes, yes. But you know, out of all the good friends we had during our military days, during the war, I still correspond with two of them.

**Interviewer:** Really?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Hmm, huh. Which I think is phenomenal, being about sixty years ago.

**Interviewer:** What, what uh, were they lieutenants wives also?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So were they in the same company as you and your husband?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yes, both the two fellows that I am speaking of, had both, one of them is dead, had an aneurysm about three years ago. The other one is a retired judge in Palm Beach, Florida. And each couple had been by Clarksville to visit us and both of them came while my husband was still alive, so. And the unit that he was in at that time, during World War 2, once a year they have a reunion, and for the past several years it's been over in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

**Interviewer:** And he would go and visit...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh yeah. He always went, of course I don't anymore. I don't, I don't have any desire to go.

**Interviewer:** You went because he went?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Oh, sure, but without him, it would just be a sad trip over there and back for me.

**Interviewer:** Did your dad um, since he owned this famous restaurant and he had people from Fort Campbell coming in, did he develop any good relationships with soldiers and maybe keep correspondence with them while they were overseas?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yes, he did.

**Interviewer:** So he would get letters from them just like you would get letters from your husband and brothers and things of that nature?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Hmm, huh.

**Interviewer:** So your dad had a place in his heart for , for uh, soldiers?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Definitely, and also because his two sons, two of his sons and son-in-law were in service and the forth one may as have been because he was in defense work.

**Interviewer:** Do you think of those years as, obviously were hard, we know they were hard, that's obviously an understatement. But do you think those years maybe was the cement that strengthened the bonds between your family and uh the country, or do you think those uh. Basically what I'm asking is how do you feel about those years, what, what permeates your mind through those...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** They were hard years, and I think it made us, our characters much stronger and uh, it brought us together much better as a family because you know, you go on from day to day, we take so much for granted.

**Interviewer:** Today we do definitely.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Definitely, we do.

**Interviewer:** Because we have everything given to us.

**Mary F. Lusk:** That's true.

**Interviewer:** So you think those hard times are almost good for this country, not good, well that's, I might not of said it that way but um, but there was good things that came out of those hard times?

**Mary F. Lusk:** It gave us a lot of character, I'll say that. We don't ever want to go through that again.

**Interviewer:** Yes ma'am, I agree.

**Mary F. Lusk:** And I'll tell you another thing, this is, you may not go into this but, in the 19, from 1959 to 61', we were stationed in Hawaii and to go out to that battleship and seeing the people come out there, I tell you what, it really makes a believer out of you. And of course going through the battlefields and cemetery at St. Lowe, it makes you, oh, it just does something to you. It's not a very pleasant experience but they both certainly make you more patriotic, make you more thankful for what you have, and um, I think it just means so much, things that you will never, never forget.

**Interviewer:** I have an odd question but uh, that's ok, do you think that uh, our youth today as any clue as to the sacrifices your husband and those men...?

**Mary F. Lusk:** I hate to say this but I don't think they do. I don't think I would have ever known had I not saw the remnants of both areas.

**Interviewer:** How sad is that, that's sad.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well, it just instilled a memory in my mind that I shall never forget. And in like in um, Honolulu, when you go out to the cemetery where Ernie Pyle was buried there, now you

may not have ever heard of him, he was a correspondent in World War 2, very popular, very famous, he's buried there. And uh, when you go out and see that, see how well preserved everything is, same thing applies with going through the cemetery in St. Lowe and places in Europe that we went to see, and it just does something to you. I'm so happy that I had the opportunity of seeing all those things, from both sides, and also seeing the um, feeling of the German people in the aftermath because when we went to Germany it was in 1950, in January. It was a short period of years since the war and we landed in Bremerhaven, one evening and took the boat train down to Frankfurt and on down to Munich and when we go to Frankfurt, it was daylight the next day and we came into that uh, railroad station, the Bahnhof, they'd call it, there wasn't any roof on it, it was all blown off, there wasn't any station there, it was all blown off, blown away.

**Interviewer:** Five years after the war ended, it still hadn't been repaired.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yeah, and they were still in poverty and I cannot believe how the country has prospered like they are today, course it was American dollars that put them back on their feet, we all know that. But um, the attitude of some of those people could be belligerent, and others were so grateful that we were there to rescue them.

**Interviewer:** So your husband was in Germany from 50' to 53', about mid 53'?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Hmm, huh.

**Interviewer:** And correct me if I'm wrong but we occupied Germany from the end of the war to about 52'. So um, what kind of things would he do while he was there?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well...

**Interviewer:** In 50'?

**Mary F. Lusk:** He went over with the idea of staying in artillery and uh, we were only there a few months, when he was told that was a Russian language school down in Oberammergau, now have you ever heard of Oberammergau, well, it's where they have the Passion Play of Christ every ten years.

**Interviewer:** Oh, yeah, ok.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Garmisch, is another little town right next to it, and lived not too far from there, and this Russian language school had been in existence, I don't know how long, but they asked for volunteers to go to it, so Davis was always interested in languages and so forth, so he volunteered for it. Well, he would leave home, drive across a mountain, we were living down in the Alps, he would drive across part of that mountain, get to school on Monday morning at 8 o'clock and from that time on until Friday afternoon, not one word of English was spoken, it was all Russian, and then he would be home with our son and me, he did that for six months and by

the time he graduated, he graduated as third in his class and it really helped him. Not that he ever used it in the manner that you think as a translator or something, but he changed from artillery to intelligence and as a result, we were transferred out of the unit that he went all through the war with, on up to another town called Byroth, it's near Neunburg, you ever heard of it?

**Interviewer:** I have never heard of it.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Ok, and that's where we spent three years and um, from then on, then we came back to Washington and was at the Pentagon for eight years and then he went to Korea for a year and we came home, then we met him, he came from Korea to Hawaii, and we uh, went on a ship from San Francisco to Honolulu, and a few later we flew back, and um, so I tell you, all in all, I got a pretty good idea what goes on, on both sides. I mean it was interesting.

**Interviewer:** I'm just curious to know um, he was in 20 years, probably a little over 20 years um, when he got out what did he do?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Well, he decided he wanted to get completely out of the military, so..

**Interviewer:** And that was in 63' right?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Hmm, huh.

**Interviewer:** He got completely out.

**Mary F. Lusk:** And we were living in Baltimore at the time, he was stationed in Fort Holabird, so we decided to come to Clarksville, and go to Alabama, and see what we wanted to do, well, I had always wanted to come back home and uh, but first though, let me tell you this, when he first retired from the military, he went to work with CIA, in Langley, Virginia, which is Washington and he worked there for three years, in the mean time, our son graduated from high school, and came down to Auburn University, down in Alabama to school, and my mother had passed away and we were trying to make a decision. So, we came down and visited my father and my brother, who was a bachelor, and I cried for three days leaving, I thought we have just got to go back home to take care of those two men. Which is why we eventually did, and he didn't do anything after he moved down to Tennessee but just worked around the house, just sort of did his own thing you know, and then one day one of the teachers at high school became ill, so they called him and they knew over at the school he had a degree so they asked him if he would substitute for this teacher until the end of school, and he told them yes he would, he wasn't doing anything, the high school was next door to us and you know five years later he decided he'd had enough teaching, so he retired from that and he really just enjoyed golf and just enjoyed retirement from there on.

**Interviewer:** Like every man should.

**Mary F. Lusk:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Enjoy retirement.

**Mary F. Lusk:** But since Danny, that was in 1965, I've lost my mother, my father, two brothers and my husband, so.

**Interviewer:** You have one brother left?

**Mary F. Lusk:** Hmm, huh. And he's a retired attorney in Clarksville and my son is an Executive Officer in um, well, can't think of, isn't that crazy.