

Wiley Moore

Interviewer: This is May the 18th 2001 this is Debbie Bratton with the Memories of Service and Sacrifice and I'm meeting again with Mr. Wiley D. Moore. He spent six years in the U.S. Army from 1940 to 1946 and Mr. Moore before we really get started today could you tell us about the certificate that you're holding?

Mr. Moore: This certificate is a copy of my promotion from a First Sargent to a First Lieutenant on August 13th of 1942 after I had finished Knox Academy School there at Fort Riley, Kansas.

Interviewer: How are you feeling today Mr. Moore?

Mr. Moore: I'm feeling pretty good for an old guy.

Interviewer: You've turned 85 since I first met you. It was March 15th when I first met you and your birthday was the 31st. And this is actually your second interview with Memories of Service and Sacrifice and we wanted to meet with you again so we could discuss more of your experience going to becoming a Buffalo Soldier with the 91st Division.

Mr. Moore: My first assignment after I got my commission.

Interviewer: Let's pick up there when you were 26 years old in 1942 and you went to Officer's Candidate school. What was that experience like?

Mr. Moore: Well it was like anything else in the Army it was right back to basic training and all that stuff again and along with schooling you were taught practically all day long some facets of army life and things that you could do you know that equated that could be used in any branch of the service. General to general army information general preparative information in stamina and everything.

Interviewer: Were you prepared for what happened when you received your commission in August 1942? I'm talking about what happened that evening?

Mr. Moore: No I wasn't prepared as a matter of fact I had tried to resign. I was young and I had been running around and I got tired of all of this constant you know hassle all day long and I tried to resign and let them send me back and let me be a First Sargent. I already a permanent army First Sargent and there wasn't that much difference between that and Second Lieutenant's pay and I tried to resign and they wouldn't let me resign said no you are in here you're either going to finish or we are going to punch you out.

Interviewer: Not only would they not let you resign they rewarded you with an award for being the most outstanding black soldier.

Mr. Moore: Yes that was great but the word black hung in my craw. I don't know out of over two thousand men and two hundred black I'm wondering what happened to the white ones. But of course again that's education I don't know whether

Interviewer: Did they actually use the word black?

Mr. Moore: Yes

Interviewer: Or did they say

Mr. Moore: They actually used black.

Interviewer: Okay but within 24 hours you went from Second Lieutenant to First Lieutenant.

Mr. Moore: Oh yeh within ten or twelve hours.

Interviewer: Ten or twelve hours.

Mr. Moore: Cause we were commissioned during the day and that evening we were having a not a social affair an enlisted man's club in the 9th Division area and they came down and got me from the party and from the graduating from the social affair and brought me to of course headquarters and that's where they conferred the change the same the very same day I got commissioned to Second Lieutenant.

Interviewer: And we have a certificate of your military service here which shows your entry into the Army on August 10, 1940 until August 13, 1942 when your rank at that time was a First Sargent and then you went to OCS School and you were commissioned as a First Lieutenant on August 14, 1942. So you had roughly only been in the service for two years. You had mentioned earlier that there was some what of a backlash among the other black soldiers because of your progression so quickly.

Mr. Moore: Yes and along with a lot of others you know a lot of other men went through the same thing particularly and I was very much concerned about those men that had applied with me to go to COS that had already gone to college and had college degrees from approved ROTC courses instituted in various colleges around the country. Cutsing, Liverpool that school in Virginia I think Hampton, Virginia had it and there was one in River force, Ohio and down at Tuskegee that's four that I can recall off hand that had these kind of courses going on.

Interviewer: And you had had one year of college.

Mr. Moore: Yeh and they were graduated men with bachelors' degrees and they were commissioned after the graduation as Second Lieutenants in the Army Reserves. Now a few years later they called them in as enlisted men and brought them back into the Army disregarded the entire program. So we had a lot of grievance that we could bring forth.

Interviewer: So in other words in the 92nd Division you had college graduates whom when they had received their degree

Mr. Moore: And before the 92nd Division prior to us going to OCS.

Interviewer: They were commissioned officer they were brought in as reserves they were brought in as enlisted men?

Mr. Moore: As enlisted men the highest rank that any of them that I knew of the ten or twelve that was in Camp Lee, Virginia the highest rank any of them had was a Buck Sargent and he was a very brilliant from Ohio University. He graduated from Ohio University which was one of the elite black schools at the time.

Interviewer: So you were quite the exception?

Mr. Moore: Well I don't know about that but I got there first that was the looking force. Jackson and all those fellows came in after I came to campus.

Interviewer: Are you talking about Sargent Jackson?

Mr. Moore: Sargent Jackson that was from Harvard University as well as McDofenburgen and several more fellows from West Virginia State and Hampton University ROTC courses and two from down at Tuskegee and one or two from River force, Ohio you know that had graduated and had college degrees.

Interviewer: So how did you feel when you became a First Lieutenant?

Mr. Moore: There again you know that would be now that you bring it up jumping in ten or twelve hours from Second to First Lieutenant. And that's something I didn't see Jackson or any of them after I went to OCS. But I knew they were there because I had taken their applications and had given them to the Regimental Ashton and he was supposed to have sent them forward to post headquarters and everything. But the commanding officer of the regiment ordered them pigeonholed. Ordered them rolled up and put in the company stations and not send them forward.

After you were commissioned then commissioned as a Second Lieutenant promoted to a First Lieutenant in just a matter of hours then you remained at Camp Lee for just a short time

Mr. Moore: Just enough to get on to get in my car and the orders were already cut that I was to go to Fort McClellan, Alabama. I and another one of the officers that graduated with me

Interviewer: Was he also black?

Mr. Moore: Yes and younger than I he was about 22 years old.

Interviewer: Really

Mr. Moore: Yeh and I remember distinctly he come from Chicago and he had been out at Fort Frances he was in Wyoming when they excepted him and he was sent a long as this great number of men, they needed officers very badly and they were going though rapid preparing courses and pushing them very rapidly you know to become what they needed to become commissioned. I guess officers are

Interviewer: So then you and this other fellow officer drove down by automobile to Fort McClellan, Alabama.

Mr. Moore: And I took a new route I'll never forget it when I had not followed and I took a new route because of where we were going but different from the route that I normally followed when I had come

back to Clarksville on my furlough. And I remember we went up to a little place near Buna Vista, Virginia and I had let Ward take the wheel of the car because none of us were too accustomed to cars and knew he was just itching to get under the wheel and I let him drive.

Interviewer: What kind of car was it do you remember?

Mr. Moore: Had a Willis Knight four cylinder and I bought it based upon the times and the gasoline rationing and all that kind of thing. I had a larger car but I got rid of it.

Interviewer: So this was your personal car?

Mr. Moore: Yeh my own personal car a Willis Knight I saw an advertisement an old elderly lady had it and it was something like a 37 and I believe I paid \$375 for it but it was in tip top shape all the way around had very low mileage on it and all of that.

Interviewer: What color was it?

Mr. Moore: It was kind of yellowish I believe beige or something like that and it would 35, 25 to 35 miles to a gallon of gas and that's what impressed me. And one of the gas rationing rules then you know where you could only get a few gallons of gas a week or something but I could drive the pool I would drive with one of my friends

Interviewer: But you were going to let this other soldier

Mr. Moore: I decided to let him drive and I had it insured under the Army's thing like they got out here at Fort Campbell here now you know I was fully insured. And we started up through there just before we left I saw another an in the paper where people were part of their house and other wheels and tires were at a premium and I went to this place and bough all the tires they were in practically new condition and had them stuck back in the back seat you know underneath all of our cloths and duffle bags and all of that you know. And you couldn't see out the back window you had to look out the side view mirrors and the car was loaded from top to bottom. We got up to this little place and the road come like a corkscrew and Ward got excited and over corrected and he ran off the side of that mountain and you looked down there and fell maybe 25 or 30 feet and there was a little put nick there that the car dropped on and I'll never forget it as long as I live I pushed my hands against the dashboard that's how I got that and that started from that day on and had a fracture right here and Ward got a knot on the front of his head and that was the only injuries that we apparently had. They carried us into a young doctor and at Buna Vista and he checked my wrist and everything cause we had no car so we had to get there in other words to get on public transportation. It was a new area for me to be in.

Interviewer: What did you do with your new tires?

Mr. Moore: I just gave them to the people who took the car I got what I could out of it you know got our clothes and our bags and everything and we got on a bus or whatever a bus to come home I think it was a bus we came to Clarksville and then we went from Clarksville to Fort McClellan, Alabama.

Interviewer: What was it like when you arrived at Fort McClellan?

Mr. Moore: Confusion again and due to normal procedure the Commanding Officer when I was young Officers were coming in set up a form of reception to be received and to be introduced to you and we went to division headquarters to present ourselves and to be introduced to the Commanding General and when it was that way you had a table like that over there this table with a little container for us to put our calling cards in never saw him.

Interviewer: You're talking about General Almond?

Mr. Moore: General Almond so there again I says I'm like Hayman when he went to Syria to get rid of his leprosy in the Bible you know went from Syria to wherever he was over there and he thought because he was a big top General and everything somebody would have a reception lined up and the red carpet rolled out. And we kind of thought that way too young and dumb and feeling our importance you know in a unique situation we thought somebody would be there would have an aid or something but no one.

Interviewer: No one was there?

Mr. Moore: You just had a little bowl that you stuck to leave your card in now the rascal knew my name because shortly after we got there he called me up out of formation scared me to death you know. And asked me to we had a little field exercise and called me up to direct it without any preparation didn't bother I didn't even know they had set up the area

Interviewer: How did he treat you when he called you?

Mr. Moore: Well with the proper respect you know and décor he told me that he want me to run this exercise to do this exercise and everything and they had prepared an incident where the air was being invaded or being spied upon by spies and they were coming you know in to do the damage in order to break us up to throw s in a state of confusion. And I was to make sure the troops and things that were there would become ready and repel it. And I guess I did a fair job obviously I had never seen anything like that being the Quarter Master I had not seen any military maneuvering and called me up and he kept calling me on occasion every time get me line and orders get me line and orders over there. He put me in a special assignment to various jobs he took me again away from the Quarter Master which I was assigned and brought me to division headquarters as an Officer there.

Interviewer: I think we had discussed this off camera at one time Vernon Banker who was one of the soldiers' years later after WWII who received the Congressional metal of honor in 1997. He had mentioned in a book he had written, "The black Officers' or the black soldiers I don't think he used the term Officer if they came to division headquarters they came to the back" door did you witness that?

Mr. Moore: I didn't know that we didn't have that we went through the regular door and the center of the what do you call it I mean plaza or whatever you know the Officers were gathered around.

Interviewer: In the lobby, lobby area?

Mr. Moore: In the lobby like the front lobby.

Interviewer: How long were you at Fort McClellan before you went to Fort Wauchula, Arizona?

Mr. Moore: We were there from August when we got there until around March or the first of April the following year.

Interviewer: From August of 42 until the spring of 1943. How did you feel going to Arizona here you are a native of the south going out west?

Mr. Moore: Well it didn't bother me I thought I might enjoy it however, again Fort Wauchula, Arizona not to our knowledge or anything of that nature had been a post designated by the Army to except most black troops especially when they come in in large numbers. They still had Native Indian Scouts out there and everything and everything was controlled.

Interviewer: Did you take a train when you went out there?

Mr. Moore: I took a train because I when they decided to go I had come home I had gotten a leave to come home I had just gotten married and I came home right at my home down here on the little ole street well I hadn't been there two or three days had a fifteen day leave I got an order to come back to Fort McClellan that we were that I had been assigned as a troop train commander to move troops that were going to be moved by rail from Fort McClellan, Alabama to Fort Wauchula, Arizona.

Interviewer: We should say when you mentioned this area just down the street we are in Clarksville, Tennessee.

Mr. Moore: Right

Interviewer: So you and your wife

Mr. Moore: Eleventh Street I had come home to bring my wife into the family you know things like that we had just been married maybe five, six weeks.

Interviewer: You were on leave at that time and then they called and wanted you to come?

Mr. Moore: They ordered me back ordered me right back I said God I can't even take a leave they that they ain't bothering me.

Interviewer: When you came home when you got that time to get married

Mr. Moore: I had got married already.

Interviewer: Oh you were already married. I bet your mother was very proud of you being an Officer.

Mr. Moore: Yes she was and in the course of the conversation we find out that her my mother and her mother and her two sisters had attended A&M College at Huntsville, Alabama together.

Interviewer: Really

Mr. Moore: And my mother graduated Huntsville, Alabama in 1903 as salutatorian of her class.

Interviewer: Wonderful what was your mother's name Mr. Moore?

Mr. Moore: Annie Johnson-Moore.

Interviewer: Annie Johnson-Moore.

Mr. Moore: And all three of her aunts her mother and her two sisters were there at Alabama A&M at the same time and they knew each other. You know the world gets small. And of course she fell in love with my wife you know. She was not very receptive of a girl marrying her boy. But she loved her and she had not liked any of the girls that had married any of the boys up until that time and I heard her tell her that she had her best boy that she better treat him right. They were sitting on the porch there talking she was out there my boy this my boy that.

Interviewer: How long was your train ride to Wauchula, Arizona?

Mr. Moore: Two or three days at least three days maybe four and on the way there when we stopped break stops and things like that they designated them and set them out and was very rigidly in flow we could not go around and walk all over town and things like that you could go out there and get refreshments or something the train was hot and dusty and cinders flying al around. And you may go out and get some pop some cold pop or something like that but then you just get back on the train and you're off again. But three or four days riding out there and that was the way it was and there again politically they were appeasing the officials wherever we stopped. And we were not allowed to go around like the time I walked up there in Virginia with my pistol on my side now here comes a whole train load one after another car after car.

Interviewer: Now at Fort Wauchula there were other than maybe white officers you didn't have white soldiers was it totally all black?

Mr. Moore: Oh yeh we had almost all black. The base the post compliment was white Under Colonel Holiday and he had some blacks in the highly visible blacks. Also they brought in the 184th field artillery out of Chicago, Illinois and they brought in a lot of medical men to run the hospital the post hospital in Fort Wauchula, Arizona out of that bunch and they went by our field and my private doctor after I went to Chicago Colonel Harold Thatcher. Harold was a man then about 34 years of age and he was Chief of Medical services for the post hospital. The hospital was the commanding office now he had a medical battalion assigned to the division and had a Colonel in command. But they were the post compliment party was professional black soldiers mostly a high percentage of them were. And Colonel Holiday was one of the Army Officers that recognized blacks and treated them fairly. He had been injured in one of the wars and had lost his right arm or left arm about the elbow and given a job at the post.

Interviewer: What did you after the train arrived and you had your position at headquarters what would you actually do?

Mr. Moore: I was administrative officer for the company assigned as the administrative officer and one of his the Generals aids and one of the fellows that was at West Point with Benjamin Davis Jr. that told me all about him was assigned as the Commanding Officer. And as well as being an aid to the Commanding General so all of those responsibilities for the company area and everything fell on me because he was out of there most of the time.

Interviewer: Give us an example of what a typical day might have been like.

Mr. Moore: Well normal routine getting the troops out to their assignment and I had my assignment as the division headquarters of the company to get all the company and all of those sections over there. The AG and the IG and three and G4 and they were all individual headquarters company military defense platoon police platoon and everything. So it was my job to see that they were in their proper places at the proper time and the men that were going to man division headquarters would be in division headquarters in that position at the proper time.

Interviewer: Did you see much racial discrimination at Fort Wauchula?

Mr. Moore: A little you know not enough because like I said we were in the majority and we were visible and others were visible too but they as suit enough to not bother you know as almost like you were non existent like you weren't there they didn't bother you. Because they knew that they were also in training ahead of us and given the promotion first so this went on for a year or two. You know they sent other men when they took the McClavery out a division you know and made him an Assistant G3 and they took Rowdy who was at West Point out and made him an Assistant G4 you know and moving them up. Every time they moved them out instead of moving me to being the Company Commander they brought in another white officer and gave him the respobsilibility of being over me. So he could get a change to promote him and maybe promote him to staff of the division or something like that and another white would come. But I got mad one day and I said you send any dam body you want to but I said but you need to understand that I'm running this company. They called me and I said we can send Lieutenant we can send so and so and he'll be the CO how you feel and I says that's alright with me I said just so he knows that he's not to bother my troops that I'm in command of them. So that went down like that I was very abrasive cause I had already picked up on what was going on you know. And they'd stay there a month or two and get a promotion from Captain into a Major and bring them into division headquarters for a month or two and the next thing you know he was transferred out to a white unit. And we were to get the dregs whenever he was there and as a result of that the training for that division was greatly hazard because we

Interviewer: It was such a change

Mr. Moore: Every day every time you turn around there was a new this and a new that. One little fellow came down that was a West Pointer and his dad was a General in the Army and he come in there and made the remark he knew how to handle black soldiers and he was a Colonel a Lieutenants Colonel and General Arnold gave him a regiment. I don't remember which one it was the 371st or 370th and he got out there you know doing his little thing you know the great white farmer. And were on maneuvers one night and some of the boys were mad they took an advent on his tent a little command tent out in the

field and they fired a few shots through that tent and he came out there hollering I'm going to see the General right now I want a transfer. And that then was wrapped around his shoulder so there went him.

Interviewer: He wasn't very well liked.

Mr. Moore: There was animosity I wasn't the only one but when I heard and I saw about this I just gloated.

Interviewer: Did you know who fired the shots?

Mr. Moore: No I had no idea didn't even know anything about it cause they were down in the regiment. They were down in the combat regiment I was in division headquarters. But whenever problems arose

Interviewer: So you didn't stay in a tent while you were at Fort Wauchula?

Mr. Moore: Yes I had when we were in the field.

Interviewer: When you were in the field but

Mr. Moore: Normally we were in quarters in barracks safe on the base. But when this came about and I heard about it and everybody heard about it and you know said he's gonna have to leave you know their beginning to learn to defend themselves and take care of themselves but all he was drastic and he was very aggressive seeing to it that possible he might have been right because those troops were not ready.

Interviewer: Did you have many

Mr. Moore: He never General Almond never received a compliment when any of his superiors came out to inspect that division. It was always a kind of negative that there was room for great improvement. And he would stand up to his superior officers and tell them how he knew this and he knew the other and bla bla bla and I know better and all that kind of thing and he didn't except it.

Interviewer: We should mention that we're talking about Major General

Mr. Moore: Edward L. Almond it might be an M.

Interviewer: I believe the report I looked at had an M, Edward M. Almond.

Mr. Moore: Now he was from Virginia and he was a national guard sent in to take over a black regiment and everything. And his brother Lindsey was the Governor of West Virginia.

Interviewer: Were there many black soldiers there that were unhappy that they weren't in combat at the time?

Mr. Moore: Oh yeh a lot unhappy about not being in combat but they weren't happy about everything like me.

Interviewer: Kind of miserable?

MR. Moore: Yeh and misery loving company and we would commemorate together you know we would talk about these things you know you had some very fine young men very tender.

Interviewer: So you were there in Arizona when the war was declared in August of 45 in Europe VE-Day.

Mr. Moore: Yes VE-Day but the war was declared you know earlier than that and that's why they were scurrying around getting all the troops and that's how we came to be a part of Fort Wauchula because prior to our tour in Fort Wauchula the 93rd division was there.

Interviewer: Before they were sent to the Pacific?

Mr. Moore: Before they was sent to the Pacific and when they got them out they had room enough for us. But that was the only base in the United States that was big enough to hold a unit the size of ours cause they had the 93rd division first and trained them and the Calvary for the 92nd division came from the 91st including General Almond. He was Assistant Division Commander in the 91st.

Interviewer: What was the mood like when the war was over I mean the black soldiers?

Mr. Moore: I'm not exactly sure I got out just about the time all of these things were coming to closure and I lost contact and because of my court marshal and everything court marshal that they had had and they had declared me they said the basic thing that they got was that I was associating with enlisted personnel.

Interviewer: Oh this was what your court marshal was about?

Mr. Moore: That was what couldn't find a dam thing else so.

Interviewer: Was that in 44 or 45?

Mr. Moore: 44, 45 somewhere along in there it started then and then hung on for a year or two before

Interviewer: For fraternization?

Mr. Moore: Yeh fraternization. And well hell who in the hell else am I going to fraternize with you know.

Interviewer: Yeh because there weren't many

Mr. Moore: There weren't any officers around and you know I loved a lot of those men I had a lot of respect for a lot of those fellow troops what am I going to do with a fellow like Jackson and McDawsonburgan college graduates that were you know commissioned Second Lieutenant you felt out of place when you were around them you know. And they had to feel something I'm there you know.

Interviewer: What were the results of the court marshal?

Mr. Moore: Well they

Interviewer: And who what was the officer that pushed for that was it a Colonel?

Mr. Moore: No it was Almond himself. Now McNair listened they had to come in the army ground core came there and the first they do is start checking service records you know to see you know whether there may be some infraction or whether you may be involved in this or that.

Interviewer: So they went back to Camp Lee?

Mr. Moore: Well they went back to Camp Lee and vindicated me. General McNair told General Almond to leave me alone. And ordered him to transfer me away from there shortly after that he the visit there on the base and he he giggered him or unpreparedness and you know and everything and Almond raised cane he went along then further to inspect some more units. And went overseas to inspect some units and he wasn't over there no time before he got killed. And as soon as he got killed Almond sent back to Camp Wood, Texas where he had transferred me and also they sent me back to an advanced automotive course at Camp Evader which was training truck troops and all that and he sent back and got me and brought me back there and court marshaled before they went overseas. And after that was done they went on overseas and of course I the officer that he assigned to defend me knew nothing about it fine young man fine young black officer.

Interviewer: And what were the results of the court marshal?

Mr. Moore: Well they they court marshaled me and found me guilty but they hadn't decided on what the punishment would be. And then at this time they left me back until the troops were gone and I stayed there until finally they decided on I don't even remember 3 or 5 years Leavenworth and he finally sent me to Leavenworth and they asked me about it and I said let them go let them do that because I knew the courses and the procedures they were following. That they was out of reviews and I was banking on the fact that they would come up with the same thing that McNair came up with you know that he had stopped him from perusing me earlier and they did. My first interview after I was there three or four months after I was there I was gone. They first tried to influence me to come back and that they were going to give me some promotion that was promised to me that he had promised that he was going to make me a Lieutenant Colonel and that I was going to be in command of a battalion of infantry.

Interviewer: And he is?

Mr. Moore: And they went, Almond, and that I would be the first field officer in the division you know and all this kind of thing. Now one of the field a couple of field officers

Interviewer: Now there must have been your saying that it's the government that

Mr. Moore: More or less exonerated me the procedure the military what you are like to be in cases like this they convict somebody but they also have a right to an appeal. And some of the appeal

Interviewer: And who was the Army Officer that really insisted on the court marshal do you remember?

Mr. Moore: Almond

Interviewer: Oh it was Almond too?

Mr. Moore: Almond nobody but him

Interviewer: Then he turned around then he turned around and was going to glorify you?

Mr. Moore: No no no no no all of this happened after I had won lost fell in grace with him.

Interviewer: Okay

Mr. Moore: Because I was out doing all the things he wanted me to do. He sent me you know to be assistant to the finance officer rather he assigned me you know special duty and all this he for a month or so after I was down at Fort Wauchula he called me and told me to get together and set up an officers club and build it. Now he's got a battalion of engineers out there with a Lieutenant Colonel in command and all kinds of black officers in there that were engineers and couldn't anybody build and set up an officers club but me. All this kind of thing you know and I went on and I did these things and I had them done in nothing flat and that amazed him you know. That amazed the heck out of him you know and I went on then and what I did the first thing I did I sat down and I wrote a letter to the Commending General. And told him that I wanted a man appointed from every unit, a black office, from every unit to be assigned as my advisory okay an advisory board for the officers club.

Interviewer: Now this was an officers club for the black

Mr. Moore: For the black they had one for the white and this was in McClellan still in McClellan.

Interviewer: This was before you were sent to Arizona?

Mr. Moore: Before we were all this I did all of that in those five or six months that I was there. And so didn't give me anything but I remember I was in the CCC Camp and I remember that when they broke up the camp they were sending all the equipment out of the CCC Camp to Fort Gordon, Georgia to be stored for further use. They broke up a lot of CCC Camps we had lovely furniture in the day room

Interviewer: And you had been in the CCCs in the late 30s before you went into the Army?

Mr. Moore: Yeh and so I told him I says I'm going to call down to Camp Gordon, Georgia I says may I use your name you know and I called and a man down there answered the phone and I told him what I wanted could he give me to the highest ranking officer that handled that kind of king and he was a Colonel. And I told him who I was and I told him that General Almond wanted me to set up an officers club. I said now the building is just about ready I said we need some furniture. Well I've got it he said and I said General Almond will be very happy if I report to him that I've talked to you and I said when can you get it to me and he said I can start getting it loaded. So in no time we had cars of furniture.

Interviewer: So you were on General Almond's good side at this time?

Mr. Moore: Oh yeh he was still grooming me he hadn't got the right shoe yet but he was buttering me up to get me he wanted me on his side because he knew I would pick up smith and he knew the men loved me. He knew that that if I said something they were behind me. So he was taking advantage of all of that he was willing to give me a promotion.

Interviewer: But later then he he was an influence behind this court marshal?

Mr. Moore: Oh he wasn't no influence he was it. Yeh he was it.

Interviewer: What was Fort Leavenworth like when you

Mr. Moore: Well I was just like anybody else I was an inmate for a month or so I guess when finally the board came there to interview me.

Interviewer: You must have been upset.

Mr. Moore: Well I it was to me I had spent my time in the army learning about the army I don't get through nothing that I don't know from A-Z . And when I joined the Army and I was down at Fort Bragg I went up to the orderly room and got the digestive opinion of the Georgia General in the manual for court marshal manuals and I read with a flashlight when the Retreat was born and her life I ended up in my bunk reading Army regulations and all that kind of stuff with a flashlight until I just couldn't stay awake anymore. So I was deep as a young recruit I could quote Army regulations from all over you know and things like that but I was in all that I didn't go on pass I didn't run up and down Panama all of that I stayed right there and learned. So I had filed a lot of information and a lot of this information I had filed I learned procedures for the General section you know. And how the appeals and how the cases were won and I learned how that the pride at that time the noncommissioned officers like myself in the first three grades they couldn't reduce them unless they sent them before a board an Army board to be examined and all the Army board was some of their own people at some of their own rank you know most of them.

Interviewer: And they had not done that?

Mr. Moore: No they hadn't done this yet and I knew it. And I knew that I was gonna get an appeal you know and I knew if they knew the circumstance the whole circumstance that I'd find somebody in there that felt like General McNair that knew what was going on that knew that my troubles stemmed from the fact that I was always dilly dallying when the Commanding General wanted me to do something. I want to know why he was supposed to know why he wanted somebody to jump and say yes sir and I didn't do any of that. Why me I wanted to know like the last time I got that telephone call I asked why did you pick me and everything I'm that way it scares me when somebody comes upon me all of a sudden out of the clear blue sky beware of those bearing gifts was the statement a few years ago they won't stop me and they ain't going to drop that other shoe until they think they've got you in the right position to drop it and you can't back out. Make me an offer that I can't refuse.

Interviewer: So once your case was reviewed at Fort Leavenworth then you were free to go?

Mr. Moore: They threw it out they first asked me to rejoin the Army you know start over.

Interviewer: Had you already been discharged?

Mr. Moore: No I hadn't been discharged I was there until the first time the sentence expired I probably would have been promoted in a year or two if nothing had happened but I from the very first from the review of my case they started reviewing questions and having questions that the questions that they asked me was if I had been General Almond and if I had a soldier like that what would I have done. I told them I would have done the same thing that General Almond had done with on exception I would have insisted on transferring him just getting him out of my command you know and because maybe I would have been wrong and maybe it would be worthy to someone else.

Interviewer: You mean if you had

Mr. Moore: If I had been General Almond and you had been Wiley Moore I would have just transferred you. I'd have gotten you out from under my command.

Interviewer: Instead of gotten you from fraternization?

Mr. Moore: Instead of going through well that was the only thing they could come up with.

Interviewer: Was there much publicity at the time while your court marshal was going on?

Mr. Moore: Well not much it was very quiet very quiet because they didn't want any publicity. They didn't want and you see just before that two or three incidents had happened where I had gone to him and made him clear of some men. Two of my Master Sargents got into a fight and one of them cut the other one and they sent the one that cut the other one to the brig. And he called and asked me to come down there and he was trying he admitted it and everything. But it was a matter of jealousy in work. One of them had the G3 clerk and the other one had the G2 clerk that cut him and they were the Sargent Majors of G2 and G3 and they were close buddies. They had an enlisted mans club but they bid against each other on how clean the barracks was or what they had and everything and it seems to me like Sargents were well anyway Fits was the one that cut the other one. Fits was very flighty and everything and he was buying for attention and he had a terrible complexion his skin acne you know English he was a neat little old soldier and everything and he was a Sargent Major of G2 and Fix was a Sargent Major of G3 which was training so they were buying against each other all the time. And English was out maneuvered him from being in all of the enlisted men's club and everywhere Fits wanted to be on top too. So I went to the brig to see him and I came back and I got with McClavery and Browning and General of that area and I says there's really nothing to it. That's what I got investigating them what I recommend is that you just turn Fits loose he has learned his lesson and you know and I talked to English and he didn't want anything done to him and they processed him down from Master Sargent but he was he was a McClavery's boy and English was Rowdy's boy and they both was aids to the Commending General and they ordered with Benjamin Davis and all that. And Almond arrested his matter for them to suggest to them how to run that division and everything and they were doing it. And one of the things that they came up with was they were gonna harass all of these officers and they set up the program called the school of application and proficiency for backward officers.

Interviewer: I wanted to ask you about that.

Mr. Moore: Yeh they set that up and they called me immediately Rowdy and McClavery called me and said now are you going to be in? Said we want you to come out in flying colors and I said well I ain't I says I don't like this already

Interviewer: Was the purpose of that to try

Mr. Moore: To initiate you better join your sorority over there your sisters were going to give you hell. If you join a fraternity your fraternity brothers are going to give you hell you had hazing and yeh

Interviewer: That was a terrible name for backward officers.

Mr. Moore: Yeh and what made me mad the first thing that I put in the cells they had initials SAO School of Application and proficiency use the first letters for backward officers and I substituted black officers I knew that they were after us.

Interviewer: And that was in Arizona

Mr. Moore: Yeh and I refused to participate. And they they run about two weeks each class and they had officers up to the grade of Captain, white and black and they couldn't you know they couldn't use white officers like they come to me and told me they knew well what was going to happen they played along with it I didn't. I said hell no I said I'm ready I said if I'm that backwards then how did I get to be an officer.

Interviewer: Right

Mr. Moore: You know I said they can take it and stick it I'm not doing nothing. And I went through three sessions I didn't pass the first I didn't pass the second the third they just put me on out. Five or six weeks of this and that's when my troubles began really began and that was within two or three months after we got to Arizona. And during this time they kept dropping every 90 days they kept dropping my efficiency rate I had had nothing prior to that but excellent and superior. And after this happened they dropped me to very satisfactory. Two degrees you know and then the next time came around just satisfactory and that 's the thing that the General McNair saw in a period of six months that I dropped from superior rating to just satisfactory. They were trying and what they were trying to do was to cull out those black officers and they did cull them out sent them to this school and they didn't pass.

Interviewer: And you came out of the Army January 1946?

Mr. Moore: Yeh

Interviewer: We probably are going to have to start winding up and I wanted to ask for your thoughts on the triple nickel.

Mr. Moore: Well the triple nickel cam in existence I believe about 1943 or 44. I was to go there after I finished my training at Fort Benning Georgia for infantry they wanted me to change my branch of service. That's the next thing

Interviewer: You mean at Fort Bragg?

Mr. Moore: No at Fort Wauchula.

Interviewer: Oh okay

Mr. Moore: Word came now the General had never spoken to me about this

Interviewer: You said parading and I didn't know you were ever at Fort Benning.

Mr. Moore: I wasn't but that's where he wanted to send me to start me out.

Interviewer: Oh to become a paratrooper?

Mr. Moore: Not necessarily that but an infantry man an accredited infantry man and triple nickel was a thought on the map at that time. You know and then you know then after I finished that he wanted me also to go through the paratrooper's school and it was a 90 day period. I was going to get another promotion to Captain and then he was going to send me to the Commanding Generals staff school at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and if I finished that I was going to become a major. And then he was going to send me on from there to Army War College where you get all of this inside information and all this stuff for 90 days. And if I complete that he was going to promote me to Lieutenant Colonel and give me a battalion of infantry to command not a regiment but a battalion. I was still going to be under a white Colonel you know and all that but they had been making plans on what was going to be going on and whatever it was and wherever we were because of my ability to handle the men I was going to be in the advanced troops for the invasion.

Interviewer: In Italy?

Mr. Moore: Wherever they had to go wherever it was. They had an ideal of where we were going already but that could change over night and of course Almond knew this and he wanted me there on the maneuvers when we were on marches he made me the Stragin Officer because I could exploit the men you know and make them go another mile or two we went on 25 mile marches and 40 mile marches full field packs and all that stuff up and down

Interviewer: In the desert?

Mr. Moore: Yeh in the desert well we came to great maneuvers and moved out to Fort Pool, Louisiana there was a little area if they got a failing grade down there. So they came back to the base ready then to go overseas and they got a failing grade and McNair had already seem this and he had made him move transfer you know I just don't like it something's wrong here. This man we're not trying to run soldiers out we're trying to get soldiers and this man has all of the qualifications that are necessary. And if you don't need him let him go on he may be good somewhere else where maybe he doesn't have to go through this kind of husha job and all this kind of and all that. Now all of that was the brain child of J.D. McClavery and Edward L. Brown who were the aids to General Almond. And McClavery and I had a little fist fight in he was commanding headquarters and we went out on a little maneuver and come

back in and we were cleaning up equipment and everything and he kept coming back to me saying that the equipment wasn't clean to the degree of proficiency that he wanted and ordered me to have my men do it over again. And my men were tired and worn out and I just told him after three or four times we tried to get them clean and make them look better and we couldn't satisfy him I told him said well I have ordered it for the last time. I said you want to order them to do it I said you order it I said I'm not going to give the order anymore. I said I'm satisfied with the appearance of these stoves our portable stoves and everything. I said I'm satisfied and if I'm satisfied with them and your dissatisfied then the order is in your hands I said you do it. And I turned to walk away and he grabbed me and that was just what I wanted him to do was put his hands on me I went right after him. They broke up the little house there all the men were standing around looking so I told him says I'm going straight to the duty officer and records this I want you to get this fully public and I said if you want to go with me I said we can make our complaints together and he wouldn't do it he dropped it.

Interviewer: What year was this when that happened?

Mr. Moore: 1943 getting better all the time.

Interviewer: It came after you had gotten to Wauchula?

Mr. Moore: Yeh

Interviewer: But you had also mentioned I know you had you went through some distressing disappointing times a lot of racial prejudice at that time

Mr. Moore: Well you heard it was a knife and all and this was back through the courser of the marshal the orders came down to integrate the officer's messes. We were eating separate from white officers eat. And the General called me again he called and he asked me said what do you think about it and I told him I said I don't like it. I said but for conveniences sake I said and if you are not going to do your part in case troubles arise and want to sweep it under the carpet it's going to be a bitch. I'm going to be bitching about it and I said you need to know that. And I said as far as I'm concerned I says we don't give a dam. I said if they don't like me I don't like them they can go to hell and that goes for anybody you know. I said I can get along I haven't had it in 26 years I don't have to have it what the hell do I need with it now I've learned how to do without. You know and so whenever they did his degree and I had the privilege of cooking food black food you know and I ordered the cooks to make some turnip greens and pig tails and feet and things like that.

Interviewer: A real southern meal.

Mr. Moore: Oh they I had them serve it and with all that fat on them pig feet and all that fat on them pig you ever seen the tails look like an ox tail. And everything they were picking through gently and I was standing there looking I was just getting my jollies.

Interviewer: And that was the first meal integrated with the officers?

Mr. Moore: That was the first time they integrated the officers there at Fort Wauchula. You attend an officers club it was segregated.

Interviewer: What was the conversation like at dinner at the meal?

Mr. Moore: Well one conversation was off I think everybody was taken back. I remember the menu was pig's feet and pigs tails and white beans and I don't know what maybe a salad or something you know that was so funny for the evening meal.

Interviewer: Were you ever in charge of the cooks again?

Mr. Moore: Well no I mean but I had it done purposely.

Interviewer: Oh yes I realize that.

Mr. Moore: And I told them the General if we have if an altercation occurs whose going to bear the brunt of the responsibility I said we don't need that. I said it will fall back on your ability to give a command and insist that everybody follow that command down the line. Now if there's an exception to this I don't want no white washing you know I said let the chips fall where they may.

Interviewer: You had what I was leading up to saying a moment ago I believe your experience was bitter sweet. But you had said previously it was very worth wild for you because you learned things you never would have learned otherwise.

Mr. Moore: That's what I told this review board when they came and when I shocked them when I told them that if I were Generals Almond that I would have done the same thing. I'd have got only that I would have just gotten him out of my command.

Interviewer: Stopped it without court marshal.

Mr. Moore: But he he he he was taking it personally and if you are taking it personally then the hell with it. I'll go personal too I'm not going to back down off of him you know.

Interviewer: So was your discharge in January 1946 was that still honorable?

Mr. Moore: No it was other than honorable but they didn't take away my privileges' like Raymond said the man that prosecuted me Ray Watkins he was a lawyer in Chicago. And when he later on he became the commanding officer of the artillery outfit there. The man died and then he became a Colonel in charge and he bet me and he called for me and he said I can get all that and I said you didn't do it when you were trying me I said you robbed me my attorney and you had the man scared to death, he said yes, I said you come upon me now and tell me I said hell I don't want you to do nothing for me leave me alone. I just told him right on 63dr and College Grove in Chicago.

Interviewer: When you went through the court marshal there must have been only white officers there.

Mr. Moore: I believe they were I believe they were all white I'm not sure though. But Ray was he was a lawyer and they had Allen Brown from Baltimore, Maryland representing me and I observed and I didn't they took my pay as the assistant AG in personnel after I got them up and running

Interviewer: how about the lack enlisted soldiers that were that you were supposable fraternizing with were they did anything happen to them?

Mr. Moore: They got one of them to say that I borrowed some money from him and I did you know I did borrow some money from him. And he gave them the indication that he loaded it to me because he was afraid that if he didn't that I would have a felling of animosity.

Interviewer: That you had abused your authority.

Mr. Moore: Yeh that's right so they had a based upon Army regulations they had a right to if they wanted to. Of course again he was one of my best friends and enlisted man you know.

Interviewer: How do you feel about fraternizing in today's Army?

Mr. Moore: I think they are going through the same thing as a matter of fact some of the soldiers out there the Arisen General of the 101st a black man was telling me you know how people like me made the way for them you know. He's out there now I got a call from him he asked me to call him up to invite him over or out to a drink or something you know. But I've never done it and the reason why I've never done it is because of the fact that they can bring back a charge against those men for fraternizing with me who was discharged from the Army under an other than honorable discharge. And they will do that.

Interviewer: Do you think they would do that now? It's been more than 50 years ago.

Mr. Moore: They would bust him they would get him out of there I mean a middle aged young man but he is the Arisen General for the 101st out there. SO they got him sprinkled around in this position they got Colonels and things doing that Colonels and things running around in there you know. And but it 's still basilacly ingrained as long as you have I don't know if you had the oppportunity to see McArthur over this past week .

Interviewer: No I didn't.

Mr. Moore: You should you should have seen it. But I like McArthur but I never forget how he as Chief of Staff of the Army ordered the Army to fire on those soldiers who were trying to get a decent pension after WWI.

Interviewer: Was that in the documentary?

Mr. Moore: Yeh McArthur when Truman called him in and chewed him out I was mad as hell at Truman because you see what had happened was he had won that war and they had run across the 38th parallel just the beginning of another war and he pursued them across the mounds and Truman called him in. They had wanted a political settlement they wanted to make our life now that we have beaten your ass

if you are willing for forget and forgive if you will just totally act re-ask to us you know. And that's what war was all about. And I'm waiting for Colin Powel and Arnold Swortzineger to right there memoir.

Interviewer: I believe Colin Powel has he said writing a book and you know the demanding life he's lead he said writing a book was the hardest thing he had ever done.

Mr. Moore: It's nothing I want to write two or three books.

Interviewer: Well I would start now.

Mr. Moore: And to see that war in Iraq Swortzineger did what they did what they didn't want him to do. He went in there and annihilated them dag gone people and in a couple of two or three days. They would have loved for it to prolong a little longer where maybe they could surround and catch Saddam Hassan. But he went in there against the orders of Colin Powel and annihilated the Iraqis' in. Nobody has probably mentioned this much but me I know I what I would have done and I'd have done the same thing he did. But Colin is a good soldier and he was trying to follow orders. That's the only reason he is where he is. Because he wouldn't take the step that I would have taken and I admire him for that. I couldn't do it I've shaken his hand at the Buffalo Convention up there.

Interviewer: Oh before we close here explain to us I meant to ask this at the beginning we talking about it once before but not in an interview setting. The meaning why the black soldiers were given the name Buffalo Soldiers?

Mr. Moore: Buffalo soldiers because of their appearances and no one had seen the Indian had not seen many black before and there was an Indian war going on and again I think MacArthur was involved in that if I was you know Persian and everything down there the French American War. But I think MacArthur was a young lieutenant.

Interviewer: But the appearance was because of the black curly hair and the dark skin.

Mr. Moore: And they compared them to the looks of the Buffalo and said they howl like Buffalo you know. And then that just stuck you know. And that's how they got it was down in those Indian Wars down there you know the Civil War and all that kind of stuff. That's where they came up with the Buffalo Soldier.

Interviewer: Well we probably have about five minutes left what in our first interview we talked more about your experience at Camp Lee. And today May the 18th we've tried to focus more on the 92nd division.

Mr. Moore: The 92nd division and the actuality there and that feeling that I had was pervasive all over the place. Because like I said Almond held back the ranks of the black soldiers and things until he had the opportunity to show his attitude by promoting all those whites kept promoting them right on up instead of giving them command and letting the white soldiers if they did not rank the black soldiers for him he wouldn't do that. Again you're taking about politics.

Interviewer: And we're talking about a totally different time going back 55, 56 years ago.

Mr. Moore: 60 years ago just about.

Interviewer: I have a feeling based on the hours that we've spent together that you didn't go overseas to Europe during WWII but you had your own fight at home.

Mr. Moore: Oh I was fighting the same here at first as a matter of fact on one of my maneuvers I had on one of my field meetings years ago as a boy Professor Allison up there at the high school told me about how efficient the Japanese had become and how we'd better look out and this was the 1930s.

Interviewer: And he had encouraged you

Mr. Moore: He had encouraged me to join the Army and all the things he said you know came true and so when they got ready to get into the thick of the war in Europe they started cultivating the Russians. And I said to my men I said now when we go out on maneuvers in the open and everything I said after we get our maneuvers I'll have a little group session and we would talk and I'd let them speak up you know. And I remember telling them I says now we're going into a war and we train without guns we trained with make shift guns and things like that. And I says they turned around there in order to cultivate the Russian people they are lend leasing material and things to them and I says they are letting them have war equipment I said I wonder about the quality of it. I said if the quality of it is good and when the war is over if I were Russia I'd be dam if it would be a land lease it would be a gift the only way they would get it back we would give it back to them through the barrels of those musells of those guns and things that you gave us. And when I said that I had to turn around and look around and I was part of the induction unit at the time and one of my agents was behind the tree watching me. I don't know if he went back and reported that or not but my men were just enthroned. I said when you come out of the Army you better bring your Army and things going home because I says you're going to need them. I don't know whether that's recorded or not but those were my words and that was my advise. And when they go tout of the Army even me when I got out of the Army I had all of the weapons. You see the procedure is that when you find these things

Interviewer: You still have one?

Mr. Moore: I have my 45

Interviewer: You can of course this is at your discretion if you would like to donate it to the archive

Mr. Moore: No I might need it to shoot somebody. I ain't giving you mine. That's just like giving you a stick to beat me with I ain't taking all of that.

Interviewer: Oh now no you know

Mr. Moore: You know when you send a kid out to get a switch to get a whipping hell I never would have gotten back with the switch. I used to see the old folks you know go out there and get me a switch I'm

going to whip you and I said to myself hell if she send me out there it will be along time before she sees me if she wants to whoop me she better go get a switch.

Interviewer: I want to thank you Mr. Moore for all of your time and sharing of you experience and you a very exceptional individual and I think that apparent throughout your military career.

Mr. Moore: And my life

Interviewer: Your life too after the service becoming a minister.

Mr. Moore: Down there in southern Alabama and they tried to dismiss me and I knew I had done this thing at Craig Field. Don't come down there like a dam fool because my wife is down there you know. And they remembered me they knew me I was down there writing insurance one of the doctors came out a newspaper article cam out about Lewis down there in Atlanta, Georgia and all of them going through a reunion or something a week or two ago. And the mention of how that in the Selma area that there was a young man down there that stood up and that young man's name that they gave was a young man I was going to see his father the night two whites tried to push me in the car in Selma, Alabama to write an educator named Niley Partisan Borington his daddy was something like the deans agent they used to have in the department he was a big name in the Agriculture Department over by Selman University. And I was going to his house that night to write for him to his daddy on educating and left out of there and my wife was watching me out the window because she didn't want me to go honest this day I'll never forget it as long as I live. I went around the corner and these two guys jumped out of the car surrounded me and told me your that Northern Niger from Tennessee and we don't like you and bla bla bla go back across the border.

Interviewer: Well I know you had said when you first went into the Army they found it hard to believe that you were from the south.

Mr. Moore: And I had moved down in there I had rebuilt my father-in-laws home I had gone over across through Texas to this white guy that had built the tennis court on the church's property he was dean of the church the A&M church school of religion and it was in Southern Alabama. So I went in there and build a court on the edge of that property right there on the opposite corner of this white fellow. And I was playing tennis out there you know these white doctors and all of them and a girl that was head of the community center. And I brought gas from a block away to my house in order to modernize the house and put gas heat in the house there was a coal stove you know. And I brought it from a whole block away and put it in there so we could have gas heat all kind of things and they'd get mad said he's not supposed to do that.

Interviewer: Well I'm sure you had your own way wherever you were and at 85 years old I think you're probably still doing it.

Mr. Moore: I'm ready to do some more I'm not ready to give up and I'm not going to let anyone else give up on it if I can't get it in my corner I'm dropping it because I'm scared to hit him.

Interviewer: Thank you so much.