

Interviewer: Okay state your name and your date of birth.

Pack: Now see I didn't understand that either.

Interviewer: Okay I said your name and your date of birth.

Pack: Name and date of birth Ray Pack December 17, 1918.

Interviewer: You're the same age as my grandmother. She was born December the 15, 1918.

Pack: Well that's me.

Interviewer: Okay well then do you remember the great depression?

Pack: Oh sure I remember a lot of it uh huh.

Interviewer: Was there a lot of shortages?

Pack: A lot of what?

Interviewer: Shortages

Pack: Money mostly

Interviewer: Did your parents lose their job during the great depression?

Pack: Well we moved to the country from Nashville because he lost his job up there and we had to move to the country. We owned he owned a place over here at White Bluff.

Interviewer: So you were born in Nashville?

Pack: I was born in Nashville.

Interviewer: Were you going to school in Nashville during the great depression?

Pack: Oh yes that's where I started school. And I started when I was six years old now don't ask me what date that was.

Interviewer: Oh that's fine.

Pack: I started when I was six years old and I went to Park Avenue Elementary School. Finished Park Avenue Elementary and went to Cone Junior High and graduated from down there and started the to Humfog and went about three months to Humfog and we moved to the country then. And then we moved from over close to Charlotte over to here and after I had been to school about three months over there and come over here then and I failed every grade that I had every subject that I had because they didn't have the same subjects.

Interviewer: It's not like a nationalized system like we have now a days.

Pack: Oh no see White Bluff was just a small school and Charlotte was a pretty large school. But it wasn't Charlotte didn't have all the subjects that Humfong had you know. And so I went back and everything I had failed everything I had to. But I still finished high school when I was 18 years old.

Interviewer: Did you go to college then?

Pack: No

Interviewer: When did you enlist in the military?

Pack: When did I January 3, 1942.

Interviewer: So was that right after Pearl Harbor that you enlisted?

Pack: It was in December the 7th 41.

Interviewer: Yeah so right after Pearl Harbor.

Pack: Right after Pearl Harbor. My older brother and I both enlisted and were sworn in the same day.

Interviewer: So you weren't drafted you enlisted.

Pack: I what?

Interviewer: You weren't drafted you volunteered.

Pack: Volunteered yeah

Interviewer: What did you think about the draft?

Pack: What did I think about the draft?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Pack: Oh I think it was a good thing it was a lot of people who wouldn't have had to go if it wouldn't have been for the draft or wouldn't have went.

Interviewer: Yeah but we might not of won if we wouldn't have had it.

Pack: That's right but I knew I'd be drafted and my older brother knew he would be too so we joined to get in the air force.

Interviewer: Oh you joined the air force?

Pack: We went in the air force at that time it was called the air core. I don't when it changed it was the air force then.

Interviewer: What did you think of Franklin Delano Roosevelt?

Pack: Roosevelt

Interviewer: I'm gonna get tongue on his name because I want to call him FDR.

Pack: I don't know I didn't know enough about that history then to know.

Interviewer: Did you ever watch any of his fire side chats or anything?

Pack: Did I ever what?

Interviewer: Watch any of the fire side chats that he had?

Pack: No

Interviewer: Or listen to them on the radio I'm sorry they didn't have television yet. I mean listen to them on the radio.

Pack: I thought he was one of the best presidents we've ever had though.

Interviewer: So what kind of training did you receive before you went overseas?

Pack: I wasn't in but six weeks when I went overseas.

Interviewer: So they gave you very limited training.

Pack: I didn't have any training you might say basic training.

Interviewer: So you don't think they prepared you adequately for what you had to deal with later because they didn't train you? Or do you think you were prepared for it?

Pack: Well I got more training on the boat I was on the boat for 39 days spent 39 nights on the boat. And I got more training on there than I did while I was in the army in the United States.

Interviewer: Which port did you leave from in the U.S.?

Pack: Left Boston Massachusetts.

Interviewer: Where did you go from there?

Pack: Went down to the Gulf of Mexico took on supplies. Went to Rio De Janeiro South America took on more supplies. Went to Cape Town South Africa took on more supplies and to Perth Australia and on around to Sidney Australia and got off the boat at Sidney Australia.

Interviewer: So you were in the Pacific Operation.

Pack: Nineteen thousand miles without getting off the boat.

Interviewer: No wonder it took 39 days. You were lucky it didn't take a couple of years considering the way that the ships were. How did you hear about Pearl Harbor when Pearl Harbor was bombed how did you hear about it?

Pack: Really I don't know I was down at a friend's house about five or six miles from here and come home that night and I heard my mother and father knew about it then and I don't know where they heard it. Well they had a radio of course and everything.

Interviewer: How did you feel about it?

Pack: Well I was just a young boy and I wasn't really shook up about it or anything. I knew it was going to be bad.

Interviewer: You didn't feel like we're going to go get those Japanese for doing that to us?

Pack: Didn't feel what?

Interviewer: You didn't feel like you wanted to go get those Japanese for that to us.

Pack: Oh no no I didn't a lot of people wanted to go over there and kill them yellow SOB's and everything. But after I got over there of course I didn't want them to kill me so.

Interviewer: So then you got on you enlisted and then you got on the boat and then you went all over the place to get to Australia. And then when you got to Australia did they give you any more training kind of specialized training or anything?

Pack: Marching and how to take a gun apart and how to shoot and so forth. I already knew how to shoot a gun but not the regular army rifle I didn't. But it didn't take long to learn it.

Interviewer: What was your position and what unit were you with?

Pack: I was an air force supply sergeant I mean that's what I got I went in as a buck private. And I was in about oh three or four months after I got overseas then I was corporal then I made buck sergeant and that's as high as I went.

Interviewer: Okay so you weren't trained in any kind of specialties like radios or airplanes anything like that?

Pack: No

Interviewer: And you didn't ever do officers training?

Pack: No

Interviewer: Okay what was your unit?

Pack: What was my unit?

Interviewer: Yeah your unit.

Pack: Well I was in the 5th air force and I was in the 480th service squadron of the 46th service group.

Interviewer: What was your opinion of the weapons that we had then? Were they reliable did you think they were going to fail?

Pack: You mean did I think we were going to lose the war?

Interviewer: Well not mainly just lose the war but did you think the weapons that we had were adequate for what we needed them for. I mean did the rifles like jam up on you and did you have problems with them?

Pack: No huh uh

Interviewer: You didn't have any problems.

Pack: And we were in a lot of bombing raids and so forth and so on like that. Now I never did as far as me being in actual combat hand to hand combat I wasn't in any. I was in many a bombing raid though.

Interviewer: What did you think about the war though did you think it was justified? Did you think that we had justification since you were over in the Pacific Ocean to fight the Japanese?

Pack: I didn't even think about it then.

Interviewer: You didn't think about it?

Pack: No I knew we was in the war and that was it.

Interviewer: How was the moral? Were people glad to be over there or were they all didn't want to be there wanted to go home?

Pack: Oh the biggest part of us wanted to go home.

Interviewer: Yeah missing their families. But in general was the moral pretty good?

Pack: Yes we moral was pretty good.

Interviewer: If you were in the air core you were more around officers weren't you because they fly airplanes.

Pack: I was around quite a few officers uh huh.

Interviewer: Did you feel like they had good leadership skills?

Pack: Yes

Interviewer: Did enlisted men more than the officers take charge or was it mainly the officers that took charge?

Pack: Well the officers naturally were in charge of the enlisted men yes.

Interviewer: Yeah but there were just instances like

Pack: Well in the chain of command you started in as a private.

Interviewer: Yeah and worked your way up.

Pack: And you went as a corporal and then buck sergeant and so forth and so on like that up to a lieutenant second lieutenant first lieutenant.

Interviewer: Yeah

Pack: Right on through.

Interviewer: Well see I came from the branch called the army and the army sometimes the sergeants feel like they know more than the lieutenants.

Pack: Well they did.

Interviewer: That's what I was asking sometimes did the enlisted.

Pack: But the all my dealings with officers was just and I had a good repo with them they were just real nice.

Interviewer: What did you think of discipline in the military? I mean was it harsh was it too lenient?

Pack: No not

Interviewer: None of the above.

Pack: Not what I was in wasn't.

Interviewer: Was there a lot of instances of fractions like breach and AWOL and stuff?

Pack: Not well over there see we didn't we were just when you was in New Guiney which I was. I was overseas three years a month and a day. And I was in New Guiney about thirty months of that three years and a month. So it wasn't nothing to do in New Guiney you were just there. We ate bananas off the trees we ate coconuts off the trees and so forth and so on. But there wasn't any socializing with the people over there. Pardon this and I think you'll know what I mean. I wouldn't have went with one of those black girls over there because they well in the first place they stunk like you can imagine what. And the second place I wanted to come back to the United States and I sure didn't want to bring any disease back here.

Interviewer: Yeah how did the locals treat you?

Pack: How did the what?

Interviewer: How did the locals local citizens treat you?

Pack: Well in New Guiney it would be hard to tell you.

Interviewer: I mean did they not want us there.

Pack: Well they were New Guiney natives and they were uneducated and all. Now the Australians treated us real nice when we were down there.

Interviewer: Did the other allied troops like the British troops treat you guys good too?

Pack: Well yes uh huh.

Interviewer: Did you like the allied troops?

Pack: We didn't have much contact with them with the British.

Interviewer: With the British how about with the Australian regulars?

Pack: We didn't have too much contact with Australians either Australian troops.

Interviewer: So did you fraternize in Australia I mean did you guys go out and party and stuff in Australia?

Pack: A little bit not much well we didn't have the money to go out and do anything in Australia anyway.

Interviewer: That's another one of my questions what was the pay like. What did you guys spend your money on or did you save it up?

Pack: Saved the biggest part of it because our cigarettes was furnished to us and what little beer I drank was furnished to me. Now we did get two ten day leaves in Australia when we was in New Guiney. And we usually had a pretty good time when we went down there. But well they were just uneducated they were just.

Interviewer: A different culture.

Pack: All together a different culture. They now you're not going to believe this I don't imagine. But you could see these New Guiney girls and women and they all looked old as they could be and everything I don't know how old they were. But these some of these girls you could tell they were but they had a breast that would hang down to your belt just about they wore G-strings too. And the other breast was nice and firm it looked like and all couldn't figure that out. But it was just one of those things that all together a different breed of what we were.

Interviewer: Within your unit did you have African American soldiers during World War II?

Pack: Come again

Interviewer: During World War II did you have African American soldiers in your unit? African American soldiers.

Pack: I didn't get it.

Interviewer: Did you have African American soldiers in your unit?

Pack: African oh sure no really and truly not in our unit we didn't. But we had contact with them over there in other units.

Interviewer: What was the relationships like between the colored troops and the

Pack: Good

Interviewer: Good?

Pack: Uh huh

Interviewer: So no instances of racial issues?

Pack: No not the ones that I was around no we got along real good.

Interviewer: Before you went over to Australia did the army I mean air force I'm sorry.

Pack: It was the army air force at that time.

Interviewer: Oh was it really okay so it was part of the army. Did they give you any information about what you were getting into or where you were going or what was going on?

Pack: No

Interviewer: It was like a need to know basis you just didn't need to know.

Pack: You didn't need to know I don't guess.

Interviewer: Was there any looting by the soldiers?

Pack: Any what?

Interviewer: Looting well if you like went into enemy territory you understand what I'm saying? Like that they said there were some instances I don't think it was necessarily in the Pacific operation but like in Europe like when they went into Germany there was some instances of looting of soldiers getting out of hand and stuff. Did any of that happen?

Pack: No we didn't invade anything over there.

Interviewer: Yeah you just did bombing raids.

Pack: Yeah

Interviewer: And went on some of these bombing raids?

Pack: No I didn't go on them. I was a ground crew member.

Interviewer: Did you know of anybody that was ever charged with any incident like AWOL or breach or anything?

Pack: There wasn't nowhere to go to be AWOL over there.

Interviewer: Go on a boat and hang out with the local women.

Pack: Wasn't anywhere to go.

Interviewer: What was a typical day like over there?

Pack: Typical day

Interviewer: Yeah what would you do from when you got up in the morning until you went to bed?

Pack: Get up in the morning and go to the mess hall and eat breakfast and come back and do half a day's work and go eat dinner. And then get through with supper and come back and play cards and shoot dice what have you until midnight. When we were in Australia before we went to New Guiney we'd go eat supper at night and we'd sit we'd get up and wash our mess kits go back and sit down at the table and we'd play cards black jack, poker and everything until breakfast time the next morning. And that went on a whole lot but as far as socializing there wasn't anybody to socialize with see other than our troops. And we had to play cards or do different things to pass the time.

Interviewer: What kind of work did you do on a typical day?

Pack: In a typical day?

Interviewer: In a typical day what kind of work did you do?

Pack: What kind of work did I do?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Pack: Well I was in charge of a warehouse over there after I was over there for a while and issuing supplies. All kind of air force supplies now that's even from rubber grommets to the biggest tires that they made that we had over there and airplane parts and so forth. And some days you didn't do but very little of that other days but you had to keep a running inventory of all that stuff. And when it got down low you had to reorder.

Interviewer: Did you ever get really low on supplies?

Pack: Oh yeah we'd get low sometimes because we couldn't get them into there.

Interviewer: Did you ever have really severe supply shortages where you had a need for thing that you couldn't supply it?

Pack: Yes sure

Interviewer: And you said that that equipment though was adequate like for the airplanes and stuff it was pretty adequate equipment? Basically was our stuff better than theirs?

Pack: Well I we thought they were anyway.

Interviewer: Yeah

Pack: We thought they were.

Interviewer: Was there any midnight appropriations from other units where if you didn't have something you would sort of go get it from another unit?

Pack: Oh yeah we'd do that. They'd just let us have it.

Interviewer: Oh they'd just let you have it.

Pack: We didn't steal it from other units no. That's what you was talking about.

Interviewer: Yeah midnight appropriation.

Pack: No

Interviewer: Okay did you know anybody that was killed overseas?

Pack: No I met one fellow on the boat going over there well I met him at Sheppard Field Texas before we left the United States and we was on the boat together then. And he told us then that he would never get back to the United States and we were in the same outfit in Australia and he did get killed.

Interviewer: Do you know how he got killed?

Pack: I think he was in a bombing raid when he got killed.

Interviewer: Were you ever experiencing any like direct fire like being attacked or being involved in combat attack?

Pack: No not rifle attacks or anything like that.

Interviewer: Well I mean did the Japanese ever try to bomb where you guys were?

Pack: Oh they bombed right close to us yes. I'll tell you one that I was on detached service from Rona air strip down to Fort Merobie and you would be surprised at I never seen anything like it myself. But bags

of cement was stacked up just a little bigger than this house here I'm sure the whole thing. And there was five of us boys from my outfit on detached service to Fort Merobie. And we got up on that stacked cement and we made us a slip trench. Do you know what a slip trench is?

Interviewer: No

Pack: Well we built this cement bags up oh about head high something like that and then we fixed a place where we could get in there. And when the air raid siren went off we'd run up there we'd crawl up there and we had a bird eye view of the whole thing see. And we'd see that ___ bursting around and we could see actually sometimes you could see the bombs dropping. And you could hear the bombay doors open too when they were bombing.

Interviewer: So it was really loud?

Pack: I wasn't nice.

Interviewer: Were you really scared?

Pack: I didn't understand that?

Interviewer: I said were you really scared were you scared?

Pack: Was I scared? Really not all that scared because if it had been my time I when I was in the slip trench I'd think it was my time anyway. I think it might have it me then. But I wasn't scared of it hitting me or anything.

Interviewer: During combat during the middle of the war I guess and during was like your daily life okay. Did you have plenty to eat and hot showers and?

Pack: Well when we went over when we got into New Guiney well first thing we landed in Australia. And there was a boy on the boat in our compartment that didn't take a bath from the time he got on the boat until he got off.

Interviewer: Oh no

Pack: And some of us boys we told him we was gonna give him a bath. And he said wasn't none of us big enough to do it. But about the first thing we done when we got off and was assigned to a sleeping tent we got him. And we took him down to it was a cold shower because we didn't have a hot shower. We took him down and we spread eagled him out and scrubbed him with a GI brush. I don't know whether you know what a GI brush is or not but.

Interviewer: No

Pack: I can show you one in there in a minute. And he took a bath from then on too.

Interviewer: Learned his lesson.

Pack: But none of us were big enough to give him one though. And I don't guess we could have by our self but we ganged up on him.

Interviewer: So you had showers and you had meal and it wasn't I mean did you not have what were living conditions like? I mean were they adequate? You know were there diseases

Pack: We had a tent to sleep in, we had a cot with a blanket for the mattress and I was fortunate enough that I got sheets and a pillowcase. And stealing was rapid over there I'll tell you it was. But and I stole my share of the stuff. But I got a I fooled around and got an air mattress. You know what an air mattress is?

Interviewer: Yes

Pack: And I there was five of us in my tent and all five of us had air mattresses in my tent. And we had a supply sergeant that was just real smart and he'd come around once in a while and that wasn't issued that wasn't GI issued there. Because we stole them out of a general's house and this supply sergeant he come around while we were working away from there and he'd pick up our air mattresses. And we'd have to go down to our commanding officer and we'd tell our commanding officer that our air mattresses were missing. And he was a good enough fellow that he saw that we got them back. And that happened three or four times. But he sort of liked us I think anyway and we had a we made us a hot and cold running shower. Made it out of a well in the first place we dug a ditch about oh about 300 hundred yards long I guess something like that. And we managed to get enough pipe to run it to our tent and one of the boys in the tent made a he cut a barrel into and put cut in this like that where this other barrel would lay down sideways and lay on there and not roll out. And then he fixed a torch and of course we got gas from the I don't know what you call it. Anyway from the motor pool form the motor pool we got gas from there. And we just put that tank up on the side of a tree the gas tank and run it over to the through a little copper not copper tube but through a little rubber tube over to it. And get that fire to gas to burning and we had officer and enlisted men come up there and want to take a bath and we wouldn't let them. And some of them reported us to the commanding officer and he come up and he looked and he said well it looks mighty good to me. But he never did ask to take a bath in it though. And he was just a dog gone good fellow.

Interviewer: What about your meals were they like the MREs we have nowadays or were they cooked by a cook or were they hot?

Pack: Oh yeah we had good relatively good food I'd say.

Interviewer: Was there disease was there a lot of rapid medical problems and disease especially being a tropical climate? Malaria that kind of stuff.

Pack: We had malaria I had malaria and a whole lot of us had malaria while we was over there. But as far as dying with anything I don't know as there was I never did hear of one in our outfit that did die.

Interviewer: So the medical healthcare and stuff over there was pretty good?

Pack: The medical facilities was good as far as I knew.

Interviewer: Do you know what post traumatic stress syndrome is?

Pack: What post?

Interviewer: Post traumatic stress syndrome. It's like when you get into a traumatic situation like a bombing raid or something. Did you see any guys go sort of like crazy?

Pack: No

Interviewer: Because of the stuff over there or anything like that?

Pack: Yeah it was my fault that he went that way though.

Interviewer: What happened?

Pack: But there was a boy in there he was from Oregon and he and I were good buddies. And we slept under mosquito bars you know what a mosquito bar is don't you?

Interviewer: Yes

Pack: And we slept under them, had to. And if your toe was touching that mosquito bar the dog gone mosquitos was right on that toe. And I've seen them when they take off instead of flying up they had to they were so heavy with blood they hit the floor. It was a dirt floor sand floor whatever you want to call it. But anyway this old boy when he would get a letter from this girl in Oregon, and I wrote to her some too and she wrote me some letters. And he would come up sometime they'd be almost open and he'd come up and take them out of the envelope and he'd throw that envelope up on top of the mosquito bar. Well we got it in our head one day that we was gonna scare Tommy. And we sent him down to we wrote a Dear John letter that's what we done wrote a Dear John letter. We took one of those envelopes that had been unsealed we hadn't unsealed it or anything but it just naturally come unsealed anyway. And we put that letter in there telling him that she had found another man and everything. And so one of the boys took it down to the orderly room and got the first sergeant to put it in the mail bag. And then we sent Overstreet, that was the boy, we sent him down there at mail call and while he was down there they had a bombing raid. And got back up there and of course he had the letters and everything. And he got back up there and started reading sitting right on the edge of the slip trench he had done seen that letter and read it. And he didn't give a damn if they got him or anything else. And we finally had to tell him to get his butt in there with that letter. And that was what good buddies will do for you you know.

Interviewer: Did you write anybody while you were over there? Did you write your parents did you get letters from your parents?

Pack: Oh God yes.

Interviewer: Did they send you packages?

Pack: Yes they sent packages.

Interviewer: What kind of stuff did they send?

Pack: Well stuff mostly that I asked for. Some of them sent food but food wasn't much good that they sent over there.

Interviewer: Took too long to get there.

Pack: Took too long.

Interviewer: And you already told me you didn't work with allied troops over there so skip that. What was your opinion of the Japanese? I mean did you have an opinion of them?

Pack: Oh I didn't come in contact with the Japanese.

Interviewer: Well I know you didn't come in contact with them but did you have an opinion of them I mean?

Pack: Oh I just wanted to get them all killed is what I wanted.

Interviewer: Did you ever know about the atomic bomb before they set it off?

Pack: No I was back here when that atomic bomb was set off.

Interviewer: Oh you had come back by then?

Pack: I was back here by then uh huh.

Interviewer: When did you come back?

Pack: I come out I don't know when I landed in the United States but I got out of the Army in 1945. And I got out just right after I come back and had to go to the hospital I had malaria then. And I stayed in the hospital for quite a while and I got out I mean I was had gotten out when the atomic bomb was put off.

Interviewer: What did you think about the atomic bomb?

Pack: Well I thought it did a wonderful job.

Interviewer: Saved a lot of people's lives.

Pack: Saved a lot of people's lives.

Interviewer: So you didn't think back then there was anything wrong with any kind of nuclear programs or anything that we were developing?

Pack: Oh I had no idea of it. But I had a first cousin that worked at Oak Ridge and he had written to me that there was something going on he didn't know what that was going to make the war end sooner. And it wasn't too terrible long until it did then.

Interviewer: Well going back to before the atomic bombs were dropped what did you think about when Franklin Delano Roosevelt died? What did you think I mean when he died and Harry Truman became president?

Pack: Oh I don't know it was just another man that died I guess because I've always been of the opinion that no man is indispensable.

Interviewer: Yeah

Pack: Even in his own family he's not indispensable.

Interviewer: So you think the country kept right along with Harry Truman?

Pack: I think Harry Truman did a real good job.

Interviewer: In hard circumstances.

Pack: I think he did an excellent job really.

Interviewer: So when you got out of the military what did you do?

Pack: Oh I went to work at the old job I had when I when I went in. I went to work at Davidson Chemical Company in Nashville.

Interviewer: What kind of work did you do with them?

Pack: I was a foreman in the fertilizer plant.

Interviewer: How did you feel that the citizens back here received you when you returned back from the war? Did they treat you like a hero or?

Pack: Oh no they didn't treat me like a hero but I wasn't an SOB either though so.

Interviewer: Yeah you got a really good welcome home?

Pack: Yes but now as far as meeting us at the meeting us at the boat or anything like that we didn't have any such thing as that. And that was one of the things that the Vietnamese veterans were teed off about that they didn't they weren't as welcomed with a brass band and everything and treated like heroes. Well I couldn't understand why they expected to be myself but a lot of them did. No I didn't expect to be treated as a hero.

Interviewer: Were your parents happy that you were home though?

Pack: Oh God yes they were yes ma'am.

Interviewer: Did your other two brothers did they serve?

Pack: Did what?

Interviewer: Did your brothers serve?

Pack: Yeah both of them. My older brother went to we were in well to make a long story short we both went in the same day sworn in. And they told us that we could stay together and we went to Sheppard Field Texas and in two or three weeks they shipped him to California and they started me on the way overseas to Massachusetts to go over to Australia.

Interviewer: When did your brother get back from the war?

Pack: well he got back a little later than I did. And my younger brother now he never did go overseas. But I don't even remember when he was discharged or anything.

Interviewer: So how was life when you came back? I mean you had a job was there plenty of work, plenty of money, plenty of stuff? The wonderful 50's not quite there yet but almost.

Pack: Oh I didn't make a lot of money but I had a job anyway.

Interviewer: Yeah better than the great depression though. A lot of people believe World War II brought us out of the great depression because it provided jobs and opportunities.

Pack: Oh I guess it did.

Interviewer: When did you meet your wife?

Pack: I met her before I went in the army.

Interviewer: Did you?

Pack: I knew her never did we were out together one night but as far as having a date we never had a date. She wrote me one letter and I wrote her I wrote her one letter and she wrote me one and all the time I was in there. And then when I got out I you know how these boys are I was pretty wild and I went with a few women. And I got tired of that and I went down to her house one night and I didn't even know her when she come to the door. And we talked a while and I got a date with her and from there we got married then.

Interviewer: It's weird sometimes how circumstances work out that way. You both weren't ready before the war but after war it seemed like everything worked out just fine.

Pack: Yeah she was a good one. When I got ready to settle down I got a good one.

Interviewer: And you had two daughters?

Pack: Uh huh two daughters.

Interviewer: Did you take advantage of any of the services that were offered like the GI Bill? Did you go back to school or anything?

Pack: Oh I went to farming school.

Interviewer: Did you use the GI Bill?

Pack: Yeah I used it.

Interviewer: Did it help you get a better job?

Pack: No

Interviewer: Did you ever do any of the National Guards or the Reserves or anything like that after you came back?

Pack: No

Interviewer: What do you think about the stuff that's going on right now?

Pack: I can't express my opinion much.

Interviewer: Okay well how about the Vietnam War how did you feel about that and Korea the Korean War and then the Vietnam War?

Pack: Well I didn't have much to do with either one of them Korea or the Vietnamese War either.

Interviewer: So you really didn't have feeling of what was going on over here I mean the Vietnam War with all the protests and stuff?

Pack: I didn't have any emotions over it really.

Interviewer: Okay is there anything else you'd like to add? Anything like you know an experience you had during the war or an experience you had before the war or something that happened after the war that you would like to add?

Pack: Not really I don't guess. Not really.

Interviewer: In general your war experiences were pretty good then? I mean it was a good experience for you.

Pack: The work that I did in the army?

Interviewer: Yeah

Pack: No it didn't help me a bit in civilian life that I know.

Interviewer: But your experience weren't like really bad or anything while you were over there?

Pack: But when well after I was out for I don't know how long I saw yeah my experience in there did help me too. I saw an ad in the paper one day and it was for a supply man and I said to myself that's the first time that I've seen anything like that since I've been out of the army. And I applied for it answered the letter wrote a letter and put my application in for it. And it was I guess it was two months or more or

maybe longer than that before I heard anything. And finally I got a letter I don't know what was I don't remember what was in it or anything but they put me on the list. And then they it wasn't but a little while until they wrote back and asked me if I got the job they gave us a list of towns there that where would I be willing to work. And I just wrote back to them that Nashville would be the only place that I'd be willing to work. And I thought that was the end of it just about it and altogether it was a good year before I got the job. But I had to take a test a written test and there was a gang of them there that took that test. And I finally got the answer from my test that they didn't give me a numerical score. I've taken quite a few civil service tests and I've always gotten a numerical score on them. Well I didn't get one on that but they wrote me back that they were happy to employ me that I had passed. And then it wasn't very long until they wrote me a letter and told me to come into Nashville a certain day for an interview. And of course I went in for the interview and I put on my finest by George dressed up and tried to be clean and everything. And went up there and the old Colonel and a Master Sergeant the First Sergeant they greeted me at the door and the Master Sergeant greeted me at the door and the Colonel was sitting in his office. In a few minutes the Master Sergeant the First Sergeant rather he come out and says Colonel now what was his name Colonel Baldwin wants to see you. And I went in there and he put me at ease and I sat down and everything and he talked to me awhile and he asked me where I had been and all that stuff. And I told him that I had been over there for three years and a month and a day and said I spend three years and five months in the air force and he says after he talked a while said well Mr. Pack I'll tell you says I've got 13 men to interview and three jobs to give out. But said I'm gonna send you to the supply major down in the basement. And of course the First Sergeant took me down there and of course I don't know how many men the Colonel interviewed but the First Sergeant took me down to Major Mullins was his name. And the first thing he asked me was could I type and I said no I can't I can hunt and peck a little bit. Well he said that's one of the requirements of the job is typing. But he continued talking and we talked for a while and he finally got through with the interview and he said well Mr. Pack said I'll tell you says I can't hire but I can make recommendations. And he said you'll know something in just a little while. And of course I lived 35 – 40 miles from there and I went out in West Nashville where my wife was and we went home and I was upstairs working when I got a phone call from the First Sergeant. And he said well you're one of them that's hired and told me when to report into work up there and I reported in. And of course I worked for the government ever since then.

Interviewer: Was it a good job?

Pack: Oh yeah best job I'd ever had.

Interviewer: Where was it at exactly?

Pack: What?

Interviewer: Where was it at exactly?

Pack: It was out on Cherokee Avenue.

Interviewer: Was it a military operation? It was a government job but

Pack: It was a government job yeah it was a government job.

Interviewer: Which organization was it though?

Pack: Which what?

Interviewer: Organization I mean who was it for I mean was it like Military National Guard Unit?

Pack: Let's see the Department of the Army I believe is what it was.

Interviewer: Department of the army.

Pack: Uh huh it was working for the reserve Army Reserve. But I wasn't a member of the Army Reserve.

Interviewer: So you're experience in World War II actually

Pack: That's right applied.

Interviewer: Yeah got you a good position.

Pack: That's what got it for me too.

Interviewer: Did you join any veteran's organizations when you came back over here like Veterans Affairs or?

Pack: Oh American Legion.

Interviewer: American Legion

Tape skipped

Pack: In White Bluff for three years I think. But that was I think that's what got me my job alright. And I'll tell you another thing I believe I believe being cleaned up and I believe that helps you more than any one thing.

Interviewer: Being presentable looking nice and making sure that you're dressed good.

Pack: I sure do believe I certainly believe that. When I saw that advertisement in the paper for a supply people to work in supply I said something to my dad about it that I was going to answer that. He said there's no need of it says you couldn't get that to save your life. Well I didn't think I stood a chance of a one legged man in a butt kicking either but I knew they wasn't going to call me up and tell me I had it without even applying for it or anything.

Interviewer: Yeah

Pack: But I with all the people that I worked with there with that reserve I had I was an administrative assistant for four reserve units. One of them was a medical unit and three of them was truck trucking companies. And I had good report with three of the commanding officers of them units and the other one he didn't like me at all. But the other three they thought the world of me. I know they did because I got good reports from them and good recommendations from them. And I got in the hospital down at Dickson and the Colonel and the Major the three commanding officers of those three outfits come down to Dickson one night to see me while I was in the hospital. So you know they thought a lot of me. And

one of the commanding officers he was going on a vacation once and he had an automobile that he didn't want to leave at his house and he asked me if I would take it down to my house and keep it. Well I did and but that other one we couldn't get along at all. And finally the Colonel told me said Pack said when you're talking to him and he asks you to do something or he says something to you says write it down so you will know just exactly what went on and so you will have proof of what went on. And he said they would take his word before they did mine and that was right they would. And that's the reason he said that said write her down. But that son of a buck he had to pay some money out to replace some stuff that I would have gotten replaced that they lost at summer camp. I would have gotten it replaced without it costing him anything but I didn't like him either.

Interviewer: Well something that you mentioned earlier about when it's your time to go it's your time to go. Was it like you know the job seeing the ad and everything do you believe in like divine providence?

Pack: Yes I do in a great respect I do uh huh. Things just happen for no apparent reason at all don't they? Yes I believe so.

Interviewer: Did any of your religious convictions or anything help you through the war? I mean did you guys go to church over there?

Pack: No no no no. I went to church two times over there while I was in Australia. In New Guiney I don't know whether they even had church or not. Yeah they had church services of some kind but I mean at the unit did but I never did go to it.

Interviewer: Sometimes we just can't explain things though. It's just like wow you know like you and your wife knowing each other before you went over there and somehow meeting back up after you come home and getting married. Devine providence

Pack: You think that was it huh?

Interviewer: Who knows

Pack: Well I think it was too. I don't know.

Interviewer: Did anybody else in your family like your two daughters or your son in laws ever join the military?

Pack: Did anybody what now?

Interviewer: Did your two daughters or anyone of your son in laws did they ever join the military or your one son in law?

Pack: In the military you mean?

Interviewer: Yeah did any of them ever join the military?

Pack: Oh no my two daughters neither one of them were no.

Interviewer: When you were married to your wife did she work or was she a stay at home?

Pack: She was a stay at home wife uh huh.

Interviewer: That was pretty the norm back then when the men came back.

Pack: Now she did after my girls got in school now she did take a job they asked her to take a job in the cooking out at White Bluff there. Then when my younger brother got sick with cancer she quit that and helped his wife take care of him and then she never did work anymore.

Interviewer: Did you work with a lot of women?

Pack: I was in meat inspection see I worked for the reserve for five and a half years and then I got out of that and got into meat inspection which paid more than what I was getting in the reserve. And I worked with a lot of women in that. But when I worked with the meat inspection there was a woman in there that worked in the office and she was just real smart. She knew regulations and all that stuff. And there was a job opening a job come open that she wanted and she was qualified for it. It would have been about a two grade promotion I think for her. And she couldn't get it because she didn't have the experience.

Interviewer: That was their excuse.

Pack: Well that was it though she didn't have the experience so she couldn't get it. But the man that got it he wasn't worth a think or damn he just wasn't any good at all. But this ole girl she knew regulations and all that stuff. She didn't know about how to go about inspecting so that left her out.

Interviewer: What did you think about women's rights and women's lib that started in the 1960's?

Pack: Oh I think it's a bunch of bull. She was a women but I think if a women is qualified for a job that she should have just as much chance as a man's got. But I don't think you should pass over a man that's got experience and qualifications and everything to give a woman a job.

Interviewer: Yeah I don't either.

Pack: I don't believe that you should pass over a white man that's got experience and qualifications and give a black man a job either. You know about all this stuff.

Interviewer: Was there any women overseas where you were that were in the army? I know they had separate quarters for women like nurses and stuff.

Pack: Oh they had a lot of whacks over there and they sent a load of them home just about every month pregnant.

Interviewer: See that's the fraternizing I was talking about earlier. We don't fraternize.

Pack: But they did they sent a gang of them home every month.

Interviewer: See that's what the problem is with the Navy nowadays is that they put them on the ships and they have to send them back.

Pack: I'll tell you what happened on time one Sunday over there we was in what they called the Marcum Valley and it was hot and all. And you know what a valley is it was like this right here was a valley and over here our tents the enlisted men's tents was over in here. And up on the hillside well over on this hillside here the officers had there tents built up and everything where they could sit out on they had a balcony more or less where they could sit out and watch us enlisted men what we were doing. So I'm naturally low down anyway I guess but there was five men in my tent and we saw these whacks up there with these officers up there. And I just made a suggestion that down at the lower end of that valley I mean not at the lower end of the valley but at the lower end of the tent section that we had a shower down there. And I just made a suggestion I said let's just march just strip off naked and march by George down there in front of them nurses and whacks and so forth. And we did we got a kick form that too. They had a notice up on the bulletin board the next day for us to always be clothed when we go to the shower.

Interviewer: You would think that they wouldn't complain.

Pack: Well if it had just been one they probably wouldn't have. I don't know we had a lot of fun a lot of serious times and everything.

Interviewer: Did you ever have a moment that you were really thinking maybe, put aside the fact that you thought when it was your time to go you know it would be your time. But did you ever have a moment when you were over there when you thought my goodness I just might be ready to die?

Pack: I don't know I was always thinking home.

Interviewer: Wanting to be back over here?

Pack: Wanting to be back to Mama's cooking.

Interviewer: You can't beat Mama's cooking. We all think our mothers cook the best too.

Pack: Me and a boy from Colorado Ray Parker we were in the same tent and we was in that Market Valley too at that same time. And we got paid I don't know what week it was but we got paid and marched through the pay line. And we went down to the motor pool he and I, I was drawing ninety something dollars a month. And that would buy 30 bottles of beer and we both went down and bought all of it up in beer. And we had told the cook our cook what do you call them mess sergeant we had told the mess sergeant that we was going to get some beer. And he said well I've got an ice box over there says how about us cooling it off before you drink it and so we went down there to an Australian camp and we got 60 bottles of beer big quart bottles of beer. And brought them back and the other three that was in our tent and the master sergeant was the only one mess sergeant was the only one to drink any of that beer. But I got so drunk boy. Another time the first time I ever got drunk in my life was in Australia and we went we were off for some reason or another that day and we went into town. We was about three or four miles away from town it was a town in Australia I don't remember what the name of the town was but it was a town. And we went in there and was drinking beer and everything and at that time they were ferrying airplanes over here and the all of them getting in the same plane and going back. And there was them officers come in one of the bars that we were in there I mean that we were all in. And we got acquainted we got to talking to each other and everything and one of them told me says we got to talking about writing home and all that stuff. And he said well if you'll write a letter and give it to me said I'll take it home and mail it I'll take it back to the states and mail it for you and you can say

what you want to in that. See they what do you call that stuff when they were reading your mail and everything?

Interviewer: Censored?

Pack: Censored yeah and they were censoring my mail. They just about cut some of mine all to pieces. And he told me he'd take anything like that I wanted back. But I got drunk and missed out on that too.

Interviewer: Was there a lot of propaganda about the war that you heard of?

Pack: Oh no it wasn't no propaganda over there it was all business over there. But me and that officer we some of them told me I don't know I got so drunk I don't know what happened or anything. But they told me that me and him was going from bar to bar and he was buying whiskey for me and everything and said finally I was just hanging on the bar by my chin. And finally when I woke up I was in my tent with my head sticking out the door. And you know the shipping crates that they have that was my floor and my head was sticking out not the door but the opening the tent flap and it was just as green down under me as it could be where I had vomited all over everything. Lord I've never been as sick in my life I don't believe and but that officer of course I don't know how much whiskey he bought me or beer or whatever he bought me. But he found out where my unit was located and he hired a taxi and took me out to my unit and took me to the orderly room and found out where my tent was located and he took me to my tent. So there was lots of good people I tell you there was.

Interviewer: Did you make any friends over there that you still keep in contact with?

Pack: I don't keep in contact with any now they're all dead and gone.

Interviewer: Well I mean when you first got back.

Pack: the last one that I kept in contact with got Alzheimer's and I keep in contact with his wife though. And he died a couple of year ago I guess but I don't any of the rest of them. I don't know where any of them are located or anything. Yeah I kept in touch with a lot of them. What is that thing what are you doing is it still taking pictures?

Interviewer: I'm making sure it is still working.

Pack: It's what?

Interviewer: I'm making sure that it's still working.

Pack: But when we was in Australia and that was when we was in Australia too. We were camped right out in the middle of a horse racetrack you know. And we were on the infield of that we weren't on the track we were in the middle of it. And I got drunk there and I was walking down there and they took a picture of me and I had that picture for a long time. But I was urinating walking along there and urinating and I told them I said I can't write a letter but I said will one of y'all write my Mama and tell her I'm not drunk. They'd say well you are drunk. I said well tell her I won't do it anymore. Oh boy. And when we got to Australia I'll tell you how poor we were when we got there I got paid five dollars at Fort Oberthrope Georgia as a partial payment. And I loaned my older brother of course he drank beer at that time I didn't drink anything at that time I started shortly. But I loaned him a little bit of that five dollars.

But anyway I spent out and we had this was at Sheppard Field Texas is where it was no it wasn't it was at Australia is where that was. And they had a what they called a PX there you could buy cold drinks or you could buy beer a few other things not much did they have there. But they had a bar all the way across the building there and you couldn't get over behind that bar you wasn't supposed to anyway they'd just throw you out. And there was three of us one of us on this side and one of us on the other side and one of us in the back. And when you bought a cold drink you had to pay a deposit on the bottle and we couldn't buy a cold drink because we didn't have the money. But we placed ourselves pretty strategically across there and when somebody would leave that hadn't redeemed their bottle we redeemed it for them. And we finally got enough money together we bought ourselves a cold drink a piece. That's how poor we were we didn't have any money.

Interviewer: About how much did it cost to buy a cold drink back then?

Pack: How much what?

Interviewer: How much did it cost?

Pack: I don't remember not but very little I'm sure but more than we had because we didn't have but very little. Life was grand then.

Interviewer: Do you have anything else you want to add?

Pack: What

Interviewer: I said do you have anything else you want to add?

Pack: I don't think so I don't think so.

Interviewer: Well thank you very much for letting me interview you.

Pack: And I'm glad you come down. I'm glad you come down.