

Interviewer: Okay we can start off real simply if you will tell us your full name, the year you were born, and where you were born.

Rosa: My name is August just like the month Rosa and I was born in Brooklyn New York March the 29th 1932.

Interviewer: Okay that's really close to my grandpa's birthday actually. What was your father's name and his occupation?

Rosa: My father's name was Jacinto Rosa and his occupation he was a car inspector for the city of New York in the subway system. The position today that his grandson holds. He worked his way up from engineer he drove the subway trains and after 13 years he put in for my father's job but there was only two positions in that system. But I can remember my father telling me when he got out of the army right after World War I he lived in Louisiana and he went to work for this big company and within six months he was a foreman. He said it was unheard of at that time so I asked him how could you be a foreman in six months. He said the difference between me and most people is that I could read and write and I had an education. Back in the 1900s very few people even got to the 12th grade most of them had one or two or three years. And he said he made \$60 a week which is crazy money because back then people worked for five cents an hour or ten cents an hour. Because he was a foreman he made that kind of money and after two years he decided that he needed to go up north because he had never been up north you know. So he quit his job went to New York took a test and that's how he got the job he got because he could read and write. I couldn't believe him telling me these things you know.

Interviewer: What was your mother's name and what did she do?

Rosa: My mother's name was Felesia Lebra she was French.

Interviewer: That's beautiful did she work?

Rosa: She was a mother housewife.

Interviewer: Right that's work.

Rosa: At first but after all of the kids grew up she started to go out on her own and she went to work. But my mother raised 11 children.

Interviewer: Wow you had 11 brothers and sisters 10.

Rosa: Right ten of us are still alive.

Interviewer: That's great so you said that your father served in World War I.

Rosa: Right

Interviewer: Did you have anyone else in the family brothers or sisters who served in the military?

Rosa: Oh yes got two brothers both served in the marine core one got out after four years. The other one beat me out by ten days he put 30 years and 27 days. I myself put 30 years and 17 days in the army.

Interviewer: He had you beat.

Rosa: He retired as a sergeant major in the marine core.

Interviewer: Okay and did you enlist or were you drafted?

Rosa: No I enlisted

Interviewer: What year was that?

Rosa: I started out with the National Guard in 1947 and I served 18 months and then I went into the army in May, May the 10th 1949. So I had 18 months of National Guard time which helped me out because for pay I think I got \$11 more because I had 19 months. So as a private most people made \$50 I made sixty something.

Interviewer: Okay you chose to go into the army over another branch.

Rosa: Right

Interviewer: What made you chose the army?

Rosa: Well because since I was already in the National Guard the system the army was using. When I went in in May I was sent to Newark New Jersey Fort Dix and back then basic training was 16 weeks long. I mean they took the time and they taught you everything.

Interviewer: Right

Rosa: Not like today today everything is rush rush rush in 12 weeks and then they expect the unit you get assigned to to pick on things you don't know.

Interviewer: Right to finish training you. What was your MOS?

Rosa: Well back then it was 1754 heavy weapons I was the 75 recoils I was in a weapons platoon. Half the platoon was 75 recoils and the other half was water cooled 30 caliber machine guns. I've got some stories I could tell you about that.

Interviewer: Tell them we want to hear them.

Rosa: We trained every day on those guns then we would go out and put devices in those guns where you could fire 30 caliber bullets instead of using the big round 75s awfully expensive. But in June I think the first day in June we left Fort Devers Massachusetts and went to Camp Edwards Massachusetts to support the National Guard in their training. And we was preparing to give the National Guard there classes on the 75 recoil _____. When the war started June the 25th in Korea all training was stopped and we pulled back and just hung around the barracks for about a week until we got orders. And I thought we was going to Korea as a unit but it didn't turn out that way. They took at least 80 to 90 percent of the unit and gave us individual orders and we headed for California. But before that they gave us a 15 day leave because they couldn't send 100,00 you know soldiers all at one time.

Interviewer: Right

Rosa: Anyway after my 15 day leave I took off to California and I got to Camp Stowman while I was there I arrived one day and the next day I was gone. They put me on an airplane most of the people were going by ships. So I asked one of the sergeants I said how come we got picked to go on an airplane? He says you have an MOS that is very needed they don't have people trained in recoil rifles. So they flew me from California to Guazal Johnson Guam Hawaii they gassed up on the way and that took about 12 hours. The next morning woke up and they flew me to Japan I got to Japan to a repo depot company they issued us web gear a World War II M1 rifle which was full of cosmaline which was used in World War II. So we had to clean all the cosmaline off those weapons which is a messy job you have to boil it in hot water. Anyway the next morning we took off for the rifle range they gave us three rounds to zero the weapon in. Being an infantry man we all knew how to use the M1 rifles we raised the sight twelve clicks and that's the starting point. Those three rounds you had to get your target. I managed to do that real simple the next morning no that night they loaded us on trucks and took us to Sessiebo got on an old Japanese ship and we took off for Korea. It was dark when we took off but it only too until the next morning and we pulled into Korea at Puzar. I remember the sun coming up just as we were pulling into the dock we offloaded the ship on trucks that were parked and they took us to a repo depot company. As soon as we got there we were offloaded and issued two hand grenades, two bandoleers of ammunition they loaded us on trucks and we drove it seemed like six hours. Because we couldn't go too fast the roads were almost non-existent dirt roads bumpy holes in it everything. But when we got to the point we offloaded those trucks it was already getting dark. We met this sergeant who took the group that I was with he said you all follow me. Well we started climbing that mountain it took us about two hours to get to the point we was going because after you climbed one mountain you drop in a valley go up to another one and keep the elevation keeps getting higher. It's like walking a mile to keep going up and up. It was so dark that when we got to the top of that mountain it was like being in a closet you couldn't see you couldn't see your hand that's how dark. And I looked up and there were clouds covering the sky so the stars and moon didn't put no light. So this sergeant comes up to me and he touches me and I didn't even see him that's how dark it is. He took my hand and said what's your MOL? I said 1745 he says come with me. He held my hand because it was so dark I couldn't see the ground he took me like this. We walked maybe 50 feet he says okay here's your gun now his eyes were used to that dark and mine wasn't. So I looked and reached out and touched the weapon it was a 75 recoil rifle. I said where are the other troops? He said there ain't none you're it. I was one man it takes five men to run that gun. However put the gun there started digging a foxhole to the right rear and he dug maybe three and a half feet long shoulder width and he only got about six inches eight inches deep before the sergeant took that man somewhere else. Meanwhile there was a gun couple rounds of ammunition and I'm in that hole. So I got a shovel and I started digging some more by this time it was about nine or ten o'clock at night. All of a sudden shells started coming in we were being shelled mortar shells were coming in. You could just barley here they make a hissing sound they come in siss on the position my position the ground was flat for about 15 feet then it dropped down at an angel. And around just from me 25, 30 feet the ground dropped down and the fragments would go up and they couldn't come toward me. Meanwhile playing it safe I got in my hole I tried to get as far into that hole as I could. And all of a sudden a round landed next to me between me and the gun and my ears were ringing boom. And I didn't move those shells kept coming in for about two or three more minutes. I say about 20 rounds in that fine of a period had come in and shot the area. It was quiet the rest of the night. About four thirty five o'clock in the morning that sun started coming up I finally stood up in my hole and I looked while my ears were ringing because I could reach out laying down and I could touch the fin of that mortar. So it landed just maybe three and half four feet but it was three and half four feet from the gun. And I looked at that gun and the mortar fragments had destroyed the gun the tube was all torn up.

Just about that time the sergeant came over and walked down and he looked at that gun and he says you okay? I says yeah but my ears are ringing. He walked over to the gun and he raises his hand up and he kicked it and the damn thing fell over then he unhooked it and just rolled it down the hill because it was completely destroyed. At that time he says come with me. I walked 25, 30 feet he says there's your new gun. And it was water cooled 30 caliber machine gun. I says where's the crew? He says there ain't none. He didn't tell me that we only had six people in that platoon that most of them had been killed in the last two to three weeks they kept you know coming back. They had so many casualties that they were down to 80 men and we had to cover a front that was a half a mile long. Which means you had one soldier every 50, 60 yards. I said how can you hold a line with all that space? They can just walk through there and that is exactly what was happening. Every time they came walked through our unit or another unit and get behind us we had to roll up try to get in front of them again out up a new line.

Interviewer: Were you expecting more troops to come were you just holding ground until more people could try.

Rosa: That's about what it was just hold ground the best you could but every day truckloads of you know we were getting troops every day but not enough of them.

Interviewer: Right

Rosa: When he put me on that machine gun there was two boxes of had grenades you had a para pit built with ammunition boxes because the top of that mountain was mostly rock not too much dirt. So they took whoever was there before me had taken these ammunition boxes put rocks and dirt and built a para pit then put the machine gun. And there was two boxes of hand grenades an M1 rifle a BAR that's a Browning automatic rifle like a machine gun. And I had my own M1 rifle and he said that's your field of fire behind. We was on the finger of this mountain so the frontline was here but the finger went around so put one troop here one here one here. And I had the rear of this position and the next man on the right 30 or 40 feet on the other side of me. We only had one man positions and it smelled bad the odor. I kept thinking I recognized that smell what is it because I could remember as a kid rats down by the East River when they'd get killed they'd rot it puts out on odor. And finally I realized these people have been up in this position maybe two weeks and they were being hit every other day and there was a lot of fire exchanges. And in the daylight I could see where the bodies were laying all over that place there must have been 20, 30 Korean North Korean soldiers and one of them was maybe 15, 20 feet from me. And someone had put a little dirt on him no more than that much because there was very little dirt it was rocky. But the flies were covered and every night when we'd get shelled some of those bodies would be exposed to that explosion and it would send body parts flying meat into the trees. And the trees they had were maybe 6, 7 inches in diameter not too they were young trees you know. And it was the middle of this was the first week in August hot it was like 103 or 4 degrees. But when the sun hits that rock it heats it up even warmer and you could see the heat coming off the rock. I can remember we only we a canteen of water we would get a half a cup a day. We had an old 19 aircraft that would fly over real slow and drop a duffle bag out with some sea rations and a couple cans of water five gallon cans of water. And that sergeant would go around to everybody and give them a half a cup and that sun we had no overhead cover and that sun would come down and beat on you all day long blister you. I was sun burn and then the fleas everybody I had fleas all over my body I would scratch. There was no way to get clean it didn't rain at night when the clouds came in it cooled off and it got kind of chilly you know. And then you'd pray for the daytime to warm up. But after three or four days I can remember we got hit bad. They didn't come up the through the front they came up through the finger they were smart they didn't want to go down and climb that hill. They went there was nobody watching they climbed the mountain

and they came through the ridge right across the ridge. All of a sudden the troops that were in front of me 30 or 50 yards I can hear their guns going off. And you can tell the difference in American weapons from the North Korean weapons it sounded different. An M1 when you hear an M1 you know that's an M1 when you hear a bird gun or a rifle you know that's the North Koreans. All of a sudden I'm on my gun and I'm straining my eyes to see if anybody is coming up. Meanwhile bullets are just coming over our heads all of a sudden GIs came running right past me and they stopped like 20 feet from me because there was a little ammo dump we had stacked up ammunition you know hand grenades and machine gun ammunition and bandoleers for the M1 rifles. They said hurry up get in here they would go back to their positions see. Everything got awful quiet and I could hear North Koreans and we didn't have any Korean soldiers with us at that time ___ soldiers came later on to replace help us out you know. We didn't have any at the time well when I started hearing these Koreans I knew that they were the bad guys. And sure enough they were 30, 40 feet in front of me I could hear them they were talking they made a lot of noise. And you could smell them too they had that odor of kimchee where they'd been eating you know you could smell them. And I can remember a sergeant in my old unit when I was in the 7th infantry regiment at Fort Devers he was a World War I veteran and he retired just as I came into the unit. But I remember him telling me at night you never fight with a machine gun if you can help it. I said what do you mean? He said that's what the hand grenades are for. If you open that machine gun they can see the flash of it and they're gonna all bring fire on you. And he was right because that's what was killing all of our troops. And I remember him telling me that so I took those hand grenades out of the container whoever was there took the tape off the containers so it would make it easier to get to those hand grenades. I took two hand grenades I said if I throw these hand grenades that handle is going to come off and make that bing sound that gives it away. So I took the hand grenade I put my finger and when I pulled that pin out that cap came over and hit my hand then I took it off I took two hand grenades like that. When I thought they were like 20 feet from me I hit both of those hand grenades together. That started the fuse you've got five seconds. I went one two and underhand I threw them up in the air in that direction both of them. And I could hear them drop and I could hear those guys talking bla bla bla whatever the hell they were saying and they went off. When they went off I must have got two or three of them because I could hear them moaning crying _____ hurting it means hurting. I said yeah that will teach you to fool around with this boy from Brooklyn. I had a smile on my face you know what I mean I was proud of myself. I got me some more hand grenades and I waited because those that got hit didn't run you could hear the others run you know. Sure enough about five or ten minutes later they were coming back they were bla bla bla but they just gave themselves away. They were talking and I done the same thing only this time I threw them overhanded so I really got them out there. I could hear them hand grenades hit the ground and in a second or two boom boom. Again ohhh ohhh I was doing my job I was hurting them bad you could hear them run away from me. I got two more hand grenades and here they come again bla bla bla only this time they started throwing their own hand grenades and they were throwing those big old blue looked like potatoes mashers come down at an angle and they were from World War II. But they were big but they didn't have any destruction power they were just like a flash bang you know. When they threw the first one landed maybe five feet in front of me and I heard it hit there. I just ducked down under those and it went off but the flash they were watching gave away my position so they could see the para pits so they threw two more. Only this time they never got within five feet of me that's because they were so far back. So I just didn't say I word I just let them get closer and closer I mean I thought they were like maybe 15 feet I fired in the hand two more and when they hit you could hear them start going. They knew but again I got some more and they crying and moaning and finally they didn't come back no more. I thought they had gone a different direction somewhere else it was quiet for about 20 minutes. Finally I got up got my M1 rifle the CP was like 20 feet behind that ammo dump I went to the CP to find out if anybody was there, there was nobody. I said anybody here nobody so I came back to my position I heard some more noise behind me I

get up and it was a soldier laying behind my foxholes my position he was wounded. He said I'm hit in both legs he had come up trying to get some first aid because the medic was supposed to be at the CP. Sure enough I said is there a medic around here? Here comes a medic this medic was the smallest man I've ever seen. I swear to god he wasn't five feet tall and he didn't weigh maybe 115 pounds real skinny guy. And this boy that was wounded laying behind me six feet 180 pounds you know. So he started wrapping up his leg when all of a sudden I hear Koreans talking again. This time they were coming up through the right so I got up to get closer and I could see the silhouette of their bodies. I picked up my M1 rifle I aimed it at his chest and I was just about to pull the trigger when he stepped back. When he stepped back there was a tree I couldn't see his body. That man I don't know if he's alive today or not but he came within a second of dying because they started walking back. Finally I got up I walked the position I couldn't find nobody I assumed that those three people that were over to the right of me either got killed you know there were too many more Koreans in that area talking. And nobody was shooting at them anymore. I said I'm up here all by myself I says we've got to get that guy move down the line and team up with somebody because we can't take all those people by ourselves. So I took my machine gun the plate the trigger off the machine gun and threw it away which made the gun useless to anybody that especially those Koreans. I said let's go he said I can't carry that man and the doctor he didn't weigh about 115 pounds I didn't weigh but 130. I mean I was 18 years old skinny kid with 29 inch waist. I sad alright, medics didn't carry weapons, I said you take this M1 rifle it's loaded. I went to the box of hand grenades and took six of them and put them inside my shirt so I'd have something. And boy them hand grenades are heavy they are bulging there. So I get turned around and I pick this young man up I get down on my knees so I can put him on my shoulder I put him on my shoulders and boy he weighed 180 pounds I swear to god. Here I was 130 myself and I said let's go so we took off on the ___ line until we hit some more GIs. Since we're just 50 yards apart there's not too many maybe one or two. And the Koreans were catching up with us they are right behind us moving fast. I said I've got to get away from here so I got off the trail I went down the forward area of the position and I ran into a barbed wire fence. They had erected barbed wire and they had tin cans on it. I said we've got to get down there and go around the mountain. As I was going through the barbed wire the tin cans were rattling here comes the North Koreans bla bla bla saying there's somebody down there. They came to investigate and all of a sudden they start shooting and them bullets are whizzing by my head. I kept quiet and they kept coming closer I took two hand grenades done the same thing when they fired I threw to the flash of those rifles. Soon enough some more crying and some more you could hear them running away. But every time I would get that young man out of the barbed wire I would get stuck and this went back and forth it seemed forever but it could have been maybe five or ten minutes. While I was doing this the weight of those hand grenades pulled the shirt right out of my trousers and the hand grenades all drooped and I knew I had to have something to fight with. So I had to fall to the left I picked up two this time I put them through the loops through your shirt you know. I picked that young man up and we took off down around the mountain and back up onto the trail. I'm on the trail and I know sooner or later we're gonna run into some GIs. All of a sudden I hear these Korean behind me and they were running toward me on this little trail and it was dark. But the trails were used so much the dirt had changed colors and just about make out the trail and it was young trees. And knew they were going to run into us so I stepped one step off that trail and I was so damn tired from carrying that soldier. I got down on my right knee held onto the trees so I wouldn't fall over with his weight and I was like this not realizing that his foot was hanging on the trail. Every one of those Korean soldiers were running and they were running fast hit his leg with their left leg and every time they did it jarred me. But they were running so fast that they thought they hit a branch or something. They didn't stop every one of them hit that soldiers and every time they hit him it knocked me over. Finally they left I had enough strength I said let's go and we walked for hours hours. The next thing I know its daylight and down in the valley I had gone down in the valley and it was an open valley. I said there's got to be GIs up there let's go. We

walked and all of a sudden I see an American tank they had a line way out there. And this one guy out there was looking through his binoculars. I said it's a GI let's go we've got it made we've got it made. As I started walking I could hear artillery this four point duce mortars they had thought we were Koreans and they were jesting four duce mortar on us. The first one was 100 yards to the left and 200 yards over. The next one fell short they were adjusting I said we've got to get out of this open ground let's go into some rocks we started walking toward the rocks. Meanwhile this guy had taken off his shirt and was waving it like this here and hollering you know. And here comes those mortars finally they fire for effect right on top of us. I got between some rocks and the shells hit all around us some as close as that fence right there. But I was wedged between the rocks the fragmentation would go over us finally when I got up and started walking toward them they must have realized that the closer I got I could see hey those are ours. Meanwhile I've got this young man on my back and he's no longer talking to me because he had lost so much blood and I didn't realize it but as I was carrying him, they quit shooting after they realized we were Americans. I must have gone another 200 yards when I had to stop because I was tired and I put the young man down and realized he was dead. I had been carrying him for another hour he had passed away on my back. I contribute that to the loss of blood and the shock not even to get blood in his system. Being 18 years old I really didn't know too much about that so I took his dog tags I took one of them I left the other one with him and within five minutes we hit the line. And they said oh I'm sorry we were firing on you guys they were making apologies you know. I said that's alright you didn't hit us they almost killed us. By this time I got to the unit some guy gave me a can of rations I ate that and I asked him where my unit was he said there probably down the road. I said I'm too tired to go on by that time it had gotten dark. He said you sleep with me I've got a spare bunk. I got in his tent as soon as I got in there I passed out from lack of sleep exhaustion. I got up the next morning that medic I got my rifle back he went back to his unit, if you want we can go inside.

Interviewer: I just have to make sure we can still hear because I want to hear what you're saying. Yeah we're good.

Rosa: Okay when I took that rifle back from the first aid man he went to his medical unit. I went down the road until I ran into my company CP. And the captain he had a French name I can't think of his name today he never met me before because from the repo company right up that hill you know. I said I'm PFC Rosa and I was up on the hill we got hit we are the only three people that survived that portion of the area so I gave him the dog tag of the man that died on my back. And he says he looked at me and he said I was covered in blood all the way down but his blood you know. The company commander gave me a set of his HBDs which is fatigues and a set of underwear and I went to the creek which was 80 yards away from the CP. And that water was cold even though it was August.

Interviewer: Yeah I'm sure.

Rosa: I washed in that creek and I put on his clothes then I went back and he says okay I'm gonna have your story check out. So he had a man come from the battalion a PO or some guy that writes history you know. And he asked me for my story so I told him everything just the way I told you the story then he left. Then the company commanders says well is that guy gonna put that in the paper or something and he said no he's over there running down that medic to get his side of the story. They wanted to make sure that we didn't bug out or something. Well anyway he said I want you to hang around here a couple of days he must have saw that I was in shock or something I wasn't right because of that experience. To tell you the truth there was nothing wrong with me I felt normal. But he thought the experience might have done something to me he said take a few days off. So I hung around there for about two or three days and I got bored doing nothing.

Interviewer: Right

Rosa: Finally here comes a tank down the road and it stops and the sergeant jumps off the tank goes and talks to my company commander. Finally he comes out and says I will try and get you a few men, I was listening. And I said sir what do you need people for? He said we were having trouble with gorillas these soldiers that break through the line and they're by themselves and they start shooting at the convoys in this village behind us. I said is it okay if I go with them? Of course go to the supply room get yourself a helmet and a weapon. I ran to the supply room got me a weapon a bandoleer of ammunition an M1 rifle I jumped on that tank with the other two infantry men and we took off to the village. He starts up to the first house and he stops the sergeant jumps off and says you guys come with me. So it's him, me, and another GI and he says they're in this house somewhere. He said you see that fence they've got the sea ration cans on the door to make noise they're in there let's get them. This guy was a World War II veteran from the Pacific War and he, he know how to fight them Japanese. I guess he knew how to fight the Koreans too. And I'm just young kid you know 18 years old. So he opens that gate and we started walking up to that house and the house it built up because it had steps going into it. So I'm on the left, he's in the middle, and the other GI is to his right arm. He's one step behind we've got our rifles he had a 45 grease gun we call them grease guns it's a 45 caliber machine gun. Not a Thompson they call them grease guns. So we started walking and we was gonna go up them steps and into that house when all of a sudden a rifle come right through that door. The doors are made out of paper you know wood covered with paper. And that Korean that was in there made the mistake of poking that rifle when I saw that rifle I start shooting. But to get out of the line of fire I jerked myself to the left and I did it so fast that I threw myself off balance and as I falling to the left I kept firing. Now the sergeant is just one step behind me he had that grease gun he backed up and started shooting then turned around and when I hit the ground I saw him turn around and run both of them. But we had put enough bullets in that door to hit that guy meanwhile I'm lying on the ground and if I move they're gonna shoot me so I play dead. I've got one hand grenade hanging here I can hear the sergeant hollering they're in the house they're in the house. And somebody on the 50 caliber machine gun on the tank starts shooting. Now he was shooting blind because there was a bunch of trees bushes in front of him and he couldn't see me and he starts shooting into the house and he shooting so fast one bullet hits right next to my face and I'm on the ground. And I could hear that sergeant hollering stop shooting stop shooting there's a kid laying on the ground out there. Just as he stops shooting they fire a 76 millimeter they fire the tank gun into the house. And there was a hell of an explosion I felt the shot waves. Finally I reached up got the hand grenade and I made the mistake of not straightening out the pins. See you bend those pins so those pins don't come out. And I'm trying to pull that sucker out afraid to move and my teeth I could feel them I thought they were going to come out. Finally it came out and he said he's still alive I could hear that sergeant he said he's still alive. We've got to get him out of there. I flung that hand grenade through that door I got up grabbed my rifle and ran. When I got out there that hand grenade went off. Now I know that sergeant tank commander was crazy because he done something I would have never done. He reloaded that gun came down and charged up them steps crashed through them damn doors as you could hear that Thompson go off. I said oh shit they got him dead they killed that sucker the next things I know had that he was coming out he had two of them one in each by the head. And he had put that grease gun on him it was just hanging and he came out like this and he went back in there I hear pop pop and he drug out another one. But they were already wounded he was just finishing them off. They were laying there two of them were still alive they were grasping for air. And you could look at their body they were shot all over looked like somebody had got a cleaver the blood and they were trying to breath. You could see his body go huh huh finally that sergeant says put them out of their misery shoot them. And I started to reach down to shoot them you know the first thing that came to my mind was God. I said I can't murder this man you know. There was a black soldier standing to my right and he had been there for two weeks.

He didn't hesitate he just went pop and I said to myself this man's got to be cold blooded. Then the sergeant started checking the houses he said check under that house. And sure enough there was two more under the house in a crawl space. He reached in there and got them by their feet and pulled them out these two soldiers were wounded and you could tell they were shot maybe a couple of days ago. And they had no medical treatment and you could see the gangrene the infection had started and they were half dead already one was in a coma. And we kept searching and we found another live soldier not wounded he was in the back. And this man he was North Korean he was about four feet eight inches tall real small boned. And I kept looking I said is this what we're fighting these little midgets. He was just a small boned Korean soldier you know and that sergeant offered the guy a cigarette that Korean you know and he just started smiling and as he lit it as he took his first puff that sergeant just kicked him in the face. I looked at that sergeant and I thought there's something wrong mentally with this guy that's what I thought but this guy had fought the Japanese in World War II so he had a disrespect for the human race as a whole. And that colored boy that shot those two Koreans put them out of their misery because they were going to die. Had just come back into the unit a week before recovering from his wounds where he had been shot with a bird gun right above his knee. He said when I was laying down I saw a North Korean soldier kill my brother by beating his head with his rifle crushed his head and I couldn't do a damn thing about it. If I'd have moved he would have killed me. And that's why he had no problem killing those to him they were just lives. I remember him telling me this story and the reason I don't forget it is because the next day when we went back to our unit the company commanders says August do you know you shot that sergeant? I looked at him and said what do you mean shot the sergeant? He says when you were shooting and he turned to run you had shot him right through this portion of the leg. I said that can't be he was behind me when I was firing sir he got shot because that rifle came out that's who shot him. He said you sure? I said on my mothers and we didn't discuss it no more but it irritated me that he had thought that I had shot him you know. The next day I says to my company commander sir is it okay if I go back on the line? He says sure so they got a jeep and they drove me as far as they could and I climbed that it too forever to get up that mountain I swear to God. I got up there they said where the hell have you been? I said you guys left me they said no we rode up maybe we missed you one of them passed me and I didn't know it. But they had they were doing what I wanted to do. But they had come back and reoccupied the positions again. I went up there and then we moved from that position to another position and we kept getting hit early in the morning late at night. And I can remember one day they had brought the kitchen up to that mountain they said we are going to stay here a couple weeks so they brought the kitchen up to that mountain you know the parts that they can carry. And they had set up these garbage cans of water and put the heaters in there and they got pipes its gasoline heaters and smoke will come out of them. When they done that the enemy had saw that smoke they knew where to shoot. They started firing mortars and were hitting all around people just scattering and running. Finally I said what the hell's going on cut the stoves off. Meanwhile I was walking back to my position I stopped to talk to this guy and a sniper five or six hundred yards on the next ridge line had fired and hit close to my feet they were shooting at both of us. There was a BAR automatic rifle belonged to that guy when that round hit he ran and left his weapon there. I grabbed that weapon I went to where the round had hit, I sat on my buttocks I crossed my legs and I looked at the crease that the bullet made on the ground. And I said alright and let 20 rounds go in that area that he was. I couldn't see him but I knew that he was there. I couldn't tell if I hit him but I know I scared the hell out of him because he didn't shoot no more. So the next day I'm on my position and I've got to go to the bathroom. Most people they take these hand grenade containers and they don't throw them away they save them. They urinate in them deprecate in them and put the cover on them and throw them away because there's no dirt in those mountains there's just rock you know. And there was no dirt around there where I could go so I said I've got to go find me some dirt I must have walked a hundred yards down that ridgeline found a nice place to deprecate. There I was doing natures call right I no sooner finished and

this sniper he must have saw me he had enough decency to wait until I was finished. But he fired and boy that you could hear it I said I ain't gonna run I'm gonna screw this guy's mind up. I walked real slow about 25 feet and there was a big lot that was kind of concaved like that and somebody had built a little stool there with rocks you know to sit. So I just walked there and I sat down. As I sat down he fired and about a foot to my right hit that and ricashade I didn't move I said I'm gonna screw with this guy. I made like nothing was happening I took out a cigarette lit it he fires again this time to the left. Meanwhile I'm just hoping that he don't hit me I'm 18 years old playing stupid games my life was on the line and I didn't even realize it. Now I look and say I must have been stupid.

Interviewer: Yeah you were so young.

Rosa: The thing was I started to lay down as I laid down that bullet if I'd have been sitting he'd have got me. He'd have hit me here or here. As I lay down that bullet and I looked at it and I said damn he would have got me that time. I got up like this here like nothing had happened and walked away. I know I screwed that man's mind up because I acted like nothing ever happened. I never done that again I walked away I was afraid to stop.

Interviewer: Right just keep walking. Well let me ask you this did you hear about or did have any experience with Task Force Smith?

Rosa: No they got there before me about 30 days before me.

Interviewer: Before you got there okay.

Rosa: See they got there in July I didn't get there until August the first.

Interviewer: Okay what kind of things did you hear about it from other people? Did you know anybody that was a part of it?

Rosa: Well later on I met people that were a part of it and the unit in Taejon they talk a lot about Taejon. Taejon Korea that's where we done real well against the North Koreans and the other units didn't do so well you know. But when they fell back to the Pusan that's when I got there that's the first of August.

Interviewer: Did you feel like and I wonder what other people that you served with what your opinion was of how ready America was for the Korean War.

Rosa: We weren't ready.

Interviewer: That's the opinion I've heard.

Rosa: You see we were training to fight a World War II war. Well Korea was completely different even though it was a little like World War II it was just a little bit different.

Interviewer: It was just a different animal right.

Rosa: I think the worst part was when I was with the 7th regiment 3rd division at Fort Devers Mass. we trained as individuals see. And we never had a chance to train as a division we always trained as a battalion because there was nobody else around. But the worst part was when they sent us as

replacements. My unit we were so well trained we trained to do other people's jobs I mean after a while you train for one thing you know it so well. Then they start cross training us I was trained 75 recoils rifle I knew that backward inside how to use it on the ground on the vehicle anywhere. Then after then they started training us on the machine gun so I trained on the machine gun to fire indirect fire which was used in World War I very few times was it ever used in World War II. But you can use machine guns a lot of people don't realize it like artillery you have these devices you put on there to get degrees and angles then you can fire just like artillery. We trained for that but we never used it in combat.

Interviewer: Right

Rosa: And then when they sent us as individuals it was all lost all that training went it didn't go completely to waste but when I joined this new unit they were trained different see. My problem was I was a heavy weapons man from a weapons company assigned to an infantry unit. Once I got there that platoon sergeant used me like a part of his team even though they're not supposed to. They were so short of people I just became part of that company. And I wasn't familiar with the infantry part of it I learned as I went every day you know.

Interviewer: Well what was speaking of that specifically I would be interested to hear what your impression of General MacArthur was.

Rosa: I respected the man because he had so much experience and he knew war from a to z. Now generals don't control the army they only run it. Civilians control and the president Truman did not support Eisenhower not Eisenhower I mean MacArthur. MacArthur was not afraid to fight China because he knew China wasn't strong enough. China at the time was working on the atomic bomb they didn't have it and he knew that if he knocked out those airfields on the Yale River stop the air force from coming over that he could end the war right then and there. MacArthur was afraid of another world war because he knew Russia would support China. As it turned out years later MacArthur was right all along. He didn't have the support of the president that war would have ended in December. See I had gotten wounded on September the 22nd of 1950 when the Inchon landing September the 15th hit Inchon we jumped on the next morning the 16th. So we and here by that time we started getting these ___ these South Korean soldiers who were just put into the army threw a uniform on them and sent them to us without firing any rifles you know. It was a blessing because when we dropped off on September 16 we attacked. We jumped off the sergeant came let's go we're moving out they're attacking. And here I was with a machine gun right the machine gun itself weighs 45 pounds that bandoleer of ammunition that goes through is 20 pounds. I've got my M1 rifle, my pack and it's got all kinds of ammunition in it, I've got my ammunition belt that's another eight or nine pounds. I'm carrying 80 pounds of equipment a rifle weighs nine pounds and I didn't have anybody other than one soldier. He took the cradle and tripod that's 48 pounds he throws that on his soldiers. I had a Korean soldier he carried two ammunition cans of ammunition each one weighs 22 pounds and he's got his own equipment. So I'm carrying more weight than him and here we go all that weight we jumped off down that valley up that hill the enemies shooting. I'm carrying heavy machine gun across my arm like this here and that bandoleer hanging on there going up them hills you know. I get tired because I'm not supposed to be right up there on the line with the infantry my job was to support them. So as I got out in the ___ I stop here I let the infantry pass me and we didn't have too many infantry there wasn't 80 people in that company less than 80 people you know in the company. And most of them just got there too so I set up and I'm shooting over their heads. I don't know if I was hitting anything but if they were up there they were ducking them bullets I'm sure. Saving getting them GIs a chance to get up that hill finally these two sergeants came up after they had taken position. And I'm standing there the gun I'm letting it cool off because I didn't have any

even though it had water in it I didn't have the box and the hose we left that back. So it was overheating these two sergeants stepped to my right one was right here and right here and they were talking and as they were talking some sniper takes a shot at us. This boy the sergeant that was standing right here the bullet hit him right here. It was just like somebody took a knife and slit it you know and I was right here I went so we got the hell out of there real quick.

Interviewer: I imagine. What did you think of MacArthur's replacement Matthew Ridgeway?

Rosa: Matthew Ridgeway done what other commanders should have done before we went to Korea trained the troops for combat.

Interviewer: What an idea.

Rosa: When we were setting the lineup they'd pull out a company put them in reserve we'd think we were gonna get some rest no we went back we had class on how to do this how to do that how to attack position. We had been doing this now for a month and a half. (This side of the tape ended and a new tape began) The war lasted from 1950 until 1953 the reason I remember the day I left Korea was because the last major battle that I fought in was a bad one. We was in the Iron Triangle it's a valley that runs for miles and it's built like a triangle in the mountains. We had a combat outpost five miles in front of the main line of resistance five miles on top of that mountain 717. And we sent a company up there every 72 hours we'd go up there and dig our position and we stayed there for three days. Then another company would come behind us and relieve us and they stayed three days and it just rotated. The first three days I went up there nothing ever happened it was just improved our positions you know. Love company always relieved us And nothing happened my second time up there the Chinese knew we were there and they fired they had a World War I 75 millimeter canon just like you see in those World War I pictures you know. And they was about two or three miles in front of us and you could see them and they were shooting at us. And those 75s must have had something on them because you could hear them coming a mile away and the noise was enough it just got your nerves. And when they came down they would whistle and then they hit and explode and they done that all day long. And we said why the hell don't the Americans knock that gun out. And the reason they couldn't it was too far advanced from the main line and we didn't have no artillery that could reach out that far unless they bring a gun up like an eight inch Howitzer which can really reach out there 22 miles. That's why people get stressed out like PS and we were all getting that way jumpy. We would pray to God oh please don't let them you hear them coming in and they'd just go boom. It was making a wreck out of me when they stopped and Love comes up and releases us I was glad to get off that mountain. I told ___ I says Gus when we get down to the company turn your equipment in go to headquarters company you're leaving. My 14 months I was there 14 months most people didn't spend that much time in Korea they got out with nine months ten months. I spent an extra 45 days because I was asked to stay because we didn't have no sergeants they had all rotated I was the last one with combat experience. And we got a new influx of soldiers nobody to teach them anything. So I volunteered for 45 days and I tried to teach them everything that I knew sounds, smells, this and that how to tell which way the fire is coming and going. I just did got back to the unit turned in all my equipment went to headquarters company got my soft cap which you never see anybody wear put that on I'm laying in the cot I'm sleeping. And all of a sudden I hear boom boom boom artillery lots of it and it don't sound good because when you hear a lot of it you know there's something happening real bad. Finally I get up to investigate the noise and I look I'm looking in the direction that I just left and that combat ___ is five miles in front of the lines. You can hear the flare and the light hundreds of rounds are must being thrown up that mountain. Finally some guys comes by 717 just got hit and it was like a couple of regiments of Chinese had attacked the hill. And the thing was we had

prepared all our positions facing the enemy these Chinese had snuck around the day before miles and miles around and hid up in the mountains behind the position. This was between the ___ line resistant the next morning they came and they hit them from the back they attacked from the back. There was Love Company maybe 212 people on that mountain fighting 5,000 Chinese attacking that hill. Along Love Company was a little finger next to that hill and they had M Company had all the machine guns and recoils rifles to support the rifle company. And they were facing the front of the hill so they couldn't really shoot behind the hill. And they got hit also the airplanes that were attacking supporting the battle were up in layers fighter P51s fighter navy planes fighter and they'd all take turns dropping rockets and nay bombs. The unit my regiment my company everybody got alert loaded up and we went my company attacked along with the other companies the 3rd battalion all went up there to support L Company. I said Jesus Christ I missed that battle I thought I was gonna miss it when this major comes into the tent sergeant you and you two go to the supply room get a helmet, a rifle, and some ammunition get out here. I said oh shit I said what's going on he said I need you Sergeant Rosa take these two sergeants take those 100 civilians, ammunition, water and food take it up to 717 they need reinforcement. I says son of a bitch so I go there I said alright let's go move out. We get half way up that hill going toward the hill we get shot at snipers and the civilians all stop and squatted they refused to move. I says hurry up get moving and the guy went like that. When he done that I had a temper back when I was young I got so mad that I took my rifle and I was going to kill the first three and I fired three rounds pow pow pow. I meant to kill them to show who was boss so they would get the hell up and move. Thank God those bullets just hit right around their feet but they got the picture they all jumped up and started moving. I said I'll bring up the rear make sure none of these ass holes you know. Then we go up the mountain up the reverse mountain when I get up there who do I run into my company. The company commander says Rosa what the hell are you doing up here? I said I brought you your supplies ammo, food and water. Oh good we need them the soldiers came and got the ammunition distributed the ammunition and while I was there there was a bunch of America bodies lined up on the ground covered in ponchos. I did not ask who they were they could have been my own buddies you know I didn't want to know. When the last pack got dropped I told the civilians let's go home. They ran down that hill those Koreans were healthy and when I ran I passed them all. When I get back I didn't say a work I said I just missed that by about that much. We had an army reunion a couple years back and there was a boy who was from Love Company and one from I Company. And the guy says Rosa I'm gonna tell you something that was not put in the newspaper he was from I Company. When I Company went up that hill fighting with the Chinese because most of Love Company had removed themselves from that position went down the other slope. A marine core ___ came down the straight and dropped a nape bomb and coupled one of our platoons by mistake. Wiped out the entire platoon killed them all that was from I Company and another plane they didn't tell me what it was P51 or nothing from another angle dropped a bomb too close to some troops and gave them a whole bunch of casualties also. But Love Company the company that was up there that took the main force done such a wonderful job that they were awarded the Distinguished Presidential Unit Citation that's the equivalent to the second highest medal. The let's see the Medal of Honor the Distinguished Service it's equivalent to that.

Interviewer: Wow I can't imagine. So after you went home then.

Rosa: Yeah I got home.

Interviewer: Did you think when you were leaving that we were nearing the end of the war that it was gonna be over quickly?

Rosa: No because the talks between the Americans and the North Koreans hadn't started yet. We were really fighting excuse me they had just started because I remember they were talking about Pork Chop Hill and they were getting all the news reports up on Pork Chop Hill. But our battle was just as bad as Pork Chop Hill.

Interviewer: Right

Rosa: There was so many casualties they tried to keep it out of the newspaper.

Interviewer: Right

Rosa: We suffered a hell of a lot of casualties on that hill because of that.

Interviewer: Well Mr. Rosa I so appreciate you talking to us. I can't

Rosa: Well that was the Korean War. I served two tours in Vietnam as an infantryman.

Interviewer: I'm glad you told me that.

Tape ended