

Interviewer: So first of all could you tell me your full name?

Grantham: Miller Grantham.

Interviewer: Okay and when and where you born Mr. Grantham?

Grantham: I was born in Middleton Tennessee.

Interviewer: What did your daddy do?

Grantham: He was a farmer.

Interviewer: Now you told me earlier that you were drafted in 1946.

Grantham: Yes I forget what month seemed like September or October but I forget which one.

Interviewer: Okay and I also know that you served over in France from 1950 to 1952.

Grantham: Yes

Interviewer: So although that was during the time of the Korean conflict you were over in Korea during that time is that right?

Grantham: No not in Korea not at that time no.

Interviewer: Okay you were there actually before that in 1946. So we know that World War II ended in 45 then you're drafted.

Grantham: That's right right out of high school.

Interviewer: Right out of high school you were drafted. Where did they send you for training in 46?

Grantham: I believe in Fort Oberthrope Georgia.

Interviewer: In what now?

Grantham: Fort Oberthrope Georgia.

Interviewer: Fort Oberthrope Georgia. Okay what was that like.

Grantham: Well I took basic training down there I forget now how long it went a few months. And I was in the tank division down there and of course went out and shot these big 90 millimeter guns training and also drove tanks at that time. So when I went over the following year went overseas to Korea well I was in the 6th armor division. And from there I worked in an office they put me in administration down there in Korea Puzon Korea. So after about nine months I was in service they came around wanted me to re-enlist or RA regular army because I was a draftee. Well I told them no I was gonna come home so they discharged me and sent me home.

Interviewer: What did you do in administration over there in Korea?

Grantham: Well just clerk.

Interviewer: Okay can tell me what you were in charge of were you in charge of anything in particular?

Grantham: No I wasn't in the service I was what you call a recruit. You don't even go in as a recruit now you go in as a private.

Interviewer: Okay

Grantham: Then they had recruit, private and then at that time when I got on they made me corporal. And I didn't stay in long enough to get any higher rank at that time.

Interviewer: I imagine it was very different coming right out of high school, getting drafted, having to go through basic training and then was that the first time you had ever been overseas?

Grantham: Yes

Interviewer: I imagine it was very different culture.

Grantham: Oh yeah very much different.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of the guys that you served with over there?

Grantham: No I sure can't remember I've got pictures at home of the whole platoon but I don't remember anybody. First name my company commander was in Florida he lived in Florida his name was Ben Pastel. But that's about the only man because I worked with him as a clerk in the orderly room when I was in the United States. Even though I went out in the field and trained sometime I was the company clerk.

Interviewer: What was the talk about communism at that time?

Grantham: You know I I was a young kid 18 years old and didn't know hardly what was going on in the world.

Interviewer: So all of it was new to you.

Grantham: Pardon

Interviewer: I said all of it was new to you then.

Grantham: Yeah that's right.

Interviewer: Were you ever afraid that you were in any danger when you were over there in Korea?

Grantham: No

Interviewer: Were you pretty much on base the whole time?

Grantham: No we'd go into town us boys would get together at night on the weekend and go into town. You know I didn't stroll down the streets by myself we went in groups.

Interviewer: Right so what did you do for fun in Korea?

Grantham: I don't remember having a whole lot of other than you know at night. We didn't play around too much downtown. Walked the streets about all we did.

Interviewer: Okay so let's fast forward just a little bit. They ask if you want to go RA and you say no thank you. You come back home and you have three years in between before you got drafted again. What did you from 47 you got home about 47 if I remember right?

Grantham: Yeah 47

Interviewer: Okay so what did you do when you got back home?

Grantham: Well I came back home and I got me a job in a factory.

Interviewer: In Tennessee?

Grantham: Yes in Middleton well it's actually Bolivar

Interviewer: I know where Bolivar is.

Grantham: Bolivar just south of Jackson.

Interviewer: Okay and did you have a family at that point?

Grantham: Oh no I didn't get married until after I was in the army the second time.

Interviewer: I see so you were working in Bolivar for a while.

Grantham: Yeah I worked at a tannery where they tanned hides to make shoes

Interviewer: Right

Grantham: You know about that?

Interviewer: It has a certain fragrance.

Grantham: That's right you know it. But I worked there for about one year 1949 went back to Middleton we had what you call a Tennessee gas pipeline. These big natural gas pipelines coming through here.

Interviewer: Right

Grantham: Well I went to work for them in 1949 and I worked for them for 37 years.

Interviewer: Oh okay so then 1950 rolls around.

Grantham: I was at Tennessee Gas

Interviewer: Yeah

Grantham: And they drafted me back in the service.

Interviewer: Were you surprised?

Grantham: And I went back in and spent two years.

Interviewer: But this time it was on the other side of the world.

Grantham: That's right I through Fort Brag North Carolina and took my training.

Interviewer: What did they train you for in Fort Brag?

Grantham: I was in the 309 field hospital.

Interviewer: Okay what did they have you learn to do what was your position?

Grantham: Well beside taking all the basic training again and going out in the field. Then they put me on what you call TDY at the hospital that's where they send you over there to work in the hospital dispensary. We had lots of paratroopers come in there and every time the paratroopers would jump they would come in with a broken arm broken legs and hurt. We had to take care of the paratrooper's dispensary.

Interviewer: Oh okay so you worked

Grantham: You worked in the I guess you call it dispensary where all the people come in you had to admit them to the hospital and do all of that take them in clean them up and all of this. Some of them was bleeding when these paratroopers jump you don't know what's gonna happen.

Interviewer: Right so they had you training to do that then you got shipped out.

Grantham: Then the whole unit got shipped out it was the 309 field hospital. And we headed they told us we were going to Germany and then the orders got changed to go to France. The army's like everybody else they give you orders and they can change them or do change them.

Interviewer: What part of France did you wind up in?

Grantham: Pardon

Interviewer: Where did in France did they send you?

Grantham: Bessancourt

Interviewer: Bessancourt where's that?

Grantham: Yeah its way out in the country like I told you yesterday. We set up tents out there lived out there set up a dispensary up there. And of course I worked down in the dispensary because you'd be surprised how many people call on sick call every day. It's not because all of them were sick it's because they were trying to get out of work. I shouldn't tell all of that but that's what goes on in the army.

Interviewer: Well I think it happens all over the place. People call in sick when they're not sick a lot.

Grantham: And they come down there and some of them would come every day every day and the doctor would see them coming and he'd tell the nurse, I shouldn't tell this but, he'd tell the nurse say hey there comes so and so again said give him a shot of sugar water. And that would satisfy him he thought that give him I don't' know a penicillin shot or something to make him feel better. But I mean he had to.

Interviewer: I understand that I sure do.

Grantham: I don't remember everything that went on of course that's been I'm 85 years old.

Interviewer: You're doing quite well doing quite well. So help me understand see the picture you're in France. What was happening in the army at that time that were you having paratroopers having to

Grantham: Not in France no this was just

Interviewer: So why did they have you in France is what I'm driving at?

Grantham: Well that's when they trained a unit they ship it out you don't know where you're going. You may go into a war zone you may no.

Interviewer: Right

Grantham: It happened so I didn't go into a war zone was in Korea at that time.

Interviewer: But they had you in France right

Grantham: Yeah in South Korea and North Korea was fighting.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Grantham: At that time and I went to South Korea in 67. But in France they was still fighting. That's just like now they are fighting in Afghanistan but not all of them go. Some of them may be going to Korea now see. It's just wherever the army decides to send a unit to.

Interviewer: Right

Grantham: Mostly they sent units I don't whether they do that now or whether they send individuals to a certain. But see we was specialized to field hospitals so we went as a unit.

Interviewer: Yeah that's why I was curious why a field hospital would be in France where there wasn't really anything happening at that time in France.

Grantham: Because back in the 50s you go to a France hospital they got all that set up in Germany and stuff like that. Bu they've still got some if you're not in bad shape they've probably still got field hospitals over there. But they're in buildings they build buildings and buy buildings and so on.

Interviewer: And you weren't in a building though were you?

Grantham: No we was out in tents.

Interviewer: Right

Grantham: Two men slept in a ten about 8 x 10 on cots. But none of this stuff they went you an apartment now. I know over there they rent you an apartment, give you TVs and all that excreta in Germany and France and all that over there. And they talked about how bad some of the soldiers has it now but they wasn't in when there wasn't no such thing as renting you an apartment and putting you in and furnishing you a TV and everything else. But they're doing it now.

Interviewer: It's a lot tougher sleeping in a tent.

Grantham: I'm glad for them but it is a difference.

Interviewer: A difference yes that's a nice way of putting it not suggesting that anybody's got it easy. Did you have many soldiers get sent to you from where there was action happening in the 50s?

Grantham: Well not in 50 because there wasn't a whole lot going on mostly just people got sick.

Interviewer: Right

Grantham: A field hospital in Korea where they were fighting yes they had plenty of action.

Interviewer: But they never sent you went on from France over to Korea?

Grantham: No

Interviewer: Okay that's fine. So while you were there in France were you near any towns any cities?

Grantham: Was I near any towns?

Interviewer: And cities where you were stationed?

Grantham: Well I'd go into visit on the weekends.

Interviewer: How did the town people treat you guys?

Grantham: Fine in France yeah.

Interviewer: They were fine?

Grantham: Oh they would invite you into their homes and all of that. I've been in a lot of their homes over there.

Interviewer: So they was a good relation between the town and the field hospital?

Grantham: Yeah

Interviewer: Unit that was there.

Grantham: I got to see the Eifel Tower went up on that and I probably ever would have got to see it if I hadn't been in the army.

Interviewer: Were you able when you got back home did you benefit anything from the GI bill?

Grantham: Well really I didn't ever pursue the GI bill or anything. But I went into electronics.

Interviewer: Okay

Grantham: And I studied electronics from Tennessee Gas actually I started studying electronics at Tennessee Gas when I went with them in 1949. I had a friend there was the radio man he took care of all our radios on our automobiles and I got interested in that and went into electronics. And I had a bunch of correspondence courses on that studied electronics. And I went to lots of seminars on electronics and I wound up I did get my FCC license. But I never did go into the radio department because I was in a department what they call measurement department and I went out to all these cities around here measuring the natural gas. And I mean that's what I transferred back from Louisiana I went to Louisiana and worked down there four years. That's how come my son's down there now in Louisiana. We was down there when he got ready to enter college and he went to college down there.

Interviewer: Did he go to LSU?

Grantham: No he went to McNeese State University there in Lake Charles.

Interviewer: I see

Grantham: There in Lake Charles we was living in a little town named Welch and we moved back to Tennessee in 70 and that's when he entered college. And he married

Interviewer: When did you get married?

Grantham: Well 1950 after I was in the service.

Interviewer: You were in the service?

Grantham: Uh huh I was getting ready to go overseas.

Interviewer: Can I ask where you met her?

Grantham: Well yeah I was living my home was in Middleton and there's a little town names Summerville Tennessee out of Memphis east of Memphis. And she that's about 50 miles from where I live and I'm there and I stayed there for a while. And I got ready to go overseas and like a lot of service people I reckon I thought I had to get married before I went overseas.

Interviewer: I hear that story quite a bit yes sir I do. Did you get married in uniform? Some folks did that.

Grantham: No I came home on a weekend pass from Fort Brag North Carolina where I was stationed.

Interviewer: Okay come home on a weekend and got married.

Grantham: We went back to Fort Brag.

Interviewer: Oh good she went back with you.

Grantham: Yeah because I wasn't going overseas at that time. It wasn't too long after that I did carried her back with me to Fort Brag.

Interviewer: So did your children come along after you were all done with the service?

Grantham: Well the oldest one came along right before I went overseas.

Interviewer: Okay so she

Grantham: In 51

Interviewer: In 51 so she was at home keeping the home fires burning.

Grantham: That's right.

Interviewer: While you were overseas.

Grantham: That's right

Interviewer: Those home front people they're very important too. I had the privilege of getting to talk with a whole lot of women who were keeping the home fires burning when their husbands were serving overseas. So that's very important.

Grantham: And she passed away we was together 56 years and she passed away in 2008.

Interviewer: I'm sorry for your loss. How many children did you have together?

Grantham: Two boys.

Interviewer: Two boys.

Grantham: Yeah the other ones the one I was talking about in Nashville. He's got three kids not any of them there but the one in Lake Charles Louisiana he's got two girls with is my grandkid. The oldest one

she's got triplets and that's a picture of them up there on that top up there. They were three or four years old they are five years old now.

Interviewer: Nice looking family.

Grantham: And the other girl his other girl's married and got two kids one two years old in October the other will be four years old in January. And she called me the other day and said Pawpaw I've got some good news for you and I said what's that? And she said well I shouldn't say this but said we've been to the doctor today and had an ultrasound and I'm gonna have twin daughters in March.

Interviewer: Oh wow multiples must run in your family.

Grantham: Well the twins in my family got two sets of twins in my family girls and my daddy's family he had twins in his family and my mothers, he had two sets in his, and my mother's got two sets of twins in her family. So yes they do run in the families but they skipped me.

Interviewer: Mr. Grantham I so much appreciate you taking your time today and sharing your experience with us we certainly appreciate it.

Grantham: Well I'm glad to do what little I can. Of course before I went overseas in France they promoted everybody and I was made sergeant. And I got over there and they froze all the ranks. And of course some of them was planning on getting another ranks when they got over there because they told them before we left the states said we can't promote everybody right now but as soon as we get over there we'll promote your rank. And on the way over there orders came down all ranks was frozen.

Interviewer: Oh my

Grantham: And of course that hurts.

Interviewer: Yes sir it would. But you were a sergeant?

Grantham: Yes came out as a sergeant and like I said on the electronics I studied that all my life.

Interviewer: Did you use any of that training you got while you were in France or in Korea later in life?

Grantham: No I never did pursue any of that.

Interviewer: Okay

Grantham: Never did pursue that. Came back with natural gas I went with that. Like I say I retired 1986 May 31st 59 years old.

Interviewer: Early retirement.

Grantham: Well the company a lot of them came around and wanted to get rid of the high paid salary people and they're still doing it in some places now. And everybody 55 and older was given a chance to go home early with a little give you a little incentive to go. And at 59 I had planned on leaving at 62 so if

you don't have it made at 59 you're not gonna have it made by 62. You can't save enough to live on at 59 that's my thinking.

Interviewer: Okay well I am very happy to have met you.

Grantham: Well nice to meet both of y'all.

Interviewer: Appreciate you telling your story and letting us record it and

Grantham: Well it's probably a lot more I skipped but I can't think of everything.

Interviewer: Well we appreciate your time.

Grantham: Is this something that you gonna be writing a thesis on or a paper on or something?

Interviewer: No sir not personally. I am in charge of taking so many interviews and then there will be another group that will come and transcribe them or type them out and then like I had told you earlier there are museums that are interested in the stories of veterans. And they will review the transcripts and kind of take it from there.

Grantham: Yeah I didn't know I didn't know whether

Interviewer: That's a good question.

Grantham: Whether it was gonna be something typed about all of this I could get a copy of.

Interviewer: What I'd like to do is get a I plan to make a copy of the tape and give you a copy of the tape on dvd if that's alright.

Grantham: That would be fine.

Interviewer: Okay