

Interviewer: Okay here we go can you go ahead and state your name so it will be at the front of the tape?

Ball: My name is Millard R Ball.

Interviewer: And when and where were you born?

Ball: I was born in Paris, Missouri October 13, 1927.

Interviewer: What was your father's occupation?

Ball: Farmer

Interviewer: And I'm guessing your mother the same.

Ball: She was a house wife.

Interviewer: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Ball: I have two brothers and three sisters.

Interviewer: What did they do for a living?

Ball: One of them worked on a railroad one of them worked in a factory and my three sisters were school teachers two of them were school teachers and the other was a house wife there she worked some in our hometown.

Interviewer: Did any of your other family members did any of your family members serve in World War II?

Ball: She we had several uncles my dad's brothers serve in World War II. My brother served in World War II.

Interviewer: What did he do?

Ball: He was in the navy he was in the navy.

Interviewer: Okay did you enlist or get drafted?

Ball: No I enlisted in 1946.

Interviewer: What was your reason for enlisting and why did you chose the army?

Ball: I was broke and needed the job and didn't want to go to school and didn't want to farm. I didn't have much of a choice. It was the army, go to school, or work on the farm. So I chose the army.

Interviewer: Why did you choose the army say over the navy or something like that?

Ball: Well I kind of wanted to go airborne the navy and nobody else had the airborne see.

Interviewer: What was your MOS?

Ball: My MOS was first as a rifleman a squad leader, platoon sergeant and then later on it was administrative and it was logistics 76Z when I retired.

Interviewer: Where did you go for basic training?

Ball: Camp Polk Louisiana and it wasn't Fort Polk it was Camp Polk. I took four weeks of basic training and they closed the post and I went to Japan never had even been to the rifle range.

Interviewer: So what was a typical day like during basic training back then?

Ball: During close order drill and going to classes you know then if you didn't have nothing to do you'd have close order drill and anything to keep you busy. And learning how to salute learning how to stand at attention learning how to do close order drill and take orders and some class work you know. It was the kind of life of a soldier. Only took four weeks of basic training they closed the post so I didn't learn a lot. I learned my left foot from my right foot you know that was about it.

Interviewer: So no particular interesting stories or memories?

Ball: No interesting stories or memories. Used to you had to get up in the morning at Camp Polk Louisiana in those days and run the cows out of the company area because there was cows hanging around everywhere you know. So we'd get up in the morning and run the cows out of the company area and we'd start our day.

Interviewer: Did you go to airborne training directly after that?

Ball: No went to Japan and then went to airborne training.

Interviewer: Could you describe basically your airborne training and maybe a typical day with that or any memories you have from that.

Ball: See when we got in our unit we took about I was in a rifle company so we took pre-jump training because jump training was only two weeks in Japan so we took pre-jump training in our company until we went to jump school. And that was a lot of running that was about I done was PT and run until I got to jump school and that was about all we done the first week in jump school. Wanted to make sure you was in good physical condition. And then the second week of jump school was jump week we had two jumps one day two jumps the next day and one jump the next day and that was about the whole jump school.

Interviewer: How was making the jumps did anybody freeze up and not make the jump or?

Ball: No I don't remember anybody freezing up and not making the jumps but everybody was kind of in the same condition I was they hadn't even rode in an airplane. See we hadn't even rode in an airplane you didn't ride in airplanes in those days there wasn't many airplanes in those days. We thought a C46

and a C47 was really a big airplane it's a little ole airplane today. But no we didn't have anybody that didn't jump that I can remember.

Interviewer: So how was the boat ride to Japan how were the living conditions on that?

Ball: We were bunked about five high and had about a foot and a half between bunks and you had to get in there with your duffle bag and kept all of your stuff close by. If the guy on top got sea sick everybody down below him got part of it you know and that's it kind of happened too.

Interviewer: In after that you stayed in Japan for some time before transferring?

Ball: Stayed in Japan until 1949 then I returned to Camp Campbell with the 11<sup>th</sup> airborne division 187<sup>th</sup> airborne infantry regiment.

Interviewer: Okay so what was your impression of the Japanese people while you were staying there and what was their impression of you?

Ball: Well I was young the war was just over and nobody liked the Japanese you know. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and the Japanese American people didn't like them in those days. So my impression of the Japanese they wasn't any good you know that's all I had ever been told. But I found out later the Japanese people were good people and probably the people who started the war they was all hung or they was dealt with the people. And the people I associated with were all good people the Japanese are good people.

Interviewer: What was their impression of American soldiers the ones that you dealt with?

Ball: Oh the first when we first got there they was a little leery of the American soldiers they had been told a lot of tales about the American soldiers too you know. And I don't know whether we ever proved it wasn't true what they had been told or not. But we got along with them better as we went along learned a little bit more about them.

Interviewer: What did you think of the state of the military preparedness on the eve of the Korean War?

Ball: Actually the military preparedness wasn't too good. We had really good NCOs in the army we had really good soldiers in the army. We probably had as good a people in the army then as we ever had when the Korean War started. But I don't think they was properly trained and equipped because we had the opinion we could send a battalion and show up and we was an American battalion everybody else would run and hide you know but it didn't work that way.

Interviewer: Did you have any personal experiences that showed any unpreparedness in the army or anything such as that?

Ball: No I didn't have any personal experiences of that.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you were at when you heard that North Korea had invaded South Korea?

Ball: I was at Camp Campbell yeah I guess.

Interviewer: Did you expect to be called to Korea?

Ball: Didn't know what was going to happen to us. So I got a leave went home bought a new car come back ready to really so I parked the car and the company commander said we've got a meeting in the theater. And the meeting in the theater he said we're going to Korea. I said man I just bought my first new car. And you're going to Korea so that ended the car fun and we left in August 1950.

Interviewer: And what time did you if you left what time did you get to Korea or what?

Ball: See I was on the advanced party and I got to Korea I think the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1950. We took off in Japan and landed at Camp Orr airport.

Interviewer: Okay what was your impression of McArthur?

Ball: Oh I was too young to have too much of an impression about anybody. Anybody older I didn't exactly I didn't even talk to platoon officers see so what was my impression you know. McArthur was a general I knew that but in those days you didn't do too much evaluating people you kind of evaluated the regimental commander and the battalion commander and company commander and platoon leader and platoon sergeant you evaluated everybody above you that you saw once in a while. You probably evaluated everybody else when it wasn't no good when you was out there about to freeze to death you know and you could blame McArthur for it if it would make you feel better. But my impression of him he was general that was about it.

Interviewer: And would you pretty much say the same thing for Ridgeway?

Ball: Yeah he was airborne see so I liked him.

Interviewer: So what was your first was your first combat experience in Korea when you

Ball: First combat experience was in Korea when we made the combat jump October 20, 1950.

Interviewer: And where did can you describe that and where did y'all jump into?

Ball: We jumped at Suchon it's about 35 miles north of Pyongyang the North Korean capital and our jump was delayed for about four hours on account of the weather was fogged in. We was scheduled to interrupt a troop training carrying POWs from Korea into China north yeah into China. But being as we jumped late we found a lot of Americans that they had shot and part of in fact we found part of the troop train but part of that had left too. And a lot of them was airborne we did find some people alive and some dead Americans.

Interviewer: Did y'all encounter much enemy resistance or was it

Ball: We did we encountered come enemy resistance. The night of the 21<sup>st</sup> of October was our biggest really first engagement.

Interviewer: And you said you found some troops killed.

Ball: Yeah they were American POWs.

Interviewer: They had killed the POWs in there?

Ball: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay what was your second job what did you do after that jump?

Ball: After that jump we stayed up in North Korea for about a week or ten days where we jumped around that area. We moved back to Pyongyang the capital of North Korea. We eat Thanksgiving dinner in Pyongyang and then we left Pyongyang and went south. The Chinese intervened in the Korea War and so we headed south to get reorganized you know and set up a front to face the Chinese. Then we back to Kempo not Kimpo went back to Seoul and then later on went in the other operation.

Interviewer: Do you remember having any contact with either the North Korean or South Korean civilians?

Ball: Yeah we had all kinds of contact with South Korean civilians you know. Going and coming they'd want to you'd meet them but they were pretty scarce you know. South Koreans made themselves scarce and the North Koreans did too.

Interviewer: What was your impression of both of them respectively? Was there would you say there was that much of a difference between the north and south Koreans?

Ball: Actually I didn't like the North Koreans my impression was no good see. And my impression I had an impression about everything thing especially I was cold and hungry and wet and tired and couldn't dig a foxhole because the ground was froze too hard. And we had impressions about everything but we really didn't you know they said North Koreans were no good see they were shooting at us at night so naturally we didn't like them too good. But South Korean people were good people we learned a little about them after we got a little older and things settled down and you're enjoying yourself instead of doing other things we had done.

Interviewer: And you said your next jump was after the Chinese and everything entered the conflict.

Ball: It was after the Chinese intervened. The second jump was the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1951 at Boonsomee which is in South Korea now.

Interviewer: Could you give me some details about that jump and basically what you were doing?

Ball: We jumped out of a C46 airplane we jumped about noon it was actually on Easter Sunday. Good Friday was I believe it was no we jumped I don't remember. Good Friday and Easter Sunday had something to do with it but maybe we jumped on Good Friday. But anyway it was the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1951 and there wasn't much resistance our unit didn't face much resistance around Boonsomee at the time.

Interviewer: Did you ever have contact with Chinese soldiers or Chinese troops?

Ball: No I never did.

Interviewer: You never did so you couldn't compare okay. And you mentioned POWs and basically how the North Korean had treated them. Did you ever hear any stories about harsh treatment or brainwashing tactics that the North Koreans used or?

Ball: Yeah you hear all kind of stories you know and we had people in our company got captured. And then they come out in 1953 of course they tell you all kind of stories you know.

Interviewer: You don't have to go into that much depth on them but basically what was their description of that you talked to them about?

Ball: They would talk about hard times they would talk about not much food to eat not much medical care. Places they slept in was cold and that's kind of what they you know soldiers take all of that stuff and they kind of laugh about it after it's all over you know and you get to joking about it you know. What these guys done to them and it's those were about the only things they ever mentioned. Of course that was about the only things they done they worked they had to go work some but they basically they stayed in those camps and that was about it done what they was told.

Interviewer: Do you remember the winter of 50 and 51?

Ball: Yeah 51 is one of the things I was there in 1950.

Interviewer: So was your unit prepared for how cold it was gonna be?

Ball: Nobody was you couldn't even guess how cold it was gonna be I think it got down to 40 below. The ground was frozen so hard you couldn't put a tent pin down in the ground and dig a hole. We had an old truck we had captured on the first jump we would start a fire under it in the morning to warm it up so the engine would turn over and warm the oil up in that crank so the engine would turn over. And it was cold.

Interviewer: So was that basically how y'all coped with the winter?

Ball: We just coped with it.

Interviewer: How were the conditions and supplies that your unit received?

Ball: We received adequate supplies. Now some people would tell you they didn't but as far as I was concerned we pretty well we got as good as anybody else. You know everybody didn't have a winter sleeping bag but we done as well as anybody else did. It was difficult to prepare for that you know you just didn't know how cold it was going to get.

Interviewer: And how old were you in theatre in Korea?

Ball: Just one year. I've been there one year since in peace time but during war time I was there one year.

Interviewer: Were you there when the peace talks were going on?

Ball: No

Interviewer: You were not okay.

Ball: I was at Fort Campbell then.

Interviewer: And were you wounded at all in your time?

Ball: No

Interviewer: Okay basically looking back on Korea is there any other interesting things you'd like to add or?

Ball: No I didn't that has been 50 years ago and my memory is not too good. But that's about it.

Interviewer: Or anything I might not have covered that you might think

Ball: No I can't think of anything else that might be of interest.

Interviewer: So after that you went back to Camp Campbell and

Ball: Went back to Fort Cmapbell.

Interviewer: What were you doing there?

Ball: I was in the 188 airborne infantry regiment.

Interviewer: What were or what were you doing within the regiment?

Ball: I was in the supply end of it the S4 logistical at that time. Then later on I was a platoon sergeant but not in the 188<sup>th</sup>.

Interviewer: So how long were you in that capacity?

Ball: Well until 1954 went back overseas 55 so it had been about four years.

Interviewer: And where did you go when you went back overseas?

Ball: Went to Taiwan

Interviewer: Taiwan?

Ball: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay

Ball: Advisor to the Chinese army.

Interviewer: What was your could you basically talk about what you did there?

Ball: Yeah we assisted the Chinese army and we'd go around they had manuals and see we gave them equipment. They had manuals that had been transferred from English to Chinese and we had trouble understanding their own manuals so after it had been translated in Chinese they'd have trouble reading it and doing what they were supposed to do with the equipment we gave them. You go around the system and those types things in the infantry and the administrative field.

Interviewer: What was your impression of the people there the Nationalist Chinese?

Ball: I liked the Chinese yeah I relay did. I had a translator and a driver that was very dedicated and good people.

Interviewer: And I'm guessing

Ball: They didn't make any money they made about 5 or \$10 a month you know and they were nice people.

Interviewer: How much animosity was there between the nationalist Chinese people and the communist Chinese?

Ball: There was quite a bit because all the people who had come to Taiwan had escaped the communist China. See Shangkishae brought the noncommunist out of there and brought them to Taiwan. So there was naturally animosity to the communist government but all of them wanted to go back to China.

Interviewer: And this was still during the point in time when the U.S. government still recognized the Taiwan Chinese government correct?

Ball: Yeah that's the reason I was over there.

Interviewer: Did that make things difficult at all from your impression?

Ball: No from my status it didn't make any difference. You want me to oh okay I'll tell you about the Chinese. See I had a Chinese driver he was a master sergeant in the Chinese army and he was one of the finest soldiers I've ever seen. He was a really good person and really dependable and sharp. So I asked my translator I told my translator I said ask him why he didn't learn how to speak English. So they talked in Chinese and pretty soon the translator said you want me to tell you what he said? And I said yeah what did he say? He said you're over here as an advisor you're the smart one you're over here to teach us how to do said I think you should learn how to speak Chinese. So I told him I said I think that's a pretty good answer except I wasn't very smart probably could have learned Chinese. But I thanked him for his answer and I agreed with him that's probably what he should have told me.

Interviewer: Now if you find something or if you know something that I don't you're welcome to just chime in.

Woman in the background: No I just wanted him to say that.

Ball: Yeah I told that story before.

Interviewer: That's a good one. I'm sure you know his history better than me so if you catch him leaving something out.

Woman in the background: That's the only one I wanted to hear him say.

Interviewer: Thank you. And after you were stationed in Taiwan where were you transferred to after that?

Ball: Fort Brag

Interviewer: Fort Brag

Ball: The 82<sup>nd</sup> airborne 505 airborne regiment.

Interviewer: And what was your

Ball: I was in logistics there.

Interviewer: Logistics

Ball: And we only stayed there for about 6 or 8 months and then I had to re-enlist for Fort Campbell because I'd been rock signed in the 187<sup>th</sup> in the Korean War. They had the 187 here as part of the 101<sup>st</sup> so General Wes Moorland was the commanding general out here so he had gotten an agreement that anyone who had been in the 187<sup>th</sup> could re-enlist and come to Fort Campbell. So I was at Fort Brag in the 505 and I re-enlisted and come to Fort Campbell. So I went in the 32 well actually I went in the 501<sup>st</sup> here as a platoon sergeant and stayed there for a while. Then I wanted to get back in logistics so I did stayed in the 327 in logistics for about 6 months then I went to Yugoslavia. That's where I met my wife.

Interviewer: And what did you do in Yugoslavia?

Ball: We was part of the American Military Assistance Staff the same thing we done in the Chinese Army. We was giving them military equipment military aid. They had American made military equipment they had manuals translated you know from English to \_\_\_\_\_ and we had people go around and help them with that with what they were doing.

Interviewer: And Wikipedia this beforehand so it might not be that but I might mispronunciation but Tito.

Ball: Tito was the president then when I was there.

Interviewer: And from what I read he was somewhat a socialist but he didn't get along with Russia that well or the Soviet Union that well.

Ball: Well Tito was kind of a mystery you know. My wife is Yugoslavian she knows more about Tito than I do so I don't want to tell you a lot about Tito. I don't know anything about Tito anyway to tell you the truth. My level of business that's about I knew about as about Tito as I did about McArthur you know I heard of him and seen him flying around or something. But yeah that was the reason we were told we left Yugoslavia in 1958 because Russian had kind of told him to tell us to leave.

Interviewer: And how long did you stay there I'm sorry.

Ball: Almost a year.

Interviewer: And you met your wife.

Ball: I went to the 11<sup>th</sup> airborne I met my wife while I was there then I went back to the 11<sup>th</sup> airborne division in Germany.

Interviewer: And what were you doing with the 11<sup>th</sup> airborne?

Ball: The 11<sup>th</sup> airborne division I was in logistics and administration and in October or July 1, 1958 they deactivated the 11<sup>th</sup> airborne division reactivated the 24<sup>th</sup> infantry division. And the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1958 we went to Lebanon one of those Lebanese wars. Stayed in Beirut for 100 days then came back to Germany.

Interviewer: Came back to Germany?

Ball: Uh huh

Interviewer: Was there a lot of how seriously did y'all take the threat of Soviet Military conflict back then? Did y'all

Ball: Naturally me I didn't take anything too seriously at my level you know I was only a Master Sergeant at that time. But we did train to for the Soviets and we had practices we done you know drills we done and things that they gave us to do in case we saw a Soviet car. We did we was knew who they were and we did do our training to do whatever we had to do to face them if we had any altercations.

Interviewer: So a decent level of military preparedness you would say?

Ball: Yeah

Interviewer: And you mentioned staying several places what was your favorite place thus far to have stayed?

Ball: Well I'd get killed if I told you it wasn't Yugoslavia.

Interviewer: What was your second best?

Ball: I don't know everywhere I've been people probably won't believe it but you know I've kind of liked it had a good time everywhere I've been. Even in the worst places it's what you make out of things you can go through life and be miserable everywhere you are if you want to be. Or you can make yourself kind of happy and that's what I always managed or tried to do anyway. And of course I had unhappy times when I was home didn't matter where I was you have unhappy times but I tried to make it as good as I could. That's the reason I stayed in 30 years.

Interviewer: Was it just a state of mind thing?

Ball: Yeah

Interviewer: Or was there any particular thing you did to pass the time?

Ball: No it's a state of mind thing. You can make yourself miserable and you can make yourself un-miserable whatever you want to do. Like when I was gonna go to Yugoslavia they said you want to take a refrigerator I could have done that. I said what about refrigerators? They said well a lot of people in Yugoslavia don't have refrigerators. I said if they can live without one I can live without one too it doesn't make any difference to me. I don't need one I didn't take one. But it's those types of things you know I figure if the natives can do it I can do it.

Interviewer: And I think I got a little bit past that in the time line but when you decided to re-enlist what was the particular reason? Was it you enjoyed the lifestyle?

Ball: Yeah I was glad to stay in. Everybody thanks me for my service I always tell them I joined the army to get a new pair of shoes and I was lucky they let me stay in. They didn't have to thank me for my service I should be the one doing the thanking.

Interviewer: And I believe that was your second time in Germany and they deactivated the

Ball: 11<sup>th</sup> airborne division reactivated the 24<sup>th</sup> division 1 July 1958.

Interviewer: And you remained in Germany?

Ball: I remained in Germany in the 24<sup>th</sup> division until January 61 then came back to Fort Campbell 101<sup>st</sup>.

Interviewer: Still in logistics?

Ball: Still in logistics yeah.

Interviewer: What exactly did you do in logistics was it supplies and

Ball: Well I was in war plans for four or five years but I was really in G4 administrative part of it. We really didn't handle supplies too much. Unless we made a parachute jump out and we had to haul ammunition and there wasn't anybody else around to lift it you know we'd get into the detailed work of it. But I was usually in the higher respond of the administrative end of it planning and the writing regulations and things like that.

Interviewer: And what did you do after that assignment?

Ball: At Fort Campbell?

Interviewer: Yes

Ball: Went to Vietnam in August no July 1965 1<sup>st</sup> brigade of the 101<sup>st</sup>. Stayed for a year in Vietnam and then I went to Germany from Vietnam and stayed three years.

Interviewer: What did you do in Vietnam were you

Ball: Logistics

Interviewer: Logistics

Ball: Yeah

Interviewer: Did you ever encounter

Ball: Brigade headquarters

Interviewer: Did you ever encounter combat?

Ball: Well we was kind of exposed but not a lot of shooting and killing and you know we didn't we weren't exposed to much.

Interviewer: Did y'all encounter where were you stationed at I'm sorry?

Ball: In Vietnam?

Interviewer: Yes

Ball: We was all over. We had our base camp was Banrang but we was hardly ever in it. First brigade had the no-back in Vietnam and they was all over Vietnam. (Tape began skipping ever couple of seconds) I came home from Docto in 1965 and went to Germany from Vietnam.

Interviewer: What did she give you?

Ball: She told me to take my glasses off. I look old she didn't want me to look old.

Interviewer: So you didn't encounter any sniper fire or anything like that?

Ball: No I had enough exposure to get combat infantry badge. We didn't do a lot of shooting, hollering, killing I was in brigade headquarters I guess the rifle companies did that.

Interviewer: And what was your impression of the quality of troops in comparison to Vietnam to Korea?

Ball: We had good troops in Vietnam I had about the same impression. In the airborne you know these people almost all of your life you know from when you're a young soldier and you stay in. There's people around here now that I made both combat jumps in the same plane and that was in 51 which was almost 60 years ago. So we had good NCOs and good officers in both Korea and Vietnam.

Interviewer: And so in Vietnam you didn't experience worse drug use or \_\_\_ or anything like that?

Ball: Not a lot you know. You know one of the experiences I remember about Vietnam we used to go down the road we were eating sea rations and we would buy something to eat from the locals and corn on the cob was really a kind of delicacy see. So we was going down the road one day and there was an old farmer had he was out there in his field he had his corn he was growing. So we went to buy some we did go buy some and this old guy could speak English pretty good. Now me told me he what are you

doing over here? Well American soldiers we go wherever we are supposed to go and do whatever we've got to do. He wound up telling me said you can't win over here because you don't even have a purpose for being over here. You know that old guy was probably right. But it really was amazing after I got to thinking about it why he would say something like that. He said I wished the people would just leave me alone said the North Koreans or North Vietnamese come by and I've got to do for them then the Americans come along run them out. Here comes the South Vietnamese here comes the Americans he said I've got to deal with everybody. He said I only want to do my farm and take care of my family. If everybody would leave me alone I'd be happy. And that kind of set with me I kind of remembered that.

Interviewer: Would you say that was the general opinion of

Ball: Well I don't know if it was or not it was his opinion. He was like me got an opinion about everything. But sometimes your opinion is not too good sometimes it's okay. But that was his opinion anyway.

Interviewer: Any other what was your impression of the Vietnamese people as a whole?

Ball: They was good hard working people yeah I didn't see a thing wrong with them. They was probably about like him they just wished everybody would get the heck out of there and leave them alone. That's what I'd be thinking I guess.

Interviewer: Any interesting stories or experiences from

Ball: No you know not too much about it many stories.

Interviewer: What did you do in your free time?

Ball: we didn't have much free time we went to sleep. You know you worked until about ten o'clock every night about seven days a week. Then you had radio watch sometimes after that so your free time you went to sleep. Now I got R&R and I went to Bangkok Thailand for five days. But you didn't have no free time like eight hours a day it wasn't no eight hours a day. It was up in the morning at five or six in the morning you worked till you got through at night which was usually nine, ten o'clock at night. You'd go to sleep get up do the same thing again the next day.

Interviewer: And where did you go after you left Vietnam?

Ball: Germany

Interviewer: Germany

Ball: Yeah Frankfurt Germany headquarters 5<sup>th</sup> core.

Interviewer: Logistics still?

Ball: Logistics yeah. Stayed there three years then went to Korea in logistics still.

Interviewer: What was your impression of Korea the second time around?

Ball: There were a lot of improvements I had a better impression than the first time I was over there. But they had built good highways and had buses and things had changed. I expected to see the rough roads and them old guys carrying honey buckets around and that didn't work. They was all driving car and had the highways and doing good.

Interviewer: Were you in Seoul?

Ball: I was in Seoul for six months then I was in Tagu for six months.

Interviewer: I've got a friend who is in the army and just got back from Korea a couple of years ago and he said their opinion was really favorable of Americans when he got back. Was the opinion extremely favorable then or was it

Ball: Yeah it was their opinion was okay as long as they were making money off of us they was happy you know. We was over there we was gonna be spending the money said you're over here so you get take what you have form you.

Interviewer: Did you have more free time in Korea than Vietnam I'm guessing.

Ball: Oh yeah you didn't work 24 hours a day in Korea like you did in Vietnam.

Interviewer: What did you do to pass the time in Korea?

Ball: Play golf actually we didn't have as much free time as you'd think. But we would go to the club tell war stories play golf once in a while. And it was kind of like your free time anywhere you have to do what you can do when you do have free time.

Interviewer: What would you do in Germany for free time?

Ball: Well about the same go to the guest houses and I don't know. Just the same as you do in regular living go home. I had a wife and two kids I'd go home and they'd give me something to do. I'm sure I had plenty to do I just can't think of what it was.

Interviewer: In what stations did your wife come with you and which did she not?

Ball: She came straight from Yugoslavia to Fort Campbell. Stayed three years in Tennessee or four years at Fort Campbell and then she went to Texas while I was in Vietnam. Then we went to Germany together then I went to Korea and she went to Missouri and stayed a year. And then that was the only two years we've been separated since we've been married.

Interviewer: And after your second time in Korea what did you do then?

Ball: Went to Hawaii

Interviewer: Went to Hawaii

Ball: Stayed five years in Hawaii as an adviser to the National Guard.

Interviewer: Hard life?

Ball: That was probably my finest assignment of ever. That was really a good assignment. Boy the people nice people we still go back and visit ever chance we get. If it wasn't so far over there we'd probably go more often because we all liked Hawaii my kids and my wife and me. We liked the Hawaiian people good people.

Interviewer: And after that?

Ball: After that I came went to Alabama and stayed one year as an advisor to Alabama National Guard then in 1976 I retired after 30 years' service.

Interviewer: Looking over all of your years in the service what would you say the best and worst living accommodations you had were?

Ball: The best was in Hawaii I guess. See I was in the army 15 years before I got married so my accommodations were in a barracks. They're you know not too good not like when I got married and had an air-conditioned house I thought I was really doing good then. Over on Camp over on Fort Campbell but I guess my our conditions our happiness was really the best in Hawaii. We lived right by the school the kids participated in sports and all kinds of things and kept us busy and we really like it.

Interviewer: And since you were in the army for 30 years were there any particular changes you had seen occur in the army over those 30 years?

Ball: Naturally there were a lot of changes. See when I came in nobody had any money we couldn't muster up \$5 in a platoon two weeks after payday. You know we really couldn't nobody was married we all lived together we all needed one another. And we lived together we socialized together and then by the time I got out of the army 30 years later the biggest part of the army is married, people go home they didn't live in big ole barracks you know 40 people in one room like we did. Yeah big changes in the army.

Interviewer: What else is there anything else that you would like to add or anything I might not have known about and might not have touched on that you

Ball: No I don't think there's anything I need to add. I'm not much on these interviews I hope I give you something that's beneficial to what you want to do with it.

Interviewer: You have I think he's got a couple of questions for you.

Interviewer 2: You're not done yet Willard.

Ball: Okay

Interviewer 2: Something that I learned about that you had never told me you were in Lebanon in the 50s?

Ball: Yeah 1958 we went to Lebanon for we stayed down there 100 days. And we were in one of those Lebanese wars. Yeah we lived out in this olive grove I was with the 187<sup>th</sup> Rocksons. We lived out in an

olive grove and they had an American headquarters up in Beirut. And we run patrols in town and we even had one guy killed down there shot by a sniper.

Interviewer 2: Were you the American forces there as intermediate an intermediate force between the two conflicting parties or were you actually fighting on the side of one against the other?

Ball: We were probably I don't know to tell you the truth at my level. But we did have there was two different parties down there that didn't like one another and we were in between them.

Interviewer 2: Do you remember what was the nature of the two conflicting parties?

Ball: No I don't remember. See I remember one night we was going down the road and this guy had all the laundry concession stands around the regimental area battle group area we was with the battle group. And he took me into town to dinner the colonel told me I could go and on our way home we run into an ambush and had 11 bullet holes in that little ole car when we got home and counted them. But neither one of us got hit it didn't have any windows left in it but there was some shooting going on. But I didn't get exposed to it except that night. So I didn't go anywhere after that.

Interviewer 2: Because Lebanon we have such a long history now with Lebanon and the problems that we have here today. Going back to Yugoslavia you were an advisor to the Yugoslavian military.

Ball: The American military assistants staff not advisor

Interviewer: Okay

Ball: Assistants

Interviewer: During World War II at least from my reading the Yugoslavs were largely known as commandos' partisans' kind of doing irregular warfare against the Germans.

Ball: The serves

Interviewer 2: The serves

Ball: Now the part of the Yugoslavs the Kroasions were with the Germans.

Interviewer 2: Well sure sure

Ball: But the Serves was the only part of Yugoslavia that was really against the Germans and they did all kinds of they did anything they could to damage the Germans.

Interviewer 2: Uh huh by the late 1950s had the Serve military really progressed then into a coherent military?

Ball: Really had

Interviewer 2: So they made the move from partisan to organized military in that short span of time?

Ball: When I was there in 1957 the Serves had a or the Yugoslavs had a real good army I mean a Cracker Jack professional army big army good army.

Interviewer 2: One last thing something that people you continue to stress your airborne connection and a lot of people don't really understand what that means in terms of what your rump ranks would be like. Can you describe for the listener when you were ready to jump out of the airplane say on your first combat jump in Korea or something you must have had hundreds of pounds of equipment on between your chute, your ruck, your weapon.

Ball: Yeah we had we had probably each one of us that made a combat jump probably each one of us weighted about 350 pounds. It took two people to put us in a plane. And then the first combat jump we jumped out of a 119 it had a montarail system going out to the bottom of the airplane the same time as we were jumping out the back door. The montarail system had the extensions of the static line so that the equipment would fall down below us and open up so we wouldn't get tangled up with it.

Interviewer 2: Okay

Ball: Yeah it and I but you know my cohesions with the airborne comes from my coming in the army when I did. Like I explained we needed one another and we've always felt that way. And when we came in the army we all slept in one big ole platoon room and 40 of us in the same room and none of us was married. We didn't have any car we didn't have any civilian clothes over in Japan and that's just the way we were brought up. So I guess that's the reason we're still tight with one another. I think the airborne is probably the closest group of people of any services. I don't see any other units like the Rocksons for example that get together as often as we do and greet one another as much as we do. And the 11<sup>th</sup> airborne division is kind of the same way we have a picnic down here every year at Fort Campbell and we have people come from all over the United States still do they are 80 years old. If they can make it they'll be here. And they're really a tight group and when we came in we were all young we needed one another we soldiered together I think that's kind of the way we were brought up that's the way we started.

Alright thank you tape ended