

Conway Vernon

Mr. Vernon: I'm from Chico, California born February 3, 1924 in an Indian Ranch near California Rancheria on an Indian Reservation one of the small ones. And I go back every now and then. In 1980 got my tribal rights back in federal court then the tribal council can't see me being on there and they vote against me, kick me out, so I've been fighting for 10 years. In 1943 I was living in Sacramento 41 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and I was going and joining the Marine Core. And my father said he would sign if my mother would sign and my mother wouldn't sign so I couldn't go until I quit high school. So I left and went to Indian School in Riverside California had 1500 students, Indian students. And went to school there and next year I took up aircraft and went to San Diego to work. So I got steel wool in my hand and I couldn't do any welding anymore I couldn't clean the wool or anything the steel wool it bothered me to much. So I quit and went back to my folks in Richmond, California and worked in a ship yard quit school down here so I could go into the service but I couldn't go in until I was drafted. I was drafted in 1943 and I went in service. I joined in San Francisco and they sent me down to San Diego boot camp and I was there for three months. And after three months of boot camp they gave me 10 day leave and I joined the Marine Core and I didn't know they had an Air Core I thought it was all infantry that's why I signed up the choices infantry infantry infantry.

Interviewer: And you didn't know that they had Air Core.

Mr. Vernon: And when I got my 10 day leave and went back to boot camp and got distributed out to different places they had me in the Air Core and I was disgusted because I had joined the infantry. And so they sent me to Camp Miramar stayed there about two months and they send me to Lake Hurst, New Jersey and I stayed there about three months and went through Chicago and lay over there the troop and I'd never seen coal burning engine before. And you wake you you could see the outline from the coal dust. Where you laid there was a white spot an outline of your head and the rest of some of the people woke up with their face covered black. So from there we went to Detroit, Michigan I went to aircraft turret school.

Interviewer: How long were you there?

Mr. Vernon: About three months. Then went threw went threw Washington D.C. and stayed there just about the day one day and caught a train down to North Carolina North Carolina to a Marine Air Core base there and I think I stayed there about several months. All of a sudden they asked if I catch a convoy to Eaton, North Carolina my group was moving no one told me about it. So they had an airplane there and I couldn't pack up my gear so I had to leave it there. Caught the airplane and took off went to Eaton I only took a half hour then they had caught the convoy to come back and get my clothing and it took us about all day to get there about 12 hours or more to get back to Eaton when the airplane only took a half hour. We stayed there for a few months and we were the first B25 squadron to go overseas. And I got 30 day mess duty there and I weighted about 155 pounds when I went in about 5'11 and a half and after 30 days I weighted again I averaged about a pound a day I weighted 185 when I got out. Then we caught a troop train to San Diego and they had all of use march to the train and everything I didn't think there was that many in our squad I guess about 700 or more. And so then we got down to New Mexico

and we were on duty on the flight cars and the equipment and trucks and everything. And every time they would get us out we'd see ships and we'd have to get on the boat with passenger cars and so many folks in the water couldn't get in I had to come back with the flat carts and get them started. And our caboose engine most men stay away I just threw my riffle up on the flat car then he motioned me to come on like that and it was foggy and you couldn't even see very far and I just ran down on the tracks seemed like I'd never get to the train. He stopped the train and I got back on and stayed in the caboose until the next stop. I thought I'd got a bawling out from the sergeant only he got left behind the same way so I didn't get no bawling out.

Interviewer: That's funny.

Mr. Vernon: Then we got to San Diego and went to Camp Miramar and I thought we'd go right overseas and we stayed there about three months. And here I lived on the West Coast up in Northern California and they wouldn't let me run liberty to go see my folks or anything and other people who didn't even live in California got to go on liberty. Cause you were on guard duty and instead of doing four hour on four hour off I rather just to eight hours. And finally we get going overseas and went down to the troop ship Navy ship took us down called Liberty ship. It was 1800 of us get on the ship.

Interviewer: Now did you leave in a convoy with how many ships left at the same time?

Mr. Vernon: You mean on our squadron there was about seven or eight hundred in our squadron. But there was other troops in the ship beside us.

Interviewer: No other ships were there lots of ships that left at the same time or just one?

Mr. Vernon: Just one. We went overseas we were out in the Pacific no convoys or anything one ship that Liberty ship.

Interviewer: How long did it take?

Mr. Vernon: We had 13 days out in the Pacific we had a storm and it was like a rollercoaster that ship go like that the wave go in and all of a sudden go down like that. And it sounded like it was going to break in the air I didn't know it could do that but it didn't. It didn't do anything like that. And somebody said it was a submarine out there a big submarine but we didn't know it it's what we were told. And I guess it was too rough for them to torpedo or something. And so just three weeks and said it would be a little calmer now on. And we stayed in that three or four months and that's ridiculous before we ever go to war just go to combat and sitting around there for three or four months it seemed like.

Interviewer: Didn't go into combat?

Mr. Vernon: Not right then. If I think if I when the infantry went up in the Marshall Island invasion but they didn't have the luck at Marine Air Core. Then we oh I say about three months later we got the call to get ready and everything and we moved up then on Quanta Cannel and we went by London and Luam and through Bogenville 30 miles from there. That's where we stopped and got out at the air field

there. We just stayed where the aircrafts were at that's where we made our camps with the aircraft parts and everything. They didn't have no places to stay until they cleared a place out.

Interviewer: What was it like?

Mr. Vernon: It wasn't very good you had to watch out for the centipedes they'd grow over a foot long like that you know you ever seen a centipede all them legs well this looked a lot like that. And they were about that wide with the legs. And then you had a coral snake they are poisonous. And you just had to pray that it wasn't their time to eat I guess.

Interviewer: Just the tropics I guess.

Mr. Vernon: So then later called guard and there was at the main gate and it was on the building there and all of a sudden I felt something on the back of my head and in my hair and everything and I went like that and nothing happened and I said maybe it was my raincoat I had my raincoat on and then I reached up again like that and still nothing. So I called another guard over and he put his flashlight up there and he seen that there was a centipede they grow in pairs and you knock it on the ground and said don't you want to step on it and I said no you step on it. So they hit it with the bottom of the riffle but they didn't know what happened to the other one.

Interviewer: Well the other one wasn't on you was it?

Mr. Vernon: Well it had to be because they grow in pairs. I took my raincoat off and of course I couldn't keep it on. So it was one guy took us three or four months before they let us set up ground defense before they let us set up our low caliber machine guns. And I don't know why they didn't have us put them up when we first got there. And a Japanese plane came over and the siren went off and this guard he was down there on duty he told the guy that was under escort he had stole some money on the ship going over he had him on guard. And he was down in his cot there in the tent and he said we'll go out and run out in the coral rock and go for shelter he said oh the Japanese won't come over here and all of a sudden they hear aircraft start going off and he turned over to wake the other troops up and he turned back to wake this one guy up again he was no where in sight just disappeared all of a sudden. I guess when he heard that aircraft coming it scared him and he ran for a place to hide. So I didn't have anything to do and they wanted be to go out for boxing and I went out and boxed with this Libby guy and I think he must have ran out of his corner because he had a good very fast and I didn't have a chance to do anything I think I only took a couple of steps out of my corner and all of a sudden he hit me right between the eyes like that and it made everything go black. I couldn't see but he didn't knock me down though just kind of blacked me out a little. So I did cover up my face with my arms like that and stayed like that until it was over all I could do was protect myself the first round. Then the second round I was expecting it he came out of his corner and I just put my arm out like that and I think he ran into my fist face first because he ran you know and he come out there I've had enough after what you did to me I had enough I had enough. I said well don't tell me tell the referee. So I told the referee said he wants to quit he said he had enough. And the referee asked him and he said yeh I want to quit. He did so I got a technical knock out. And so later on I think it was an Australian in the box and I just went out for boxing I'd never boxed before.

Interviewer: And this was just while ya'll were there in your free time?

Mr. Vernon: So and I had to box this New Zealand for the championship and my second would tell me how to fight and everything cause he knew something about boxing you know. He didn't tell me it was his soft spot and I could have turned this thing away it didn't make a difference to me. And he didn't tell me about the points see every time he hits you he gets a point and I didn't know that. I could have hit him more often but I didn't do it so he come out with more points than what I did you know. But otherwise it was alright. And I got a pick out of this sergeant he was in charge of us we were at mess call one day and we had a Marine Core supply outfit above us we started going up to eat because they are getting fresh food not there yeh right there and we're getting K-rations and so the colonel up the major up there Marine Core supplies didn't like us coming up there so the colonel that knew what we were doing so I didn't do anything and I didn't have anything except K-rations so they just said go on strike the troops so they said they weren't going to do anything and they went up the colonel went up and got the officer came down and he said how come you didn't he said don't you know getting good food helps you and your strength and he said yeh and in the mess hall the supply officer up there the supply officer wouldn't give us any fresh food and yet they were getting it. All of those three months we were there see we went from that Island back to London for a rest period. That's when we went on strike and I guess there were about 6 or 7 hundred on strike. And the officers there said you were supposed to be getting fresh food ever since you've been here. It was about two months or longer and that's what we had been given K-rations and the master sergeant said that's what you've been given you weren't given fresh food. So after the next morning after the strike we got steak and eggs for breakfast. But then the next week we got shipped out again up to an Island to secure it.

Interviewer: What Island was it?

Mr. Vernon: Lou Island.

Interviewer: Lou Island.

Mr. Vernon: I think it was Lou Island we were going above Boganville. And I didn't like where I had it and the buddy he said it didn't bother me any bit. It bleached my hair I didn't know that. Two of these guys that were on our garbage detail they'd go out in the mess hall and different areas of the camp and they backed up the truck to dump it over the cliff the garbage and they just barley hit the brakes in time or they would have gone over the cliff with the garbage. So I never drank in the service. They got this pure alcohol 90 or 180 proof something like that and they thought it was coke we took our own coke cased of coke with us and they took about 2,3 or 7 cases of beer and drank about two or three a day to the men that wanted it. And we kept mosquito netting there we kept that out to keep the crabs out the land crabs land crabs get about that round and they crawl up that mosquito netting and they keep the centipedes out too you know. And they have little land crabs come up too.

Interviewer: Now that was on the Islands or the whole time?

Mr. Vernon: All of the Islands.

Interviewer: All of the Islands were like that. I was in Quam lots of bugs.

Mr. Vernon: I know a family here they are from Quam they live in Nevada. The guy was with the Marine Core he met his wife over there. Married her and brought her over here.

Interviewer: Neat. Now when you were over there did you get to write letters and stuff in your free time?

Mr. Vernon: I used to write about 30 or 40 people you know that I used to go to school with and my folks and my cousins.

Interviewer: Did you have a girlfriend when you were over there?

Mr. Vernon: No but you don't have a girlfriend just got the Navy there.

Interviewer: No but I'm saying back home.

Mr. Vernon: No I had read and heard too much about thieves marrying GIs so they could go overseas and get \$10,000 insurance. That's what a lot of them were marrying them for. So I said I'm not going to get married. If something happens to me I'll leave my insurance to my folks. I was kind of particularly my duties was over there and all I had to do was wash the trays and that wasn't nothing just heat the water up in just no time weren't too bad of duties. But when we went overseas on the troop ship out in that sea we were the only ship out there by our self we had to do four hours of guard duty all the time going overseas on that ship. Security they had security on there already we had

Interviewer: Just keeping you busy I guess.

Mr. Vernon: They just made us do that. On the way overseas Monday they had us on four hour and off and you got to sleep and eat the time you were off duty you know. In three or four hours if you sleep too long you don't get to eat so I looked at my time and I had about five minutes left in the mess hall and I sat there and ate and they had a mess in there and they couldn't wait until breakfast was over. So I ate and I was already a Corporal and so when I came back the colonel said I was late I was only about 30, 40 seconds late that's all he started yelling at me and I told him I was hungry I had to eat cause the only time we got to eat is on our own time and we don't have that much time. And I was up for buck sergeant took me up for buck sergeant this colonel caused that. Them guys they are strict showing their authority you know. It was a wonder one of the GIs didn't shoot him over there you know. Cause I understand a lot of them did that you get too rough with them and they kill the sergeant or the officer.

Interviewer: I didn't know that. That was on the ship?

Mr. Vernon: On the ship and on the land.

Interviewer: I mean I'm saying when you were dropped from Corporal to Buck Sergeant?

Mr. Vernon: No that was on land. That was on Mondale. And they saw we were supposed to get rest area in Australia New Zealand they in for a rest period. And all of our officers got to on for rest period

when they were in Australia and all the sergeants went down there not the buck sergeants the staffs on up they got to go down there and the buck sergeants down well they had to stay on the island they couldn't go. And we were supposed to go but we weren't allowed to go. And we were right above New Genie for distribution back to the states and I volunteered for the invasion of the Philippines and I was going to go but the timing I was over the 18 months already a new order came out no one could stay overseas more than 18 months in a malaria zone. Some people was over there three or four years. They wouldn't let me go so I had to come back to the states and troops got to come back to Hawaii Islands and got there on a Friday and the captain of the ship the Navy troop ship said everyone get their khakis on your going to liberty. But there was three sergeants in charge they said no you can't go cause you might now make your troop ship back to the states. Yet those three sergeants got to go on liberty. I can see one sergeant doing it he's in stripes but all of our officers flew back over to the United States. We was at port I think two or three days before we left there and had to stay on the ship all that time. And that's when we started getting cold weather before we got to the Hawaiian Islands of course it was hot down in the Solomon Islands it would get 100 and something degrees. I came back overseas I came back over in San Francisco and went on liberty from Treasure Island it's in California so it didn't take me long to get home. One day I went back down to San Diego I hadn't been there in so long.

Interviewer: Now were you discharged after that?

Mr. Vernon: I went back down below and they shipped me to Santa Barbra for duty in Goleta a little town next to Santa Barbra. At a Marine base there an air base. I went into shore patrol there and we had boats there the sergeant in charge he never left the state he always was state side. And he always made the Marine keep their blouse buttoned up and he didn't and he would give orders to do it and he always walked around with his unbuttoned. And I have a shore patrol truck and they knew I had it and they turned me in saying I stole the shore patrol truck. I got court marshal out of it lost my PFC but a few months later I got it back. Then I should have turned him in going around with his blouse unbuttoned. He just wanted to show his authority and everything. It was 8 months 5 months and 6 months then the infantry showed up men getting killed wounded and discharged. So they put me in the infantry down in Camp Pendleton but I never did leave there just stayed in distribution.

Interviewer: What year was this?

Mr. Vernon: 1945

Interviewer: After the war or before the war was over?

Mr. Vernon: The war was still going on. And so we stayed there and the new order came out any enlisted men anybody enlisted men that was signed up for four years and wanted to get out in time now we had a colonel that was too strict and he'd go in and inspect the men's barracks they wore white gloves and if he got a little dust on the white gloves made them go back and do it he made them go back and I was on a 48 hour pass then. He told me when I came back in and all the time I guess they had to go back about four times to get the barracks clean cause he didn't like it. And this was the last time they cleaned it up well they thought it was the last time he came out and said Marine and they were standing out there and the colonel came walking off the porch he slipped on a wet step and fell down and he

heard the guys laughing and snickering and everything and he made them go back in because they snickered at him. So they had to clean up the barracks again. I'm glad I wasn't there. But I knew one of the fellows that was going to clean the officers quarters he said see the enlisted men the enlisted men's are perfect compared to the officers quarters. You look in the officer's quarters beer bottles all over the floor whiskey bottles and clothes all over and everything. They didn't even pick up their clothes. And no one inspected the officer's quarters and they were the worst ones. If they had someone inspect the officer's quarters they would have really been in trouble. So I put in for my discharge I got three years and nine months went to Treasure Island got discharged up there. Then in San Francisco I had some friends that lived there and my brother he came and went around with me and we celebrated that night. My folks lived in Sacramento then so I went to Sacramento. And then oh I guess I was out about a year when this one boy right across from the city auditorium I seen this guy this guy talking and I said did you get discharged over in Treasure Island? He was in the army he said yeh and he was in the marine core then and I said do you remember we got discharged together. I was surprised he remembered me we just had a few drinks and everything. The reason I went in there is because I'm a Native American and I said whether we went in the service or not we will either get a better government or a worse government. Just waiting to find out I said. They were the worst yet they took over the country that's the way the won the Indians.

Interviewer: Did you remember before you went in the war did you keep up with the news of the war and what was going on?

Mr. Vernon: Well like they were selling the scrap metal to Japan and I felt the same way they needed money and that's what they did all that and I can see why their doing that.

Interviewer: What about Franklin Roosevelt did you have any what did you think about him when and his speeches did you listen to his speeches and what was your impression?

Mr. Vernon: I think he was right and everything about the war and everything. Then him getting the social security and everything started. But now I'm on the social security now and the Medicare been on for 12 years on the social security and Medicare rather and now all of a sudden I've got to pay for my Medicare. I never did for 12 years or more everything was more or less free. But all of a sudden the politicians must have changed the rules or something. They charge me up to \$200 a month now for diabetic stuff.

Interviewer: What about before Pearl Harbor what did you did you take the threat from the Japanese and the Nazis serious did you take that threat?

Mr. Vernon: Oh I didn't like it of course we had the Nazis they used to beat up people in New York and what do you call it the place where they used to have meetings and everything I can't think of the name of the building now. They used to beat up those people that were against the Nazis and everything during the war they done it.

Interviewer: What about remember hearing the new about Pearl Harbor? Remember that day?

Mr. Vernon: Yeh

Interviewer: Where were you?

Mr. Vernon: I was in Sacramento in high school Sacramento High School. When I got out of school I heard about it. And didn't have TVs just had radios so they used to have the newspaper boy saying extras and everything they were yelling extras and everything about Pearl Harbor then. Extra extra Pearl Harbor got bombed.

Interviewer: Did you have nay friends or family that were involved or affected by that?

Mr. Vernon: This one my tribal member he's part Hawaiian half one and half Indian and he had a lot of friends over in the Hawaiian Isalnds that were Hawaiian. I worked with a Hawaiian and I figured a few years after the war ended we were both at the army base and we were both in for five years before he found out I wasn't Hawaiian. He said I was Hawaiian.

Interviewer: Let's see what else did you ever have a sense of the big picture of the war? Did you know as far as strategy and what was involved in beating the Axis powers?

Mr. Vernon: Well I think we had to use the atomics bomb because they figured then if the troops went in there into Japan they would have lost over a million men just after they went into Japan. So it was either the atomic bomb or a million men get killed. I think more or less the atomic bomb but the Japanese didn't like that. But they weren't easy to kill and they always won and everything like that but they but when GIS hurt one of them now they complain about it and talk about what they used to do to kill people and everything like the troops and everything that were captured.

Interviewer: What about as far as the strategies that were used in the war did you ever know anything were you aware of what was going on where going in Pacific and why you were there?

Mr. Vernon: No they didn't tell us where we were going on the troop ships. They said all we were going we figured we were going in the war zone but we didn't know where at.

Interviewer: Did you keep up with any kind of the news while you were over there?

Mr. Vernon: All the news we could get over there was what you hear on the radio or gossip or something like that. You didn't have a radio or anything like that over there. I just done what they told us.

Interviewer: When you went did you tell me a little about when you were in combat in Japan I mean on the Islands.

Mr. Vernon: Well we didn't have too much combat or anything except the Japanese planes come a couple of times and because in Boganville they had an airfield over there and I don't think they had too many planes cause that B25 don't even belong to them it belonged to the Victory Guard and they always said the Japanese were bum shots and everything. Yet every time our planes went over with bombs I'd

say about a half of dozen times different times and maybe just one plane come back not shot us. They may have two or three planes went down lost and everything and two or three would come back.

Interviewer: And you didn't ever have to fly and bomb anybody did you?

Mr. Vernon: No I had a chance I could have gone up in one of the planes on a bombing trip but there were many who weren't come back so I said I'll just stay on the ground and let them come back.

Interviewer: When you were over there did you have civilian contacts?

Mr. Vernon: Do what?

Interviewer: Civilian contacts

Mr. Vernon: No there were no civilians around except the natives and people with little loin cloth the black people or whatever.

Interviewer: Did you ever talk to them or see them?

Mr. Vernon: Yes I got a pick out of this English position the Solo man Isalnds and this one sergeant he tried to get smart he spoke broken and they made a little lighter and he said how much for that and thing like that and he say \$1 like that and sergeant was going to be smart and give him a \$20 bill and that native he reached down in his loin cloth like that and picked a roll out about like that of American money and he said he was giving him his change and he could speak better English than he was.

Interviewer: That is hilarious.

Mr. Vernon: That native couldn't let him do that the sergeant said he was smart you know.

Interviewer: What about kids did you ever did you have a lot of contact with children?

Mr. Vernon: The Japanese took the ones between I guess 8 or 9 up to 20s or 30s and only left the older people around 50 or the ones that were 5 years or younger but all of the men the took on to Boganville.

Interviewer: So that they'd be safe?

Mr. Vernon: No they keep the race going the Japanese race I guess. So even though they were natives they took them over with them.

Interviewer: Do you think they were harmed?

Mr. Vernon: I have no idea I never knew anything about what was going on.

Interviewer: That's sad.

Mr. Vernon: Yeh but a lot of them during the in Boganville it was about in the middle of Boganville they said there were about 30 thousand troops there, Japanese troops. But there was nothing they could do airplanes kept bombing them and they couldn't eat you know. I was walking on the Island and there was

a little hole there I don't know if it was from a bomb or what but they had Japanese down there they started smelling.

Interviewer: Did they burn them?

Mr. Vernon: No they just left them there. Their body smelt worse than any other like an animal they smell when their dead but the human body smells worse than the

Interviewer: That's gross. What about your living conditions over there did you live in barracks or did you live in tents or did you sleep on the ground?

Mr. Vernon: Tents

Interviewer: Did you have hammocks or anything like that?

Mr. Vernon: No you could make one you could make one of your own but we had cots and we took those with us when we left the states and it wasn't too bad or anything. But the idea of being on guard duty all of the time being on four on and four off all day and all night.

Interviewer: You didn't get to sleep too much.

Mr. Vernon: No just like when the Japanese plane come over with the bomb and they didn't bomb it they just the aircraft kept going over. Then kept you awake then we finally got a ground defense so but there was nothing to shoot at anymore. The Japanese planes what was left something must have happened to them because they didn't come back.

Interviewer: How long did that last?

Mr. Vernon: It was about a week I guess.

Interviewer: Then you went home?

Mr. Vernon: No I mean the Japanese planes come over and then it seemed like it was secured after that.

Interviewer: Were any of your any of the people that were over there were they wounded or anything?

Mr. Vernon: There were quit a few that were wounded there.

Interviewer: By the bombings?

Mr. Vernon: Yeh so I don't know exactly how many but someone told me they were CPs and different ones like that. Then all that went in that area was that the men that flew the B25 they are the only ones that go over there. Then we had a colonel that our colonel and he wanted to stay with them for a while and the flyer he had a chance to go back to the states and he could go back to the states or he could stay with our officer and he flew a B25 over Boganville and he did and he got shot down and he got killed. He could have went home and he didn't.

Interviewer: That's sad. Did they have a good medical treatment set up?

Mr. Vernon: We had that and it was pretty good. And George Smith he was a lieutenant over there a captain a captain I think and after the war he made a U.S. Senator down in Florida. He made out alright.

Interviewer: That's neat. Who was your commanding officer? General I mean your commanding General?

Mr. Vernon: I don't know it's been over 50 years.

Interviewer: It's been a long time. What were the officers I know you told me a little bit about them?

Mr. Vernon: Just we had one got RCL worked his way up to oh I can't think of it it wasn't a lieutenant I can't think of that he's not an officer but warrant officer that's what he was. He wasn't an officer but yet he was the way they explain and he would come over with the enlisted men and talk with them. And the commanding officer didn't let the enlisted men come back and sit with the officer. He liked to be with the enlisted men because he used to be one.

Interviewer: Did you have friends a lot of did you make friends over there?

Mr. Vernon: Yeh I had a lot and some of them up in Ohio and Indiana. I don't know if they are still around or not.

Interviewer: So the comradely there when you were there did you feel the comradery was strong? As far as you know how you stuck together as a team all the soldiers.

Mr. Vernon: Yeh it was a good group and all but they would get disgusted like not letting us set up our ground defense equipment you know. Had about three 20 powered machine guns you know. They just wouldn't let us put them up they told us the Japanese planes were all gone. And we couldn't do anything we didn't have a ground defense. And the boys back in North Carolina I can't think of the airbase now one of my tribal members from Chico, California is stationed there back at the same base I was and we didn't know it. And then I got transferred up to Indian, North Carolina. And he got transfer there and I didn't know that. Then cause he I was in the MP23 I think it has been so long and he was in the next group behind me. And he was there and I didn't know it we were stationed at two bases and we didn't know it until we got to talking about it when I got in C core. That's when I found out both of us were there.

Interviewer: That is neat.

Mr. Vernon: He got to go to China they let him go to China. And so he got a deal on that went back and I stayed home.

Interviewer: But you were safe at least you didn't get hurt or killed.

Mr. Vernon: If I would have stayed in the infantry I probably wouldn't be here. After when the Korean war started I volunteered to go in the Korean war and then the army went out somewhere the night before and I took my physical the next day and they told me they wouldn't except me cause my blood pressure went up I had high blood pressure and they told me you come back in two weeks and we will

see what is what. Well I could let you know already if you don't want me I just won't go. So I just never got to joining after that.

Interviewer: Now after the war did you what did you do after the war was over what kind of job did you get married?

Mr. Vernon: I met my wife my first one she from Nevada from Lafayette and when I had children one boy and four daughters then she left me in Sacramento. My brother he had to come and get me. She asked him to take her back to Nevada took her back over and then she didn't come back I still had the kids.

Interviewer: How old were your kids?

Mr. Vernon: Oh I had three kids I guess they must have been about my daughter must have been about 2 or tow and a half between 2 and 3 that's the oldest daughter another one names Marlena was a few months old and my son he must have been 3 or 4 then. And she took off and later on she came back for a see and they have that Indian insurance over there that antique piece over there and they use the podia in that I think hallucinator and made her and mind wonder you know and she kept hearing voices and all of that and she did nothing. And I went to school cooking baking school and adult education in San Francisco and that instructor cooking instructor he quit and more or less arrested Indians there and a couple of girls sent him in for following them and but he didn't do anything to them. And but he wouldn't give them a good score on anything. This one guy he was an Eskimo he came in the Indian class too and all they had him do was make coffee all the time and he wanted to learn more about cooking. So I wrote to his girlfriend in Alaska and told him he wasn't getting to do anything just make coffee. But he went six months extension went to school longer. So I never seen him after that. And then I joined the post office in Sacramento and I worked there about a year or so I guess then I quit because we were only getting 86 cents an hour and.

Interviewer: When was this?

Mr. Vernon: I think it was in 48, 49 something like that. And other places they were getting 4 or 5 dollars and hour and everything and we were getting 86 cents. And the government itself said you get time and a half after 40 hours and they didn't do that and after saying that was a policy.

Interviewer: So you quit?

Mr. Vernon: I quit and went into contract labor and I was getting about four something an hour. Made good the first year and then all of a sudden it dropped and couldn't get another safe job you know. So we got this Latin kid we got I mean Emerald Construction manual labor and we constructed a whole set of building two stories high got block on and pulled the lumber. And they said a white person and a black person were in this elevator shaft you know where an elevators going to be two stories high and 12x12 length and width and everything. We had guys with a stack of lumber and everything and we had to go help them because all they did was sit around and everything they didn't do no work. And they were the one that kept their jobs we got laid off. And they couldn't see that.

Interviewer: How did you get to Clarksville?

Mr. Vernon: Oh my second wife I met her in San Francisco I went back as a letter carrier there but I was at Oakland arm base working there as a cooks helper and so and I belonged to the American Indian Center in San Francisco and the center burnt down and they didn't know what they were going to do about that so that's when they started Alcatraz so that's where the American Indian Center started at. And Richard Oaks I knew him before Alcatraz and we got along real good and everything and he's got a few colleagues you know Indians and that's when we went over there. But before that they went to Alcatraz they went on a ship to Canada it looked like that Penta Maria you know one of those old ships. And he took us on Alcatraz and everything and of course he wanted all of the Incas to go in first and we saw this newspaper reported and he said well you will have to get off its going to be all Incas on this ship and everything like that. I'll tell you what there won't be anything in the newspaper article tomorrow you can ask what you want said I don't have time for a newspaper reported for the Chronicle. So he stopped right then. Of course he couldn't help me get off cause I was in my 50s then. So anyway this one night she got on the main land in Solace over there that's where he wanted to go when she left she's a dope addict and I was against her and everyone on the island needed a council member and I was the only one voted in by the people the Indian people. So I went to Solace but before then Richard Oaks on the main land his daughter was doped in Solace up because he sold it over there. And that's why they call Dope Island Leach Island because her last name was Leach they are blood suckers you know leaches are that's what they call her. It was always a place to get doped up over there. His daughter the news said fell three stories no four stories hit the cement floor over there you could see the blood spots all over the floor. And they took her to the main land and I said I better go over there and go over to the main land and he just came over to Alcatraz and I said did you hear about your daughter and he said no and I said well she fell three stories is what they said but it was four and then they took off and went to the hospital and seen her and she stayed there about three days and died. And later on my daughter she was about seven years old six seven years old and she was doped up and still blame the Leach and we had to call the ambulance we couldn't wake her up. And this young kid he is in charge of the Coast Guard boat and I couldn't see him being in charge and he wouldn't go on the main land until we filled all of the paper work out it was something serious she could die and it didn't make any difference to him. He said no you've got to fill all of the papers out. So we got over there and the ambulance met us on the Coast Guard and brought him back he missed a turn off. And the ambulance driver said I think they call it a code 3 three sirens and lights and everything so they went down where four lanes go one way and four lanes go the other way come back. The traffic was it was a Saturday and there was so much traffic you couldn't get around the cars so he went on facing traffic with the siren and the lights on and he went about a half mile like that I think and hit all that traffic and he pulled over at St. Frances Hospital even the nurse and doctor couldn't wake her up. And the doctor asked the nurse anyone got a pin one said I have and he took the pin and stuck it in the bottom of her feet like that and she let out a scream came right out of it. And she didn't know what happened and they said Leach may have done it before put dope in all of the food I think that's what he did and that fixed her. I haven't spoke to Leach ever since every time some movie actress and everything every time somebody would come he wouldn't let me come over there he said just they are a member because he had the board stacked of course Lunette Means she's on the council and Sal Leach was on the council

and Sal Lech was there. So if anybody come they wouldn't let me speak except this paper part that comes out I think they call it Parade and it comes out in the newspaper every Sunday. They had a fellow come over and interview me he hold me about it wanted to know if they could conduct me so I talked to them.