

Harris: I went in the navy in 1943 let's see I guess in May of 193. Went to basic training over in Virginia finished basic training and they sent 50 of us to Camp Pendleton California and attached us I was in the CBs Naval Construction Battalion. And it attached me to the marine core I took about three months training physical training under the marine core. And went in left in October to the South Pacific stayed 28 months without a break on invasion of Mogiville and Guadalcanal and well Guadalcanal had already been to Mogiville and Guam. And when the war was over naturally I got to come home. I was young a lot of CB had sent some people in there in their 40s the CBs had more skilled people than anybody else. Electricians, pipe fitters, welders and heavy equipment we were more or less the marine core engineers. And so four of my buddies we had been through all of it together and they were all older than me they got out before I did and of course the navy was letting you out on your age and points see. I had more time overseas than they did but they had age on me so I left the Island of Guam the 7th day of December 1945 it took 14 days to come to Frisco and I got discharged at Memphis on the 2nd day of December 1945 and they asked if I wanted to stay in reserves and I said no. I don't what to stay in reserve I volunteered to come into the service and I was already in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and I could make so much more money in civilian life than I could being in the navy I got along fine in the military I just chose to stay out. And so I come out and went to work back in the electrical trade but before I went into the service I had already been to Alaska on a defense project. And when I come back it was so cold up there and they didn't have the proper gear that they promised us you know it was 60 below zero. And we only had boot packs with a repel sole and an insole and didn't have hardly nothing compared to what you have now for foul weather gear you know. But I come back and I was walking down the street there and I met the girl working in the office of the draft board and she said what are you doing? I said just fooling around here riding a Harley Davidson she said they're fixing to draft you in the army. I said not if I can help it I'm going in the air force or the navy one. So I turned the corner and I met the manager of the rural light department he said Harris what are you doing. I said nothing Mr. Northern their fixing to draft me in the army or try to but he said come down to the office I'd like to talk to you. I went down there and in five minutes time he had me declared for the duration of the war but he didn't want to pay me enough money to live on. So I worked down there a few months and guy was there that had two or three kids that had a chance to go get a better job paid better money and all and they told him he was froze on the job. And I thought well if y'all are gonna treat him like that I know what I'm in for so I said well I'm leaving. And they said well you going in the service I said don't worry about what's gonna happen to me because I'm through with y'all. So they put on my separation slip that I preferred the military over the service and I tore it up and throwed it down drove my Harley to Nashville sold it to the dealer for \$350 for a postdated two week postdated check and went down and joined the CBs. They gave me a third class rating that's the same as a buck sergeant because I wasn't but 19 years old 19 or 21. And I come back and I had to leave here with the draft and go to Virginia so went through my basic in Virginia. And an ole boys from down here at Woodlawn oh he was a great big ole boy and he thought he could whip two or three bears. I the barracks after we finished basic and he was sitting on the bed crying and I thought maybe he got a Dear John from his wife or something I said what's the matter with you Wooten? He said well have you looked at the bulletin board this morning? I said no I haven't paid no attention to it. He said your name and mine 50 of us on there going to send us to Camp Pendleton California attached to the marine core. Said their killing marines like flies over there. I said well were not over there yet Wooten and so I left he didn't leave with us I left went to Camp Pendleton went through that training with the marine core put me in the best shape I've ever been in in my life physically. My instructor was Lieutenant Hodges played for the Green Bay Packers before he come into the service. And back then you didn't give nobody no static and he was good for it. If he told you to do something you better not give him no lip he'd show you that big rock up on the mountain up there and he'd say double time and back if you think you're getting lonesome I'll go with you. But after that they issued us a full issue of marine gear and we had a full issue of navy gear well I had an ID card to

wear a navy uniform and one to wear a marine uniform. I'd go to L.A. one weekend I'd be a sergeant in the marine core the next one I'd be to the navy three boys from Clarksville here that I knew we'd all grown up together they were in the 4th marine division there. And we'd go into San Diego and L.A. together and they were all privates. I didn't have to go through quite as vigorous inspection as they did and but all three of them are deceased now in fact just about all our war boys are gone too. But they went to the Marshall Islands and none of them got killed in combat but they all died one of them got seriously wounded at Ewagema he was a machine gun nest but he lived I guess to be in his 70s. But we had some good times then I shipped out and went from San Diego to New Caledonia unescorted on transports. And then we made the invasion of Molingville and Guam and when we went in Guam they picked a few of us CBs to go in with the marine core and the Harris name jumped in there. The front line about as far as from here to a little further than across the road from them when we hit the beach but we secured the Island of Guam in 18 days. And then we started building the roads and building up everything permanent the B29 field that was on Guam my battalion built it. And a boy that goes to church with us down here he's a chopper pilot he's been to Iraq four times he said I've been on them fields many times. They ate still using them but us guys well I was 20 years old then all of us was under 30 and we all of our officers had been contractors in civilian life and they knew what they was doing. We set up an asphalt plant and from the crusher end clear to the complete product the blacktop to grading we done it all. I could take about three CB battalions and do everything Halliburton's doing over in Iraq for a lot less money. But they kind of done away with the CBs and when we left Guadalcanal caught a boat back to Guadalcanal and when we left there coming to Guam invasion I was on a backup frog team. I had trained for that but thank goodness the number one team didn't mess up. I was sure proud because they bring you in on a destroyer and put you off on a rubber raft at night and you go in and clear the beach. But then after we got the island secure we started building up everything. The real big tank well it's all in that book over there this one here here's a good friend of mine a two star general I used to bird hunt with.

Interviewer: Let me get this on the camera for a minute.

Harris: General Mathis from Fort Campbell. He after he went to went to the Pentagon he called me wanted me to meet him out there on Sunday one day he was flying on a red jet and we'd go hunting. There's some pictures made at Guadalcanal and different places. There's the landing craft we went in on to the beach and here's we'd kind of gone native here this bunch.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: And this ole boy that one standing right there he got so sick going to the South Pacific said he wasn't coming home until they built a bridge. I guess he spent a long time down there.

Interviewer: Were you nervous at the time?

Harris: Oh yeah you're nervous anybody that ain't scared I want them away from me. Here's some of your jungle stuff let's see I believe that was down in Mogiville. He's a you see that lizard here see his head down here and tail there?

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: There was a lot of them down there like that. We had a little ole fast dog and let's see.

Interviewer: About how many people were on the?

Harris: Well in CB battalion it usually run about a thousand strong. This was my navy discharge and everything somebody might want to see that. (Held it up to camera) This is the kind of the outfit we was in but somebody made a mistake because the 53rd CB battalions instead of no I guess they got it right. We wore kind of a marine combat outfit for them. Show that, that's the papers they always want when you go to VA showed where you was at and what you done.

Interviewer: Date of entry 5/22/43 (reading from the paper and holding it up for the camera).

Harris: This fighter strip we were making put down this metal sheeting we built one in Mogville just a fighter strip we didn't build a big plane strip. And here's the bunker to get in the officers mainly. I believe this is the change when Gene Tulle come over to our outfit one time and refereed a boxing match. You know he's the one who beat Jack Pemsey. And here's the turkey that we carried over Christmas turkeys carried them with us when we went over the first time. Had two Christmas's overseas in the jungles here they are cooking in the ovens and all and I believe this is the barber shop here general barber shop.

Interviewer: Did you have a lot of free time?

Harris: No you didn't have no free time. They don't have them no more them LSDs.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: All this stuff opened up on the front you know and you could go up on the beach and it was slow. But now everything is flown in my airbus or something or another cargo. Then it's just altogether different. And I'd get letters there every week in Guadalcanal. There's the way Guadalcanal looked with all them ole wrecked ships and ____ that the Japs abandoned when on the beach. And there's a good picture of that LSD. Yeah they're pretty good size ships. (Getting a close up of the picture) Here we are dragging some mahogany logs out of the woods to set up a sawmill to saw hard lumber out of mahogany and give it to people give it to other army and marine core. And you name it the CBs could do it.

Interviewer: Did you have any experiences with the people who lived there on the islands?

Harris: Oh no they was gooks they couldn't speak no English. It took a heck of a long to learn how they ____ one dollar everything was a dollar. They liked white material and the navy had white bed sheets they'd trade anything. We'd take them coconut logs and make temporary bridges and stuff out of them like this over here and all. And rain oh God it rained down there in the South Pacific when the monsoon season set in you'd think them islands were gonna sink. See all these drums under here and everything (pointing at a picture) we done a lot of work and didn't get much credit for it.

Interviewer: Right

Harris: There's me in my marine uniform right there (holding up a picture of a man in uniform).

Interviewer: That's a good picture.

Harris: Yeah. There's I seen one of these ole oxen's pulling a cart and he fell dead and they butchered him right there in his tracks. They didn't waste nothing.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: Them natives on Guadalcanal you know they had some cannibals there in 1937 they killed a missionary and ate him.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: And the poachers had them all over the island of Salvo they'd peddle them ole dug out boats out of a tree back over there trade for anything they'd get a hold of. And there's all the natives on Guam when we freed them. That ole boy there was in my outfit his name is Kozak and that was just about the whole bunch on Guam. And this was going in on the invasion of Guam. And we sent in 12 tanks and out of 12 tanks one of them got on dry land.

Interviewer: Just one

Harris: But yeah I get a letter all the time VA wanting a donation for the service men.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: They had so much more stuff than we had to start with.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: Now they got they make god salary and it's all volunteer. And they ship the casualties home and. There's an old church got blowed up on the invasion some old storage tanks and this is an old outdoor over. They had a lot of them over there. And Ganja was the capital of Guam and they tore it up pretty bad. They took a dozier and leveled everything down where they could build quanza huts and all up there like this here they had one of them they moved over to headquarters from the Hawaiian Islands to Guam. And after they got it built and all there was two sailors digging with a pick ax a little foxhole ax between two quanza huts. And the Japs were bad about burring 500 pound bombs with the detonator up and they clipped them and it blowed them to kingdom come. And I had been all over it with a dozier just didn't clip it. Just wasn't my time.

Interviewer: Yeah twist of fate. Did you lose a lot of friends while you were over there? Did you know many people who lost their lives there?

Harris: Well luckily my outfit didn't lose but one man. But a lot of marines I told my wife he'd haul them in, now see they were building quanza huts there after we got the island secured by a big construction company.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: This was starting of a big crude oil tank hold about 80,000 barrels. All the pipe fitters and iron workers and everything worked on that stuff. There it is after it got bigger see big crane operator. He'd

drop one of them big sheets of metal on the inside he had a grip that would catch that metal you know. Just clean a guy out when it hit down there you can image what was left of him.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: There's one picture her I want to show you how muddy it was when we started where our battalion set up. Let's see, see this deal right here?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: It's about 100 feet form up here down to here. And there was a crane sitting there with ___ stick big crane. We were on the other side the other side sloped off like that we were cutting that hill down of course this was a little ole narrow canyon gap going around through here the old road. And I'd push a big load of dirt up there with the dozier and push it off and rock to him. And I pushed a big bolder up there it was bigger than the stuff over yonder and a boy form Dayton Tennessee he had to look up to run the crane. I seen him coming he run up behind the engine and hit right in the operators seat an old Coloran boy was running the rig. There were building wagon vills and they'd make a blast and the guy that was the head one over the drilling and dynamiting went up there one day he had a load didn't go off. And he went up there prying around with a dag gum iron bar and set it off blew his nose and eyes he was pitiful. He was living when they left Guam with him but I don't know whether I don't know how he made it.

Interviewer: So it sounds like there were a lot of accidents and things like that.

Harris: Yeah. This is all on the island of Guam here. They took the profits from our little PX and had all these books made up for us. I run one of them for a while trying to pull like the scrapers they got now. I run about everything they had. Here's a rock crusher set up in the asphalt plant here's the asphalt plant running here. And here's some of the finished work we done. I should have went in the asphalt business when I come back because I had been through all phases of it but I was scared to borrow that much money to go in business but. We'd take this mine detector and find the mines and located them then we had a chief petty officer, I've got a picture of him, that was a specialist on weapons and he'd take the detonators out of them. Japs were bad about, this is him right here Chief Winfield. We had a two man Jap sub beside a beached a cargo plane the Japs beached and that Jap was down in the water about as far as from here to the wall over yonder and some boy dived in there and put some cables on it. And they was like a double barrel shot gun over and under had torpedoes in them about that big around in the end. We hitched two doziers to it and pulled it until about a third of it got out on the dry land then it dug down in that sand and they couldn't pull it. He sit down in front of it and took a hammer and a center punch and I went down the island a long ways. He took them detonators out of them things but he was an expert at it he managed to get back. That's what gets me they were setting these off over there they were electronic.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: And

Interviewer: I heard stories

Harris: It was a that boy in my outfit got killed and we buried him he was the only one buried in a casket. And I believe that's me standing there on the right and but these guys here when they were buried during the invasion they just cut out a trench silo and laid them in there wrapped up in ponchos. They'd bring them in like a load of hogs off the front line and lay them in there then drive these crosses. Then they'd take their dog tags and hang them on there and when they'd run out they'd mark unknown. They didn't know who these were so that's the reason I say a lot of them they sent back here they just had so many so much bones and dirt. There's how muddy it was see how deep that mud is through there?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: And guess where our battalion built all this up and put that coal in there and that's where the original camp was after we got it set up. And this is all of our officers we had a boxing team had a baseball team. And a water purification plant had a big spring coming up from up on the mountain and oh we had good food. If anybody hated the seaweed had it.

Interviewer: Really

Harris: There was a boy in the marine core there that was a millionaire in Clarksville I found out he was over on the backside of the island and they was over there in mud up to their waist nearly living like dogs. I wanted to invite them to come over one Sunday for dinner. We always had steak on ___ on Sunday and ice cream they reminded me of three hound dogs that had been lost. Let's see we had a dentist chair he'd work on you a little bit.

Interviewer: They kept you pretty busy I guess.

Harris: Yeah we worked two shifts you'd work two weeks in the afternoon from like 3:30 until midnight and the other you worked day hours after combat you didn't do it in combat. But we'd been building these airfields and. You've seen that movie the fighting CBs?

Interviewer: I believe so.

Harris: There's some of our Christmas cakes our second year overseas. (Showing a picture of a cake from the book) They made a pretty good cake we had some good cooks. An ole boy went up there in the jungle and caught some of them natives chickens and brought them down and put on the cooks behind his sell them for a dollar an egg. There's one I believe I believe that's Commander Turner standing there in the middle. Let's see yeah that's him Commander Turner. That's the only time I ever seen him. We had some good boxing matches.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Harris: Yeah. I didn't get caught in the camera many times. Then they give you've got everybody's address now I can't find any of them hardly.

Interviewer: Oh really

Harris: In fact I get down to where I haven't found any lately that's still living. But my brother gave up his deferment joined the navy and went directly through basic up at Great Lakes. He wrote me and wanted to know what I thought about him they offered him a cockshies rating as a pilot on a landing craft or

joining the CBs. I said the best thing you could do is join the CBs because that's the first guy they knock out is the pilot on the landing craft. So three months from the day he joined the navy he was on the island of Guam. That was shortly before the war was over and all that he done while he was over there was run a crane did motifs for new jeeps and weapons carriers and all dump it over the cliff.

Interviewer: Just get rid of it?

Harris: Yeah he had only been over there six months when the war ended. I'd been over the 28 and it got him when he couldn't come home when I did. But he made it but there was people in Clarksville I've named half a dozen of them some of them are deceased now would have give \$10,000 for my deferment I don't know why. I had been in an old horse calvary here when I was young down there where the JC building is at the fairgrounds there was 109th trooper K Tennessee National Guard Calvary there. Your parents could sign for you when you was 16 years old and when the war broke out they let me out because I wasn't of age.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: And I fooled around and I was going to Alaska and all and everything then went up here to Tullahoma Tennessee and they liked to never went overseas. They stayed in Tullahoma for ages and ages and finally went to Camp Cook in California. I don't know whether you've ever seen one of these or not this is that's Fort Campbell Reservation (looking at a map). The whole thing this is the north impact back here down there's 12,500 acres in this block. I've hunted every inch of it on horseback and on foot. And this is the Clarksville base what they call the Bird Cage out there that they used to use it to store parts or something about the atomic bomb. It's all underground and they quit using it and use it for an ammo dump now.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

Harris: When what?

Interviewer: When Pearl Harbor was bombed?

Harris: Yeah I remember exactly where I was when Pearl Harbor was bombed.

Interviewer: Most people do.

Harris: It happened on December the 7, 1941 wasn't it?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: I had carried my mother and daddy and my aunt and uncle down to Benton Tennessee. My brother-in-law worked building the dam down there the Kentucky Dam. And we'd gone out there that Sunday afternoon out to Dunn. And there was an old railroad track went across below that you could go up some steps and go out there and look out over the construction of that dam real good. And when we come back I had a 36 Ford with a radio in it and I turned it on and they announced Pearl Harbor. My aunt, my first cousin was two or three years older than me he was already a lieutenant in the air force second lieutenant, well she cried all the way home back to Clarksville. But he made it through he was over in the South Pacific the whole time I was he was no a B24 most of the time. But he made it through

the whole war but yeah I know exactly where I was. But people were so much more patriotic in WWII and they just buckled down. We didn't have all this gouging on gasoline and everything. Had price control which I think my personally myself I think it would have been smart to put price control in because anybody with any common sense knows that when gasoline officials and companies like Exxon and all of them making 125 billion dollar profit and giving their CEOs millions of dollars bonuses and jacking the price out of site. That tells you right quick you're getting ripped off. Even down to the distributors here in this area they're doing it too. It's pitiful just makes my blood boil. Take someone like George Bush and make him President well you couldn't have found in my opinion a bigger idiot anywhere. Him and Chaney, Chaney's had five or six deferments and I don't know how he's gonna explain that grandson from a lesbian daughter. I can't understand it.

Interviewer: Not exactly FDR.

Harris: Something else yeah and McCain is just a carbon copy of George Bush.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: That's all that is. I don't know when they spend as many millions of dollars as their spending to get to be elected president with the mess that country's in now I don't know how anybody would want to fool with it anyway. They've lied to us about how much we owe and what they're gonna do and everything. It's just pitiful come back from WWII and I went down to the ration board to get me a set of tires for my car and I thought I was gonna have to whip the old man at the ration board to get a set of tires. I'd been gone all that time and oh wasn't gonna let me have a set of tires. It was something.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: But now they're giving all these soldiers get all kind of tax breaks from buying a car no taxes on it or nothing. Their kids get to go to our school we don't get nothing out of it or nothing. They don't have to buy the school stamp to put on their license plate that's not right. It's just sickening and I don't know whether you watch the news real close or not but I'm a favorite of Lou Dobbs and they was announcing how much pork that both parties are putting in the yearly budget. Well it's awful the money they throw away for nothing. And this illegal immigrate that just makes me sick anybody with common sense at all would have known after 911 took the Coast Guard and put them on both coasts the military on both boarders then secured them. Then clean this thing out from the inside before we went anywhere. That was the most hooked up deal to go into Iraq that's ever been in this country. And we're paying dear for it. Sent 12 billion dollars over there in cash and it evaporated and I've talked to some friends of mine that's been over there in civilian positions they're getting a lot of money. But they couldn't pay me enough money to go over there because it ain't no count when you're six foot under.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: It's pitiful absolutely pitiful. And I don't know I've lost faith in both political parties.

Interviewer: I think a lot of people feel very similar.

Harris: Here we are Pelosi whatever her name is and Hillary too. Hillary said on TV that she didn't think illegal was illegal out there in California trying to get them votes. They'd do anything for a vote. And I can remember when I was a kid growing up going to country elections and a guy would be there either

giving out half pints of whisky in a little brown sack for somebody to vote for them or they'd give them a dollar to vote for them. And I thought boy that was something to watch that you know on the sideline. But being born in 23 I was the big impression I think was from 28, 29, 30 and 31 and 32 I can remember it very well. We had a nice farm home but we didn't have a lot of money we never was we had clothes to wear and everything. But nobody had no money much.

Interviewer: Right

Harris: We had a nice home and plenty to eat. And a freight train would come in in the summertime from Memphis to Clarksville and hobos would be sitting on it like blackbirds on a power line looking for a job. Now that's another thing the federal government done when they done away with the rail system. Think how much better off we'd be if we had all the trains running on the railroads and the trucks off of the highway. It's just sickening it's absolutely sickening. The Chamber of Commerce the head Chamber of Commerce of the United States it pulling for all of this illegal labor and everything it's just ruined the country. We can't if they can't come in here legal just stay out and all that dope coming across the Mexican border. And them poor two old boys that were doing their job and Bush put them in prison. They ought to put him and Chaney both in a dungeon and just leave them forever no release.

Interviewer: Some people called WWII the like the good war. You feel that was a good war compared to some of them?

Harris: Well it was a good war it was one needed to be fought.

Interviewer: Did you

Harris: Everybody was patriotic there's a world of people in this country that ain't patriot at all. I'm a life member of the VFW and but I get sick of them sending me them notices wanting me to say you give the VFW donate them \$25 I doubt if a dollar of that ever gets to one of them soldiers. It gets to one of them guys sitting in the office on his butt in a suit of clothes doing nothing. But it's pitiful.

Interviewer: Did you

Harris: And the VA now I'm not a I wasn't wounded or nothing but I've still got VA right as far as going to the hospital and getting my medicine and all. But it's getting to where they can't get enough help. They're short of doctors they're not doing what they're supposed to do. As long as you've got your politicians covered with full coverage and their family the best hospitalization of insurance they can get and everything and drawing full retirement after they retire ain't no chance for this country. And McCain's done said that if he gets elected president he don't want to take that cut on the income tax for the rich he don't want to take that away from them. Well that's the worst thing that ever happened to this country. And Bush says if congress does try to do away with that 18 or 20 billion tax cut for the oil companies he's going to veto it. I'd like to veto him with the corner of my steel toed boot.

Interviewer: Did you do you remember before Pearl Harbor do you remember any did you feel like the Japanese were a threat? A lot of people feared Germany.

Harris: Well I didn't really I don't remember a lot up to it, it was a surprise to me. But we had gave up all the scrap iron they could get from us you know and everything and done a lot. And of course when it broke out I wasn't but about 17 years old when Pearl Harbor hit when they hit Pearl Harbor. But my

brother the only Pacific time I pulled I never was in the Hawaiian Islands. But my brother went back over there he and his wife and he said you couldn't get out on the Arizona monument part there was Japs everywhere and Japs had bought up about everything in Hawaii. And if I had my way no foreign country would own anything in this country. Now they own some tow roads in the United States now George W is wanting them to build a breezeway all the way from Mexico to Canada he I can't see the end of the tunnel I just can't see no light at the end of the tunnel. And we've got so many stupid people that thinks George Bush was just wonderful. These families that's a young family that have got two or three kids and a house to pay for and maybe a kid or two in daycare and others in school and both of them or two automobiles and a house to pay for and insurance and kids to raise and they said this morning there was 78,000 lost their jobs this last month. Well if that don't tell them the way or not only are we in a recession it's a depression. And they have tried their best to just wipe out the middle class people. One thing about WWII when it was over we come back here and got out of the service and you could get decent paying job and a dollar would go somewhere. A dollar won't buy nothing no more and if they foreclose on us it will be Japan and Russia and I don't know who else they borrowed money from about five different countries. They call themselves the simple power and he's gonna try his best to start a war with Iran before he goes out of office. I'd like to stick him up on the frontline in nothing but a bathing suit pitiful. And put and I'd put Piper in with him.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: Who took Buford Pussers place down in your country?

Interviewer: I can't recall I moved in 2000 up here my dad would know if I asked him. But I can't recall I was too young wasn't paying attention back then I think.

Harris: I like that movie.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: Yeah that's was something else.

Interviewer: Do you have any other particularly strong fond memories or even bad memories that you experienced in the military?

Harris: No not the first one. Like I said I just took it with a grain of sauce and a lot of people had a hard time with it but I didn't. Of course I'd had a little experience I had been down in Louisiana in 1940 with that calvary bunch on the 38th maneuvers. We got paid a dollar a day we came back we all went to the circus the carnival or something. I think we about got broke the first weekend we was home. But we had we was the mounted calvary and others were infantry and we were down in Alexander Louisiana in the swamps. And I seen right then I'd rather be mounted calvary than on foot.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: Oh we had a time.

Interviewer: Did you have any strong feelings like against the Japanese before or after?

Harris: No there's one little Jap plays golf over there at Swan Lake I played with him in a foursome he was in a time or two. Every time I play I get to thinking about the ones we plowed in with dozers over there in the South Pacific. And we used to send a couple marines with eight or ten or fifteen Japs if we were gonna move them or something or another very few of them would get there. Them marines would kill them on the way they didn't have it on TV about it either.

Interviewer: I'm sure do you feel I'm sure during the time WWII the media you know kind of tailored the news to fit the war aims. Do you feel that was justified or because I know

Harris: Well we didn't have so much news media back then. We got the most of our news from Tokyo Rose. And where she got her's I don't know but she knew our outfit and where we were gonna be and we used to listen to her on the radio.

Interviewer: Do you feel like it demoralized you at all or made you afraid?

Harris: Well I think in a way see they took all the Japs and put them in a stockade and I don't know I think didn't the government have to pay them some money or something about that later.

Interviewer: I can't recall.

Harris: I believe they had to pay some for doing it but we knew where they were you didn't have them scattered around. And right now on the news these Chinese are getting all this secret information out of the Pentagon. That's just disgusting and then Scholalibby you know he's squealing them and Bush pardoning him. Yeah I've been in the Pentagon I went when I finished basic training I went up to Washington D.C. I had a friend had a cripples leg he was working in the office there in the Pentagon and the only thing you had to have then to get in the Pentagon was your dog tags. And it was laid out like a wagon wheel and but it's pitiful and all this deal this iron maintenance that's sickening. Covering up on maintenance and lying about it and all. It was on TV yesterday one guy blew the whistle and his big superior officer told him over him said well you and your wife had two good jobs but their gone now. And that shows you how much two airlines has done went under in the last two days shut down. And it's getting me where I'm gun shy of flying because it's hard to work on them planes when it's up there and it goes bad.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: We're in bad shape. A lot of people don't realize it but we're sure in bad shape.

Interviewer: It's quite a change from

Harris: And they can argue all they want too that people in this country won't work. Well they won't work for nothing.

Interviewer: Right

Harris: They won't the rich wants all the money and don't want to pay a decent salary for the middle class. And anybody with common sense would have known when you take all the decent middle class jobs out of this country factories and all that pays living wages and people can't live off of minimum wage.

Interviewer: Service jobs

Harris: Look how it jumped the college tuitions it's out of site.

Interviewer: Yeah I know I've got to deal with that.

Harris: It's awful

Interviewer: Did you feel I guess your family benefited from in WWII from the you know coming out of the depressions all the businesses.

Harris: No nobody in my family benefited from them. But they just everybody in my family my mother and dad worked all the way through it and they were up in middle age and older.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: And I just had the one brother and he gave up his job. He was a supervisor at the Goodrich plant and he gave it over in the navy didn't have to. So we figured we done our part and I never drawled any rocking chair money when I come out of the navy. I went on back to work but I think one thing that started mainly after WWII was all this welfare fund.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: These people that have more kids the more welfare they get and all. They don't know whose daddy is this one and whose daddy's that one and everything. Ride in a Cadillac car and pull up to the grocery and load up the grocery with all kind of \$100 and something worth of groceries on food stamps. And this friend of mine was in dental school down in Memphis and they said he was in the line at the grocery store and this one came up there and had a bunch of steaks for her dog. And said something oh had a big sack of dog food and the clerk told her said she couldn't pay for it with no food stamps. She went back there and got her a big box of steaks put them on there said my dog likes steaks too. Stuff like that see.

Interviewer: Yeah abusive.

Harris: It's pitiful. You know they talk about the Night Riders my granddaddy on the Harris side in the Civil War he was what they call a Night Rider. Hit the Yankees like well that's what they called them Night Riders. And the other granddaddy was in the confederate army but then they had the Klu Klux Klan and they didn't only the Klu Klux Klan didn't only pick on the black. If the white didn't take care of their family they'd take them out like to I've said all along they put a canning pole down there in the court house yard and hitch them to that post there wouldn't be as much going on as has been going on. And it would break them quicker than all this stuff we've been doing. They don't do that and get by 90 percent of your crime is done by two nationalities 90 percent of it. And when you go to letting any and everything into this country God knows it's bad. Right here in Clarksville I've got a nephew that's a detective for the county and he said there's a world of gangs in North Clarksville and some in this side. And but buddy he bust that door open at night he's gonna think he stomped a hornets nest. I'm already 85 years old they couldn't keep me in prison too long no way.

Interviewer: Hopefully being out here out of the city.

Harris: I'm in the city limits. I guarantee you I don't intent to put up with no crap.

Interviewer: Do you remember when the atomic bombs were dropped?

Harris: When what?

Interviewer: When the atomic bombs were dropped? Did you have any

Harris: Yeah I remember it I remember they night they flew the planes off our strip there at Guam. Had a blackout that night blacked out everything.

Interviewer: Did you

Harris: I've seen they'd leave there after we got them fields in service they'd leave there in the afternoon loaded with bombs not the atomic bomb but just regular bomb load. Go to Japan and bomb and fly back and come in the next morning I've seen them make it all the way back and sit down and just nearly fall all to pieces. I don't know how in the world they stayed in the air.

Interviewer: Yeah

Harris: I've seen them set down and catch on fire and the crew would get away from them and when the fire was out there wouldn't be nothing but four motor blocks laying there in the old B24s. You wouldn't think they would burn up that much but of course with the fuel and everything. And had a little island down there in the south pacific I forgot what they called it just pilots tell me if they come back and had any extra bombs they'd always go by and bomb that. And when the war ended they went over there and there was 4,000 Japs on it. And they said they'd go over there and never see a one. They'd live where a rat couldn't live.

Interviewer: Huh

Harris: Yeah we went in on the invasion of Guam right inside about as far from here to across the road there a little ways there was some mounds and on the backside it was open. Well them Japs was in there and the marines went up through this rice patty and they opened up on them from behind you know. This one marine walked around there with a flame thrower and throwed it in there killed about 15 or 20 just scorched them. That flame thrower you never hear nothing about it now but it would get them.

Interviewer: Did the death and kind of the misery of the war ever hit home for you? Did you ever feel upset about it or?

Harris: No no I never

Interviewer: You just kind of took it in stride.

Harris: My wife and I had been married 11 months when I went in the service and she was working out at the Goodrich plant I felt this way about it. I didn't want to leave her here pregnant because if I got

killed in WWII the kid never would have known me no way and she'd have a better chance in life. So I waited until I got back from war before we started raising a family but she wrote to me every day I guess I was overseas. One time we was at sea 50 something days and I got 54 letters at one time. I sorted them out and wrote her two pages.

Interviewer: Did she work while you were away?

Harris: Yeah

Interviewer: What was she

Harris: She lived with her mother and daddy she was an only child she lived with her mother and daddy and they made it fine.

Interviewer: Did you have any friends or relatives in the European Theatre?

Harris: Yeah there was quite a few from Clarksville got killed in WWII that I knew real well I wasn't too close to a lot of them but I knew them. But it's just sickening now that we've done lost over 4,000 people in Iraq and it's just disgusting. Pitiful and VA right now runs so short of help. I get my prescription though them but if I have any serious problems I carry supplemental insurance and I use Medicare and that because you don't ever know when you're gonna get in up there or who's gonna do the cutting or what. I had a gallbladder attack a year ago and I had Dr. Steely down here take it out and _____ but if I'd have gone up there no telling they bring a lot of like I call them apprentice doctors out of Vanderbilt over there to do a lot of that stuff. Of course they might have an older doctor there supervising them or something. But I've had both knees changed out and got along with that real good. I was real bowlegged and the doctor straightened my legs and my buddy had his done at Vanderbilt by a Jew doctor and he left him bowlegged. But

Interviewer: Well do have any

Harris: Now what are you gonna do with all this bull we've been putting out?

Interviewer: Well it just depends on what they decide to do with it. It's shared between Austin Peay the Library and two museums the Custom House Museum and the Wings of Liberty Museum.

Harris: Well I ought to carry a picture down there and put it in the court house I never had put a picture of me down there in a navy uniform.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harris: I'll be back in a minute I take some medicine first thing when I get up and I can't move real quick.

Interviewer: Okay I'll go ahead and end this.

Tape ended