

Jack Ellis

Interviewer: Your full name is Jack R. Ellis correct?

Mr. Ellis: Yes

Interviewer: Okay and you were born in 1918?

Mr. Ellis: 1918

Interviewer: And you were born at home right?

Mr. Ellis: What?

Interviewer: You were born at home?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh

Interviewer: And so you have lived here all of your life except when you were in WWII and everything like that?

Mr. Ellis: Well I was raised grew up down between her and Cooper Town on 49 highway down there you know where the bridge and the creeks are down there that was the boundary of our farm down there.

Interviewer: Well that's nice. And the branch of service you were in was the army Air Core is that right?

Mr. Ellis? What?

Interviewer: Which service were you in which branch? Branch of service?

Mr. Ellis: Air Force

Interviewer: Did you want to be in the Air Force or would have rather been in one of the other ones? Was that your preference to be in the Air Force?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh yeh I volunteered see I knew I was going to be drafted and to get what you want I volunteered and went in the Air Force see.

Interviewer: That's cool my grandfather was in the Air Force. Do you remember what unit you were in?

Mr. Ellis: 1942

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your family what's your parent's name, what were their names? Your parent's names?

Mr. Ellis: My what?

Interviewer: Your parents? Their names what were their names?

Mr. Ellis: George and Rose Lee.

Interviewer: And did you have any siblings' brothers and sisters?

Mr. Ellis: Brothers and sisters I had four brothers and two sisters.

Interviewer: Were ya'll close when you were growing up?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh very very close we had a happy home poor like everybody else but we had a happy happy home.

Interviewer: What did your parents do for a living what did your dad do? What did your dad do for a living?

Mr. Ellis: Farmed

Interviewer: He farmed was your mom a house maker I mean a home maker? Was she just a mom didn't have a job outside the home? Your mom was a homemaker right?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh

Interviewer: Do you remember how long you were in school how far did you go in school?

Mr. Ellis: High School

Interviewer: Did you get all the way through?

Mr. Ellis: (Shook his head yes)

Interviewer: Did you graduate?

Mr. Ellis: (Began to shake his head yes then said) No I lacked two subjects getting through. Then they tried to get me to go back and finish and I wouldn't do it. I done had my job.

Interviewer: Do you have any recollections about the great depression do you remember much about it the 1930s? Do you recall much about the great depression in the 1930s?

Mr. Ellis: Lord yeh I remember that very well.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about it?

Mr. Ellis: Well it was just breaking up. We lived three miles out of Springfield and they was people down there every day begging for work. Now they beg for food they don't say nothing about working but then they would want to work want to work fifty cents a day a dollar a day anything that you would give then. Then if you would talk to them their families didn't have anything to eat. Well my dad we had well there were three of us boys still at home grown but I had done quit farming at that time and I was starting hail and wind tore up my last crop and I swore I'd never work another plant and I didn't. But they was still we didn't need any they couldn't well in fact to break it up in present that was before I went to work I

was still a teenager early teenager. But work we worked we all worked we had a real happy happy home but we worked. And we raised stuff to eat and people would come by and my mom and dad would always give them something to eat to carry home with them meant bean.

Interviewer: Well that was nice of them.

Mr. Ellis: Well you just

Interviewer: That's just what you did?

Mr. Ellis: You just can't imagine what it was like back then even though we were we had more fun than people do now.

Interviewer: Just a simple kind of life?

Mr. Ellis: Huh?

Interviewer: The simple king of life just family working being together that kind of thing.

Mr. Ellis: Yeh

Interviewer: There's nothing wrong with that. So how old were you when you joined the service when you enlisted?

Mr. Ellis: I was 25 years old when that picture was made and that's when I went overseas. Right in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean I was 25 years old. And they called me to the Chaplin's office one night and I said oh what have I done now and I didn't know anybody on there. I went in I got on that boat I didn't know a sole on there not even any of my friends who went in the Army with me. So I went in the office his office and that ole ship a bouncing around you know and there was a cake sitting on the table there was two more guys in there three of us birthday. We had a birthday cake so I was 25 when I got overseas.

Interviewer: Do you remember before Pearl Harbor like anything about the Nazis with the Japanese being a threat to the United States? Do you remember feeling any of that? Did you think they were a threat to us?

Mr. Ellis: Do I remember anything about Pearl Harbor?

Interviewer: Yeh well before Pear Harbor the Nazis and the Japanese? Did you think they were a threat to us?

Mr. Ellis: What was the last part?

Interviewer: Did you think they were a threat to us the United States that Hitler or the Japanese were ever going to come?

Mr. Ellis: Did I think they was a threat to us? No they were dead.

Interviewer: Well did you ever keep up with the news did you read newspapers?

Mr. Ellis: Sure sure I did. I was dating when I come home well when I carried my car back to her I had a car worth about a quarter it run a while and push a while. See you don't know anything about stuff like that see. But when I brought my wife home I don't know where we had been we were dating and her daddy told me that the Japanese had struck Pearl Harbor. Well I knew right then where I was going I knew I would have to go in service see. In fact I had just quit the farm and gone to work for Cumberland Electric. And yeh I kept up with every bit of that but I never thought that they would be any danger to us. I had I figured out what Japan was going to do they was going to get all of them islands close to them they could they was looking for oil on it and they would get them islands that had the oil and then we would made peace with them see and let them keep them they couldn't do anything with us they knew that.

Interviewer: Did you ever listen to the radio?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh

Interviewer: Do you remember any programs you liked to listen to?

Mr. Ellis: We well I don't really know what you said but we listened to the radio all the time even when I went overseas if we could have a radio we'd gather around that thing every night and listen to it to see what was going on. That's the only way we knew. Of course this outfit didn't tell nothing about the other outfit but now you remember Axis Sally, Tokyo Rose you remember them? I bet you were they would broadcast to American Soldiers trying to ruin the moral you know that was there job and we'd gather around listening because they would have the latest music from America and all that kind of stuff you know. We'd get a kick out of them of course some would get mad they would say your wife or your girlfriend and this got boyfriends and they got a big nice home warm home and all that. Well that didn't bother me in the least because I knew what that was all about but some would take it at heart and you would understand why but we enjoyed that.

Interviewer: It sounds like fun. Since you listened to the radio did you get to hear Roosevelt's speech the after Pearl Harbor A Day That Shall Live in Infamy? Did you get to listen to that?

Mr. Ellis: Now I didn't get that.

Interviewer: Roosevelt he did a radio program after Pearl Harbor on December 8th and he had a speech A Day That Shall Live in Infamy. Did you get to listen to it since you listened to the radio most of the time? Did you hear that speech?

Mr. Ellis: Roosevelt's yeh.

Interviewer: Do you remember what he addressed in the speech? Do you remember what he addressed in the speech what he talked about?

Mr. Ellis: What he talked about?

Interviewer: Yeh in the speech.

Mr. Ellis: Yeh he was well see all of the people Cornel Hull was Secretary of the State and it's the only time I ever heard him talk like he was mad Cornel Hull. But see they had peace they had two men over here talking peace with us when they struck Pearl Harbor you remember that and then that just upset President Roosevelt terrible that they was doing that. And he said so help us God we will win and he also said something that's always been with me "We have nothing to fear except fear itself". He said that in that speech too.

Interviewer: Did you like Roosevelt did you think he was a good president?

Mr. Ellis: Did I like him?

Interviewer: Yeh

Mr. Ellis: I think he was one of the greatest Presidents we've ever had. Cause this country was in a terrible terrible state of affairs close to what it is now. But he got in there and he just got thins program and this program and this thing and just started things picking up and of course then if you remember Germany declared war on us first. Of course we was helping England all of the time and Russia too with materials but we didn't have to declare war Germany done that for us.

Interviewer: Okay can you talk about your job that you had before the military after you did farming you worked for the electric company right? You worked for the electric company.

Mr. Ellis: I'm sorry I dind't know this would turn out like this or I wouldn't have agreed to it I can't hear.

Interviewer: You worked for the electric company right? What did you do for the electric company? What was your job?

Mr. Ellis: I was a lineman.

Interviewer: Lineman do you remember how much it paid?

Mr. Ellis: Oh lord yeh I made 50 cents an hour.

Interviewer: That's good. And thought you were doing real well right?

Mr. Ellis: What about that. I made 50 cents and hour when I started and when I went to climbing climbing the pole I got 55 cents an hour.

Interviewer: Wow good increase.

Mr. Ellis: Now what they are getting my same company \$25 an hour.

Interviewer: That's a big jump. Do you remember where you did your basic training?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh Mississippi and then well I didn't have much until I was gone. Se I was in the army six months then I was overseas. We went to Camp Shank, New York that was where we got our overseas training.

Interviewer: What did your basic training involve what did you do how did they train you?

Mr. Ellis: Oh just drilling drill they would pull tricks on you say you was going to get a pass then they'd bring you out and run you about 15 miles you know.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of your fellow recruits? Do you remember them that you went to training with?

Mr. Ellis: What did you say?

Interviewer: Your recruits do you remember any of them? People that you went to training with?

Mr. Ellis: Oh yeh

Interviewer: Can you tell me anything about them?

Mr. Ellis: Sam Huggins lives right out here not far from here now you might know him. But yeh Bill Fife that used to live right down here. John Meacham and oh different ones. And of course after I got overseas then I knew a lot more people then than I had a chance to here.

Interviewer: Did you think your training prepared you to fight did you think it was realistic at all that I did this training and now I am ready for combat? Did you think that or not?

Mr. Ellis: Did I what?

Interviewer: Did you think that your training prepared you for combat?

Mr. Ellis: Well yeh the thing about me see as a lineman and on a farm I wasn't like some of these New York school boys or something like that see I was in good shape and yeh the training helps because on those hikes we'd go on you'd run awhile then walk awhile and a lot of them guys would just fall out they couldn't take it. Well it never did bother me a bit at least I just of course they would have a truck come by and pick up those people but it dind't bother me I could take it then but now the shape I'm in now see. I think about that everyday how I used to be and the way I am now. Can't get out here and can't do this I climbed the ladder I had the back part of this roofed the other day and I climbed that latter up to where I could see what they was doing I like to fell off that thing. And used to climb poles trees and just anything can't do that no more that bothers me a lot. As far as living it started out not hearing just me and my dog lives here my son comes by about every day he's by every day and. But the training s didn't bother me and it was good it was good for you. Now you had to they had us crawl under the said it was real fire you know crawl on your elbows knees all kind of stuff.

Interviewer: When you went overseas did you go in troop ships?

Mr. Ellis: Troop ship?

Interviewer: Yes

Mr. Ellis: Yeh

Interviewer: What were they like?

Mr. Ellis: Terrible the one we went on had been a cattle ship and it was now I got a friend married my niece went over on the Queen Mary he said he didn't even know they was in there and we were just a bouncing boy stink real bad they tried to clean it up you know but you could still it still dind't smell good down in there.

Interviewer: Do you remember how long your voyage was from the U.S. to overseas?

Mr. Ellis: Nine days

Interviewer: It was nine days. Did it feel like some of the longest nine days?

Mr. Ellis: Terrible

Interviewer: Okay when you arrived overseas where did you live did you live in barracks?

Mr. Ellis: Oran North Africa is where we landed. We was put on trucks there. What they see went in Mediterranean through the well well but anyway we went in the ocean out of the Mediterranean Sea and they was always sort of afraid of German would bomb us you know and they put us on trucks and they let us ride outside the city town there and then they put us out and made us walk the rest of the way where we was going to a replacement center out outside of Oran.

Interviewer: When you arrived was it a long time before you went to battle or was there just a long time before you did go was it shortly after?

Mr. Ellis: No I stayed there you see when we got over there it was so hot that they really wanted you stay out about an hour in a tent and them tents are hotter than it was outside. But anyway they was afraid of the sun and of course a lot of the guys didn't have a tan they wasn't used to that kind of stuff you know but it was good for them. And we stayed there and pulled guard duty and a replacement center and they had just about anything an Air Core could need over a thousand acres there. And we pulled guard duty until somebody ass for us or called for us for their outfit and that's where I was when I first went overseas.

Interviewer: Do you remember your commanding General who was in charge? Do you remember who was in charge, your commanding General at the time?

Mr. Ellis: Not there I don't remember who was in charge there. But I remember very well who the guy that come got me out of there he was a Master Sargent he had been in the Army 18 years and I when I first saw him I thought I don't know you but he was oh about 6 foot 4 or 5 inches tall and real slim you know and he interviewed me and first thing he asked me was did I drink of course I dind't drink you know and he asked me a bunch of questions. And he picked me out he wanted me and he got four or

five there that he needed in his outfit and that's the way I got away from that place. When we first got overseas and got in these we slept in we had some tents we'd sleep in and we'd get out food was C-rations you'd get a can of beans at one meal and a can of stew for another and it hot and that mess would make you sick. Now I could eat the beans but that other was and we thought we thought it was going to be like that and come to find out our food was being black marketed they caught the guys doing that then our food was alright.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of the weapons or equipment you trained with?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh we had the regular 30 caliber stuff and then when we got overseas we had carbons and each one of us had a 45 pistol automatic I always wondered why I didn't bring mine home with me you could have all I had they never checked one thing that I had when I come home.

Interviewer: Did they operate well in combat did they work when you needed?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh those old ones did now they said the new ones that they made about the time the war ended they had trouble with them the 45s. But the ones that we had worked perfect the thing about it you just didn't want to use it.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you first experienced combat?

Mr. Ellis: No you see I was in the Air Core and the biggest combat now my when I was released from the Army my release showed three combat stars well that was for different areas of combat where our planes or the Air Force were. But the only thing we had to worry about was the Air Force bombings.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you bombed?

Mr. Ellis: Remember where? You don't forget. The worst one I was ever in was December 23, 1943 at 7:30 in the evening when it started. We was in very deep then and there was a little bath house down right by the docks where all of the ships was there was a barber shop and a bath house well this same ole Master Sargent that found me come got me and we asked him about letting us go down there the middle of the day and he said no if you'll work on if you'll finish stay here and work do your job until late in the afternoon now you dind't get a bath everyday you know you didn't get a bath twice a day you got a bath when you could ever four days five days whatever. And if you ever are around the ocean be sure and take you some soap and get in the ocean and wash your head it will take you four days to get that soap out of it. We didn't know that see or I didn't some of them did I guess but I didn't. But we was there that night we went to this bath house four of us and it was the first time we had been there and we didn't know anything about it in fact it was dark when we went down there and the Master Sargent dropped us off and he went back said I'll come back after while and get you. Well he hadn't more than got out away from us when the alarm went off and there we was didn't even know our way back. And I got a book in there that says it was 18 ships sunk there that night and we was as close to it as near to the road out there but I don't believe it was that many. I've got a whole stack of WWII books World War well the whole World War Japan and all. And it says that there was 18 ships sunk there that night now I don't I know a bunch was a bunch of people killed but I don't believe there was 18 ships sunk. But it was

bad I'll tell you. The funny thing about it now is that day is the first day that we'd ever had a building that we could sleep in it was an old some kind of school Italian school building and it had long rooms that would hold 22 bunks each one of those rooms and oh we thought we had it made and that thing come that night and blowed every window and every door out of that thing. So you don't ever know what the next day is going to hold see.

Interviewer: What was your job when you were in the Air Force?

Mr. Ellis: I was in transportation. And my job well when I first got there now see I signed up or tried to be an air gunner here and they said I was too tall. Well what I done overseas they say where I wanted to be a gunner they said yeh we can use you and I said no you can't I ain't taking you. What they was doing they was training them here and over there they would just pick you up and put you in there because they needed some see. I wasn't doing that I had done signed up for something else anyway so I drove whatever needed driving we had as many as 200 vehicles in my outfit see. We had staff cars we had jeeps we had big trucks all size trucks and then after I got to be Corporal I'd get a little easier job then when I got to be Sargent I didn't drive any I just seen if I had so many vehicles under me.

Interviewer: So were you transporting troop or supplies what were you transporting since you were in transportation supplies food?

Mr. Ellis: What we was hauling?

Interviewer: Yeh

Mr. Ellis: Whatever whatever was needed if they said a truck if somebody need a truck we'd send a truck and driver and that was the Air Core that was who we worked for. And we had a dispatcher just like you know what a dispatcher is he'd sign out that truck to a certain driver and that driver would be responsible for that truck until it come back. And it always we had a lot of fun and we was scared a lot of tiems too. A lot of unfortunate things happened our mail clerk we had a place down the coast, let me tell you this, where you could go down there if you could hide and they had French fries and eggs fresh eggs now I don't know where they got that stuff but you could hit the jeep you had a place you could hide the jeep and you could get two eggs and a whole plate full of French fries for \$25.

Interviewer: That much \$25? That's a lot.

Mr. Ellis: We would carry we would carry our bread with us and we would carry our butter and maybe if it was summer time we'd carry tomatoes. We'd have somebody go out and find somebody that was raising tomatoes and bring us in some tomatoes and that helped that ole GI food you know and we'd carry all that with us. But all he would furnish was eggs now he would have fish but I ordered fish one night and he brought that thing in there oh that things was that long laid him on my plate and he was looking right at me them eyes head and all I covered him over to the side. Never did order fish no more over there. We had a lot of things happen that was sad really hurt us out. I'll tell you one and that's all I'm going to tell you.

Interviewer: That's fine

Mr. Ellis: We had a our mail clerk that took care of our mail and I just loved him because he would go through the mail and if he found he would get mine out for me and he'd bring it to me I dind't have to go stand in line or anything you know and he was going to get to come home say like tomorrow late that evening it was nearly night he wanted a jeep to go down to this very place I was telling you where you could go down there and the guy was black marketing and that stuff I don't know where he got it we didn't care as long as we could eat get to eat. But anyway he wanted a jeep and the man the boy didn't drink usually but he had been drinking he was celebrating he thought he knew he was going to get to come home the next day and I wouldn't let him have a jeep. I said no you're not going to get a jeep I said I'll let another driver take you down there but I said you're not going to get a jeep. Well him or somebody forged my name on a trip ticket and the dispatcher in fact he's been by here twice to see me since WWII Saint Pier was his name and he looked at that ticket and he thought he didn't he just glanced at it he thought it was my name and he give him a jeep and he hit a rock wall down there and killed his self that night. And they tried to get me in trouble over that in fact they had a little trial now and they discovered that I didn't give him the ticket cause I wouldn't give anybody a ticket like that. But there was tings you had everything happen to you. My parents were old when I went over there and that's that thing that worried me more than anything I was just hoping they'd be here when I come back and they were. My Momma was sick when I come home but she she had had pneumonia but she got over it lived a good while after that.

Interviewer: Did they write to you a lot did they write to you when you were in overseas in North Africa and Italy? Did you receive a lot of letters you were talking about?

Mr. Ellis: Oh yeh yeh I did a lot of people I was still very thankful for that a lot of people wrote. Dr. Kemp do you remember Dr. Kemp? I don't guess you do he's been dead too long but he would even write me a letter ever once in a while the girls over the office would write and my sisters would write and of course my girlfriend my wife would write me all the time Momma would write me all the time. Yeh I got lots of mail now sometime you didn't get it you'd get a whole bunch at once you didn't get it every day all the time.

Interviewer: Did you write a lot home did you write your parents?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh I did every chance I got I did.

Interviewer: Was that the major thing you did in your free time was write letters? In your free time was that the major things you did was write letters home? You wrote a lot of letters home right?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh I did see the letters was all censored see when I'd write home maybe they'd blot out a lot of it. But my Momma finally somebody come home and they found out exactly where the only way they knew where I was is if somebody come home over there and told them because they wouldn't anything in a letter you didn't you might as well not put it in there because it would be blotted out. Nobody and I don't know why because the Germans knew right where we were all the time. They had people and they knew and that ole Axis Sally that was on the radio all the time she'd tell you she'd even tell you what you had for supper. Can you believe that back then?

Interviewer: They knew what they were doing. When you your fellow soldiers did you play cards you know play sports in your free time?

Mr. Ellis: We played softball after the war was nearly over we got a field cleared off and we had a real good softball team. They I was over there for awhile after the war was over there was some little bed see the Air Core after the 15th Air Force was really set up to bomb the Pulaski oil field remaining see once they put them out of order or recaptured them and they was bombing all the oil facilities every one they had they run out of oil see and when they run out of oil and gas now the good pilots played out see they got shot down captured or killed and then our danger was minimized we didn't goods see. And that big raid I was telling you about where the 18 ships we didn't think they could do that but they got enough together that they come in there and bombed that place that night.

Interviewer: Do you remember much about the Germans what you thought about them like their leadership. What did you think about that Germans that they were good troops that they were brave?

Mr. Ellis: They was more like our people than any other people over there. You could take the Italians the French the British and the Germans walking down that street away from you and you could tell the Germans just about every time. They was smart they was even the prisoners that we had some that worked there with us in fact when I come home we landed in New York then we went into this I don't know what kind of building it was but there was a guy poked through us and said your going to have a meal tonight like you haven't had in a long time. Anything in the world you want to eat you ask for it. And you know who was preparing it? Germans German prisoners had been sent over here and those working in the mess hall.

Interviewer: Was it good?

Mr. Ellis: Huh?

Interviewer: Was the food good?

Mr. Ellis: Yes sir it was good of course it might not have been now but it was good to us. And when the when we come in on the boat you see they had the anchor out in the middle of the river you know they couldn't get over the side and these little barges sent one over to put soldiers on they was all stacked with fresh milk and you'd get on the thing and you would just drink milk all you wanted that is the first we'd seen of that see. Fresh eggs now the eggs we had the army had was ole what do you call them?

Interviewer: Was it powdered?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh powered eggs. But you gained weight you'd gain weight on all that stuff I don't know how but. Oh there's a lot of things happen a lot of funny things a lot of things wasn't funny. I won't talk about them.

Interviewer: That's fine. What you were talking about before about Italians what did you think of the Italians? What were your views of them?

Mr. Ellis: About the Italians? Oh I won't say much about them.

Interviewer: Did you ever come across many civilians or refugees when you were overseas? Did you come across any civilians or refugees when you were overseas?

Mr. Ellis: What?

Interviewer: Civilians and refugees? Were you around a lot of Italian people while you were there?

Mr. Ellis: Oh yeh we were with them for two years over there we was around them every day. In fact we had some drivers that was civilians had ole civilian cars of course the Army took them over or the Air Core took them over and they'd have drivers. Oh they was they was good people. But talking about the girls they were pretty until they grew up. Island of Capri you've heard about the Isladn of Capri haven't' you? You haven't heard I know you have the Island of Capri.

Interviewer: Tell me

Mr. Ellis: That's where all the millionaires had the fine homes and all that. Well the army took that over and I got to go there for two weeks rest camp the Island of Capri. And there was some good looking girls there. No people a lot of people here in the states own some of those village cottages over there on the Island of Capri and they just let the air force have them to use for rest camp that was really pretty you could swim on out in the Mediterranean and you could just see a hundred foot deep in that water. And play soft ball they had a place to play softball there.

Interviewer: It kind of took your mind off the war?

Mr. Ellis: Huh?

Interviewer: And it kind of took your mind off the war for a little while?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh that's right you enjoyed yourself. I got sun burned in the head over there. Of course it was hot you know and the sun the weather was about like out here there was a summer and winter about like ours of course North Africa it stays hot hot hot all the time. But anyway I went out there and we went swimming and we played tennis and we done everything on the Island of Capri. And I went in and got a shower and the next morning I got up and started to comb my head and I couldn't hardly touch my head I had one I said look a here what's wrong with my head I said I can't touch it and I had sun burn in the part of my hair and it got peeled it blistered. But we had fun.

Interviewer: It was good times. And you were still overseas even after the war was over right?

Mr. Ellis: When the war was over? Yeh

Interviewer: You were still there what were you doing?

Mr. Ellis: After the war was over we had tons and tons and tons of stuff that we had to check in see. When the war was over over there I could come home I had enough points and I'd been there long enough I could have just come right on home. But see what was going to happen I would have stayed

home a month's furlough and then went to the Pacific. And I had all I wanted and I said no I ain't going home I choice I could stay over there or I could come home. If I'd have known they was going to drop the atomic bomb I'd have come home see but we dind't even know they had atomic bombs nobody else and after I agreed to stay over there they dropped the atomic bomb over there and the war was over.

Interviewer: What are these points you were talking about?

Mr. Ellis: Huh?

Interviewer: The points what are the points you were talking about what did they involve? You said you had enough points to go home.

Mr. Ellis: Yeh if you had been there so long and I don't know I guess good conduct had something to do with it but you had points see and when you had enough points you could come home for a furlough. But then you would have to go back over there. But after the war was over over there if you had enough points you could come home and in place of going back over there you went to the Pacific see. I wasn't going to do that if I could help it I just wasn't going to.

Interviewer: Well how long would your furlough have been if you'd have come back? Do you know how long a month a week how long would you have got to stay in the United States before you would be sent to the Pacific?

Mr. Ellis: Thirty days.

Interviewer: Thirty days?

Mr. Ellis: Thirty days. That's what they told us I don't know if you got in a certain outfit we was already in an outfit though I guess they could just send you right on I don't know what they were doing.

Interviewer: So when you were after the war and you were just processing the trucks and stuff to bring them back to the states is that what you were doing after the war?

Mr. Ellis: You know what they done with a lot of that stuff?

Interviewer: No

Mr. Ellis: Put it on concrete and run a bulldozer over it. But see we had to get shed of trucks. Ya'll let me go to the bathroom.

Interviewer: Alright. So do you remember when they declared that WWII was over and done with? Do you remember where you were?

Mr. Ellis: Very well.

Interviewer: Where were you?

Mr. Ellis: The first time we got word that the war was over we was outside we was watching a movie outside.

Interviewer: What was the movie?

Mr. Ellis: Huh?

Interviewer: What was your movie?

Mr. Ellis: I don't know but we was watching it. And we got word the war was over and everybody just we would always have a cigar to smoke and it was almost like a fog out there. We got word the war was over and we tore up the screen we tore down everything and we just had a marry time and about the time we got it all tore down we heard it was a mistake the war wasn't over. But it wasn't but a few days it wasn't long we knew it was about over with it wasn't but a few days until it was over. And another thing that touched me was when President Roosevelt died I was coming in a jeep from an air port in Navarre Italy and a guy was holding up stars and stripes there and said that President Roosevelt was dead and them ole Italian people cried them older people cried just like babies. Now that was touching to me that they thought that much about it but they would just now the young ones didn't because they didn't know what was going on but the old people were just crying like babies when President Roosevelt died. Oh we knew the war was about over because when we got word that night we celebrated we was a little early.

Interviewer: Well when you went back to the Untied States did you go on another troop ship? Did you go on another troop boat or ship when you left? When you came back to the United States how did you arrive troop

Mr. Ellis: Yeh see they told us that we could come any way we could so I put down I would come by air or boat either one I was ready to come home and I come on a boat and of course had to get sick again.

Interviewer: Was the experiance any better than when you first got on that boat to go overseas?

Mr. Ellis: Oh yeh lord have mercy yes the boat wasn't any better.

Interviewer: But you knew you were going home.

Mr. Ellis: You knew you was going home. See when I went over there that was when the submarines was really sinking everything in the and they went to putting the made the convoys out of a bunch of them going together. And I guess al lot of us dind't realize how lucky we was that we wasn't hit we dind't give it a thought those poor people that was torpedoed out there in the middle of the ocean. I never did know all those books I've got in there I'll show you that stack before you go home every time my son finds one he thinks I haven't got he buys it for me. Oh we had some good times but we had a lot that wasn't good. You have a lot of good friends over there I got letters from them up to this last a year ago this last Christmas. The last one of them died that was keeping in touch with me I got a letter from his wife and she said that Warner White he was with me that night of that big raid we was in and he had died. Most of us are gone you know just scattered around now but. Had a friend the other day that had

been down to the Korean War you know he was in it and they had had a reunion down in I believe it was Atlanta. But he is a good friend of mine of course he is a little younger than I am cause he was in that war and he was saying how many of theirs had fell off that wasn't there. And I told him I said yeh most of mines gone.

Interviewer: Did you ever go to any of the reunions?

Mr. Ellis: Huh?

Interviewer: Did you ever go to any of the reunions yourself? Di you have some reunions with your group?

Mr. Ellis: Oh yeh I never did go I never did go but to about two but I had several boys come by to see me you know and we'd have a big time. No its war is a terrible thing it shouldn't happen it just shouldn't happen. Now we are very fortunate in this country our women and children never had to go through that but over there those women and children go right through it just like the men do see. They and its pitiful that it has to happen and I think this is so awful in Iraq I don't know what you think I just don't think we ought to have been in there to start with we didn't have reason enough to do it. Just because somebody bombed our buildings over here we didn't have to go over there and be terrorist to them people. And then we don't ever know how many women and children was killed over there. That bothers me a lot I read in the paper and now our soldiers getting picked off here and there and I noticed the paper while ago one was killed yesterday. From seven to eighteen years old to twenty three they ought not even be allowed to go overseas until they are twenty five. I really believe that I just don't we just don't need those kids over there until they've become mature men. Somebody asked me if I'd rather have an old man or a kid I says kids if there not too old I'll take an old man with me any time.

Interviewer: Well when you arrive back to the United States after the war did anybody greet you was your family there to greet you?

Mr. Ellis: Was anybody what?

Interviewer: When you came back to the U.S. you came off the boat the ship was any of your family or your friends there to greet you?

Mr. Ellis: No cause they dind't know when I was going to come in. I dind't neither I didn't know what to tell them see and once you got on the boat it was too late. See we was waiting for transportation when we got transportation to come home we took it. And you dind't have time to make arrangements for anybody then of course my parents as I said was old my sisters and brothers wasn't but they was see my next brother I had six brothers and sisters. And my next brother was nine years older than me that made me a lot younger than them. And of course I was glad they didn't because the way things were up there there was so many coming and going you just didn't have a chance to do anything. Of course they was getting us out of there we went in there that night and there was some I believe he was a Colonel or somebody and they had talked to us and he said I've got good news for you and bad news we didn't know what he was talking about. He said the good news no what was the bad news that's what he said

the good news is won't a one of you be here tomorrow night he was going to get us all out of there all on the way home you know. And I come down to Fort Knox and there's where I was discharged to come home. Some guy there with a Cadillac and he was getting him a bunch we would give him so much and he was coming to Nashville and coming down 431 and you remember the ole old forks in the road over there where gullies are what was that? Where the filling station was at its all gone now where the 41 out here went in and I got in that Cadillac come down there and got out and then I was gonna hitch hike from there back to Springfield and I didn't more than sit that ole bag down I had and this A-Model Ford came by and old man and old woman. He pulled over and stopped and he put me out right at the square in Springfield. And of course out office Cumberland Electric office was on the square at that time up there and I walked right over there. My brother was manager over there and I hugged everybody over there and he put me in the car and carried me on down to the house.

Interviewer: And you went back to work with Cumberland Electric?

Mr. Ellis: Yeh another week or two I went back to work.

Interviewer: And a couple of years later you married your wife?

Mr. Ellis: Huh?

Interviewer: A couple of years later you married your wife you said at 28?

Mr. Ellis: About two weeks.

Interviewer: Two weeks?

Mr. Ellis: Well we'd been going together a long time before I went overseas but I dind't think it was a good idea to leave a wife here I dind't know whether I was coming home or not. I thought I was so I always thought I was coming home. But there was 40,000 in the Air Core over there that didn't go home. That's what one of these books said I dind't know what it was but it said that we had 40,000 Air Force people killed over there. But I was sure glad to get home I'll tell you that.

Interviewer: Well I appreciate you doing the interview it went well you did a good job. Thank you thank you so much.