

Interviewer: Mr. Collins go ahead and tell us your full name and where you were born.

Collins: I'm Willie Collins I was born in Hickam County what they call Little Spring Creek.

Interviewer: Little Spring Creek

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: What year were you born?

Collins: 1918

Interviewer: 1918 so that makes you how old today?

Collins: I'll be 82 in July.

Interviewer: The 18th so you was born July the 18, 1918 alright that's great. So I guess the next question is where were you the day that Pearl Harbor was bombed?

Collins: I think I remember when they declared war.

Interviewer: Okay

Collins: Because I was hauling down at Tennessee Products I have my own vehicle truck.

Interviewer: What age were you when they declared war?

Collins: In my middle teens.

Interviewer: Middle teens

Woman in the background: No you wouldn't have been middle teens. How old was you when you went to the war?

Collins: Let's see I went in January 15 of 42.

Interviewer: January 15, 1942?

Collins: Yeah

Woman in the background: Let's see how old would that be?

Interviewer: How old would that be? It doesn't matter we can figure the math later can't we.

Collins: Twenty I guess I was about twenty. Is that on?

Interviewer: Yeah its fine we're fine. You was about 20?

Collins: Well I really can't remember.

Interviewer: That's fine you don't have to remember we can add the dates up later that's fine. So were you drafted or did you enlist?

Collins: I was drafted.

Interviewer: You were drafted okay. What were you drafted to?

Collins: When I went in I was of course they wanted to know the same thing they wanted to know what I was doing and I told them I was a trucker. And so they sent me to school in Virginia what was that training place up there Lori? Camp Lee Virginia so I took eight weeks of basic training there as a truck driver like I'd never been in one before. They showed me they wanted me to paper and I told them see I didn't finish the eighth grade but I knew how to make a living with a truck or try to.

Interviewer: They wanted you to do all this stuff with paper and pass

Collins: Yeah on paper and I told them I remember that much I said well I can't drive your truck on a paper but I says I can drive a truck I drove one trying to make a living with it. So you don't have to tell me how to change gear or when to change gear you put me in one and I'll drive it.

Interviewer: It was common sense really.

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: They like to do things a little different.

Collins: So theirs was a five speed and mine was a four speed I mean you know.

Interviewer: Is there anything at the training or at the school that just sticks out in your mind?

Collins: Well yes I remember we'd have to change the oil if I had one and you had we you know we'd all. They'd change the oil and pour it in a big square pit out in the back about 8 by 8 square brand new oil. You just I'd just fill it and put it in my truck they'd drain it out and you'd come along you'd do the same thing you'd put in new oil you know and drain it out and go out there and throw it in that pit. And I thought that was the silliest thing I'd ever seen.

Interviewer: Why did they do that?

Collins: That's the army.

Interviewer: Something's they did didn't make sense.

Collins: See everything was rationed back home and then you know putting oil in an 8 by 10 something like that 8 by 8 square pit hundreds of thousands of gallons I guess. That's all they done day in and day out. So I thought that was silly.

Interviewer: That is kind of silly. Where did you go from there?

Collins: Well I got my training there and let's see I went to I believe we went to Georgia what they called.

Woman in the background: You went to Fort Oberthrope.

Collins: No that's where I went to induction. I didn't stay there but a day or two. But I went to Georgia and the new camp down there was Collin Water Base and see I already was driving a truck you know. And they wanted volunteers one morning and I hadn't been there but a few days a new camp and everything new barracks they had just built it. So me and L.B. Goings me and him went in the same day Lester B Goings lived at Centerville and Brown Breeze.

Interviewer: I know Brown.

Collins: But he didn't go to Virginia with us they just picked out you know whatever. So me and B was friends because we was doing the same thing we were truck you know done the same thing when we were down Tennessee Products you know they made charcoal and stuff like that. So they asked for volunteers you know truck drivers so naturally me and B that's what we took that you know.

Interviewer: That was your specialty.

Collins: Yeah so got up there they gave us a wheel barrel they had a new building it was about 2,000 square feet I believe it was. A big you rebuilt motors you know and all that stuff put motors on them then take them out stuff like that. So they give me and him a wheel barrel a piece and a broom and a shovel and I forget how long it was I'd say at least three or four foot all the way around that building and it was dirty you know just freshly new built. We had to sweep off all the way around that building we worked all day with them wheel barrels.

Interviewer: That's the army for you too right.

Collins: We was driving a wheel barrel.

Interviewer: Instead of truck you were driving a wheel barrel.

Collins: So that broke us from volunteering we learned.

Interviewer: You don't volunteer.

Collins: So we were shy you know anytime they called for volunteers for something or another. So we learned you have to be in there about four to six months to learn what to do and what not to do.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: So we learned that real quick.

Interviewer: You learned that the first or second day right.

Collins: So we got our training you know there but we went to from there to I believe Alabama, what was the name of that place there? Camp Rucker Alabama.

Interviewer: Okay

Collins: Camp Rucker so we got down there so they done the same thing there it was a new camp too see. All of that was new we had three barracks we only had one company but had three barracks outfit had three barracks. Our company was 311 Ordinance you know what I was in.

Interviewer: Is that what you stayed in all the way through?

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: So what was that again now?

Collins: 311 Ordinance

Interviewer: Okay

Collins: 311 Ordinance Depot you know that's what we run when we went overseas.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: That's what we was training for. So we got down there and we had do the same thing clean windows and everything like that. And about the time we got the building all cleaned up well we'd have they'd move us over to the other barracks. Well the first time we did that we jumped up like the rest of them you know. Went over there well we'd clean them all up and we'd fix out bed and everything you know everything just like they told us to do. Well we'd lay down on our bunk well they'd come over then and they made a mistake and like you were supposed to have slept beside of me or down at the lower end you know you slept down there and I slept in the middle. Well we had to tear up the bed and put all the stuff back in the duffle bag and move down there. So well we got wise there so next time we went to one well we just laid back we just laid there like that until they said well we've got everything done. We'd pick up our duffle bed and out linen and everything you know went over and we fixed our bed and everybody the rest of them were done settled. We just got in there and fixed our bunks and laid back in it. We learned you know. But in Virginia' I'll back up a little bit there, in Virginia when I was taking basic training well they every Saturday we had a drill or go to a movie. Well we had to change put on our uniform dress uniform to go to the movie. Well when we'd get back we'd have to change into our dungarees or whatever I can't remember that ain't the right name we called them fatigues. So they'd decide they wanted to go back and show us something else a different movie we'll we'd have to change back into uniform.

Interviewer: Uniform to fatigues.

Collins: It was cold up there you know and one time I just put my uniform over my fatigues. So when I got back I'd just pull the fatigues off I mean uniform and hang it up and be in my fatigues. So one Saturday it was cold up there and we all fell out to drill. I decided I wasn't going to drill and so I was laying back on my bunk and heard somebody coming up the steps upstairs slept upstairs had double bunks you know. And I heard someone coming up and I knew there wasn't nobody supposed to be in there but me I mean I wasn't supposed to be in there but I was. So I hid in the see we had all our clothes in the rack on the side you know like all the way down the room. So I hid in them clothes and they couldn't find me so that broke me so I didn't know how to change step until I went down to I guess it

was Camp Rucker I don't know seems like that. No I guess it was at Georgia I didn't know how to stay in step so B learned me how to stay in step.

Interviewer: So you hid in those clothes and they didn't find you huh?

Collins: No if they had they would have Court Marshaled me no that would get me extra duty.

Interviewer: Give you extra duty or something like that.

Collins: They'd give me extra duty they were good on that you know.

Interviewer: You wasn't a little mischievous were you?

Collins: Yeah and one more thing I'll tell you one day they got me for my shoes not being lined up. Well I thought well I'll figure something to do I'll just get me a yard stick. I got me a yard stick and a pencil and just marked you know beside the bed you know.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: And well I'd put them on that line you know they were perfect. I got gigged for a week for having a mark on the floor.

Interviewer: Well after training and all that was over with when did they send you when did you know you were first going to go overseas and when did they send you?

Collins: We went to Rucker to make it short went to Rucker and we had tractor trailers 16 of them and we drove we went to North Carolina I can't think of the name of it we was on maneuvers. I'll think of the name of it after while but anyway.

Interviewer: You said North Carolina?

Collins: Yeah and but anyway we stayed up there a couple of months something like that. Then we brought all of our equipment down to the fairgrounds.

Interviewer: Yeah that's another question, I hate to interrupt, but what were hauling in the tractor trailers at this time?

Collins: Well we was training with them empty.

Interviewer: Oh you were training with them empty at this time. Okay so you were just on maneuvers going to North Carolina.

Collins: Well then we had supplies in it.

Interviewer: Oh okay

Collins: See when we got to North Carolina we might have pulled no I believe they was empty when we went to North Carolina they was empty.

Interviewer: Okay

Collins: I wish I could remember. _____ Field North Carolina.

Interviewer: Oh okay

Collins: We was out in a big field before we got to town. And see we'd go to I'd go to I remember one time I went to, nobody will ever believe this, oh I forget that fort. There used to be a camp in Georgia but anyway they sent me down there and I got a trailer load of oil filters you know a semi-trailer of oil filters. I'd never seen that many filters in my life.

Interviewer: You've got a whole trailer full of oil filters.

Collins: Trailer of oil filters.

Interviewer: What were they for I mean just the jeeps and the trucks and the?

Collins: Yeah and see we just had 16 tractors and 2 command cars and a couple of jeeps I think you know for the officers to ride in. So of course we had to supply them Mickey that was our job supplying the other people that was on maneuvers.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: So that's the reason but that was the most oil filters I ever saw.

Interviewer: Oh me so after North Carolina.

Collins: We come down to Camp Forest.

Interviewer: Went down to Camp Forest.

Collins: Then we left from Camp Forest Tullahoma, Camp Forest Tullahoma.

Interviewer: Okay

Collins: Then we hauled supplies from Atlanta Georgia to Augusta Georgia and Anderson Alabama. That was we used to go down like me and you pick up a load come back you know. We got small armor in Anderson Alabama and other places we got supplies. And we come back see we supplied all the other people whatever they needed you know out of them 16 tractor trailers.

Interviewer: So just 16 of you that just went almost just everywhere together supplying?

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: And you would run things like filters maybe

Collins: Small arms I'd go to Anderson and Augusta Georgia we'd pick up automobile small you know like engines and things like that and brought them back.

Interviewer: Right so after all of that you I guess what I'm trying to ask is they needed you overseas so.

Collins: Right so we went to Camp Stowman I've got that Camp Stowman California and.

Interviewer: Oh so you drove your tractor trailers to.

Collins: We shipped them on a train.

Interviewer: Oh you shipped them on the train.

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay that's interesting.

Collins: Shipped all of that and we rode in the passenger cars you know. But they put them on trailers you know now like they do to haul them.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: Just like piggy back they called it.

Interviewer: I figured they'd make you drive them to California.

Collins: Oh no

Interviewer: Too much time I guess.

Collins: But they done things different you know. Of course they could ship them back then probably cost them three cents a gallon for diesel fuel for the railroad that's all they give back then three cents a gallon.

Interviewer: Yeah it's amazing. So you went to California and then.

Collins: Camp Stowman and Mickey always thought I dreaded going over there so bad I couldn't hardly stand it I guess everybody else did. So we went down to the dock we had numbers everywhere we you know like I had a certain number to stand with my duffle bag and with all my ammunition and rifles and everything ready to board, couldn't hardly tote it all. But anyway you just stand there with all the boys you know you was like family large family that's the way it was when I was in service. But I don't believe I could have had the guts to just if they called me out and I'd walk out and let y'all go overseas. So that's the way you feel.

Interviewer: Right you just knew it was something that you had to do.

Collins: Yeah and I wasn't no better to go do it

Interviewer: Than anybody else.

Collins: Than anybody else I don't think that's where I probably would have volunteered.

Interviewer: Right even though you knew not to volunteer that's yeah.

Collins: Yeah for that.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: But I wouldn't want it to be any of my friends.

Interviewer: That's just your duty. That's what a lot of veterans felt.

Collins: See we it was a close nit it was like brothers. We was like brothers to one another so the next place we stopped it was Melanie Bay. We stopped there to fuel up I mean water or diesel fuel or whatever the ship I guess it run on diesel I don't know what it did. But we stopped there stayed overnight and then we went on to French ___ in New Guiney

Interviewer: Speaking of you know you were talking about other service men and the army you know the other guys were kind of like family kind of like brothers to you. You were not married at this time right?

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: You were married? Tell me a little about that how did it feel leaving your wife?

Collins: There ain't no way to describe it.

Interviewer: No way to describe it. Just a lot of pain hurting pain in the gut?

Collins: Well just it hurt you.

Woman in the background: He was, you don't mind me?

Interviewer: No I don't mind.

Woman in the background: He was at Camp Forest and I rode the train up to Camp Forest and stayed with him it wasn't many days until he had to go overseas.

Collins: About a week.

Woman in the background: And I'll never forget it when he went out the door seeing him that was the last time 21 months he stayed overseas.

Interviewer: Twenty one months

Collins: I think that's right.

Interviewer: So that was just an awful pain. And you didn't have any children at this time?

Collins: No

Interviewer: So that was a blessing. So you went to New Guinea tell me about the trip over.

Collins: We zig zagged from California Camp Stowman California on the Cliff Fontaine the ship you know that's the name an old Dutch ship. We zig zagged all the way over there.

Interviewer: So they couldn't pick you up?

Collins: So the subs couldn't see there were just 1600 of us on there.

Interviewer: 1600

Collins: And the first time the next morning we went down to eat breakfast Mickey and we all was sitting at a bench you know on both sides all the way across the ship you know the dining room whatever it was. It was more like a pig pin and see that things a rolling. And I've seen like you sitting across there the plates would slide you know the way slide over here. And you've vomit in your plate and it would be over here.

Interviewer: In another person's area.

Collins: Just back and forth that's true now I ain't joking.

Interviewer: Did you experience a lot of see sickness?

Collins: Never got sick at all.

Interviewer: You didn't?

Collins: I don't see how but anyway the first bite I took was a boiled egg. You got beans and boiled eggs it was about no more than three items on your plate. And I the first bite I took of that boiled egg I thought well I've always ____ told me that will keep you from getting sick. So I bit in there and it had a piece of shell in it. So I didn't eat another bit.

Interviewer: It wasn't see sickness that got you though was it.

Collins: And that floor was vomit all over it you'd just slide and the table was vomit all over it and in them dishes they'd slide wasn't dishes some kind of pans you know plates you ate on.

Interviewer: I guess it after one started it just started like a domino effect.

Collins: Yeah and I'd grab mine and you'd grab yours or try to grab somebodies. But it was funny it wasn't funny then but.

Interviewer: It's kind of comical now to think about it to think about some of the aspects of it.

Collins: Yeah well it was heart breaking to go but you had a duty. You always felt like you know you had a duty to do so. We had good times we had sorrow times you couldn't be sad all the time.

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about I suppose that the trip over was successful I mean you didn't have no problems.

Collins: No

Interviewer: So what happened after you landed?

Collins: Well we didn't know where we was at. And I had a full field pack 50 roll of 50 caliber bullets you know for the big gun and a cot and my bag and of course it took I wasn't very big then. I stayed in there four years a fraction over say four years and I got lost.

Interviewer: That's okay

Collins: But anyway we had to go down they didn't have steps off the ship or anything like that you had to go down ropes you know.

Interviewer: A net type?

Collins: Yeah you had to go down that. And I dropped my helmet it knocked off but I finally got it you know when we got down there. But anyway we got off there it was just a jungle. So they loaded us up in some trucks and took us to the area we were supposed to. Well me and B we had a pup tent so me and B slept together. It's a jungle I mean a flat place out form the beaches or a hill up here and off down here's the ocean. Well we had a level place up there where we was gonna camp. But it was just like woods jungle. So me and B.

Interviewer: Something you never seen before.

Collins: Oh shoot I don't care nothing about that jungle. But anyway me and B two had to sleep in a pup tent you know so I wagged a pillow I done forgot about that I wagged my pillow, I wasn't supposed to. But I toted that thing Mickey all the way you know over to New Guiney. So B used to rag me a lot about it. I was laying there on that pillow you know we was in that tent and see we didn't know it see they had a guard walking all around our guards.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: And of course the first night I didn't get on guard but me and B it rained Mickey maybe three hours and the sun would shine one. But anyway at night a lot of us would sleep you know get dibs for sleep and I woke up and my pillow was flouted out. Flouted out you know under the tent part half you know how after I wagged that thing all the way over there. B that just tickles him till I lost my pillow.

Interviewer: You lost your pillow.

Collins: Lost my pillow.

Interviewer: You couldn't drag it anymore.

Collins: So we left it there but anyway oh this was when I got to the Philippines I'll tell you when I get to it maybe. But they put us up for cars and happened I did have to walk the next night but anyway walk around the jungle. Well a Jap all he had to do was come out there and stab you.

Interviewer: Right it was so close.

Collins: And we was all scared but we never lost nobody.

Interviewer: That's great

Collins: So we stayed there so many months I can't remember how many months we stayed there.

Interviewer: So did you ever encounter any Japanese while you were there?

Collins: No the only time we were hauling cavers you know that's like you row sawmills on it well anywhere now cavers you know that you roll supplies on. Me and B on detail we carried a load of them up in the jungle somewhere just a road cut out like you was going to haul something out of them woods over there they had a road cut you know. And they told us to go 221st savage no 221st ordinance I believe I don't remember what they done. And we missed the fork in the road and see we didn't have no lights we had to run a little black out lights.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: And I think B was in front I'd follow his little light behind. If you went off the mountain or river or ocean I'd go with you I'd go with you because I was following you you know.

Interviewer: Yeah

Collins: So someone stopped and man my hair raised up you know and I thought the Japs but it wasn't it was a car. And he said soldiers what in the world are y'all doing here and we told him and he said you turn them around as quick as you can and get out of here. And we turned them things I remember riding sandwiched down to get turned around of course B had to do the same way. We got out of there so we missed the road and we was behind enemy lines.

Interviewer: Oh

Collins: And man we shoot that would have been all they wanted they would have killed us in a minute. We didn't have no guns with us we had some but they didn't have no ammo in it we didn't know it.

Interviewer: You didn't know you didn't have any ammunition?

Collins: No

Interviewer: Is that the way the army did it then?

Collins: Oh yeah

Interviewer: That's bad.

Collins: It wasn't our fault.

Interviewer: No that's bad I mean that's just.

Collins: So B he got hurt in New Guinea. He was backing a dump truck up one day we was fixing up our area. No I take that back he was down at the water house they had a water house down there supply you know and all that for them. And he went to turn around with the dump truck and he had his foot you know they didn't have any doors on them just cloth cabs you know combat. The reason they had cloth tops on them they put them in a box the old GMC 6x6 had a box they freight and ship it over there. So that's kind of what he had this top on it didn't have no doors on it no I don't think they had any doors no they didn't I've got some pictures of it. He had it on the fender looking back at that trailer he backed his trailer no I take that back he had the trailer on it he was hauling supplies he had one of them tractors there from the water house. And he dumped a batch he had his foot right here on the fender looking back in the mirror or whatever and he backed into a dump truck and tore that ankle all up there. So we had to part from there I went to see him some he was in the hospital. So he got to come back to the states.

Interviewer: For that injury he got to come back to the states?

Collins: Yeah he was crippled form then on you know.

Interviewer: Yeah it maimed him up pretty bad then I guess.

Collins: I hated to see him leave over there and he did too we cried you know just.

Interviewer: Yeah because that was your partner.

Collins: Then we went to the Philippines then we went up there to Leyte I've got a picture of the camp and everything. It was a better territory but anyway we got up there so all the communes except the 16th tractor you know drove the tractor trailers that come off the ship we had to stay I don't know how many days there you know waiting to get loaded out in the harbor or whatever they call them harbors I believe. And this ain't nothing to brag about we had what we did they had a cabin like a store on the ship where you buy ice-cream and stuff like that you know just snack you know candy a canteen? They call them a canteen I guess. But anyway it was Thanksgiving night in 44 Thanksgiving evening when they torpedoed us there.

Interviewer: Oh so what ship were you on?

Collins: I believe it was Darnell.

Interviewer: Darnell?

Collins: Darnell I believe it was.

Interviewer: And it was parked at the harbor?

Collins: It was anchored out there yeah with all the rest of the ships you know.

Interviewer: And you think that was about in 44?

Collins: Yeah I got down there the 5th of let's see the 5th of October 94 I believe I mean 44.

Interviewer: And that was the Darnell.

Collins: Yeah this plane come over and what we was doing we was just boys like everybody else and what way we'd get the ice-cream see we didn't get it with let's see I got \$66 a month I used to get \$30 when I went in there. When we went over there driving a tractor they called it Corporal or E5 whatever same thing \$66 a month. And plus 20 percent but anyway they didn't pay us we didn't have no money on the ship there didn't get paid you know. And so we had a little change they give us change something like that well we'd have a little crap game that we'd all you sat around there you know drivers whoever wanted to. And we'd play we'd have one bucket of ice-cream so we were sitting there eating that half gallon of ice-cream it was a half-gallon of ice-cream.

Interviewer: So now how much were you making again?

Collins: Sixty-six dollars a month.

Interviewer: You were making 66 a month? So when you went in you were making 21 then up upped it?

Collins: I made PFC that was \$30 a month.

Interviewer: Right so then you went to 66 a month. How much were you sending home or did you send any home?

Collins: Yeah well see I didn't have nothing to spend it for see I didn't smoke I didn't chew but.

Woman in the background: I don't remember how much you sent home.

Collins: I sent it all except you know maybe

Interviewer: Five or ten dollars.

Collins: Yeah just pocket change that was all I needed there wasn't anywhere to go to spend it.

Interviewer: Right you just had to play craps with it.

Collins: But anyway if we played craps it wasn't for the money because nobody didn't have none.

Interviewer: Right nobody had any money for the ice-cream.

Collins: So we played for ice-cream you know like that. So we was eating that ice-cream I never will forget it and it was just about dusky dark. This Jap come over the plane it was something like a fighter plane with a torpedo on it and he had his lights on see he wasn't supposed to have his lights on. But see he made us appear it was an airplane.

Interviewer: An ally?

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: Right because the lights were on?

Collins: Yeah it had little lights on it.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: So he went over us and he turned around and come back and he dropped his torpedo out there in the water and so we thought he was missing some of them said you missed us you know. And about a few seconds it hit number I believe number two hatch had all our equipment in it 16 tractor trailers down in a room like this you know on the ship. And with all our ammunition and everything all our supply you know where we was going.

Interviewer: Now what ship was that that it hit?

Collins: That was the Darnell.

Interviewer: Oh that was the Darnell.

Collins: Yeah so that thing knocked a hole in the side of that ship on the right side we call it the right side you know the end front end and back end back here. And so it was big enough to drive a GMC in 6 by big truck. Well we knowed enough I don't know whether we got all the ropes but all the troops the ship crew was still on there and of course they had you know ropes and didn't have no boats to get off in to let down. So we tied ropes you know and hung them over the side of the ship we was aiming to get down them. By the time you got all ready you know got our ropes down and everything I didn't get off even with a helmet on. It flopped back on the other side you know when the water shifted and all the ammunition was going on and the torpedo had already hit it. That ammunition was it was the awfulest noise you ever heard in your life. Ain't no telling how many rounds we had you know supply you know.

Interviewer: Right just supplies.

Collins: Yeah there was a big tractor big wrecker ten ton wrecker was up on top the hatch you know big timber like and that thing see all of that was down in there was a fire it fell down in there too. And it was an awful mess little boats come and picked us up and he come back then strafing I can't say the word they was firing at us you know. And me and ____ one of the drivers you know the little boats the front of it come back there and it wasn't very big. But we got in there me and him both was up in that culvert like I don't see how it was big enough for one of us to get in there but we made room for both of us. And so then a bigger boat you know come out you know picked up the other after they got the word. So they carried us over there to a big old building and it didn't have it did have a concrete floor we slept on that floor concrete floor. And the first thing I heard the nest morning was a rooster crowing.

Interviewer: The roof what?

Collins: A rooster

Interviewer: Oh a rooster crowing.

Collins: And that made me homesick so bad I couldn't hardly stand it. But I knew I was in a civilized you know I knew that much having a rooster.

Interviewer: Oh me well I guess continue on. After that after you lost your tractor trailer you did lose it you lost your tractor trailer.

Collins: Everything we left everything I mean I didn't even get off just my fatigues is all.

Interviewer: Yeah that's all you had.

Collins: We didn't have nothing.

Interviewer: Even lost your helmet.

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: You done lost your pillow.

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: So what was the next step what happened next I mean did they did they get you another tractor trailer?

Collins: No that's where see they never did see we built warehouses you know they was well they was bamboo. These big warehouses with bamboo over the top of them and the sides it didn't have no sides.

Interviewer: So that's what you started doing then?

Collins: No see they give me a six by six then GMC truck and so before then though they put me and B got called there we volunteered for this job. They wanted

Woman in the background: Well no not in that there you done left B in the hospital.

Collins: Yeah in New Guiney. Well me and let's see I guess it was Eddie Edwards. Anyway they wanted somebody to fix flat tires and so they didn't have I think it was about 25 of them flat tires wheels. So me and Eddie jumped in there and fixed all of them and they had a little a captain he was a ball player from West I can't think of the name. Captain _____ he was over the motor pool and he was real nice to us real nice to us. So he us a house built out there with a top on it with burlap around and we'd go back there when we didn't have nothing to so we'd go back there. Well we flew in there that's where I dispatcher was you know for our trucks and so we flew in there and fixed all them flat tires those muddy things you know had water in them. We got just as dirty as hogs fixing them. We fixed all them well we thought you know we could rest until we had another flat tire. But anyway then so they put us digging a ditch down for the water house where the water run out you know from there on down. Well we worked a day or two doing that and that's when we got our trucks you know do we didn't I can't remember. Anyway our trucks was sitting they didn't have nothing for them to do I think that's the way it was but anyway. They but me and B _____ he was the first sergeant no staff sergeant he was an electrician so he got us on his detail we was glad to get on that. And because we didn't like digging that ditch so we was wiring _____ house had these wires stretched you know we put these drop cords on it

little light bulbs you've seen them. So we had three long warehouses I forget how many hundreds feet they was long.

Interviewer: With bamboo roofs?

Collins: Yeah so me and B we was up there one day and we just lacked one building being done. So we said we're going to run out of jobs if we keep so we got us a board and put some bamboo over that and we laid down there you know and if would hear anybody coming we'd go pecking like we was working. But anyway we finally got that through with so they put us back on our trucks.

Interviewer: What did you do when they put you back on the trucks?

Collins: We hauled supplies.

Interviewer: So you were hauling supplies. Where were you hauling the supplies to, to the front line?

Collins: From the ship to the warehouses.

Interviewer: Just from the ship to the warehouses?

Collins: Yeah we went down there to that _____ see that was right there where the ships could come in the Philippines and unload there. See then they loaded our trucks you know then we'd bring then up to the warehouse and unload them. So we didn't have to do nothing we were just supposed to drive that's all we done.

Interviewer: So you just from the ship to the warehouse and then someone else

Collins: Unloaded the truck.

Interviewer: Unloaded the truck and then someone else would take it from the warehouse to wherever it needed to go.

Collins: Well they I think they because I remember like you said you needed some _____ or something well y'all could come and get rifles or part for the vehicle. See we had all kind of parts you know a lot of automobile parts small arms and stuff like that you know three warehouses.

Interviewer: So at first you went to New Guinea then you went a little north to the Philippines and where did you go somewhere from the Philippines or is that where you stayed?

Collins: No we stayed there on Laity I did until I got ready to come home. See like when they was going to invade Melanie was it Melanie I believe Philippines Melanie was that the name of it?

Interviewer: Douglas McArthur where he stayed.

Collins: Yeah and but let's see I believe I was they had me down when I went down to pick up a load of bombs to load them on the ship you know. And see the Midway there we was just a little further from the Midway they called it. I guess you've heard of the Midway.

Interviewer: Yeah

Collins: I've got pictures of the ships you know not all but see was just an hour or so I used to remember what it was. See the Japanese was coming to take Laity you know that was an island there and it was a pretty good size island Laity was. So we supplied the ships and planes or whatever for that invasion in Melanie I can't even think of the name of it.

Interviewer: I say Manila.

Collins: Manila that's right.

Interviewer: Right so here you are in the Philippines and you continue to drive the truck back and forth. And you drive the truck back and forth from ships to warehouse us until the wars over?

Collins: Before they got the dock fixed to unload the ship you know that's all out there in the bay you know.

Interviewer: Oh so you would take it and they would have to put it on a smaller boat and then they would take it?

Collins: No we went out there with the amphibian ducks they called them.

Interviewer: Oh so you went out there in a duck?

Collins: Yeah I was assigned to a in place of my truck I was assigned to an amphibian. Had two sets of ____ tandem under it.

Interviewer: Right did you drive a duck?

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: You drove the duck?

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: Tell me about that I'm interested in that.

Collins: Okay they rode the easiest things I ever rode it was rough you know but it was the easiest thing to control. We had one of them with springs the chuck holes it rode easier and we didn't know they were hard see.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: But anyway the interesting thing about them I could sit in it, it had a little leaver I could like I said I went out to get in it this afternoon or anytime in the morning see a lot of time I worked at night.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: And we'd eat down at the dock after they got the dock. They had a big place down there all us truck drivers would meet there and eat. But anyway let's get back to the amphibian is a GMC had the motor up front and the tires on it just had the same tire big ones you know 900s I think something like that is would drive on land or water. You'd run out in the ocean there and you'd put a propeller in and you come back you take you know and so yeah the tire I was going to say if you had a flat tire on it you just like a nail hole or something like it would be flat in the morning when you went to it or evening when your shift you know you had different shifts. And you just pull a little lever in there on the dash it pumped the tire up.

Interviewer: It would inflate it yeah.

Collins: You pumped the tire up and if it got a little low while you was going you'd just put a little more air in it. I don't know why they didn't put that on cars or trucks years before now but that was something.

Woman in the background: Was there where one of them didn't one of them sink with you?

Collins: Oh that was one we went out there it was night and you couldn't see nothing where to come back to the beach except there was a light way up on a hill.

Interviewer: Like a beacon light.

Collins: Yeah but it was just a little light you could see it I don't know how big it was it was up on one of them mountains. And we always come just like a start we'd come right direct to that up to the beach you know. Well I was loaded up they loaded me up and I was coming and my rudder cable broke and it just cut to the left just made a circle out there. Well I knew not to well maybe I burnt all my gas up well I didn't know what I was gonna do. So there was a boat come along and had some officers on it and they towed me to the beach. So I just had to leave it there and just hitchhike back to camp at night. The next morning when we went to get it we couldn't find it it was gone. It had drifted way out in the ocean the tide had come in and it had drifted way out in the ocean. But you know you have a real funny feeling it's gone.

Interviewer: So you didn't know if it had sunk or what happened.

Collins: I didn't know and you wasn't supposed to lose none of the equipment. You were supposed to keep that just like you would your rifle. So we finally found it.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to find it?

Collins: I don't remember.

Interviewer: You don't know. Is there any more things anything else that about the duck that interests you?

Collins: Yeah I was going down to the warehouse one day and the Japs you know the fighter plane they call it dog fights you know. And we had P38 I guess and the P40 as I recall I used to know every one of them I made a hundred on them all the airplanes I did listen to that. But anyway I was going down there one day I guess it was the second trip and they was having one and

Interviewer: Having a dog fight?

Collins: Yeah so some had stopped in front of me they just had a one way rut but anyway that place was. So they learned the Jap they'd see him hit the ocean before they'd get off his tail you know like a dive. So there was this plane then every fifth bullet was a tracer and them tracer that's how you went on patrol there were tracers everywhere and they was so close to me seemed to me right up over the amphibian. And I left that thing of course I was sitting there anyway couldn't move with other vehicles. I jumped out of that thing in mud about that deep. I jump dived got crawled under that thing you know in that mud it was horrible. I thought that plane was you know well it was one of our planes but I thought the bullets you know just would kill me but it didn't.

Interviewer: So how close did it get to you do you think?

Collins: Oh I'd say well for minute they would run just as close as they could to trees I mean what trees there was.

Interviewer: Right you had to worry about the Komokozzie pilots too at this time you know.

Collins: Huh

Interviewer: The Komokozzie that dive right in suicide you know. They were becoming more famous for this like in 44 and 45.

Collins: I seen one suicide I guess it was about a half a mile out in the ocean. I was sitting out there 221st Savage Company I believe it was yeah there was two 221st one of them was ___ supply ___ work on vehicles. The other one was to pull in the torn up vehicles you know salvage they called the savage. He headed the plane right in there and stayed in there with the plane it was a suicide right in the ship. And the boys soldiers there our soldiers jumping in you could hear them screaming that's how close it was. I don't know how many burned up but it blowed the ship up.

Interviewer: Yeah and you witnessed that?

Collins: Huh

Interviewer: I said and you witnessed that?

Collins: Yeah it was real sad. And I could drive along and see dead Japanese lying beside of the road. See was in combat it was on.

Interviewer: Right I read a book and I don't know if you saw any of this personally and you may not have. I read a book that in the Pacific a lot of the men were cutting off the body parts of some of the Japanese and mailing it back home or keeping it as souvenirs. Like they would cut an ear off or they would do things like that. You never witnessed any of that or saw any of that did you?

Collins: No all I seen is the dead ones and prisoners I used to haul prisoners.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: Me and Quarles one of my friends that lived in Madisonville Kentucky me and him was hauling prisoners one day and poor old things they'd come in there by the drove they'd capture them you know. They'd be poor some of them wasn't even able to walk hardly.

Interviewer: Them were Japanese prisoner right?

Collins: Yeah Japanese prisoners. See they stayed up there in the mountains so long they were just poor.

Interviewer: Weak

Collins: Yeah and they'd come up there and well let me show you one well later I'll show it to you.

Interviewer: Okay

Collins: Camp you know where they kept them prisoner camp. And we had guards and we'd work them for work the prisoners you know they had guards on them. We was down at the beach one day doing something or another I can't remember what it was now and we was taking a break of course I stayed with my truck all the time it was a six by. And one of the guards and the Jap was lying down and his pick and shovel he was doing some kind of landscaping or something they built I don't remember. One of them picked up a shovel and killed one of the guards.

Interviewer: Right there

Collins: Well he come up behind him see. He thought

Interviewer: Caught him off guard.

Collins: Yeah he hit him with a shovel and killed him.

Interviewer: What kind of punishment did the prisoner have to face after that?

Collins: We didn't know.

Interviewer: He didn't?

Collins: We didn't know.

Interviewer: Oh

Collins: They killed him somehow.

Interviewer: Yeah no doubt.

Collins: But they fattened up there in our prison we fed them you know it was like steers you were going to carry to market.

Interviewer: Right fed them well and treated them fairly decent.

Collins: Oh yeah but they tormented our boys they just torment you they just kill you and get you over with torture you.

Interviewer: They didn't follow the Geneva Conventions did they?

Collins: They would hang them up now I didn't see this some other boys told me about it. They would see them our boys hanging up with the tongue by the tongue and they'd burry them in the sand close to the you know where the beaches was up there here and let the insects eat them up. And there wasn't nothing worse than that I reckon.

Interviewer: Or let the tide come in and drown them.

Collins: Yeah but they had them back where the insects could see if you drowned them that would be too quick.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: So they had them back to where just the insects eat you up.

Interviewer: There was a lot of awful things. How did you personally feel about how we were treating the Germans and the Japanese you know the prisoners of war how we were treating them compared to how you knew that our boys were being treated by the others?

Collins: The Germans we used to have them in Camp Forest. I remember we had one down there at the warehouse where we backed our tractor trailer and unloaded them they worked in there. And they'd give them a break and they was just like me and you were he had two children you know babies and he'd just cry about them. And they was a lot different than we were they as far as I know I've seen on TV or something like that they'd take and kill a whole truck load of you I mean. I remember one time seeing on TV they had a six by standing and they'd unload them and shot them as they got off you know. But different than killing you I never have either one of them but killing you shooting you you die it ain't like you staying out there for days and tormenting you.

Interviewer: So the Japanese you feel, so do I, but the Japanese you feel were a lot worse treated?

Collins: Well this is the way I feel I never was in German but anyway I've been around the prisoners. To me I got the feeling I ain't got no what do you call it hate.

Interviewer: Hatred

Collins: I guess you would want to call it that I wonder sometimes maybe I will be forgive for that. But I have no use for Japanese.

Interviewer: I can't blame you.

Collins: I don't have no use for them what so ever. I can't I just it's in me and I can't get it out.

Interviewer: Right that's normal it really is.

Collins: But the torment over there the way they tormented you. They had little hot boxes they called them it was a little hot box made out of metal a little tin roof or something like that. And they'd put you in there trying to make you tell something you set in there all day without anything to eat or without any water.

Interviewer: And you would dehydrate and everything else.

Collins: Well you'd just die.

Interviewer: Right but it was a slow thing.

Collins: Slow death.

Interviewer: Slow painful death. I guess we can go to a more upbeat topic I guess of the war. You know you were married and everything tell me a little about the relationship you had with your family about mail sending mail sending mail back and forth.

Collins: I never did I don't know whether Loraine got any. See I knew never write anything in a letter see you do and they sensor it you know. They read every letter I mailed home.

Interviewer: Right so you couldn't ever tell her where you were or?

Collins: I could tell her I was in Laity or Philippines.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: Or New Guiney but nothing else.

Interviewer: Did you look forward to receiving mail?

Collins: Yeah

Interviewer: Was that one of the highlights of the day?

Collins: When I was in New Guiney Lorene was going to work when I was going to bed. When I see we slept in we finally got to where we had these tents you know four could sleep in it primal tents.

Interviewer: Made out of canvas like material?

Collins: It was like a little point with a square. And I remember I couldn't go to sleep and I would think Lorene's going to work while I'm trying to go to sleep.

Interviewer: Did you while you were over there which I'm sure you did. Did you worry a lot about your family back at home or did you have too much other stress and worry?

Collins: Well see I'd get letters and I knew everything was alright. See like Jay me and him was real close already in the Philippines after we left B back there you know Jay Wall. And see his daddy passed away while we was over there. We was on the ship once and this boy from New Jersey and I thought a lot of

him. He was from up north you know New Jersey if they liked you they was just like a brother I mean some of them was sort of you know but as a whole they was alright. But he got a letter message one day somebody had killed his wife.

Interviewer: Oh

Collins: It was real sad just you know you wonder how he took it.

Woman in the background: But you were lucky that didn't none of your family passed away.

Interviewer: None of your family passed away.

Collins: No

Interviewer: And you said earlier that you were overseas for about 21 months?

Collins: I think about 20.

Woman in the background: Twenty one months.

Collins: You sure?

Woman in the background: Yeah

Interviewer: Let me ask you this here you are over in the Philippines had you heard anything or did you know anything or what was your reaction to the atomic bomb.

Collins: We never did hear nothing about that much if any I can't recall ever hearing about it.

Interviewer: You probably didn't hear too much about it until after it did you hear anything about it after it happened? Like when they bombed Hiroshima did you know it?

Collins: Well see what we had radios but they had I can't think of her name she'd give a lot of false propaganda whatever you call it. I used to know her name.

Interviewer: I know who you're talking about and it's slipped my mind too. I am wanting to say Ruth or Judy or something I know it.

Collins: I should never forget it but you take see that's been about 50 something years you know.

Interviewer: I know exactly who you're talking about and I can't think of it but go ahead. So you had a radio

Collins: Maybe some of them had one at the camp or in the tent or something like that but I didn't have one.

Interviewer: Okay but you could hear broadcasts?

Collins: Yeah you could hear rumors or

Interviewer: Right

Collins: Rumors good or bad whatever.

Interviewer: But you never knew if it was the truth or not you never knew if it was fact.

Collins: Not on the radio because see would what was her name.

Interviewer: It's bothering me too that I can't remember.

Collins: She was you know if you couldn't see nothing you couldn't trust nobody so you.

Interviewer: When did you know that the war was over?

Collins: I'll never forget it I have never seen as many fireworks in my life. I mean the whole island where you could see.

Interviewer: Right there on the Philippines.

Collins: Everybody you know they just. See I had to have so many points before I could get home. And I thought I never would get home?

Interviewer: How many points did you have?

Collins: Seems to me like what was it 68 Lorene?

Woman in the background: I forget but it seems like you just had seven when the war was over.

Interviewer: Well go ahead and explain the points system.

Collins: I can't remember you got points for so many months I believe or years something like that. And see I don't think Lorene was even counted but some of the boys went in there in our outfit after I did and they left before I did.

Interviewer: And you couldn't figure that out could you?

Collins: Of course I knew why but of course it didn't seem fair.

Interviewer: I can understand that too. So you had so many points and the war ended what did you think was going to happen to you?

Collins: Well see when your 8,000 miles only all water you just have to wait day by day.

Interviewer: And they have control over you too they have total control.

Collins: But the one thing I was in a good outfit.

Interviewer: Yeah and you stayed with the same outfit the whole time.

Collins: Yeah see that was one good thing. It was just like a family you knew everybody in the camp you didn't associate with ever one of them but you knew them the first name or last name of course their last name.

Interviewer: Did you prior to the ending of the war did you feel like it was close? Did you feel like the war was fixing to end soon or did you just was it day by day you just didn't have a clue one day was just as good as the next I mean?

Collins: Not as I can recall now I don't think we knew anything until we got the new Germany you know. And what didn't seem fair to me they'd send some of them boys I met them from Germany whatever country over there they might have been in. They sent them over there you know to the Philippines and they had done fought over there we never did I mean our own boys I wasn't the only one didn't think that was fair.

Interviewer: Yeah that they had already fight so hard in Europe and here they are in the Pacific.

Collins: Yeah that was like us if we didn't go over there first they didn't send us over there they sent us home. I don't think that was fair.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: I don't' think that was fair at all.

Interviewer: Well I guess what their background on that was what a lot of people didn't think about they were getting ready for the biggest invasion ever really or one of the largest invasions. You know I mean even greater than the Normandy D-Day they were going to invade Japan so they were sending them boys over. But you're right here they fought so long and here they are they are having to come I've talked to a few they had their orders to go.

Collins: See I think we was don't quote me on this I believe we was trained for different theatres.

Interviewer: They were different landscape you had jungle they had

Collins: I always thought I would rather so over there and go overseas I thought I would freeze to death and I'd get _____ I've seen some they just got some boys over there and it was just like

Interviewer: Well you mention that fear of freezing to death or something else like that did you ever encounter any type of sickness or illness while you were?

Collins: When I was in I had

Woman in the background: Malaria fever when you was in New Guiney.

Collins: Yeah and I got burnt one time too that was my fault. But we was arguing about the amphibians about I said it had antifreeze in it which it did all antifreeze. See that kept it cooler and so one of the drivers was arguing with me you know it was water so see like we had already done a run carrying all the

laborers Phillipinos laborers to ____ that was the one I was thinking about that was the end of our run our first year at Dickson I guess. We'd pick up laborers there at the warehouse and the hospitals you know where I was talking about I showed you my friend there today she was like an aid or something a nurse. And she worked for the warehouse I used to drop her off at the warehouse and some more you know I mean I had hospital and I think where I got acquainted with her the time I had the fever I don't know how many days I stayed in there.

Interviewer: So you had malaria?

Collins: Was it Ding or malaria?

Woman in the background: Malaria I always thought.

Collins: Okay I can't remember.

Woman in the background: That's where you always thought when you developed TB.

Collins: Yeah and I had to stay I took the radiator cap off and I should have known the thing it run hot all the time anyway but it didn't boil over. I took the cap off and that stuff just burnt me all over my arms and face. It wasn't an emergency but it could have been one.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: So I had to stay about three days with that.

Interviewer: And then when did you develop malaria? A lot of people died you know form that.

Collins: Seems like it was in New Guiney.

Woman in the background: Yeah it was in New Guiney.

Interviewer: So that was right after you arrived.

Collins: I was thinking it was Ding fever see there was a difference in Ding and one of them both of them from mosquito bites.

Interviewer: Right so that was soon after you arrived because you went to New Guiney first.

Collins: Yea

Interviewer: How long were you sick with that? You don't know but it was probably several days.

Collins: I'd say a week something like that.

Interviewer: A week and then I heard your wife mention something about TB.

Collins: Well see in the Philippines of course we were around no natives in New Guiney except the ones that would like come out of the mountains you know. But they'd have they'd trade with us of course I

didn't have nothing I didn't buy nothing. But that's the only time you'd see them when they'd come down you know to sell trade or whatever sell whatever they had. And so I figure I took the TB in the Philippines they didn't have no inside they didn't have no place where we was at Palo the name of the place there in Laity. Laity was a whole island but the little town was name Palo because it had a river running down through it. In there where we camped at where our camp was I'll show you in a little while it was all like bamboo you know sides up so far and a top on it up about four foot you know had a screen over it like to keep mosquitos out. But any how they didn't have outdoor toilet buildings you know anything like that they just wherever they was at they just used the bathroom.

Woman in the background: You used to take your bath in your helmet.

Collins: What

Woman in the background: You used to take a bath in your helmet.

Collins: Yea you can do that you know it?

Interviewer: Take a bath in a helmet?

Collins: Yea

Interviewer: Explain that.

Collins: First time I took one it was on a ship and of course you had to stay clean no matter is you was in the mud or whatever you had to clean up.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: Wash up someway and what you would do I'd take the helmet you know me and you had a helmet that's all they would allow us on the ship. Of course on land there was plenty of water where we was at if you could catch it. It would rain seem like three hours rain three hours and the sun shine one but anyway. This was on the ship when I first well me and you you know we take a shower we put just enough on us to lather up you know and I'd take my helmet or your helmet and pour it up here and use it to rinse you off. Of course if it wasn't full of rain you'd just dry wiped it off anyway.

Interviewer: So much as you could.

Collins: Yea but over there in the Philippines that's the way we had to do until we had one of our boys like a plumber form West Virginia and he fixed us a jeep motor and put a pump on it. Before that we had a barrel 50 gallon barrel and we had a spigot I mean turn it off some way I guess like you was draining oil I don't know whatever it was. We'd all fill that barrel up with water and take showers like that there was a branch down there you know right below in the area. And then

Interviewer: But he put together this motor?

Collins: Peterson he took a jeep motor and of course we had plenty motors you know new ones. And pump he took a truck pump I believe it was and rigged it up with a bell on it and so he we took a shower

with that. Then he improved it he made us a washer. Took a barrel and of course the war was over then you know.

Interviewer: This guy was handy to have around.

Collins: Yea

Interviewer: How long did you stay there in the Philippines after the war was over?

Collins: I don't know?

Interviewer: Did you stay there for several more months?

Collins: Yea see we didn't go nowhere we stayed on Laity all the time after we left New Guiney. Because we had our warehouse set up on there and everything.

Interviewer: So you were on Laity then?

Collins: Yea

Interviewer: Oh okay

Collins: Okay and see we hauled stuff put it on airplanes and ships things like that to invade the rest of the islands you know.

Interviewer: Yea to invade Japan.

Collins: Yea whatever you know.

Interviewer: Which never happened.

Collins: No but getting back to he made us a washing machine to wash our clothes. We used to have to go down there and wash our clothes you know in the branch but he made us washer. It washed just like the one it had an agitator or something in there. We was uptown then.

Interviewer: Yea uptown that's a pretty handy guy. That was a pretty handy person to have around.

Collins: And I'll this we all got a kick out of it everyone in the company. See when they shipped anything over there they called it dungeons like bombs and thing had you know one by twelve good pretty lumber just like you were going to they got the best lumber. So they would take that and bring it up there and they'd build things you know tents and things you know brace the tent something like that. You know we was getting up town like and so we had a scrap pile down there after we got through with all of that. We had to tote that stuff down there to the branch where we done all the washing and taking a bath. And put it in a big pile a used pile. Well some officer would get he'd get moody I guess you'd call it.

Interviewer: Yea did you encounter that a lot having officers who were moody or

Collins: No not really.

Interviewer: Not really

Collins: But anyway not really because well I'll finish that then I'll tell you about the airplanes I made. But anyway ever so often we'd have a pile of lumber you know just scrap after we got through using it there in camp. We'd have to move that so somebody got thought of it they took gasoline and set it afire and burnt it all up. So we didn't have to fool with that no more. Then we used to go to where the airplanes was a strip there in the Philippines. And we started out somebody give us a pattern they was coming home and they give us a pattern and I was the only one got the big way of it making a little P38 ashtray. I sent two home I've got one I lost one somewhere here but anyway I built it out of 50 caliber shells you know.

Interviewer: Yea I know the 50 caliber

Collins: The little 30 calibers you know I used for the tail part and all of that. I wish Lorene would look it up and I'd show it to you. But anyway then I got I believe it was 25 pesos for one which would be about I believe I got about \$50 for one.

Interviewer: Really

Collins: And so I'd carry then down first what I was getting at me and B no not B Waller went up in the mountains and we found some shells and I brought them back. Of course see the black was a steel jacket in it that's what I wanted. And we had one had tracers in it and we had some a black, green and red the red was a tracer and the green one I guess there was three of them there was five of them every fifth one was a tracer. But anyway I plucked that bullet out the 50 caliber now in the crack the steps that went to our tent we had you a step going up to a tent our tent was floored in you know that's where all the scrap come from. And I had all my little tools and I had a torch one of them had lead in it you know full of lead. And so I thought I had the one that had lead in it and I was going to melt it out and I had a blow torch one of these heavy you know you pump it up set it afire and that's what you done your soldering with. So I had it on the crack in the little platform we had you stepped on and come on in the trailer you know. I had it on one of the cracks put the blow torch on them and melt the lead out and it was one of them center it went straight up you know and explode when it got so far along. I was sitting there and that thing just like a rocket mad it must have went up through that camp and Buddy come running out and I bet that thing ain't fell yet. But that streak it was just like running you know you've seen that and that thing went out of sight with all that flame behind it. Everybody was running around here and the captain sent word for me you know he found out who it was so I had to go up there and I told him what I was doing you know what I had done. And he was real nice now Collins you know better than that. I said I didn't know I thought it was lead in it he said well you should have known. He said I'm going to give you an extra duty a week's extra duty at night he said you know that could have killed you. I said well I knowed it after it had done gone. But anyway I had a full weeks extra duty about that. And our first sergeant he got sick and he had to come home and Angelic was a staff sergeant so they made him promoted him to a first sergeant. He was a pest Mickey every time he'd come along he'd mention that thing to me.

Interviewer: Oh no he wouldn't bury it.

Collins: No he never would let it die down. But finally one day he was real you know he was humble like he just I don't know why he'd mention that but he'd mention that every time he'd see me. And I one day I said Angelic well I called him Sarg I said Sarg you're just tormenting me to death. I said I've done paid for that I pulled a week's extra duty at night for that don't you remember it? He said yea and he apologized for it.

Interviewer: He continued to mention it?

Collins: No he quit but it was weeks there he just kept on every time he'd see me he'd mention that.

Interviewer: You didn't get a nickname from it or anything did you?

Collins: No but then we'd go down to the airstrip you know they had an airstrip you know. And they was air force was real nice I mean the crew the officers most of them officers they was just real close as anybody that was in service. And they'd we'd sell them to them then they'd give us some ammunition me I was the one selling them and B Quarles went with me. That's the reason Quarles Lorene was in that picture there with the plane. And so maybe I got \$25 a piece for them.

Interviewer: That's good money.

Collins: Yea I could make one a day you know I worked at night. So I got so many orders for them I had to hire Eddie Everett to you take a 105 shell Lorene you ain't got? But anyway I sawed an inch high the shell off and I took the rest of it and made the wings you know wings out in back. So I had to hire Eddie he got off let's see I worked nights and when he got off in the morning well he'd pick me up a shell he'd saw it off and polish it and everything where I could mount another 50 on that you know a 50 then a little post you know stick in the belly of the plane sort of like you clean your rifle with your kit. And you screwed that on you know put it in there and screwed that other down on there and that's what I used to mount it on there. I used to hire him I give him \$5 I think to fix the stem.

Interviewer: You was making \$20 and he was making 5 that was good money for him too though wasn't it?

Collins: Yea I sent all that to Lorene too.

Woman in the background: That's what we built our house with. No I saved the money while he was over there.

Collins: Yea but I believe this was in New Guiney no it wasn't it was in the Philippines. They had a little building out there the officers built it for us dayroom I believe they called it. It wasn't big enough for a dayroom because there was too many of us. Well they'd have a crap game in there ever so often so I was betting on the side I never was lucky enough to win nothing. So I was betting on the side and I won I had two pesos I bid on it and I won \$500.

Interviewer: Wow

Collins: I just picked that up and I went to my barracks.

Interviewer: You was gone you were done with it.

Collins: That ain't nothing to brag about but you know I couldn't wait the next day I asked the motor sergeant or captain one whichever. He was one of the ball players from I can't think of what the state he was a ball player the captain was. I got permission to go to the post office and mail that home.

Woman in the background: I don't remember that.

Collins: Huh

Woman in the background: I don't remember it.

Collins: I mailed it to you.

Interviewer: Were you ever worried about the money or anything getting to home? I mean did you ever have any concern about that?

Collins: No I never thought about it really.

Interviewer: Never thought about it?

Collins: No see it was a money of course it could have got lost but I guess they would have made it right or something.

Interviewer: Right I guess the next question is, now the wars over with its 1945 and when do you remember when it was that they told you hey Collins you're going home?

Collins: Yea

Interviewer: Tell me a little about that.

Collins: I couldn't wait couldn't wait. But went down there to what you when you come over you what do you call that? Mine was deported something like that you know ones that come in was different you know I was leaving.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: Well I had to I had to stay down there I don't know the name of that but anyway a solid week before I could you know they could get me processed I guess send me home. So I finally we got on a ship coming home and it was the Andrew Jackson or President Jackson I believe it was President Jackson was the name of the ship.

Interviewer: Name of the ship?

Collins: Yea and they put us there were six of us yea six of us. Right up in the front end of that thing you know the bowl you know had bunks stacked up. And they rubbed your nose you couldn't turn over hardly they was right there. You slept over me and I slept over somebody else.

Interviewer: Were you on deck did they make barracks on top of the deck?

Collins: No down

Interviewer: Okay you were down.

Collins: Down in the hatch you know.

Interviewer: Because they put some of the carriers you know they made some of the carriers on deck they would put barracks on deck.

Collins: But we was right up in the front end of that things. And I could hear that water you know rippling by there. And there was one I forget how many miles it was over it could have been us just as good they hit one. And I was just worried about that all the time I was coming home when I was awake.

Interviewer: What hit now?

Collins: A torpedo a mine.

Interviewer: Oh they hit a mine?

Collins: Yea

Interviewer: And how far out in the ocean were you?

Collins: Oh I guess we were about half way home or something.

Interviewer: Oh man

Collins: But anyway I couldn't sleep every time I was awake I would think about you know we could hit one of them. And the water coming across the equator well we lost a day I never will forget we made it up on a Monday that was two Mondays.

Interviewer: You had two Mondays.

Collins: And I wanted to get home. But anyway then the water was so rough a couple of days there the rudder would come out of the water you know. Every time it would go down the water would come way above us like a hill above the ship and the rudder would come out you know every so often. See you'd lose speed there well we got to California the camp come right up to the river there Oakland I believe is where we got off at. And got back we found out that the railroaders were on strike.

Interviewer: That was upsetting.

Collins: Yea they had a strike. So some of the boys they just left and went home I wished I had they bailed. They discharged them we stayed there for about a week and that's the first time see the blacks didn't mix back then.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: And we slept up there in top of the floor of the barracks. And they were a lot of fun I was thinking about eight or ten of them and they would tell jokes you know. I was thinking about them and you know we had a lot of fun then. But just sitting there waiting for them to get over that strike but I don't think they settled it I don't know how come they sent us home but we come on a train.

Interviewer: So you finally did come home on a train. And what was there a welcome home party for you?

Collins: No

Interviewer: Did they know the day that you were going to come home?

Collins: I don't think so did you?

Woman in the background: Yea I met you in Dickson.

Collins: Yea but it was night though before I got there.

Woman in the background: Oh yea

Collins: No it was night when we got there.

Woman in the background: Yea you come on the bus from Arkansas right?

Collins: Yea Camp Chaffee.

Woman in the background: And I met you in Dickson.

Collins: At the bus station.

Woman in the background: Yea

Collins: So we come from Camp Chaffee Arkansas that's where I got discharged and we rode the bus from there to Dickson.

Interviewer: So after this you said you're done with the army.

Collins: Well see Camp Chaffee that's where I made a big mistake big one. They wanted to know if I wanted to file a claim on them C number they call it claim but we call it C number now in the hospital. And I used to remember I guess I still could remember it was 800 something or another I used to know it. And I told them I said hell no all I want's my discharge. I ain't signing nothing only my discharge if I have to. So I didn't sign no claim number. See what they was aiming to do is check me send me to a hospital and have me checked all over.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: And if they would have found that TB well they'd have sent me on to the hospital. And I never would have gotten home I stayed in there a little over two years one time. So I was just so mad that ain't nothing to brag about either.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: But I don't guess there was anything wrong. So I broke down with TB in 48.

Interviewer: Forty eight?

Woman in the background: Tony was one year old when he went to the hospital. And he stayed two years and twenty something days.

Collins: Over two years in one stretch I mean I laid there a year see I took some kind of medicine for it. Then they decided to collapse this one lung a year it was 50 years ago this spring. That I was operated on had this lung collapsed.

Interviewer: And that's a result from TB?

Collins: Yea

Interviewer: That you got over probably in the Philippines.

Collins: Yea

Woman in the background: Well they traced it back.

Collins: They traced it back and if I would have filed the claim number C number or whatever you want to call it I went through all the army with the same number you know. I would draw five thousand and something dollars which that was smart money back them. But I lost that.

Interviewer: But you were just eager to come home and I can't blame you for that either. Is there anything else that you would like to add to or say?

Collins: Well after all knowing the Lord and all I'd say I a normal life a good life I've got a nice family.

Woman in the background: Back then he wasn't a Christian and I wasn't either.

Interviewer: Right

Woman in the background: Back when he was in service.

Collins: I come home after I stayed in the hospital I liked a few days being discharged with TB and that's when the Korean War broke out. And I went to the backroom and I was passing blood and I told my nurse she was an older like nurse. And to us we called her Ma you know she was.

Woman in the background: She was in the VA Hospital.

Collins: VA Hospital on White Bridge Road.

Woman in the background: Used to be.

Collins: That's where I stayed all that time. And so I told Ma that I said Ma I'm passing blood I said don't you tell please don't tell that doctor about it. I said I've been here all that time and they could have done found that. I had TB in my right kidney or was it left yea right kidney. So she said she wouldn't but the next morning the doctor come and made rounds and they said well I don't what they called it they said we're going to keep you six more months. You know we're going to treat you for that kidney. I says well I've stayed in here over two years about two years it was two years I said if couldn't find it in two years you can't find it in six you know do nothing about it. You could have done caught it before now I said I'm going home and get me a private doctor. So I signed out and come home and went to Doctor Hollis Johnson there on West End he was a TB specialist. So I went to him and he sent me up over to a kidney specialist over on Hayes Street. And so he doctored me a year and I come home and Lorene give me shot I believe what every other day and you won't believe this but I took 24 PSA tablets it was like a big vitamin tablet it looked almost like them right there. I took 24 of them day and night and four INH wasn't it?

Woman in the background: Yea

Collins: That's 30 tablets for a year and ___ every other day and they used to now this is fact. They used to send me my medicine you know I was 100% I finally got 100% you know that's when I found out I lost the five thousand plus.

Interviewer: Right

Collins: A quart fruit jar.

Woman in the background: A half-gallon.

Collins: No a fruit jar all them PAS tablets was a quart so 12 quarts is how much I took a year. Twelve quarts would be what four gallons?

Woman in the background: Yea would be three gallons.

Interviewer: Three

Collins: Three gallons

Woman in the background: Well it takes four quarts to make a gallon.

Collins: Alright took three gallons of them pills per year plus the four.

Interviewer: That's a lot and that's all a result of the Philippines probably somewhere over there catching TB.

Collins: Yea no doubt yea they traced it back.

Interviewer: Yea they traced it back to that. Wow

Collins: But when I stayed up there I worried a lot about Lorene and Tony.

Interviewer: Right because he was almost three years old or two years old by the time you got out of the hospital.

Woman in the background: He was a year old when he went and he stayed two years and three weeks.

Interviewer: So three years old.

Collins: He didn't really know even who I were

Interviewer: Right because yea he hadn't seen you for a while.

Woman in the background: We used to slip him to the back one of the nurses that didn't care let us carry him to the back door and let him look out the door at him. See they don't even do these things anymore.

Collins: See when we first went in there we couldn't have no visitors only on Sunday at 2 o'clock.

Woman in the background: Yea and wear a mask.

Collins: For one hour

Woman in the background: Yea

Interviewer: And you had to wear a mask huh?

Collins: That went on for and we finally got twice on Saturday I believe and we finally got it every day.

Woman in the background: Mickey back then I couldn't drive I'd ride the bus up and stay at the YMCA when we got to where we could go on Saturday and Sunday. I'd ride the bus up on Saturday visit him on Saturday then stay at the YMCA that night and go back out on Sunday.

Interviewer: This must have really been hard for you too because you hadn't seen him in so many months.

Woman in the background: It was real hard.

Interviewer: You were at war then you come back and now he's got to go to the hospital so I mean.

Woman in the background: It was real hard but I've always thought the good Lord blessed us them six years we was a part because if we live to October we'll be married 57 years.

Interviewer: Fifty seven years

Woman in the background: So we've had a long life.

Interviewer: That's wonderful.

Collins: But I'd have to say I've had a good life after everything.

Interviewer: And I want to ask you one more question and if you had it all to do over again as far as the war as far as everything that you did would you do the same thing? Or would there be anything that you would change or?

Collins: I think I would do what they asked me to do or told me to do. That's how much I think of my country.

Interviewer: Right that's great.

Collins: But the way they do now they don't appreciate what we done.

Interviewer: I know

Collins: They don't appreciate what we did. It hurts you so deep at times just like the little kid down the block the Cubans.

Interviewer: Yea I know it. Well I'm gonna cut this off and I do appreciate the interview and we are proud of what you did and appreciate it and we thank you.

Collins: Well most of the people now well you know the people I'm talking about.

Interviewer: Yea but we are certainly proud of you and we are glad that you served your country like you did.

Collins: I appreciate you coming I enjoyed it.

Interviewer: Thank you