

Interviewer: Hello whoever transcribes this video interview my name is Phillip Ray I was the interviewer for Mr. Plemmons Mr. John Plemmons of Centerville Tennessee. There was a technical glitch in the first few minutes of the recording which is why I'm recording over the blank spot that occurred it didn't get the first part of the interview so I'll give a summary of what Mr. Plemmons said in that first part. He gave me his name as John Plemmons born Biltmore North Carolina March 8, 1924. At the time of his enlistment he was still living in Biltmore North Carolina near Ashville and attending post grad business course until Pearl Harbor occurred. He related a story about the day Pearl Harbor occurred how his mother instantaneously knew that it was going to involve members of her family going to war. It was one of those events that there was no doubt in anyone's mind that the United States was going to war that everyone was going to be involved. It was very quickly known by everybody who heard the news that's the type of country that it was then. In any case he told me that he was a member of the U.S. Army Signal Core belonged to a unit a very interesting unit known as Signal Security Detachment D. Signal Security Detachment D was a field element of the Signal Intelligence Division European Theatre of Operations United States Army that provided analytical support to the signal radio intelligence companies at the Army group and field levels. According to an article from the Yale University daily news the unit travel on the front lines throughout France, Belgium and Germany intercepting and decrypting German messages. The messages that Detachment D dealt with were not of the well-known Enigma code but rather but rather medium grade field ciphers known to the allies as the non-indicator system the major German field cipher for the war which the Germans believed at the time had not been compromised. The security level of Detachment D was such that even persons like General Patton and Omar Bradley to whom the unit was attached they were attached to Omar Bradley's 12<sup>th</sup> group even people of that rank were not allowed anywhere near the vehicles that were used by the unit. Signal Security Detachment D had been such a well kept secret that even leading historians were not aware of its existence until the story heavily edited by the National Security Agency was allowed to be published. And it was published by Detachment D veteran Charles David in the late 1990s. An example of their work one message that was received from German headquarters dealt with a large force bidwhack in the woods at Luxemburg once the allies knew their location they bombed the location and destroyed entire axes divisions. And that's a summary of Signal Security Detachment D once again the interview was conducted with Mr. John Plemmons at his home in Centerville Tennessee September 22, 2010.

John: Radio repairman

Interviewer: Now was this through the Army Reserve at the time?

John: No I was not 18 yet and at that time they were not drafting 18 year olds they were drafting 21s and so what. And we worked as civilians under there and they guys that were 21 and up if they were still in there were in the enlisted reserve. Then one day they asked how many men were 18 years old or older to stand up and we did they said well they just passed a law today making you men so said you've got a choice you can either join the enlisted reserve right now or you can go on with what we're doing and work with the draft boys. But this way you'll enlisted so I did I stayed in and finished the course they had there before I got to the Army then.

Interviewer: Okay now when did you actually go active duty do you remember the year or the date that you actually went on active duty when you actually went to basic training to train to be a soldier do you remember when that was?

John: I don't remember the exact date it was Camp Crowder Missouri which was a big core camp which was a huge I think at that time they had a whack area and they had a different advanced areas and stuff in it and after the war was over I tried to take my kids there to show them what a place it was and it had been leveled with the ground there except just a few buildings they were using looked like a big nothing. It was city within a city during the war.

Interviewer: Now was that 1942?

John: Yeah

Interviewer: Summer, fall do you remember when you actually?

John: I don't remember that time we went through a lot of

Interviewer: Now you have already been identified for specialized training did you go through the same basic training that all the other soldiers went through?

John: Well yeah the same ones of course they trained nothing but Signal Core soldiers there. I went through the basic training all of us that came from everywhere that did. We went through the basic training there and then later on got into it we were disappointed because we knew we would never be radio repairmen which is what we thought we would do. But the signal core was using reserve to get a bunch of operators. You forget now that during the war all the operation was done in Morris code and stuff out there. We didn't have the first of all the radio wasn't as good as what it is now so you couldn't talk through the thing and besides everything that went out had to be coded. And of course there was coding in that and none of us wanted to be operators at that time but they convinced us to. So we went through that and into advanced training of this defining training and through the DF training and then later on they sent us to Vent Hill Farms which is a big signal core thing near Washington DC and we trained with the FCC then on how to go around in these little Plymouth this little staff car but they would go around they were actually used for civilian work there. But we trained in those

Interviewer: I'm thinking of the movie White Heat when they were tailing James Cagney's mom in the movie White Heat and they had a car with a radio set up that had a direction finder almost one of those type of set ups?

John: Yeah but it looked like just a regular sedan so nobody would know it had that in there had that equipment in there. And so they were going to send up down overseas to pick up clandestine stations in that and that's why we had been told never ever let a car be captured. Do whatever you have to do to yourself but once one of those cars has been captured the whole thing

Interviewer: Was compromised

John: Yeah the Germans would know about it and that would be the end of the outfit.

Interviewer: Okay that's something good I would like to talk about a little bit more. What pacific instructions did they give if it looked like an event was happening where the car might get captured. What specifically did they tell you to do to disable the vehicle or destroy the vehicle? Did they give you insignia grenades or

John: Well yeah they had informed us first that if you could get close enough to a bunch of those coming up to get that car and get it out of there in other words they trained us they would rather we be chicken and run from it then stay there and mess with it and be caught. Ordinarily the Army teaches you they will give up a piece of equipment to save a life of a soldier. It was the other way around that piece of equipment had to be saved because it was secret, secret work in what was going on so if we had to be whatever. Fortunate none of us really ever had to do that.

Interviewer: Do you remember when you got your orders tell you you were going to be going overseas? Was that right after your training was completed?

John: Yeah I went through training went through the signal core training for operators and then to high speed operators which is 25 words per minute or longer then some how some of us were picked to go into this direction DF they called it Direction Finding to do that. How I got into that I don't know but they took 60 in on the so when we got together 30 of us were picked then to go to Germany and learn German code. The other 30 went to the other Theatre I never heard anything from them since and they never heard anything about that situation over there they learned Japanese code of course.

Interviewer: So there were only 30 of you total?

John: Just 30 we were on detach service 30 men and one officer.

Interviewer: Wow alright when you received your orders how long was it before you went to the port of embarkation did you leave from New York?

John: We left from Newark New Jersey and we were on these small liberty ships. And since we were like we were they wouldn't let but five of us at one particular time be on one convoy. The others came on others and our particular convoy we got almost all the way over there and they had a lot of new tanks they had came out with underneath and one of those some how broke loose and got a hole in the ship. And they knew we couldn't stay in our convoy that was so what they did they had us turn around and go back to the USA from that. And we went back there and while they we didn't realize they were repairing the same ship to get back on that's what we did we got back on the same ship and went back. Consequently we were quite a bit later getting there than the rest of our, the 25 other men were.

Interviewer: Now when you were in the convoy do you remember that experience of going across the ocean? Were you below decks most of the time were you allowed to be above on deck get some fresh air every once in awhile?

John: At that time of course we got access to the radio rooms due to what we were doing so to the radio operators on the ships. And one in the convoy they would keep, they couldn't use the radio because of what they would pick up there were quite a few submarines and all through there. And remember the ole slip of the lip could sink a ship routine not to tell anybody anything. But anyhow they would get there and signal go from one boat to another by the flashing lights with a connection between them.

Interviewer: Did you feel vulnerable on that ship I mean you knew about submarines and the sinking's off of the east coast and in the Northern Atlantic. Was it something that worried you greatly were you afraid to; did you end up going to England first?

John: Naturally because they warned you if you fell overboard or something you had it because the convoy couldn't possibly stop for an individual. So we were very careful not to do that and we did find some floating people out on the top of ocean. Were they came from of course we don't know or whatever but yeah we were worried about you know you have ships on both sides of you and its a little bitty ship. And there is a bunch of them together though and they are in that convoy of course when we came back that one time we were by ourselves on that one we were really worried on that deal yeah.

Interviewer: You went from Newark New Jersey to what point did you land at?

John: Southern part of England

Jean: you couldn't understand them.

John: Huh?

Jean: I remember you said you thought you were going to England and

John: Yeah did I tell you how lucky we were when we were on the boat we didn't find out where we were going by the way when we were on the boat? We didn't know we were going to England we didn't know where we were going because they don't tell you anything so you won't know anything. When we got most of the way over there then we found out we were going I think it was South Hampton England and I remember I made the statement "Boy aren't we lucky at least we're going to a place where they understand English and where we can understand." But we lined it they had this bunch of companies that got onboard that thing out there and that English road they had a what in the world are these guys we couldn't understand a thing that they were saying because they were speaking in a road game even though they used the kings English it come out different than what we were used to you know.

Interviewer: Yep I do understand I had a chance to work with Austrailianers and New Zealanders something of the same thing. So once you arrived this would have been still 1942 are we in 1943 yet?

John: We trained for a while like I said with the British intelligence force over there and boy they were different from us. They didn't put you in there and train you like the Americans you had to be a hand operator to get in the thing you had to know your stuff before you could get into that part with them. But we learned a lot from them on what to do and how to sneak up on somebody that they were hitting a car. We had these practice things we had to go through and find where this was coming from and all

that kind of thing. We would get close and we had what you called a snifter that you put on your arm it was you would turn to one side or other and you could walk right up to the car where the British soldier was hid and he would wave at you. And they could well camouflage themselves too.

Interviewer: You had 30 men in this unit were any of these men deployed to North Africa or Sicily or to Italy?

John: No and that was going on when we were in training and they were in the U.S.

Interviewer: Okay so these all 30 of you were dedicated for the invasion of Europe into France correct? Nobody was detached for duty in North Africa or Sicily or Italy?

John: No

Interviewer: Okay so the first the first action that you would have seen would have been after D-Day?

John: Yeah on France coming up out of there they still had snipers in there and we were among the first people of course it took a long time going through France. But we were some of the first people when Paris was liberated and they needed up to go in there and listen for clandestine stations in that and well

Interviewer: Well we can come back to that in a little bit. Okay we're still at the point now where your England how long did you spend in England was it a year was it longer that at year that you spent

Interviewer: I was in Europe two years. Two years?

Jean: He said England.

John: England oh no no I mean that was part of the whole thing of overseas we were over there for several months before preparing for what we were going to be doing over there and training with the radio operators they had where we'd be sending our information back at that time. At that time I don't guess they knew they were going to have any headquarters over there in France in a place like that they was all down in London.

Interviewer: So your training was pretty extensive though it lasted for a much longer time than the average soldier so you didn't actually board the liberty ship to England what was it 1943? DO you remember?

John: Of course I don't remember the date I remember just as soon as we

Interviewer: Was it summer time spring?

John: After the training that we had with the FCC here then of course we had to transfer that back to an army seeing what we had to do. They used army Plymouth sedans as staff cars of course painted it the good ole army color and all that stuff. And but then they would have half of the backseat out and some radio equipment whatever you'd e back there radioing. Like I told you before they had a little antenna on top. Of course we knew once we got on the continent you couldn't have that loop antenna. So we

were putting carry alls I guess we were the first with the SUV people I don't know but we had the army carry alls and we

Interviewer: The carry all was that soemthgin like a panel wagon or

John: Like this they were four wheel drive vehicles they had we had three of those we went over in three army staff cars. They immediately found out the army staff cars wouldn't be worth anything in Europe so they took those away and sent over three more cars that we had to equip they were carry alls there were six of those carry alls to go on service. Plus the people we had in our local headquarters back

Interviewer: So each team you had 30 members with each team with five members?

John: Technically for a team actually in a car we only had three. We had who was in charge of the car and who was of course we were all operators we took our turns you know listening these long periods of time and getting those in. Them of course we had T4 who was in charge of the car and a T5 who was the driver and then a PFC who was the third guy.

Interviewer: Now the officer in charge of you what was his rank?

John: He was a First Lieutenant he had been up in Iceland for I forget how many years up there and they informed him he was going home. They sent him instead to the London over there to take charge of our outfit. We got one very unhappy First Lieutenant and I'll tell you he later became a Captain while we were over there. But he was the only officer that we had.

Interviewer: Okay so he didn't join you until you were actually in England?

John: Pardon

Interviewer: He didn't join you until

John: He didn't join up until we got through training we didn't have an officer in charge of us for a long time. We had a Tech Sargent who had been in there for a long time who was just was in charge of the thing. So we got him while we were in training over in England.

Interviewer: During your time in England were you able to follow the news of what was happening in our operations in North Africa?

John: Some most everything we heard was from BBC up there which made people very unhappy. They would tell you what all the British Army done that way and then at the end of it the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force bombed boom boom just at the end. So there were a lot of people that were unhappy with England I'll put it that way.

Interviewer: Well but I mean were you able to at least have some idea what was going on in the Pacific and what was going on elsewhere?

John: Well we got of course it was all late news that we got it was old stuff by the time we got it. But then some of us that we got on the radio it was the good stuff.

Interviewer: Now did they have Stars and Stripes started yet was that

John: Oh yes oh yes

Interviewer: So you did have a newspaper do you remember what kind of news you would get I mean was it

John: The Stars and Stripes was really our key to the whole thing that they had in there and all.

Interviewer: Yeah so the paper definitely served a purpose kept the soldiers informed?

John: Oh yeah

Interviewer: So at least you had an idea what was going on. Now your focus was all primarily directed towards the invasion of Europe via France that's I mean you had already told me that none of you were detached to operations anywhere else. When did you when did you first know or did you actually know that you were going to get on a ship and hit the beach in France until that day

John: No no no we wondered what in the world we were doing. We knew all of our everything we had was in the of course the duffel bag we had we didn't know if we were going aboard ship or what. We were down at the southern part of England waiting where it all started of course that was all as you know a secret and stuff it couldn't be let out. We didn't know until we heard about the invasion just started on the thing and of course we didn't know when we would be there or what day. We were sitting there ready to go as soon as they put us on a ship and then we of course we then eventually wound up on that ship and went over.

Interviewer: When you first went to England were you allowed to go into town every once in a while?

John: Yes

Interviewer: Prior to the invasion was there a period where everything was locked down and you couldn't go to town anymore that no one could you know where they just locked everybody down prior to the actual D-Day invasion? Or did things just go on pretty much normally all the way p to the point that you actually went?

John: Well things were fairly normal I mean around London they had the to go there no we didn't now we got used to at 3 o'clock every morning we got German stuff going over. They thought it would be Chip Charlie that happened with anything of course the worse thing over in England for those people there I'll say for them that did it were these buzz bombs that they perfected that had no man upon then. And they of course those things when you'd hear one you'd immediately stop as long as you didn't it stopped over a hedge you were okay because they had glide power. If they didn't down you went and but they had the German Air Force went over every night whether there was anything you had to go down and go into a well shelters of such for that. Of course it could happen at anytime.

Interviewer: So you know your life was I was just wondering because you were such a small unit there was only 30 of you in the entire Theatre if they took special precautions with you with the men of your unit you know. So you were allowed to go into town though of course I'm sure you

John: Not after our training not after we got over to France no.

Interviewer: Okay once you got over to France but prior to that when you were still in training in England prior to the invasion you were treated pretty much like every other soldier?

John: In other words we were we had these accounts come up where they'd have a clandestine station we would have to go out and find it and that's what we were trained to do. So by the time we got over in France then of course we were on the actual stuff over there then.

Interviewer: So when did you actually board a ship to go to France? How many was that a number of days after the invasion?

John: It was a very few days I don't remember exactly I don't remember the exact number we didn't know that kind of thing we didn't know what was going on what the first day was or anything like that.

Interviewer: You didn't even know that we had been successful the first day?

John: We had to wait until there was time they could get those vehicles off those landing crafts that they had them on there and you had to get them into

Interviewer: So your vehicles were already there waiting when you got there?

John: No

Interviewer: No?

John: They got there we rode off in the vehicles so we got off of that ship and then onto the other ship somehow I don't remember how we did it. And we got onto the thing and found our vehicles and stuff we drove them across at that time like I said they still had snipers and stuff. We were all extremely lucky we didn't have any casualties whatever around D-Day there it was an awful thing for the people that did have. I know we saw an awful lot that did

Interviewer: You said there was water

John: I said the water was bled in like I told you awhile ago I thought I didn't know there was such a thing as graves registration unit in the army but they did they had the nice job of going in there and picking these of course a lot of men had to go in walking after they went down these nets and over into them. Some of them put a thing where the equipment there when all the tanks and stuff were getting there that came off like we did on ours. But there were still plenty of red water down there at that time and all there was still blood shedding going on.

Interviewer: What was the mood once your unit got onto the beach what do you remember what happened in what order once you actually drove up onto the beach what was the next thing that



happened? Well we waited of course we worried about going to the base if you were going to get shot at going up the thing but like I said we were never hit we were extremely fortunate. And of course we got up there to the top of the division and then we were sent out into these little towns where they had the American the allies not the American Armies but the allies may have taken a town back or something they had. When we'd go through these towns and see the people at work there's well this wasn't a nice thing to see and all but we were able to do that we were lucky like I said we were lucky. We didn't have anybody injured or anything like that. But we were close enough to where we could have yeah. Like they said you see the whites of their eyes you turn around and go the other way don't stand and try to be a hero. We don't want the hero's so we didn't have any.

Interviewer: When did you first start doing for real what you had been trained to do for this entire time?

John: When I was over in France we got started over there doing that for the departments that were out and pick up close to where they could find out where the German army had their army. Everything that went out I remember was monitored and put in. We were a lot closer we could pick it up on our radios then they could say back at headquarter. So we were down where they could get that up to it and you know at any time we could be ordered to go in but we didn't do that in Germany I mean France, France and Paris.

Interviewer: So very soon after the liberation of Paris though you went into Paris?

John: Went where?

Interviewer: You went into Paris very soon after the liberation of Paris?

John: Yes like I said we were some of the first people in Paris and it was they still had many snipers. And they we got there soon enough to where you've heard of the girls that got their hair shaved who fraternized with the Germans. We got to see a lot of that a lot of that was still going on.

Interviewer: How did that make you feel when you saw that I mean

John: Well not very happy. It made you want to go on and get it over with that's

Interviewer: Now during the summer and the fall in Europe after the invasion you pretty much okay where were you at in relation to the front line as we were moving across

John: We went right over we were just right I guess you would say behind them in fact we were in there with them going and that's why we wound up going to Belgium and down to Luxemburg and of course on into Germany.

Interviewer: Try to describe a typical mission you're out there in this car two other people what exactly are you looking for with your equipment and did you have to make regular reports or just simply report when you actually had something to report? What was your primary mission the main focus?

John: We had two or three men like I said two of us would be on intercept duty the whole time the whole thing then one guy would be on guard outside we took turns on that too who was guarding and who would be in. And

Interviewer: Now when you intercepted a communication were you able to track it and know exactly where that communication was coming from?

John: All of that was radioed back to headquarters we didn't our job was to get it we didn't do anything with it. They had all the decoders and all those people like that over where the headquarters would come out.

Interviewer: So your only job was just to intercept it

John: Intercept it and get it radioed back to them but sometimes they wouldn't have us changing radio. The first thing we would do when we would go out to a place they would send you to a different place every day was to get the car parked and then get our your compass and get it on so it on the map. Where originally there were to be six of us and when we would intercept where those lines crossed would be where the rascal would who has been doing the radio work. Of course they would it was their job then to send over and bomb it, do what they wanted to with it then.

Interviewer: And that was the end result once they found out where the communication was coming from was to send

John: Yeah now we were left out of that after that they took care of that some other way.

Interviewer: Now did you have other units around you people close by so that if something were to happen you would have someplace to escape back to or were you sometimes out there pretty alone?

John: We were the only thing we come back in each evening and come back and if you want to be out driving at night you just noticed those little cat eyes out front it's a lot of fun. Get somewhere and use these old maps they had gotten from you know the French and German armies was hard to go on. They would so you go here and you'd wind up there the next day and it was up to you to get there and be there and get set up and ready to go.

Interviewer: Did you ever run into a problem where the roads were just so bad that you couldn't get to where you were trying to go and then you had to find anyway route?

John: That's why we had four wheel drive vehicles we 'd get in there like I said they took those three staff cars back and got three more of the four wheel drive vehicles because . And the equipment they put inside you couldn't use at all we had to reequip with army type radio in there that would go through all of this heavy stuff. So we had to reequip they we had to redo them they sent them up to the United States and y the time they got over there they had a lot of recorders and things like that. We had to take everything out and put in the seats everything. And we went to over in England we went and got in wreck yards we got the bucket seats out of these British sport cars they had so many cars they build

them here now. But we would fix our own and put what we needed in there to go but we had to equip them ourselves.

Interviewer: Somewhat the general things that happen with a lot of equipment soldiers I mean you have people back in the you know in the states that figure out what it should look like then soldiers that will tell you what it actually should be. What we actually do with them.

John: The things in there would be recorders a bunch of stuff in there we didn't need because we were sending it all direct in its quite different.

Interviewer: Now were your drivers did they ever train for combat situations like how to drive very very fast and

John: We all trained together on that we were all intercept operators all of us who were in the thing. And you had to do everything you had to be able to do the driving and all that kind of thing up there to it. The driver was the guy who was responsible when you got back in for two or three days at a time to get the mechanics on the vehicle working right and all that kind of thing. But he was also an intercept radio operator though.

Interviewer: Now leading up to the Battle of the Bulge what part did you plan in that?

John: Well we went first from France we went through Belgium and came down then we got into Luxemburg and we didn't realize at the time that that was the headquarters and by the way when you go over to Luxemburg now they've got burial things over there just like they had back in Normandy and places like that. I didn't realize that much was going on but now we were I found out later attacked to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army down there with General Patton and that was just a part of that that we never saw that was their headquarters down there. And when we got down through the Battle of the Bulge thing they would take just three of us instead of six three cars that would be out for a week at a time. Then we'd be back in Luxemburg for a week to get all the equipment up and all ready to go back out took turns going back in there.

Interviewer: So did you realize at the time when the German attack occurred in December of 44 that it was a really ad situation that everyone thought this was all going very smooth and everything was going well. Then all of a sudden you had this major offensive that a lot of people didn't think the Germans were capable of on that front and there it was. Do you remember?

John: We got current news we got more really around Luxemburg and Germany than we got back in France and over that way.

Interviewer: So you realized how very important it was what you were doing and how vital it was to the war effort at that point.

John: Yeah

Interviewer: Now once the once the once that battle ended and the German defensive had stopped describe for me the period from January of 45 until you found out that the war was actually over. What were you doing in Germany how did you do your operations there when you actually got into Germany?

John: On that day there they put us on complete intercept duty and came in in Frankfort we were there they took a little school they put us in intercept duty which was a very boring thing for us to have to do. But now before the war was over one thing that very impressed us all of course we saw a lot of B17 flying fortresses and all but I will never forget there right at the end when they were getting the war over in a hurry they had A20 attack bombers coming over you could see them up there like a railroad thing was coming over dumping their load going back they just kept doing that seriously when they were trying to get the thing completely. And it wasn't long after that believe me that the war was over as far as the Germans but then the war was only starting as far as we were concerned because we were to pick up these snipers and stuff that they had and these clandestine radio stations that they had hidden so they could find things you know.

Jean: We've been talking about this for a long time we were married 35 years before he ever mentioned the war.

Interviewer: You were married for 35 years before he ever mentioned the war?

Jean: I think

John: We have guys now that still won't talk about that war. Some of these people you go to interview your going to run into some.

Jean: He never mentioned he was in the war I met him right after he got home and he never said anything about what they did and we got married and I don't ever remember him saying anything to my family or anything about what happened or what he did.

John: They just knew I had been over in Europe.

Jean: They knew you had been in the war but I didn't know what you did or anything about it. And I don't remember what opened you up something I mean you just got older and somebody asked you you just opened up the first I heard about it we had been married a long time before I ever heard anything about the war. And then he started talking about it our son got older and his nephews what did you do and how many Germans did you kill. So the kids started asking.

John: John Junior said how many Japs and Germans did you kill. Of course I didn't see no Japs.

Jean: But I mean John kept asking you daddy what did you do in the war and that's where he's forced to talk about it then he opened up and started talking about what he did and why and

Interviewer: John do you remember why you just didn't talk about it did you

John: I don't know you just didn't want to remember I mean I dreamed stuff at night and go back to it and all you just want to forget it want to forget the whole thing over there. But I got back and had a reunion with the guys that were left in there we never did have one.

Jean: But you had one guy that came in from Michigan.

John: Yeah he was going to run us down and try that.

Jean: When John was a baby because we took pictures with he and his wife and I think they had one kid they came to visit us he was from Michigan. I don't know his name but the was in your unit and so they were going to take about getting a group together but you never did do it. Right

John: Yeah

Jean: I know you didn't.

John: Our group was, I'm just talking to you on the thing here, was equally split up between the north and the south. Half of us were trained at Fort Omak New Jersey which was a permanent signal core base and the other half of us were down in Camp Crowder Missouri which was a temporary base. We found out how temporary was I found out later it was temporary all you could find was where the arracks were. But when we got together we were about evenly split between the north and the south we used to when we had time all together we would fight the Civil War if we didn't have anything else to do. And on the things there but we had most of our people on our side were from Kentucky, Tennessee we had Bronson he was from Memphis then the rest of them were from Michigan and New York and places like we had a lot of people from Brooklyn New York we had some. It was a good melting pot of 30 people I'll tell you that.

Jean: We were married four years then 8 years then Johnny got to be about 8 so we had been married about probably 20

John: The big part of that is probably on the first tape I just thought you were going to get all of this afterwards.

Jean: Twenty something years that you started talking about it because when John was about I'd say 10 or 12 or something he was the one that started quizzing you about it.

John: He was always interested in the war.

Jean: Yeah and that's when you started talking about it and then gradually started talking more about it and then I think Janet got to quizzing you about things our daughter too.

John: You talk about being up close to things on the European medal that they had they had five battle stars that they were awarding we were close enough to those places to got four out of five.

Interviewer: Four out of the five battle stars.

John: The other one was down in Italy of course none of us were down around that thing.

Jean: He got to see Patton.

John: Huh

Jean: You saw Patton.

John: Yeah one day I was over in Luxemburg and of course when we moved something through this was so secret we looked like a bunch of gypsies going through the stuff we made up ourselves with wood and all. But anyhow we pulled up in Luxemburg and you could never let anyone near one of your cars I don't care who they were and

Interviewer: It didn't matter what their rank was who they were they couldn't get near the car?

John: Let me tell you this we were standing there guarding the things and our lieutenant he was still a lieutenant then and one of the guys went into headquarters to find out where we were going to be quartered and stuff down in Luxemburg. And while we were there we were under General Bradley's particular part but General Patton's 3<sup>rd</sup> Army they had some of this signal stuff but now like ours. They had some signal but not so I was standing there looks and I had my back to where and I heard this boy say Sargent who's unit is that? And I turned around and there stood General Patton and General Bradley talking and General Bradley snapped to attention and I said their yours sir but he said I know I know we can't do anything with them. So they knew they were in the secret service part of it but that's as close as I got to any Generals I got

Interviewer: So you saw General Bradley and General Patton at the same time.

John: They were both see we didn't know this at the time but they were both their headquarters were in Luxemburg I did not know this. That's where the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army and then this other group the General Bradley was over which we were attached to. We were in the 12<sup>th</sup> Army group which was a very small part of the family it finally came out with these little patches looks like a top but they have red, white and blue in them like you would spin you know. But now had he said let me in there we couldn't have done it I mean it was that much I don't care if they were one was a four star and one was a three star I think at that time. But they knew enough to not push it they just wanted to know. After I told General Bradley I said these are yours sir he knew where they had come from. Ole blood and gut stood there he had these two pearl handle pistols on stuff you would recognize him looked just like he did in the movie.

Interviewer: Now he was pretty much about spit and polish there were legendary stories about what he demanded out of the troops under his command. Always having a tie always you know being always wearing a tie always looking as spiffy as possible did that filter down to you all were you all did you ever experience anything

John: That's the only time I ever saw General Patton when I was over there I mean I was amazed y it then because like I said I dind't know they had the headquarters for those two armies in Luxemburg at that time.

Interviewer: What was your impression of Luxemburg while you were there?

John: Luxemburg the area had been mighty nice ordinarily because it was ruled y some people that had plenty of money so it had no taxes of course there was a war come along don't get me wrong. But it was a nice place to live ordinarily over there.

Interviewer: It's a beautiful beautiful city I always tell people if you're going to go to Europe make that a place to go.

John: Oh yeah it's got some beautiful parts now it would be a good country surely they've got smart enough to start charging everybody taxes now.

Jean: Did you all go there when you and John were over there did you go there?

John: No we went through Luxemburg like I said we were on our own had this plan everyday had to get on everything over in Europe had been on trains. The first day we thought we would rent a car we said forget that there's no where you can go and get out in a car said they go everywhere they go by trains their so fast and all. So we made plenty of trips we had to really jump across the tracks.

Jean: Somebody pick pocketed his billfold.

John: I told you that my first day on the subway in Paris.

Jean: So I had for them to them.

John: We were going from Ouray Airfield to our hotel where we had a reservation and we were just gotten on to a subway

Interviewer: Now this is on you visit back when you went back.

John: The second time oh yeah no no not during the war shoot no we didn't have any vehicle or anything during the war. I've got pictures of the Champs Du Lesage in Paris we were there you'd see one or two vehicles. Now there's ten lanes of traffic going across the thing. But there was nothing what you saw were army vehicles people they were on bicycles if they had anything.

Jean: When you were there.

Interviewer: Now when the war came to an end how did you first hear about it? What was your reaction when you first heard that the Germans had surrendered?

John: Well of course we were glad it was over.

Jean: Where were you?

John: Huh

Jean: Where were you?

John: I was in Germany near Frankford I can't think of the name of the little town now its been a long time.

Jean: Well did you all hoop and holler?

John: Oh yeah we were able to do that then we had to go back to work on intercepts again but.

Interviewer: So you continued to work intercept even all the war after the surrender?

John: Oh yeah because we were still having to get stuff sent back into headquarters to find the clandestine stations. And of course at that time we weren't out in the car they just put us on interceptive duty in this thing which was boring as get out sit in front of a radio all day long.

Interviewer: Was there a genuine worry that Germans were going to continue to a gorilla war you know once the government had surrendered?

John: Oh well yeah there was always a few when we were there you could go out night and we were quartered even when the war officially over they knew it was going to be over. You could go in but they were warning us never go unless you go two at time because they had so many snipers that would get you and they had a lot of people there that would.

Interviewer: Was there a shift in focus after the German surrender after how long did you stay first off in Germany? How long was it before you came back to the Untied States?

John: I didn't get back until

Jean: December 45

John: December 45 over here we stayed in Germany the whole time. We did go by way of Paris and come I mean go by way of Lehar and go there where we could get on the boat. Y the way we went on these little bitty boats where there would e very few men and a whole lot they had some of us from infantry and they had some from tankers then we had this one group that were important people in the army. They were in the pay part of the thing what they call it anyhow they took care of all to see you got checks and stuff like this. We called them the girls most of them couldn't even carry their duffle bags on the back of a truck like we could. But now what were we into before I got to that but so we got back to Lehar and we had to wait there it was a tent city we had tents and tents you know what they are they are six men tents. Wait a week there at a time to go and I'll tell you this is for your own benefit I'm not proud of doing it there but we got there and there was a guy in our tent. He was a Staff Sargent and he could speak perfect French all the way through because his father was a Frenchman had a couple of French bakeries back in the Untied States. So his job during that was to stay in Paris as these VIPs came over from London and places like that find them a place to stay and stuff like that. So while we were there every morning we would have to jump up and go to roll call you'd eat and sit around and do nothing they'd have you exercising and stuff like this you know how the army is. And he said you know he said they don't know when it will be if we get someone here that can answer for us I can write us passes straight through and I can get them for hotels and places where you can go eat. Well we never did get to go to anyplace like that what they call R&R you know we never did get to go to any. We went back I'll have you know this guy wrote us passes at a time and we'd just call in everyday to find out everything. So we were in Paris at that time we couldn't let anybody know where we were we would



have probably got shot by the army if we did. But anyhow we did get to go back into I'll never forget this Staff Sergeant in charge he said now what's your name Flemmons I said just think of Lemons and put a P on one end and an S on the other then it will be Plemmon S. He said from that day on I was P lemon S to that guy. Call me what are you doing and I was P Lemon S.

Interviewer: So you got to spend some time in Paris before you actually came back to the United States?

John: Pardon

Interviewer: Spend time in Paris before you came back to the United States? At the end of the war once it was decided you were going to get sent back to the United States you had time to actually take in some of the sights at that point?

John: That was that sneaky thing Paris was considered that R&R and what killed me I had went in to a furlough to Switzerland because I wanted to take that at the same time and my furlough came up at the same time and they said sorry you can't go you've got too many points. Everything was on the points system you know you got a point for every month you were in two points for every month you were overseas stuff like that you know. We appreciated those four battle stars we got 20 points for those rascals they were worth five points a piece. They come in handy at that but when they got through they said you can't go you've got too many points you can go back to the United States at anytime. I said I still would like to go to Paris before I went but they said no you can't do it. We did army style I forget how many months it was after that before they could get us on a boat coming ack. And by the way we were talking about went over on liberty ships we came back on the USS America which was stripped to the bottom you never saw as many GIs in your life. They had just bunks with canvas on them six deep you stayed in they took all of that luxury stuff out of there. And we got to come home on the USS America I don't know how many they had thousands of people on there I imagine hundred anyway.

Interviewer: Now this was like a something more like a big cruise liner?

John: Yeah that's what it was they made a cruise ship out of it that's what it was.

Interviewer: Do you remember the name of the ship?

John: Some of the guys probably got shipped over there where we were.

Interviewer: Do you remember the name of the ship?

John: The USS America

Interviewer: The USS America so it was cruise ship and then.

John: No it wasn't a cruise ship it was a big ocean liner.

Interviewer: Ocean liner yeah

John: It was one where they went back and forth around oceans they just went around the Caribbean.

Interviewer: That's what I mean an ocean liner.

John: It was huge oh you couldn't imagine it being so big we even got into fun on that we got we were back where they were going through a real ad storm oh one thing about these liberty ships let me tell you about have you ever been on one?

Interviewer: No

John: Well you don't mind when they go side to side like that or when they go back when they put all of that together you're ready to feed the fishes upstairs as they call it. And when they got on this USS America on the thing coming back they had already had wax and stuff on it a lot of stuff you don't need to know about. While we were down in Germany some of them getting R&R down in Neisse France you've heard of Neisse and they had there was one guy that went. He said he met a Whack going on the train going down and he said well maybe would could get together when we get down to Neisse so she said in a hurry just how much it would cost him. He said you mean your going to charge me for with you she said well a girls got to earn her PX ration come way. So mo matter where you went and on the ship coming back you would find groups of men like that there would be a Whack and another guys down in we won't go into that. Anyhow they had things where they paid poker. We got the first American money we had script the h whole time we were over there the whole two years you know what that is it's printed up money that you can buy stuff with but its not American cash. And boy I mean they were throwing money around that ship we were drinking milk the first milk we had had in two years. But it was no luxury liner but we had the milk there during that. One of the propellers came off of that thing after being in one of these storms I forget how many thousand dollars an hour they paid some of these volunteers to go down under the ship go down in the water and to repair that. And but they did they go it fixed up so we got back into New Jersey again because while we were there we got all filled up on the milk and the steaks and milkshakes and all of that kind of stuff we hadn't had for years you know. So by the time I got down to see my mother in North Carolina she wanted to know what I wanted to ear my favorite meal I'll never forget I picked out cornbread and cabbage that she had down there because like I said all the things I had was steaks and things like that before.

Interviewer: What was your single most I guess indelible memory throughout your whole time through that whole experience. What was the one moment was it being on the beach at Normandy seeing that was that you know or was there some other moment.

John: Yeah because we thought we would get to come back quicker than we did like I said getting that furlough canceled to Switzerland about killed me because I'd never been to Switzerland before. My son and I went over the second time we did.

Tape 2

John: We went through Switzerland we picked up another country they've got a little bitty country I can't think of the name of it, it's down there in Switzerland down there at the bottom. So we got an extra country added on to it. But well I'll tell you one thing my brother is 14 years older than I am and he had real bad eyes couldn't get in service tried to and couldn't. But well I bent over I get in the middle of

stuff and oh when I said he'd been over I thought well here is the way to go he had never been married he was disappointed early in life he wouldn't court or nothing. He was disappointed or something never did but we had to figure that was the only way to go. That's how we'd been brought up I didn't have no father my father died when I was less than three years old I was raised by my mother. So I would have been a real Andy Pandy had I not been in the service it's certainly extreme in there you know. But I said well when I go I'll be single and go through then we found out we were getting ready to go home I said what are you going to do we had about three or four men in there that were married they had just gotten married three or four months before we left the states and got in you know couldn't wait. We had more trouble with them over there with women than we did us single guys. But then that's neither here nor there but we had some single guy and I said what are you going to do and he said well I don't have anybody to come back to. I got thinking hey this isn't the life I want I'm going to run over there and find me a woman I'm gonna get married or I ain't gonna go. And I did I wasn't over here too long and I picked her up right before I started in college in Louisville Kentucky.

Interviewer: So once you came back what was the transition like going back in the army to what was the next step like?

John: Very difficult because going back you couldn't buy clothes still at that time. I didn't realize that civilians over there had that hard of a thing to go through. You couldn't buy clothes anywhere I had to wear the uniform for a long time. I finally run into an old top coat that I bought that I could get into but they were hard to come to.

Interviewer: So when you first came back you had to wear your uniform it wasn't that you just wanted to you had to wear it because you had no other clothes?

John: The most prized emblem we had was a ruptured duck you put on there you know as soon as they discharged you. But no everybody wore then every body did.

Interviewer: Alright we're going to pause here just for a moment. Alright we're back and we are speaking now to Jean Plemmons John's wife of 64 years.

Jean: Sixty-four

Interviewer: Sixty-four years so you got married very shortly after he got back.

Jean: He got home in December and we married in September. We didn't waste any time.

Interviewer: No when did you first meet him? Did you first meet him when he came back?

Jean: I was working in a drug store and he was wanting to go in pharmacy so he came and got a job at the drug store so he could get admitted in the pharmacy.

Interviewer: And where was this at?

Jean: Louisville Kentucky

Interviewer: Okay so you came back when you first came back

Jean: He went in service from Kentucky because he wanted to go to Kentucky school when he got out and so he came to his sisters and stayed.

John: My sister and my brother lived in Louisville so

Jean: And so he knew he wanted to go to school in Louisville he didn't know he wanted to go to pharmacy but he knew he wanted to go to school in Louisville or Kentucky. So the pharmacy school was in Louisville at that time where UK. And so I forget what I'm talking about he got back in December and he

Interviewer: Worked at the Pharmacy?

Jean: Where I was and we met

John: Tell him about us going over

Jean: I was sort of cashier and they needed somebody on the drug side and the boss liked me a lot and he had a daughter that supposable looked like me so he wanted me to go over and apply for the job. And so I went over at that office I was supposed to be at work at 3 o'clock and I went over to the, you had to go from the soda fountain cashier to the drug side was a different department so you had to go. And so I went over and they told me to sit down and somebody would interview me and so I'm always impatient so I sit there for awhile and this boy came in and sat down. And he kept looking at me and I thought well shoot I'm going to go to work I'm not going to stay here and wait so I got up and left and went on to work. And so then that same day this was Taylor Drug in Louisville Kentucky and that same day one of the brother Taylor died so they put a wreath on the front and had to close the store. And so I'm sitting in this little booth you took soda fountain tickets and people's money I was sitting up there and this guy came and tapped me on the shoulder and said could you tell me where to get a hammer to put and I looked at him and I said that's the same jerk that was sitting over there in that office when I went over there. And I said well no I don't know where it is find it yourself and sassed him real good.

John: She didn't tell you that I got her job that she went over there to apply for.

Jean: Yeah and so

John: By her leaving.

Jean: By me going back so then the manager came and said why didn't you stay because he liked me. And I said because I didn't want to wait any longer and a girl who worked there said well she was ready to leave so she would go ahead and leave so she could have the job that I had so I went on. And so then one time when somebody was interviewing him he said I was the soda jerk and he made me so mad I could spit. I said I was a cashier you know I've had four strokes if you're wondering while I talk so

Interviewer: No you're getting your making yourself quite clear that's good.

Jean: Well I've always been a talker they wanted me to have speech therapy after the last stroke. I said no my mother said I came in the word talking so I can learn to talk again. But I know I hesitate a lot but anyway that's how we met.

John: So he was telling me at the end of his interview that when he came back to the United States that he was surprised at the fact that he couldn't buy cloths over here. Now was that something you lived with during the entire time of you know while all the fellows were over seas you know the whacks and everybody else was overseas doing their job? What was happening here in America but let me first ask you when Pearl Harbor happened did you hear that speech on the radio as well? Do you remember hearing it?

Jean: Yes very well. My dad was working on that Sunday and mother had gone with her parents to her grandmothers and so I decided I was I guess I was 12 I thought I was 13. So I cooked and made mashed potatoes and I don't remember what else but I remember making it because I wasn't used to cooking but her parents were coming back with mother and I wanted to make this meal. Well I forget what we were talking about.

Interviewer: The day you heard the speech of Pearl Harbor.

Jean: Oh yeah I had the dinner ready and they came in and about the same time it was on the radio that Pearl Harbor. And mother started crying and my grandmother started crying and nobody cared about my dinner so that's what I remember nobody wanted to eat and I had made all this dinner which I was not used to doing. And they were not even interested in it you know.

Interviewer: Well when you're 12 years old that's the kind of thing you'll focus on. That was what was important to you at the time.

Jean: Yeah because I was so proud of myself for what I had done and mother and grandparents came in they had been to Indianapolis and they came back we live in Louisville Kentucky. And I just wanted them to brag on my dinner you know because I had done such a good job and they weren't interested in anything about it. They were talking about the war and listening they had the radio on and all gathered around it. That's what I remember about that day.

Interviewer: Now how did life change for you as a result of that? When did you first start noticing the war affecting what was going on here in America and your life style and your life?

Jean: Well we had to have gas coupons and my grandparents lived down in Kentucky. We lived in Louisville and they were down in about 80 miles from there and we always went nearly every weekend we'd go to both grandparents lived there and we would go to see them. Well then when you had to have your coupons to get gas daddy stopped driving to work and saved his gas he would ride with somebody else and save his gas coupons. And what else just a matter of things I guess I remember clothes you couldn't get nylons I was wearing socks anyways so that wasn't no big deal to me.

John: You couldn't get sugar and stuff.

Jean: I don't remember I know it was rationed but I didn't pay much attention to that mother would I wasn't old enough to grocery shop or anything. And so the only thing I remember is the gas because we couldn't go to grandparents as often as we used to and had to save our gas things to do it. That's the biggest thing I remember changing my daddy I remember my grandmother crying and saying her baby was going to have to go to war. And before the war had happened and that bothered me but you know he never did have to go and so that was not a problem. But really I was not touched much by the war because I was I guess I was 12 when Pearl Harbor because my birthdays in December 12 so that was December 7 isn't it. So I wasn't quite

Interviewer: Not quite 13.

Jean: Yeah

Interviewer: Now did you start high school the next year?

Jean: I guess.

Interviewer: Yeah so it would have been 42.

Jean: Junior high I think I remember being in junior high and the war was going on. And but I mean daddy never did have to go and nobody close in the family did my grandparents were too old you know to go. And so I was not very touched by all that.

Interviewer: Now did you have friends who had brothers or you know girl friends who had brothers or parents who had gone?

Jean: Yeah I think I did but there again it wasn't a problem to me I just remember some of them did have.

Interviewer: Being in high school now I mean was the war a topic of conversation or were you guys more focused on the things all high school kids are focused on? The dance and all the rest of that stuff and if football is continued and

Jean: Manual and Belem are the two big high schools in Louisville and they are very competitive in sports and yeah it was more my mind wasn't on the war.

Interviewer: And that's absolutely natural you know I'm sure that it's the same thing after 9/11 you know 9/11 was a topic of conversation for a lot of people at school. But then when your young there so much else to focus on.

Jean: I didn't worry about anything I don't remember.

Interviewer: Did you ever have any feeling any idea that the United States might not win the war that you were just convinced that we were going to so and win and.

Jean: It would be over and everything would be okay and as a matter of fact when Roosevelt died I know the whole neighborhood was crying and my mother said oh don't worry about it. They were standing

out on the street corners crying you know the neighbors and mother said don't worry about it we'll be alright we might get it over sooner the war over sooner. Now I do remember that just because everybody was so standing out in the street when I went home from school that day and mother said oh don't worry about it come on in and eat supper so I did. I didn't really worry about anything.

Interviewer: Now in your family the topic around the dinner table was the family did your parents and grandparents did they have a lot of confidence in the leadership of this country? The president and the people who were running the country was there a lot of confidence and the feeling that they were going to take care of this?

Jean: They weren't very crazy about Roosevelt now who came Truman came after him I don't remember ever hearing them bad mouthing Truman. No I don't think it was the topic around the dinner table like church or school or it was more what we talked about.

Interviewer: Yeah now John and Jean when the war was over with was there a feeling that that was you know that was the happy ending in the movie and like everything was going to be alright now? Was it a source of huge surprise when all of a sudden we found ourselves having problems with the Russians so soon afterwards and then going into Korea five years later did that surprise you?

John: I'd like to say one thing if I could that while we were over there we saw all these bombed out cities and everything. And they told us this was the war to end all wars and we knew it wouldn't be because they bible tells you they go on and on and on. But we say all this havoc in places and we made it our personal pledges that the war like that would go on but we'd never have it in this country because we were going to do it on somebody else's turf. When it of course we had no idea anything like 9/11 would come along they would knock us down with our own airplanes but we was going to be sure it didn't happen here. It would go on but we were going to make sure it went on somewhere else not in America.

Interviewer: How would you compare the feeling between I mean did you watch 9/11 happen were you watching the TV that day? What was the comparison between the mood in your households after Pearl Harbor listening to the radio and that day watching this event on TV? Was it something similar?

Jean: Well no my age was different I thought more seriously about 9/11 you know than I did Pearl Harbor.

Interviewer: But I mean it how did you feel John did it bring back memories of that day?

John: Oh yeah people ask you where you were on 9/11 even when I'm approached at 80 years old I say I was at work like I say I'm a pharmacist and they still need you to fill in on some cases.

Jean: I called you know the phone.

John: Yeah she called and told me told us up there this was a big place that I worked because we filled orders for 33 major nursing homes. But she called me about what happened so we didn't have a TV in the things but they had telephones and they had the phone hooked up with the radio in it so we could hear it. And we actually heard the second one that went in and the guy that ran the place at the time

said now anybody here said is there may be a war coming up said we don't want to hold you here if you want to go home we want to remind you that your doing an essential duty by filling these nursing home orders for the drugs that they've got to have and all. So nobody left I remember that we all stayed we had the radios on all day long so we could hear them.

Interviewer: So Jean you said that since you didn't shop you didn't worry about the rationing of food so much. Did you notice the difference though in what you were eating that you didn't certain things as much?

Jean: No chocolate was but I don't remember that being a problem.

Interviewer: You had a problem getting candy bars didn't you?

Jean: I know but I remember that my little brother our granddad came and he gave him a nickel to go get ice cream we had ice cream men then that went down the street. So he give him a nickel to get and he said Pop nickels don't spend anymore said you've got to have a nickel and a penny they went to 6 cents. And then candy bars and so I remember that we made a joke out of it for a long time we would say you know nickels don't spend anymore. I don't remember anything major about not

John: You didn't notice the shortage they didn't have all kinds of candy and stuff like that.

Jean: I could still take a quarter and go to the neighborhood movie and buy my ticket, some popcorn and some go next door to the candy shop and get a little bag of those what's those little things peanuts? What do they call them?

Interviewer: M&M's or

Jean: No them little square

John: Peanut butter in the

Interviewer: Oh mallow cups or.

Jean: If you get several of those plus your popcorn and a coke for a quarter. Nickel coke nickel popcorn and 12 cents to get in there I thought we had a penny or two left to get the candy.

Interviewer: Now when you went to the movies did you see news reels about the war did they show pictures?

John: Now don't forget they were always weeks behind though.

Jean: Yeah and I was talking to my friends and running up and down the aisles and didn't pay any attention to that either. I was not a very serious person.

Interviewer: Well John how would you sum up your feeling about your service for those years? You said that you know it was something you had to do once it was over with you just went on with your life. Is that a good summation of it you just transitioned back into you know



John: Yeah we had several of us that had anticipated because we knew our unit was an unusual unit and if we would apply to stay in the Army we could apply to become an officer. And the thing that they had that they would do I got to thinking about it later and said well fiddle who cares I'm gonna get back home after I had spent three years you know. Go back home and see of course a lot of them came home and went to school and went back.

Jean: Well you met me and you were happy.

John: That's right I didn't want to go then.

Interviewer: So you did you take advantage of the GI bill?

John: Oh yes I would have never gotten to go to college without that. My mother was a widow and there would have been no way we figured college even going. So I got my college work through thanks to Uncle Sam. They not only paid my school and everything but they paid for the books and the things we used when you broke them they even paid for that. And in addition we drew so much money it wasn't much to live on of course she kept working in the drug store and I worked until 11:30 every night. Taylors was a big chain drug store and this was just one of their stores.

Interviewer: So did you go to the University of Louisville?

John: No I went to the University of Kentucky but at that time it was an extension in Louisville.

Interviewer: Okay say they had an extension in Louisville so you were going to school in the daytime working at night until 11:30.

John: Everybody in pharmacy school we only had one guy who was our valedictorian who didn't work. He spent all of his summers and stuff getting the information for the next year from another student so he could do that and he got through. But we got to laugh after he got through he couldn't even get a job in a drug store because he didn't have any experience and we all had

Interviewer: And you all had experience.

John: Four solid years of experience plus you know at the time we had to put in.

Interviewer: Were you amazed at the transformation of the country that happened after the war?

John: Yeah

Interviewer: Well John Jean thank you so much for inviting me into your home. Thank you for talking to me about this. These are things that down the road years and years from now that people are going to be looking at you know the historians are going to be looking at stuff like this to get a picture of what people were feeling. What this country was like during that time and maybe comparing it to a time that they live in and trying to make sense of where they are based on where we have been. And this is always important and I thank you very much.

John: There was one thing in particular different because they had so many women that went to work making airplanes and all that stuff you know that they had to do. And that changed the thing because when that didn't used to work stayed home and took care of things wanted to keep working and all. Just like when I went to school I had to work and of course she had to work too and when I got through when I finally did get my own drug store there was no way I could have run it without her. Because she did all the it was as a matter of fact a small town I'll tell you know we had people that would rather fill their prescriptions than I would they trusted her just as much because she had been there.

Jean: Well I took care of the money and paying the bills and stuff too so I could fill a prescription if I had to.

John: She was our chief cosmetician of course and went off to these cosmetic schools and came back to teach the other girls that worked for us how to do it.

Jean: God blessed me with beautiful skin and so that was such a blessing all the years we were in the drug store because my skin was so pretty I could sell them anything. And it was just because my mother's skin was prettier than mine she had kind of an olive complexion and real smooth but they thought I was using certain product that I sold in the store to make it that way. Not so that was just the way but any way that was an asset.

Interviewer: Well Mr. & Mrs. Plemmons thank you so much once again for inviting me into your home. John thank you for your service to our country and God bless you both and this concludes our interview.

Jean: Thank you