

Mr. Berkley: My name is William, I'm known as Bill. I was born the 26th of January 1924 in Old Hickory, Tennessee.

Interviewer: Where is Old Hickory, Tennessee?

Mr. Berkley: It's up on the other side of Donnellson.

Interviewer: Okay towards Lebanon.

Mr. Berkley: Yeh by the Old Hickory Dam where the power plant is that's where Old Hickory is.

Interviewer: What was your father name and mother's names?

Mr. Berkley: My dad's name was senior M H Senior and mother was Carrie Forten Berkley and she was born in Erin raised in Waverly and lived in Dickson and Waverly and Johnsonville.

Interviewer: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Mr. Berkley: I had one brother and three sisters.

Interviewer: And are you in the order?

Mr. Berkley: I'm number one.

Interviewer: The first. What did your dad do for a living?

Mr. Berkley: He was an aviator he was the only man that's been the manager of all of the municipal airports in Nashville. He started out at old Blackwood Field at Old Hickory and went from there to McConnell Field with was where McCray is now from there we moved to Sky Harbor out near Murfreesboro then we moved from there to the Williams property which is Nashville International airport and he was the first manager of that.

Interviewer: What do you remember about the great depression?

Mr. Berkley: Not a whole lot I grew up in a depression but my daddy was in a pretty good job so we weren't affected too severely by the depression itself but later on we had some problem. My dad left aviation and went into another business and had a big truck stop and he had some trucks of his own so there was where he had some problems in hiring drivers and keeping drivers and such as that. And we had to live close to the our vest at that time that worked out all right for him and when I got to high school I worked for him and when I was in high school on weekends and holidays and I drove a truck and worked on the dock and things like that. And then when the war broke out I was in high school and decided that I wanted to be in the service and my dad had a fit. So I called him on the road he was in Akron, Ohio and I got my papers signed by my mother and she thought she was signing something else she didn't read it and I wasn't to anxious for her to try and read it she just signed it and I left for the Calvary and I stayed in the Calvary for a little over three months and went into the Army air core. And as soon as I got in the Army air core they sent me to Panama. And I stayed down there until the war broke out and it was the 10th of December 1941 when we left there and went to San Francisco and from there

to Honolulu and landed in Honolulu the 21st day of December 1941. Stayed there for the first part seven months then came back to the United States and went back overseas the second time I was in Gordon Canal the second time hauling patients out of there away from the front. And I came back to the United States and went to B27 Flight Engineer School at Brimington, Washington and graduated in class 6A and from there went back overseas but when I got to Honolulu because I had already been overseas twice they pulled me off of the ship and left me in Honolulu and then air training air transport command and there I was back again flying all types of aircraft old ones flying new ones down under the combat zone and bringing back the worriers and the old ones that were worn out back to Honolulu and they would then fly them on into the United States for repair. And then on the 21st of November 1945 I went to I was transferred back to the United States where I was discharged on the 5th day of December 1945. So that's a thumb nail sketch of part of my history from 41 to 45. It was a pretty tough time of my life but as I look back over it I enjoy every bit of it I guess. We had some pretty rough times I had malaria that was the reason I was sent back the first time to the United States. Then when I went back we flew in to Guam and all around the Solomon's and through that way and I went to Australia took a brand new B24 down there and on the way back off of the coast of New Ginny we lost two engines on the B24 and I had to ditch at sea and we had some hitchhikers' on the airplane and they was coming back from Australia on their way to the United States and they were catching a ride by air wherever they could. And four of them were lost at sea and three of us or five of us were rescued and the rest of them died on board the raft while we were at sea. We stayed on the life raft for six nights and seven days and we were rescued by the America Calvary division in New Ginny at that time we had eaten what we could we had raw seagull and raw fish and when we got on land with the America Calvary division they wouldn't let us have anything to eat but bullion. They said our stomachs wouldn't take food or anything so we ate bullion until they thought we were well enough to eat and then we came on back to the United States. Three of us at that time the other two I don't know where they went, someplace else. And that's when I was enrolled in B29 flight engineer school. And that was the big bomber when it first came out flight engineers were that was a new occupation for airmen at that time panel operators they called them work on the B29 the light engineer. And that was my career for 23 years a flight engineer. Till I retired from the United States air force n 1966. Can I answer some questions for you?

Interviewer: What do you think about FDR?

Mr. Berkley: FDR was a pretty sharp individual he had a lot he was a Politian and he knew how to handle the Congress do those things that he need to do at that time. But I think some of the things he did as far as Churchill was concerned I mean well Churchill too Stalin he gave too much to Stalin which was perpetration of the Cold War that we had to contend with for so many years. If he hadn't been so liberal with the communist we wouldn't have had as much problem with the Cold War we did which was a long war.

Interviewer: What did you think about any of his New Deal programs he was doing or was anybody in your family involved in any of them?

Mr. Berkley: No but I do know WPA and so forth there were a lot of people out of work everywhere and that was a way to put people back to work. And he came out with the wage an hour law which was a

quarter an hour minimum wage you worked 44 hours and got \$12 and a half he also took social security out of that. And that was \$12 and a half and social security was twelve and a half cents and they took out of your pay and your employer matched that twelve and a half cents for social security. And that started in 1940. Then WPA built a lot of parks and bridges and other things like that putting men to work and that was enough for them to feed their family and get their families back to a life not of easy but better than what they had been used to. Which was sometimes the food lines and they called them soup kitchens and bread lines and that New Deal worked pretty good for the United States population as a whole until the war broke out and then that dropped off and things really went to a good deal because men that had been making \$25 a week began to make 50 and 75 dollars a week and that really helped they helped they helped the war effort and helped out economy. So our gross national product picked up tremendously during the war years even though they were not happy about not having gasoline which at that time cost 13 to 14 cents a gallon as opposed to what we pay for it now. They had rationing for shoes rationing for sugar I don't know much about that cause I was overseas during much of that rationing. I think they rationed meat and I don't know what else but they had stamps for a particular thing and I think they had cards for other like shoes I don't know if they got cards for that or what but I was in San Francisco and I kept seeing all of the automobiles had down in the corner of their windshield had A, B or C and none of us knew what that was until we talked to some of the people and they told us that was their gas ration so if they had an A they could get so many gallons a B they could get so many more and C they could get so many more than that or vice versa I don't know exactly how that worked. That's about all I know about gas ration.

Interviewer: Do you remember seeing any major shortages during the depression? Trying to find things and stuff like that?

Mr. Berkley: Oh most everything was short during the depression everything not we lived pretty good cause my dad worked for the city of Nashville at that time he was the airport manager and but everything was in short no one had an abundance of anything during that depression. The farmers ate better than anyone else but they didn't do too well themselves cause they couldn't sell their food cause nobody had any money to buy it. And produce was that's when the government started crop hoarders I think they called it here in Joelton was a tobacco crop and each tobacco farmer was allotted so many acres to grow tobacco for market and that's all they could grow. Now other things corn and produce and other things like that had other restrictions on them and I don't know what that was but these are some of the things I found out after I got back from overseas. We lived on a minimum wage then. When I first went in the service I made \$21 a month. And out of that I had to buy insurance I had to buy canteen chips, theatre chips and laundry, laundry was \$1.35 a month and we could turn in laundry once a week and I think we turned in 25 pieces of laundry 26 pieces and socks one a pair was two and that made two of your 26 and you had underclothes you had to wash yourself cause you had so many t-shirts you could use laundry shirts we had then so many pairs of shorts and trousers khaki shirts each one was one and our fatigues work coveralls and our two piece fatigues were part of the 26. So then our canteen chips we could go to the movie I think we got five chips which was five movies we could go see on base and then we had the canteen chips I forgot how many that was we could get so many packages of cigarettes a month then we had to buy sacks of tobacco to roll our own cause you couldn't have table made for the

full month and that left you when your canteen chips and your insurance and your laundry and so forth that left a man making \$21 a month about \$9.25 a month for his personal life. That's to buy toothpaste and shaving cream and razor blades and things like that. Of course you got a reduced price in the PX you know. That's the way those things ran.

Interviewer: Before you went in the war and you were living with your parents did you have like electricity and running water?

Mr. Berkley: Where I lived we did but I lived on Riverside Drive known as Memorial Drive or Double Drive in East Nashville and it was a divided roadway and the streets off of Riverside Drive were unpaved. Those that were unpaved didn't have water or didn't have light didn't have telephone but those on the paved street generally speaking had water, lights and telephone and it was kind of funny because the man that lived on the street beside of our house which was about 200 feet or four lots down from our house lived three houses down on that street they put in electricity and when they did they hung one wire from the ceiling in the center of the ceiling in the room and put a bare bulb on it those people in that house wouldn't take a bath in the room where the naked light bulb was because they were afraid that it would injure their health the rays from the light bulb would injure them someway. So they didn't particularly care they didn't take a bath at night at all they only took a bath during the day. If they took one and they had to draw the water from the well and they had to heat the water on the stove to fill the washtub to take a bath in and that was about I guess we were about five miles from the court house in downtown Nashville no we weren't that far we were about three and half or four miles from downtown Nashville. TVA hadn't gotten a good foothold at that time.

Interviewer: Did you have a radio?

Mr. Berkley: Yes we had a radio. We had a radio that was called a Chrystal Set and my daddy took the Chrystal Set out on the front porch every Saturday night and turned it as high as he could turn it so the people in the neighborhood could hear the Grand Ole Opry. Then it was a long time before everybody got radios it became an electric radio then before that they had battery sets and we listened to such things as Amos & Andy and Fiddle McGee and Marley and I don't know those were some of the things we listened to.

Interviewer: Did you ever listen to any of FDR's fireside chats?

Mr. Berkley: Oh yeh we heard some of them but most of his fireside chats were delivered during the war now there was some before that. But after the war we of course didn't hear any had them before the war.

Interviewer: Did you join the Army Air Core before Pearl Harbor or after Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Berkley: Before

Interviewer: So when you signed up for the Army Air Core where did you go to sign up for it?

I signed up first in the Calvary I went down town Nashville and the old Federal Court Building across the street from Ewing Paul High School I signed up there and I went in one day at about 9 o'clock in the morning and got everything squared away and I think it was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon they put me on a train and sent me to Fort Overthorough, Georgia. And there they swore me in and put me in basic training and told me that I was in the Calvary.

Interviewer: Did you do basic training at Fort Overthorough?

Mr. Berkley: We didn't call it basic training then we called it recruit drill. And of course there was a lot of draftees that were coming in and the National Guard had been constricted and there was a song that had came out called I'll be back in a year little darling and they were going to come in for training and then they were going to come back home and wait until the war broke out and then they would be in the service but that didn't happen they went for the year and during that year the war broke out so they got caught with a little extra time. They were National Guard Troops.

Interviewer: What made you go from Calvary to the Air Core?

Mr. Berkley: Well I had a lieutenant that was not much older than I was he didn't look like he was much older than I was and he had a big mouth and he really exercised his authority as a second lieutenant and he kept telling me that I was going to get to ride a horse and that was the reason I went in the Calvary. But it never came about all I had to do was carry horses and clean up after them and feed them and that was my job mostly and drill and we were transferred from Fort Overthorough to Fort Seal, Oklahoma. And that's when we got to Fort Seal I saw a sign that said you could transfer from the Army I mean from the Calvary to the Army Air Core and I said okay that's where I want to go and I told that first clerk in the order room to put my name on that list. And the lieutenant found out about it but it was too late and he got upset because I sneaked off from them but that was the best move I ever made. One of them.

Interviewer: Would rather clean up after airplanes than horses.

Mr. Berkley: Absolutely. That's what I did I worked on airplanes and I worked on General Frank Andrews crew for a little bit down in Panama in Albrook Field and he left to go to Europe and was going to take over the European Theatre and on his way back to the United States he was killed in Iceland but we were still in Panama as part of the crew in headquarter and headquarters and we were kind of casual so we worked for the medic core we kept the airplanes flying for them. Then we were put in the casual pool and that's when we went to Can Francisco and then to Honolulu.

Interviewer: Where were you when you heard about Pearl Harbor being bombed?

Mr. Berkley: I was in Panama Albrook Field and that particular morning we had been to the mess hall and came back to the barracks and headquarters called us out for roll call and so on and so forth which was unusual they didn't do that and that's when he told us the war had broken out. That's how we found that out. It was about 9 o'clock in the morning when we found it out.

Interviewer: What did you think about it?

Mr. Berkley: What did I think about it? Well I was glad I was in the service if I hadn't have been I would have immediately became a soldier of one description or another but I was glad I was where I was.

Interviewer: What do you think about the Japanese?

Mr. Berkley: What do I think about them? I'm not very politically correct.

Interviewer: That's fine I'm not expecting you to be I want to know how you felt.

Mr. Berkley: And I don't patricianly care for the Japanese and I've been there for a long long time after the war. I went back and then during Korea and in Japan. We worked between Japan and Korea for two years. And I didn't like them then and since that time I still haven't trusted no Orientals. That is the way I feel about them and that's not politically correct and I understand that but I feel like I have the privilege of having my own feeling and not being controlled by the government or anybody else for that matter.

Interviewer: Is that the reason why you went to San Francisco because they bombed Pearl Harbor and you they were sending you to the Pacific?

Mr. Berkley: Yeh they were transferring us from Panama to Honolulu to Ikan Field is where I went.

Interviewer: I know where that is I've been there.

Mr. Berkley: Oh have you? Well we went directly to Ikan Field from Hamilton Field California. That's right in the center of California just across the Golden Gate Bridge. From across the bay and we left there and went to Honolulu and I stayed there seven months.

Interviewer: Did they give you any kind of additional training or anything? When you went to San Francisco and Honolulu did they give you any more kind of training?

Mr. Berkley: No when we got to Honolulu then we began to get some training but we trained in Panama we had recognition training and most of those of us see I had been more or less in aviation all my life an airplane wasn't a stranger to me. And when I got down there I worked on airplanes and was an aircraft mechanic and when I got to Honolulu that was the job I was doing there an aircraft mechanic that's when I began to fly. Was when I went to Honolulu I was flying on B17s. Out into the Pacific on bomb runs and sub chasing and all that sort of stud.

Interviewer: What was your position on the aircraft on the B17?

Mr. Berkley: Flight engineer crew chief and we had of course when I was on the ground I worked on the airplane and when I was in flight I monitored all the engines to see that everything was working right that we had enough fuel and if we had fuel in one tank and not another I had to transfer fuel from one tank to another and that was the way we operated.

Interviewer: What kind of things did you bomb?

Mr. Berkley: Well we bombed some cargo ships we bombed at submarines I don't know if we got any or not. We flew down to Johnson Island and flew out of Johnson Island we were more or less on patrol for Honolulu.

Interviewer: Make sure no more surprise attacks?

Mr. Berkley: Yeh right that was part of it. So we had it wasn't so much a vacation land then. We worked pretty hard during that time. Then I came back to the United States.

Interviewer: Is that when you got malaria?

Mr. Berkley: Yeh and when I went back I went back with the air transport command with is ATC and at that time and then I flew all over the pacific we delivered cargo ammunition we picked up wounded patients and brought them back. Then after I got off of the life raft and came back to the United States I went into the B29s and then I got on B29s and got on B29s and got pulled off the shipment at John Rogers Airport Naval air base we transported all the airplanes that was the intermediate point between the United States and down under the far east. We'd send airplanes to Guam to Saipan to Tinian to we sent B24 to all those places to all throughout the Pacific to the Solomon's then later on we sent them to the Philippians and in the Philippians we took cover and then we hauled a lot of the prisoners' out of the Philippians and back to the United States. And that was our job then my main job was if a B29 came through Honolulu the crew we did an inspection there at that station on the airplane and they would be there some 24 hours maybe 36 hours when they got there most of them we had a beach there called Key high Beach and those guys would go out on Key high Beach and swim in the Pacific and they didn't protect themselves and got sun burned and they were really in trouble cause the flight engineer if you were one of the ones that got sunburn I had to take his place on that airplane and go to Guam, Tinian or wherever it was going then I would get on another airplane and come back and they would replace him or they'd out him in a hospital and let him get well then they would send him back but it was always court marshal one way or another for having gotten sunburned. That was destruction of government property.

Interviewer: I've heard that before you couldn't get tattoos because it was destruction of government property. What was your typical day like just any one of your times you were overseas what would you do from the time you got up until the time you went to bed?

Mr. Berkley: Well it would depend on what time I went to bed most generally. I would get up and go to the engineering office which was the office that had all of the records of all of the airplanes in our operation our squadron and I reported to duty there and most of the time I was the crew chief on an airplane and that airplane was the one I was responsible for the maintenance on it and so forth. Then we'd do gunnery training sometimes I didn't like to ride in the top turn I had a co-pilot with me to be in that top turn so I rode in the co-pilot's seat most of the time. But when we were on the ground we pulled inspections on the airplane we kept the airplane clean we did what we had to make that airplane airworthy. And then we would fly it.

Interviewer: And you'd just get home anytime or the next day.

Mr. Berkley: Whenever.

Interviewer: What kind of recreation activities did you have?

Mr. Berkley: Most generally we would have well we had baseball games but I didn't play baseball until the last time I went overseas then I did. At first we had we would go deep sea fishing that was one of the activities. We had a lot of USO shows over there see those in the evenings and at night. Then we went swimming a lot at Key high Beach right off the base there between what is not the international airport and Hickam Field and those were generally the things we did. We didn't go downtown very much, seldom did you ever go to Honolulu because it was so full of personnel the Navy the Marines the Army all those people were in Honolulu and they'd come in there on those ships in Honolulu Harbor even when they land in Pearl Harbor they went into Honolulu and it was so crowded with GIs that those of us that were stationed there just generally stayed away from there. We could do what we wanted to do generally on the base. We could go to the movie and such things as that play ball but there wasn't much time for that.

Interviewer: Did you ever have fear of being attacked did you ever have air drills and stuff like that?

Mr. Berkley: Oh yeh we had we always had blackouts all of the time if there was an unusual aircraft in the area somewhere they think that's the same thing that happened again that happened at the first. We took our light bulbs and painted them black and put a cross in the end of the light bulb so we could get that much light out of it and we could see by that what we needed to see during a blackout. If it was a total blackout we turned everything off we didn't have any lights at all and there were a lot of them. But we weren't ever really we weren't ever really in danger of being attacked anymore like they were on the 7th of December.

Interviewer: Did you write letters?

Mr. Berkley: Oh yes we wrote letters I had two sisters at home that I wrote letters to and I wrote letters to my mother and to the family and that was the way we spent some of our time you had to watch what you write because one of the duties of a new second lieutenant was to censor the mail so if he saw something in there he didn't know what it was he cut it out. I don't know what we could have said in a letter that would need to be censored at that time security was at a maximum so they did all of those things.

Interviewer: Did you receive any care packages?

Mr. Berkley: No we didn't know anything about care packages then I'd get packages every now and then from my mother she would send me some cookies or something like that. Once in a while she would send me a five dollar bill that was great. Then I could go have a day or to that I wasn't used to having. Beer costs a nickel. We'd have one or two beers on my five dollars and it would last a week or two. I wouldn't have to spend my canteen chips and things then see. It wasn't a terrible life until you got down in the islands then it was it was terrible down in the Solomon's and Gouda Canal the Philippians all of those places were drudgery and terrible activities they were under constant enemy fire there in those

areas it rains almost every day. In Gouda Canal they had two airports there one was Anderson Field and the other was Carnie Field and they had fighter and bombers there and we would fly in cargo to them which was generally ammunition and sea rations generally. And then we'd send in part aircraft parts truck parts whatever the occasion may be we would take that in to them. And that was the gist of our part of the war we were in those areas under constant surveillance from the enemy they knew where we were and we generally knew where they were most of the time. So the fighters the Marines were in Gouda Canal and had a bunch of Marine ground troops there and of course the Marine and Navy fighters were in there, aircraft. And there were some bombers there then we when I went back over there the second time things had gotten a lot bigger a lot more fighters and bombers cargo aircraft American's were flying in and out of those places boats were going in ships loaded with troops and escorts destroyer escorts destroyer battle ships were all over the Pacific it seemed like. Then in and around Honolulu we had air sea rescue and we called it rescue then and they would go out and hunt for the people that went down at sea. On mission that I was on this was in 1944 I think it was 44 General Harmon was lost at sea and we went out to hunt for him and the longest flight I had ever made at that time was 18 hours and at that time that particular search mission that we went we were flying an OA10 that was a Canadian build amphibious type airplane and it would fly forever and we flew 18 straight hours just circling particular areas looking for General Harmon. I believe that was in 19 the last of 44 or first of 45 but it was a long flight.

Interviewer: Did you find him?

Mr. Berkley: No he never was found to my knowledge he never was found.

Interviewer: Was the only time you ever crashed was the time you ended up in the ocean was that the only time you ever had a crash or bad landing?

Mr. Berkley: No but that wasn't during WWII.

Interviewer: When you ended up in the ocean that wasn't during WWII?

Mr. Berkley: Yeh that was during WWII. I've been in some accidents after WWII and I was in some too where the landing gear folded or something like that on a touchdown. But it wasn't an extreme emergency it was an extreme emergency but it wasn't anything where anyone got hurt.

Interviewer: On that incident when you ended up in the ocean where were you coming from where were you going to.

Mr. Berkley: In Australia and we would end up back at John Rogers Hickam Field sent the airplane on to the United States to be repaired and it had been down there and had flown several missions in that area. And they had gone in to I can't remember the name of that place there in Australia I guess they went down there and were being transferred in we took another airplane down to replace the airplane that they had been flying down there and brought that back to the United States and then in 45 when all of the B29s and B24s were in Guam and Tinian and South Han where they would fly the daylight out of

those airplanes they'd get old and wobbly and you'd have to replace the airplane we'd take a new airplane in and pick up the old one and bring it back.

Interviewer: I bet it was scary flying some of those.

Mr. Berkley: No it wasn't it was okay because most of time they were flying out of hours and they made it up for inspection and repair to see if there was anything really wrong with it and we took a bunch of hitchhikers back that were being transferred out of that zone into the United States.

Interviewer: When you ended up in the water you said you had engine trouble?

Mr. Berkley: Yeh two engines went out and we just lost it.

Interviewer: You were in the water for a week?

Mr. Berkley: Six nights and seven days.

Interviewer: Were you scared were you afraid?

Mr. Berkley: Well naturally you get I was more hungry than I was afraid.

Interviewer: Did you worry about the Japanese finding you instead of the Americans?

Mr. Berkley: No but they told us that when they found us when they saw us that if we would have been smart we would have know the seagulls were there and we couldn't have been too far from land of course we couldn't see it. And they couldn't see us from land but we got close enough that they thought we were a submarine so they sent an LST armored LST out to check on us that's when they discovered after they got so close that it was an aircraft and not a submarine.

Interviewer: Send somebody out there to bomb you.

Mr. Berkley: Yeh those things happen but it's all together different now.

Interviewer: What was it like being on that raft for seven days I mean the sun?

Mr. Berkley: It was tough, it was tough you didn't have water all the time like I told you before three of the guys went off of the raft and we think that two of them drank ocean water and that killed them and the other one just died and he probably drank the water too. But the rest of us we caught water in what we could when it would rain and we rationed that and drank what little we could. Most of us were in pretty good shape back in those years. I think I was about 20 well I was see I was about 19 or 20 so I was in pretty good shape physically. That's something else we had to do a lot of times we always had PT, physical training just about every day.

Interviewer: Make you run a lot and do pushups?

Mr. Berkley: That was part of it. Side straddle hope I hate a side straddle hop to this day. Of course I can't do it now.

Interviewer: Were you ever injured overseas?

Mr. Berkley: No I got sick but I never was injured I got malaria but no injuries. Aw I bumped my elbow and cut my head and such things as that. No particular injuries.

Interviewer: Were you ever in any direct combat where you were fighting fire to fire with Japanese Zeros?

Mr. Berkley: Oh yes we were attacked on numerous occasions when we were on bomb runs. We generally had enough fighter escorts that we generally didn't have too much. We've been under attack many times that's the reason the co-pilot supposed to ride in the top turn so he could shoot at them he'd lug that 50 caliber in that top turn. That tickled me to death cause I didn't like to ride in the top at all. One guy that I didn't envy one little bit was the belly gunner if we had to belly in he was in trouble.

Interviewer: Wheels wouldn't come down.

Mr. Berkley: Yeh that was when he was in trouble.

Interviewer: Were you still in the war when they bombed Japan when they dropped the atomic bomb?

Mr. Berkley: Yeh I was in Honolulu then that was on my third tour the last tour that I made over there. We had all of the B29s went through our station and we inspected them and ran them up ran the engines so we could see there was nothing wrong with them was our main job and the crew that brought it there would come and get on it and go on their way and they'd be there 24 or 36 hours so while they were taking their crew list we'd take care of the airplane service it fuel and all and so forth on it. And we found out about that about three days after it happened I don't know if we got it on the radio or somehow or another we found out they had dropped an atomic bomb then they dropped another one and two or three or four days after they had done it we found out it had been dropped so we were all jubilant when we would out they had already decided that Japan had give in. So we had what they called a points system if you had so much time overseas so much time in the service you got so many points for each one of those things if you had ribbon you got so many points for that ribbon if you were married you got so many points for being married if you had a child you get so many points for your child and I believe this was in about May I can't remember exactly when it was but you had to have 65 points before you could come back to the United States gosh you're getting my brain to remembering here. We had I had several appoint I had about 60 points I think but I couldn't come back because I was declared essential I could fly any one of the airplanes that require the flight engineer so they kept me there and I couldn't come home even when no the first points were 85 then they dropped it back to 65 when they dropped it back to 65 I had 60 I think but I had to wait because they declared me essential. And I didn't leave there until November and in November that was when Roosevelt had two Thanksgivings and all of those troops going back and forth across the Pacific in an airplane when I got ready to come home they put me on a boat and sent me back home so I had Thanksgiving on board the boat then when I got to San Pedro Harbor in Los Angeles we went to Riverside California and had another Thanksgiving one of the was Roosevelt's Thanksgiving and the other one was Thanksgiving. So we got some we were fed by German in March Field we were fed by German prisoners' and boy did we

eat high on the hog I'm telling you. It was something to remember then we got on a train and had Italian and German prisoners' of the train cooking and feeding and we ate good then and we got to Camp Chappie, Arkansas and that's where I was discharged on the first day of December 1945. And I think I got there on the 28th or 29th of November and they were really feeding they fed you some good food and the prisoners were taken care of. And they discharged me and I came home but that was some eaten that was good eaten I'm telling you.

Interviewer: It was probably really good after not having so much overseas. Did you have any inclination when they dropped the atomic bomb that they had been planning anything like that at all?

Mr. Berkley: Well we knew something was up cause some of the airplanes came through that were under extreme security. I was sent out to run airplane up after they had pulled inspection. About every mechanic there were two mechanics on each engine and three mechanics on each airplane and then after they did the inspection there was an MP with each one of those people and when I got ready to get in the airplane to run it up there was an MP that went with me climbed up in the airplane and set there while I ran it up and when I came down out of the airplane he was with me until I left the area he stayed with me. We knew there was something up we didn't know what it was. I happened to be cleared for top secret clearance at that time and it was several of the airplanes the same thing happened to and after they dropped the bomb then all of us put our head together and figured well that's what that was. We didn't have any idea what that was to begin with but after it was over hind thoughts told us that was probably what that was all about. We didn't know. Of course they kept us in the dark a lot of times on everything.

Interviewer: What did you think about Harry Truman?

Mr. Berkley: I think he was a truly honest down to earth good human being and I think that he was pretty smart in a lot of ways. And as far as I'm concerned today they don't have any generals in the Iraq and in that area they are working for congress now congress calls the shots. And you saw that thing on TV yesterday about Rumsfeld being drilled by the Senate Armed Forces Committee there's some people on that Armed Forces Committee that didn't have no business being there, Kennedy and Bird and Clinton have no business what so ever being on that Senate Armed Forces Committee.

Interviewer: Their all anti-war, anti-military.

Mr. Berkley: And they drilled Rumsfeld and as far as I'm concerned if I had the wherefore and so forth to do it I'd bring charges of treason against those three people today. I think that's a deplorable situation for them to act in the manner that they did. We had general back in those days we had Eisenhower and we had Patton and we had Marshall and McArthur and then you asked me about Truman and McArthur served under Truman and McArthur told Truman what he thought should be done and Mr. Truman didn't appreciate that an McArthur was insubordinate with his commanding officer and his commander fired him and he well should have. Cause if I'd have sassed my commander I would have been dealt with severely.

Interviewer: Court marshaled.

Mr. Berkley: Right absolutely court marshaled. So I have a lot of regard respect for Truman.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your war experience?

Mr. Berkley: Well I think we've covered it pretty good.

Interviewer: What did you do when you got back from overseas is 1945?

Mr. Berkley: I came back and went to school at Vanderbilt and I worked for my dad. And had a general overhaul and body repair shop out there on Dickerson Pike and I worked there for him as a mechanic to begin with then as a shop foreman the service manager got another job downtown somewhere and that left dad without a service manager and he made me the service manager. And I worked there for him until dad and I got like Truman and McArthur and dad was Truman and I was McArthur and he told me which way to go and I reenlisted I wanted to anyhow. Because I liked the service and I stayed in until the 29th of July 1966. And after the war not counting the time I was in Korea and Vietnam and some of the other places we went Cuba, Panama, Fort Cie in Lebanon those were instances that weren't very good but other than that it was a great life we didn't make much money but we had a great life.

Interviewer: Where were you stationed in Korea?

Mr. Berkley: I was stationed at Ischia, Japan but we worked all over Korea. I was in Wonsan, Kempo, Tadu, and Pusan and all over the places over there we called them numbers then not names. Kempo was J14 and Wonsan was K23 and well all of the cities and bases had a K number that's how we identified them.

Interviewer: What kind of work did you do over in Korea?

Mr. Berkley: We were on C119s and we left Sudan air force base and my airplane was lead ship leaving here on the 27th of August 1950 and at 8 o'clock in the morning we was in the air and we went to Japan by way of Castle Air Force Base, Honalu, Guam I think we stopped in Guam and then to Japan then we went on down to the Asheeta. The first drop we made we resupplied Pensaun and then the next things we did was drop the 187th regimen combat team. We were the only people that dropped the 187th the C119s were and they were made up partially from Fort Campbell. And we dropped them on the Subton and the Sunchon and Munchinee those were the drops we dropped the 187th combat team in Korea. But our main base was Ischia that's where we did all of our maintenance and service and loaded and unload the airplanes there. Well we unloaded the airplanes in Korea but we picked up passengers' out of Korea and brought them back a lot of times we brought back body bags to a what was the name of that place I forgotten now the name of the place we dropped the body bags but Tokyoka was one place sometimes and sometimes we dropped them at Ischia. And they were taken to Cody, Japan I think that's where the mortuary was for Japan or something like that I don't know. But that's what we did in Korea. And in we were the 314th true carrier group stationed at Zoo Air force Base that was sent to Korea on 60 days TDY. The first ones that came back I was the first one that went over there and one of the last ones that came back. I stayed two years and three months I think in Korea and Japan on a 60 day TDY tour. So today it seem kind of unusual that our troops go overseas for a year and if they get extended they cry bloody

murder and most of that is done by the wives and our wives didn't do that they didn't like it and some of us had children we didn't see and some of us had children that grew up while we were over there. But that was a common thing was the true carrier out there. We'd go somewhere on 30 days TDY and be gone six months. When I first went to Vietnam in the later part of 1953 I went over there on 30 days TDY and stayed 90 days. Hauling troops French troops out of Denangle to Shataro, France so I don't have much patients for these cry babies we've got today. Nor do I have much patients for the generals that don't stand on their two feet and run the war for themselves instead of letting Congress tell them what to do. Now the Presidents a different thing but Congress doesn't have any business telling them how to run the war.

Interviewer: The President is the commander and chef.

Mr. Berkley: Right, the President is the commander and chef and he has the final say so not congress. But they've decided they'll run the war now.

Interviewer: You don't like the power congress was given about war with the right to declare it?

Mr. Berkley: And to spend the money.

Interviewer: Right

Mr. Berkley: But you see I'm not politically correct.

Interviewer: I don't think I am either.

Mr. Berkley: And I don't practically give a dam whether anybody likes it or not.

Interviewer: Were you married when you went over to Korea?

Mr. Berkley: Yeh, I was.

Interviewer: When did you meet your wife?

Mr. Berkley: In 1940 in Science class at Central High School.

Interviewer: She waited for you.

Mr. Berkley: Well I didn't see her for years then I ran into her again an old high school buddy and I. I had a blind date with her one night and it just went from there. And that was in 1947. So that was a long time after.

Interviewer: Were you going to Vanderbilt then?

Mr. Berkley: No I was getting ready to, no I had gotten out of Vanderbilt because I was going into the service.

Interviewer: And you went to Vanderbilt on the GI bill?

Mr. Berkley: Right, I wasn't a fulltime student I was taking courses there and I dint like on campus I lived at home and I worked and I studied when I could at work. I went to class.

Interviewer: How many kids did you have?

Mr. Berkley: Two, I have and I still got well I had three and I still got two. One of them lives in Denton, Texas and one lives in Earnest.

Interviewer: Did either one of them go into the military?

Mr. Berkley: Both of them. Both of them were in Vietnam.

Interviewer: Are they boys

Mr. Berkley: Both of them are boys the girl died. She was a Cambridge diet trying to lose twelve pounds and it killed her she had a cardiac arrest. I don't know if you've ever heard of the Cambridge diet or not but it was a I guess you might say kind of a fad at that time it was back in the 70s and she lived in Colorado Springs, Colorado. And her electrolytes went below zero and she had a cardiac arrest and that's what killed her.

Interviewer: How old was she?

Mr. Berkley: She was 40 year old. Yeh 40.

Interviewer: When you were over in Korea did you write home a lot?

Mr. Berkley: No, not as much as I did during WWII. We worked night and day in Korea sometimes we would make three missions a day into Korea from Japan and drop supplies. Sometimes we'd unload supplies we hauled everything from war rollers to pigeon feed. Everything imaginable we'd haul into Korea to the troops then we'd drop everything you can imagine. We dropped road scappers 105 heliodors we dropped everything imaginable to those troops over there ammuniton everything.

Interviewer: So in your opinion was Korea and Vietnam fought hard than WWII?

Mr. Berkley: It was for us. And you know they killed more people almost as many people in Korea in three years as they did in Vietnam in ten years. And there was more artillery shells fired in Korea than there was in all of WWII. And that was one of our most ferocious wars in every respect and cold it was so cold even here in the states it was cold. But there we had we would pick up an airplane load of soldiers who's feet were frozen or frostbit. One trip after another.

Interviewer: What made you after going to WWII and Korea made you stay and go to Vietnam too? Just liked the service?

Mr. Berkley: Oh I loved the service. I've kind of got a different aspect of the service now I don't think that they have the same attitude today that we had then and they have to be politically correct and we did what we were told to do and people had common sense. They weren't as educated as they are now but they did a better job I think then that they do now.

Interviewer: How long were you over in Vietnam just had that 90 day tour?

Mr. Berkley: I was over there on numerous occasions but I never was stationed there I was always there on TDY. I was over there about five or six times I don't know.

Interviewer: When you were in Korea and Vietnam did you ever have any close calls like being shot down?

Mr. Berkley: We lost our squadron we lost two airplanes and our own troops shot down those two airplanes. Artillery shot them down. They were down low dropping supplies and got in the way of the artillery shooters. And they were the only two ships that we had knocked out of the sky in Korea but we had some damaged and we had some with runaway props and we had all kind of problems. We got into K23 and we were moving a bridge out to drop the Chosand Reservoir and some of our airplanes got in trouble there and we had three on the ground and we had a brand new captain that had just come there from the United States that came over as a commander of an airplane and was the commander of the mission and he wanted to bring the airplanes out then he wanted to blow em up because they weren't in commission and the Chinese weren't too far away. And he and I had some conflict I got airplanes in commission and we flew them out. And we had a C47 along side of us and we had to blow it up. I didn't have anything to do with the 47. I did have with the C119 and we got them out and that was a problem we had. We had one of them and then we had another guy come down from Tokyo that wanted to shoot and he lost an engine off an airplane and went into Bofu, Japan and landing gear up and an engine gone and we had to send a crew up there to repair the airplane and fly it back to Tachikawa to be completely overhauled. Those are some of the instances we had. We had one airplane that got four bullet holes in the top of the airplane but they came through and hit the rollers and the extractors we had for rolling the equipment out on in parachutes in flight and they were called conveyers they were like skate wheels, and the bullets would hit that skate wheels and it would become shatten and there was 133 holes in one airplane from five bullets. And of course we had to fix that one and get it back flying again. We had another one that a run of ammunition hit the tip of the prop blade and shattered it and caused tremendous vibration and they had to come in and take that prop off and put another one on before they could fly it out of Korea such mundane things as that happened to us over there.

Interviewer: What did you think about your sons being over in Vietnam?

Mr. Berkley: I wasn't very enthusiastic about them being over there. One of them I was still in the service while he was over there and the other one I had just retired when he went over. And I was more worried about the second one than I was about the first one. Cause the first one that went over he stayed over there about 18 months then my youngest son stayed about 13 months. But the war had escalated when the second one got there. The first one was a medic in the Army and the second one was a 104 aircraft mechanic and he was right in the middle of a whole bunch of they were dropping mortars in on the base where he was and things like that. The other one was pulling guys off of the front as a medic. I don't know why one worried me more than the other one did but the younger one did because the war had escalated more from; the first one went over there about 64. And Mike went over

there in 68 so the war really escalated from one time to the other was one of the reasons for my concern for them the way that it was.

Interviewer: Why did you get out when you retired?

Mr. Berkley: They just said they were going to send me back to Vietnam. I was an E8 and I had been instrumental for starting a school for a school for the C130 world wide training course at Sewer and they needed E8s and E9s in Vietnam and they kept sending them out and I could see that they were getting pretty lose to me and I told my commander I said I think I'm going to retire, he said when do you want to retire and I said as soon as I can and he said well let's see what we can do about that. He said I'll tell you what you stay for five more months and we'll go retire together and I think this was in February or March of 66 I said okay because he was a grand guy and sure enough we got word the our commander General Hardin and A39th air division commander was going to leave and I went in one morning and Colonel said Sarge it's time to go and I said where are we going and he said you said you wanted to retire. And so we turned and both of us went to headquarters and put in our papers and we retired within about 48 hours after we turned our papers in. But that same day we retired there was about 45 or 50 that retired. Well I'm sorry that I retired I wish I would have stayed. For one thing monetarily because in July of 66 we hadn't had a pretty good pay raise in a long long time then in September after we retired the services got the biggest raise they had ever had.

Interviewer: What did you do when you got out, just retired?

Mr. Berkley: When I retired I went to work for Locke at Marietta and they didn't do what they said they were going to do so I quit and came back to Nashville and went to work selling yellow page advertisements in the telephone directory. I enjoyed that pretty well but I didn't like working on the little books and being away from home all the time. I thought when I retired I was going to be at home. So that didn't work out so I came back and I went to work for International Academy computer programming and operations school at 19th and Broadway. The guy I worked for was a tremendous guy then we bought Falls Business College and he and I went down there as co-directors of Falls Business College and I stayed there for awhile. Then we went into business in mail services we selected addressed and mailed mail advertisements and such as that. Then I got another job after we sold that out a friend of mine, my son was in he was back in Mississippi then I think but anyhow we sold that business and I got in a little trouble all of a sudden I had too much blood in my body and the doctor grounded me and told me I couldn't work anymore for awhile and this friend of mine owned a business over on Lebanon Pike. And one day he says Bill what are you doing and I said not a thing and he says don't you want to work and I said man I'd give anything in the world to go back to work he said what's wrong and I said well the doctor put me down for 90 days. He said how long ago was that and I said about 60 and he said how would you like to drive this truck for me to Almerly, Minnesota? I said great I'll do it when do you want me to leave. He said when can you leave and I said yesterday. So I started driving a truck for him and I really enjoyed it I didn't have any responsibility except to drive for Aladdin go to the hospital drop off a load made good money. And of course I wasn't making as much as I was as the director for Lucibee but I did pretty well. Then after that I went into another business burglar alarm business and we sold that out so by then I was ready to play golf. Since that time I've done quite a few things, not anything in

particular. I was a state commander for the veterans of former wars here in the state of Tennessee and I'd been working with veterans trying to help them anyway I can and VA and helping the VA when I can and volunteering for them. Just kind of a jack of all trades and a master of none. But now I've gotten to the point I don't want to do much of anything. I feel good. I got 20 more years to live to be 100 and I don't want to spend any of that 20 years waiting on a doctor or sitting in a barber shop. So I need to be doing something instead of sitting.

Interviewer: Well is there anything else you would like to add.

Interviewer: Well not particularly unless you've got something that I can answer for you.

Mr. Berkley: I think we did a good job.

Interviewer: Well I hope I satisfied your curiosity.

Mr. Berkley: I think it went very well and I appreciate very much you allowing me to interview you.

Interviewer: You're just more than welcome.

Mr. Berkley: I've never met anyone before that served in all three so.