

We will begin with if you will just say your name and age and general commission and that sort of stuff.

Mr. Blaeuer: Ok. I am Alfred G. Blaeuer. I'm usually called Bud and I'm 77 years old.

Where and when were you born?

Mr. Blaeuer: I was born in Philadelphia on November 6, 1930.

What was your father's occupation?

Mr. Blaeuer: He was a _____ clerk for Railroad Express.

Did you have any other family members who served in the military?

Mr. Blaeuer: My brother served in the Air Force, Army Air Corp during World War II.

When did you enlist?

Mr. Blaeuer: I was drafted in 1952; March of 1952.

Did you have a choice of branches that you went into?

Mr. Blaeuer: No, I was drafted into the Army.

What was your MOS?

Mr. Blaeuer: As an enlisted man, I don't remember. I don't even know if I remember as an officer but I was in the infantry.

Where did you do your basic training?

Mr. Blaeuer: Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky.

Any more advanced training?

Mr. Blaeuer: Yeah, after Camp Breckenridge I went to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Did you enjoy your training experience?

Mr. Blaeuer: Well, no. I was very unhappy because I was drafted just a little over three weeks after I was married.

What did you think about the military preparedness for the Korean War?

Mr. Blaeuer: Well, by that time they were pretty well caught up. Initially they weren't too well off.

Do you recall when and where you were when you heard North Korea had invaded the south?

Mr. Blaeuer: I sure don't.

Were you expecting a war with Korea at that...?

Mr. Blaeuer: No, I never even heard of the place.

At what point when did you arrive in Korea?

Mr. Blaeuer: I arrived in Korea I guess it was October 1953.

So you were; were you aware of the peace talks at Pan Minh John?

Mr. Blaeuer: Oh yeah.

Were you hopeful that the talks would end the war?

Mr. Blaeuer: Yeah I guess so. We were still on full alert like we were still fighting but there was no fighting going on.

Most American units held the line in defensive formations against potential attacks by the Chinese and North Koreans. Was your experience for the war fought in defensive positions?

Mr. Blaeuer: Yeah.

How did you deal with the boredom?

Mr. Blaeuer: Huh?

How did you deal with the boredom?

Mr. Blaeuer: Oh it wasn't too boring. I was a platoon leader, but I did move around a lot. When I first got there I was assigned to the 45th Infantry Division with an Oklahoma National Guard. By that time all the Oklahomans had gone home. They went home, the 45th Division. I was transferred to the 2nd Division and stayed with them for awhile and then they were sent home so I was transferred to the 7th Division which I guess is still there. All of those especially with the 45th Division and the 2nd Division we were up in defensive positions and doing little patrols into the, after they established the demilitarized zone, we were doing patrols in there.

Were you wounded at all?

Mr. Blaeuer: Not in Korea, no.

Did you have much contact with civilians in South Korea?

Mr. Blaeuer: Initially, no; later on yes. Quite a bit.

Did you have a favorable impression of them?

Mr. Blaeuer: No.

Did you have much contact with the ROK forces?

Mr. Blaeuer: Yeah, we had what we called, what did we call them? Anyway they were we called them kotusa (Korean Organization to the United States Army). K-O-T-U-S-A, we called the kotusa for short. So we had like in my platoon probably had six or eight of them. Occasionally we saw the full units of the Korean.

Were you impressed with there, with there....?

Mr. Blaeuer: To a degree. To a military effectiveness, to a degree; they learned a lot.

Did you spend any time in Japan on temporary furlough?

Mr. Blaeuer: Yeah I spent a week there on the way into country and then I had an R & R, rest and recuperation; short ten days in Japan.

Did you do anything for fun while you were there?

Mr. Blaeuer: Oh yeah, it was very nice. I liked the Japanese and the country.

When you look back on your time in Korea what image first comes to mind?

Mr. Blaeuer: First comes to mind, I guess, it's a horrible thing to say but the first thing that comes to mind is how effective they were as thieves. They were absolutely the best thief I have ever seen. I worked with them in Vietnam too.

What was your overall impression about the policy of the ____; the foreign policy? Were you happy to be there?

Mr. Blaeuer: No. As I say, I had just been married for three weeks. By the time I got home from Korea I had been married for just over three years and my wife and I had lived together for eight months. Almost all of that time was a little tough for that reason. As far as happy with what I was doing in country, yeah I guess I was because I elected to stay in the Army when I left there.

How long did you stay in the Army?

Mr. Blaeuer: 20 years.

Are you familiar with the 187th; the Rakkasans?

Mr. Blaeuer: Somewhat.

I guess they are the only 101st unit that served in Korea. The reason I asked is because we are in Clarksville.

Mr. Blaeuer: Yeah, well see when I was inducted and took my basic training at Camp Breckenridge that was with the 101st. Camp Breckenridge is up near the Indiana border. Walter would used to sign off of his programs by saying, "If your son is in Korea, right to him. If your son is in Camp Breckenridge pray for him." He had a nephew killed there in training.

Do you have any other outstanding experiences that you can recall; anything that just really stands out in your mind?

Mr. Blaeuer: Yeah, one funny thing that stands out in my mind is we were with the 2nd Division and I was the Executive Officer of the company and the new company commander came in and after viewing the area he asked me, "Do we have more men or more dogs?" All the GI's, they all adopted dogs because the Koreans ate them. They adopted puppies and pretty soon you had almost as many dogs as you had men in the unit. I had one myself. That is one of the funny things about it. All the American units had lots of dogs. The other thing that I remember is not so good. On our training exercise I had I think it was six of my people killed by our own artillery. That wasn't very pleasant at all, especially when they did the investigation. Of course they had to ask the question but I was young and inexperienced and I had the heavy mortar company. I mean the heavy weapons company which has the heavy mortars, recoil rifles, and machine gun platoon. Without my knowing it somebody, my people were attached out to the infantry companies and they moved one of my sections of my recoil rifles up forward onto a slope and I didn't know they were up there. Nobody told me and they should have. When the artillery came in my people got the worst of it. There they were like 10 guys in the middle of 180. Six of mine were killed and only about two of the others. Artillery came right down on them but in the investigation of course they asked me if my mortars were firing at that time. I blew my top. I told them no they weren't firing it was artillery and I know it. That was a bad thing.

Alright. Is there anything else you would like to say before we go?

Mr. Blaeuer: No, I guess not. The only other thing that I can think of is the fact that we still glared at each other across the zone. Occasionally we would almost run into one of their patrols. Both sides were insuring that nobody was permanently in the demilitarized zone.

You served throughout up until Vietnam?

Mr. Blaeuer: Yeah. I served up until 1972.

How do you think the Korean War compared to your experience with Vietnam? We are not going to go into Vietnam but how did it compare?

Mr. Blaeuer: The Vietnam experience, I was there twice; a year each time. The Vietnam experience was, I felt, much more rewarding I suppose than the Korean experience.

Okay, well that answers my questions.

(End of Interview)