

Paul Myatt

Interviewer: Well Mr. Myatt can you tell me your full name?

Mr. Myatt: It's Paul D Myatt

Interviewer: Okay and when were you born?

Mr. Myatt: 1930 December 26.

Interviewer: Okay were you born here in Dickson County?

Mr. Myatt: In Hickman Country.

Interviewer: Hickman County okay.

Mr. Myatt: Bon Aqua

Interviewer: Bon Aqua okay know that pretty well. Well do you remember the years before you went into the service what they were like?

Mr. Myatt: Well yeh you mean how far back on the years when I was a kid?

Interviewer: Yeh sure do you remember WWII pretty well?

Mr. Myatt: Oh yeh

Interviewer: What was it like growing up around this area during WWII?

Mr. Myatt: Well it wasn't nothing happened just all my brothers went in the Navy left. And we were kindly a military family because my dad was in WWI. And I had two brothers in WWII and I was a Korean veteran and I had two more brothers in the service after me. So five boys was all in the service.

Interviewer: Did you volunteer for service?

Mr. Myatt: No I was drafted.

Interviewer: Okay what was your induction point?

Mr. Myatt: Centerville

Interviewer: Centerville okay where did they take you after that?

Mr. Myatt: We went to Fort Knox, Kentucky where I took 16 weeks of basic.

Interviewer: Okay

Mr. Myatt: Took 8 weeks of infantry and 8 weeks of reconnaissance.

Interviewer: Was that like a scout platoon?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh recon

Interviewer: Did you get any specialized training after basic training and the reconnaissance?

Mr. Myatt: Well yeh I got in Japan. I went to Korea in 1950 part of 52 that's when I got in the 3<sup>rd</sup> division of recon company. And what we did went through you know back they had been on the line just before I got there they got pulled back. They got real problems and that's what we were doing.

Interviewer: Were these North Korean?

Mr. Myatt: North Korean yeh.

Interviewer: Okay did you ever encounter any of the Chinese?

Mr. Myatt: Not that night not when I was there then they did call us up to they broke through the line the English England had some of our troops and they broke through the line and they called us first out to hold them. There was dead Chinese the only ones I ever saw was the dead ones at that time.

Interviewer: Do you remember the trip over to Korea?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh

Interviewer: Did you stop in Japan first?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh we went to Japan.

Interviewer: Okay and you took a ship?

Mr. Myatt: Took a ship to Korea and what was the name of that town? Pouson it might not have been Pouson but it was one of them places.

Interviewer: What were your impressions when you first got there?

Mr. Wyatt: Man it was kind of scary and we went up to some depot or wherever they pass you over to your units and I went with the 3<sup>rd</sup> division. And I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> division about three and a half months and they shipped me back to Korea from Japan. I went to Okawa Japan on the first trip.

Interviewer: Why did they ship you back?

Mr. Myatt: Oh they shipped me back to the recon company and all they done was train over there so I stayed there about three months then I went back to Korea. And I was supposed to have went to the 25<sup>th</sup> recon company but they had a guy got killed in a little town up there and when I come along well they put me there. And I wasn't there three and a half days till they had that battle. So I was on the outpost with another guy there was five of us out there three of them left and two of us stayed.

Interviewer: Where did those three go?

Mr. Myatt: They told us to get out of there but we I thought we couldn't and we knew if we left they would over run us so we just stayed that's what we done. Me and another soldier I got that place I can show you here where we was at somewhat.

Interviewer: Okay it says in this book that you were a machine gunner too.

Mr. Myatt: Well I was with I had a BAR and the other guy had a machine gun.

Interviewer: Did you like that weapon?

Mr. Myatt: No just happened to have it out there I went out there with a carbon and it was laying there so I got it it wasn't shooting fast enough. I've got all of this stuff here if I can find it I don't know where I put it. But anyhow that's I don't know what I don with all of that.

Interviewer: That's okay.

Wife: Well just tell him what happened.

Interviewer: So these were North Koreans?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh they were North Koreans not Chinese I didn't see any Chinese.

Interviewer: Now this area that you are describing where is it at?

Mr. Myatt: On Sand Bag Castle.

Interviewer: Okay

Mr. Myatt: And it started the battle started around 12 o'clock and it lasted till 6:30 right around 6:30.

Interviewer: Did you have any idea the attack was coming?

Mr. Myatt: Nobody didn't have actually they wasn't have supposed to send me out there but they did they don't usually send somebody new just got in the company out. But any how here right here is you want to see it. This is Sand Bag Castle right here this is the bunker we was in well that happened the next day this character crawled out in front of the flag up on the they got a silver star out of it. That's it right there that's where I was at.

Interviewer: Well that's a pretty small area.

Mr. Myatt: Well look here see that laying on top there what do you see right there? Right where my fingers at what does that look like?

Interviewer: Well it looks like a weapon of some sort.

Mr. Myatt: It is it is a North Korean weapon.

Interviewer: I was going to say it looked like a Chinese weapon.

Mr. Myatt: No this was on top the bunkers and we was down in it and they was trying to dig to it and a mortar hit it.

Interviewer: Is that right.

Here's what we are looking for this is our lines right here and from here behind us there is nothing but a big heel going down a valley going across through there it was about a half mile if they closed it off all of the hill because they stayed down all of the lines I'll show you that in a minute. But right here is what they called the castle Sand Bag Castle. This where I was at right here. And the Koreans was here 30 yards to their line 45 back to our line.

Interviewer: Gee that's not very far.

Mr. Myatt: No they was coming this way and we had a guy with a machine gun here and we was down here. And but they was coming up this a way and we held them off al night then they dropped about 900 rounds on us that's what they told us that's what they estimate.

Interviewer: Artillery?

Mr. Myatt: Mortar rounds.

Interviewer: How did the attack start?

Mr. Myatt: It just started out dropping mortars.

Interviewer: Ya'll knew right away something was coming.

Mr. Myatt: Yeh it was bad too. The lieutenant my company commander got killed him and first sergeant was standing out side a bunker on lower behind the hill and mortar round killed them. I think it was about how many was killed I think about

Interviewer: How many men were initially on the hill?

Mr. Myatt: My squad I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion the 2<sup>nd</sup> I forget.

Interviewer: I mean was it a company or battalion on the hill?

Mr. Myatt: The 27<sup>th</sup> regiment they were on the hill.

Interviewer: The entire regiment was up there. So did they attack simultaneously along the line?

Mr. Myatt: No just that one spot.

Interviewer: Just that one spot.

Mr. Myatt: Yeh what did I do with that picture there I had the one running down the hill? What did I do with it that will show you more. I don't know what I done with it.

Wife: Oh just tell him about the attack that night.

Mr. Myatt: Well I'm trying to explain to him what was going on. Well anyhow that was the fight that morning I got caught down there got blowed out of that bunker when it blowed this. I was right here at the door covering this part the other guy got blowed back in the bunker and it blowed me out.

Interviewer: Mortar round did?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh mortar hit that that's when they done this and killed whoever was up there. But it blowed me out the door.

Interviewer: Now how many people were in this small area with you?

Mr. Myatt: There were two of us.

Interviewer: Do you remember the man who was with you?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh his name was Martinez and he was a now here's what no that ain't what I was looking for.

Interviewer: That's a pretty good map though I like that.

Mr. Myatt: Yeh I'll give you a copy of it can we make a copy on that thing? I'll make copies of all of these if you want.

Interviewer: Okay I'd appreciate that. Did you know Martinez did he make it out?

Mr. Myatt: No he got killed.

Interviewer: Right there?

Mr. Myatt: Right there yeh.

Interviewer: Now was that when the mortar round came in?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh

Interviewer: He won the metal of honor didn't he?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh met al of honor.

Interviewer: So you knew him pretty well?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh well I hadn't known him but three days.

Interviewer: Sure

Mr. Myatt: You know but they put him in for it.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Mr. Myatt: See the things about it is here's what happened when I came in to the division on guy that lived in West Tennessee just got shot that's when they transferred me over there. And I wasn't there only but three days and my they didn't even of course my lieutenant Cannelfect he had wrote down my name in his book but they didn't have my records up there in the company and they did know who was there.

Interviewer: Was that at the Sand Bag Castle?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh and nobody but the lieutenant but he had got wounded and sent back.

Interviewer: Nobody had his notebook.

Mr. Myatt: No there I was they didn't know who that man was out there with Bonito.

Interviewer: What happened to you after you know you were wounded there?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh

Interviewer: What happened that was when the mortar round came in?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh the North Koreans drug me off and well the next day after the battle was over they went back out there and all they found was marks I was gone. They knew that somebody was there but they didn't know who it was.

Interviewer: Where did they take you?

Mr. Myatt: Back to the prisoner of war camp on the Yaloo River.

Interviewer: Okay that was pretty close to China.

Mr. Myatt: Yeh right across the river from there.

Interviewer: What was the general treatment like as a prisoner of war?

Mr. Myatt: It wasn't very good.

Interviewer: Sure did you ever receive mail?

Mr. Myatt: No

Interviewer: Did you ever Red Cross packages or anything?

Mr. Myatt: I didn't get nothing and the Red Cross come up there when the war was over give you cigarettes that's about what we got.

Interviewer: Sure

Mr. Myatt: And they were pretty bad them Koreans were. The Chinese wasn't too good but they weren't quit as bad as those Koreans.

Interviewer: Who ran those POW camps?

Mr. Myatt: The Chinese.

Interviewer: The Chinese.

Mr. Myatt: Yeh I stayed with the Koreans three months before they ever got me back there. They was the ones mean people they mean.

Interviewer: Did what was did they punish the prisoners?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh they did. They had some bad ways of doing it. If you didn't do what they wanted you t do they had a hole about up to your waist just about that big a round where you stand in that's what they put you down in and you stay about three days or they had a bunker in the back in a hill and it was dark in there and they'd put you in there and you couldn't see nothing.

Interviewer: Was it pretty cold in there too?

Mr. Myatt: Well it was cold yeh.

Interviewer: Can you describe the meals that they gave you?

Mr. Myatt: I tell you what they gave me is turnips boiled turnips dirt salad and all and sometimes you'd get a piece of steamed rice a bar of rice about that they made bread out of it they ground it up like flower. An made these balls of rice flour balls I called it rice ball and that stuff was yellow looking and it was hard stuff and they steamed they didn't bake if they had baked them they might have been pretty good.

Interviewer: When you were captured were you conscious?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh I was conscious I knew exactly what was going on but I couldn't do nothing. Somehow I said a word somebody got the idea I was knocked out but I wasn't knocked out I was just stunned.

Interviewer: Well I image a mortar round hitting that close would have that affect.

Mr. Myatt: My ear I couldn't hear nothing blood running all over my face I was in pretty bad shape.

Interviewer: Did they when they first captured you did they ask you lots of questions which unit you were with?

Mr. Myatt: Oh they tried to but I was still sort of stunned I couldn't answer what they said. About four days after I got captures they called me and they asked me questions and I gave them my rank name and serial number and that guy hit me in the back of the head with a riffle and I still got that knot and a scare there where they hit.

Interviewer: Was the guy that was interrogating you did he speak good English?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh yes he could speak good English.

Interviewer: You ever wonder how he learned English?

Mr. Myatt: I don't know well doing that was a Korean guy there were people over there and when the Chinese was fighting Japan we had a lot of people learn good English. And the Koreans too they spoke some of them perfect.

Interviewer: What kind of questions was he asking?

Mr. Myatt: Oh everything about the military and I didn't know you know.

Interviewer: Fairly new guy.

Mr. Myatt: Yeh I didn't know what was going on over there I hadn't been there long.

Interviewer: You said you went up to the Yaloo River right?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh that's where we camped.

Interviewer: How was the camp laid out?

Mr. Myatt: Well what it was was a village where the Koreans lived. And we took the back end of it and they took the end next to the river. They just took half of the village 50 people there they put barbed wire around it and that's it. Straw houses straw on the top mud floors with a weaved carpet weaved mat over it they weaved out of something I don't know what it was.

Interviewer: Did escape ever run through your mind?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh I tried but where would I go you know the rivers here and China right behind across the river you had 200 miles to go down. Me and a Canadian tried it and they caught us before we got out trying to crawl through the fence.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh that was a whole couple of day's punishment.

Interviewer: How long were you there overall?

Mr. Myatt: Eleven months 21 days. But I can say one thing we stopped them dudes that night. And then me and Benny stopped them.

Interviewer: Is that known as the the entire campaign isn't that known as the Battle of Bloody Ridge.

Mr. Myatt: No that was Sand Bag Castle.

Interviewer: I seen Bloody Ridge was really close to Heart Break Ridge.



Mr. Myatt: Here Heart Break Ridge and Bloody Ridge is over here. And this Sand Bag Castle is right here. This a punch bowl area and then we had people all up there.

Interviewer: Now which way did the North Koreans come through on this map?

Mr. Myatt: They come in this way back here. And we was at the highest point on the map see this is the lowest point no that's area five there if you look if they took that ridge away from us there they could look down on Heart Break Ridge and all down through here. And they could have had open lines see the next mountain here and we were right on the edge I'll show you. I got a picture there of the back of the place somewhere. I don't thin kit's in the book I don't have it all together. Here's some of the guys right there.

Interviewer: Do you remember being liberated from the POW camp?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh they I got to get all of this stuff straight here I got to get it all together.

Interviewer: It takes time to make a good scrapbook.

Mr. Myatt: That's the 27<sup>th</sup> infantry I got honored for something but I don't remember what that was. You might want to read that. I'm just looking to find it. Here is an extra one if you want it.

Interviewer: How did you get back to the Americans?

Mr. Myatt: Well when the war was over they brought us down and returned us to the Americans. And that's the only war I got back. This is a picture of my dad in WWI I am going to add it to the book where my kids will have. This is a bunch of people sign this book. When they gave me this book my friends there is a general signed this book.

Interviewer: Are these guys from the unit?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh most of them and there was a general from Fort Bliss, Texas we was in the we was in El Paso Texas where they had the reunion. We went out there to honor Benito Martinez.

Interviewer: Do you remember what happened right after you got back to the Americans did they give you a good meal?

Mr. Myatt: Oh yeh they carried us in there and they put us in the shower and they squirted us with DPT you know Lysol. I'll tell you what there were lice in there as long as your finger them things would run all over your body you couldn't you were so dirty you stunk.

Interviewer: Never got a shower while you were in POW camp.

Mr. Wyatt: No you were lucky if you could find enough water. Now this right here is the back bottom side we was at the top and this is the top and that tank you see it bottom side up it was up there when they brought that up there and they set it up for us fire support and that bank give a way and that thing rolled off that mountain and this guy was inside of it. But it didn't kill him it skinned him all over but it didn't kill him.

Interviewer: Now this is right below where you were.

Mr. Myatt: Yeh I was up on top of the hill and this is the bottom of the mountain. That's where it landed at. That happened about a couple of days before I got there.

Interviewer: Did anybody know who you were as soon as you got back and where you had been?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh

Interviewer: I assume you were listed missing in action a long time.

Mr. Myatt: Yeh

Interviewer: Did you have any family back here?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh my mother and dad and all my bothers.

Interviewer: How long was it before you got to see them?

Mr. Myatt: Well I come back on ship about 16 days about 20 days.

Interviewer: Do you remember the trip back on the ship?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh

Interviewer: It took 16 days how were the living conditions on the ship?

Mr. Myatt: Oh they were great they were like being on a hotel.

Interviewer: So you had plenty of room?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh oh yeh had plenty of room. Everything was fine. That is Benita Martinez that's the guy that was with me. They found him he had been stabbed in the back. With a bayonet shot and stabbed too.

Interviewer: Do you when did you receive your purple heart?

Mr. Myatt: I didn't get it for year 97, 98.

Interviewer: What kind of ceremony was that?

Mr. Myatt: They gave me I had general state general in War Memorial Building in Dickson. And I suppose there was how many people it was packed wouldn't it. My first lieutenant and my sergeant was there that was in Korea. And then my he was a first sergeant master sergeant over the company was there. And my platoon sergeant and my lieutenant that was over my platoon he was there. And how they found out my name they got to looking in his prayer book and he knew who it was then. That's how they found out. And they finally found me in 98.

Interviewer: Found you in Dickson Tennessee of all places. If you're in Boston or Washington DC or any other big city I imagine Dickson Tennessee is a pretty hard place to find anybody.

Wife: One of the guys that was in the unit he remembered Paul telling him that he was from Tennessee and he had told them to look in Tennessee that he remembered that's where he was from. Here is all these guys over there. That was my sergeant and all of these guys were in my company. This guy here is the radio man. That guy there come and made a million bucks and made it rich he was a rich man.

Interviewer: Were you nominated for the metal of honor at the same time?

Mr. Myatt: No they didn't know I lived existed at that time.

Wife: They didn't know what happened to him they weren't for sure they went out looking for him the next day but they didn't know what happened to him.

Interviewer: No I mean were you nominated at the same time you received the Purple Heart in 98?

Wife: No it was after that.

Mr. Myatt: All of these guys that was in my platoon got together and they done it. They wrote I didn't have nothing to do with it they done it and it all passes except it's in Washington and the general up there has got it and if he ever signed it whether they do I don't care. I don't expect I'll get it but you know it's an honor to be put in for it.

Interviewer: Absolutely how long has that been going on for?

Mr. Myatt: It went on about a year before 911 and its still Fred Thompson destroyed it all of the paper and they had to put it back through again.

Wife: Some water or something got to it.

Mr. Myatt: That's what he claimed. But I talked to called up there and his man up there that's over it in his office said it's all on the computer and he it wasn't long before he got out and retired. I think they all had to go back and do the same thing again.

Interviewer: What happened after you got back and got in the civilian life what did you do for a career?

Mr. Myatt: Well I went to work and done a lot of things I would up with as an assistant manager for a steel company. And I had a good job and that's where I worked met her and got married and had three kids. And life has been pretty good.

Interviewer: How long have you been living in Dickson County now?

Mr. Myatt: We lived in Nashville for how long.

Wife: We moved down here nine years ago.

Mr. Myatt: We moved back I wanted to come back down here. I was going to buy I house I wanted to buy a house down there around Hickman Country somewhere but my daughter married a guy from here. SO we moved down here.

Interviewer: When you look back on those times what do you remember most? What sticks out in your mind above anything else?

Mr. Myatt: Well above anything else I had a bad bad time for a lot of years. A lot of years. It was a long time before I could talk about all of this stuff? I didn't say nothing about it I had night mares for years and years. And one time I thought I was crazy and I went to the VA and got in there with all of the rest of them guys doing the same thing I was and they had group meetings. The Korean War veterans were in the same shape I was and I found out I wasn't crazy either.

Interviewer: No it's quit an experience it doesn't add up to crazy.

Mr. Myatt: No but some of the things I'd get up in the middle of the night and run down the hall and run into a door or something.

Interviewer: Have those stopped in recent years?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh well they I still have a few of them but not like I did. I couldn't talk about it I got where I could now. I went to them things group meetings I went to them a long time. And I realized I wasn't crazy.

Interviewer: With the mortar round hitting so close to you how did you survive that?

Mr. Myatt: Well I don't know that the only thing I can say is I got blowed out of that door and the compression of it didn't push me back against something it blowed me out of the door. And I figured well that was the only way I made it.

Interviewer: Did you have slap jackets and stuff like that?

Mr. Myatt: I had slap jackets. And I had scares over cut all over my ears were bleeding nose was bleeding.

Interviewer: Well sometimes you wonder if you have to chalk it up to the divine providence of God.

Mr. Myatt: Yeh I think that was it right there.

Interviewer: Well Mr. Myatt is there anything I've left out that you want to tell me?

Mr. Myatt: No I don't know of anything. You

Wife: I think you have kind of walked around why they ended up putting you in for the metal of honor. Did he really

Interviewer: He said that members of his platoon.

Wife: Yeh but did he tell you the reason they put him in for it?

Interviewer: No

Wife: Well they were out in that bunker and when all the fighting started it was really bad and they ordered them to come back in and they realized that if they did they would overtake the section and they would be a lot of people killed. So he and the other guy stayed out there and held them off enough where it prevented them from taking over. That was a strategic part that they were on. And it prevented them from taking over and prevented a lot of the people in his unit from getting killed.

Mr. Myatt: There was a lot of people killed a lot of them.

Wife: I don't know if he actually said that.

Interviewer: He hit most of it. The so they would have got to the.

Wife: They guys credit them for saving their lives the great guys in the unit.

Mr. Myatt: They put all of that in writing somebody wrote a letter and I didn't have nothing to do with it.

Interviewer: Well do you keep in contact with guys from the unit still?

Mr. Myatt: Yeh

Interviewer: When was your last reunion?

Mr. Myatt: Well I didn't get to go to the last one because I was sick. They have on every year. That one was before I didn't go.

Interviewer: Will you going to try and make the next one?

Mr. Myatt: Well it depends on how far it is and what kind of shape I'm in. I will have to use that oxygen if I get outside where there's a lot of pollen and stuff I get where I can't breath.

Interviewer: Well Mr. Myatt I think you so much for taking the time to talk to me.

Mr. Myatt: If you want some copies of this stuff I'll give them to you. I don't know if anybody would want to see them or not.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for what you have done. I don't think words can describe it.

Mr. Myatt: I appreciate you doing it.