

Interviewer: What's your full name and where and when were you born?

Marshall: John Earl Marshall and I was born in Martin Tennessee Weakley County twelfth month 11th day 27.

Interviewer: What branch of the service did you serve in?

Marshall: Army.

Interviewer: And what was your primary unit that you were a part of?

Marshall: I was in the headquarters unit.

Interviewer: Okay what were your parent's names and their occupations?

Marshall: Well my father deceased when I was six weeks old. And of course my mother remarried and my stepfather raised me. My mother's name is May Webb my stepfather was Brooke Webb. And I was raised on a farm he was a pretty prominent farmer up in Weakly County.

Interviewer: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Marshall: I've got some half brothers and sisters, I was an only child.

Interviewer: How long did you how long were you in school?

Marshall: Went until a junior in high school. I knew I was going to have to go in the service because back then they was drafting just as fast as they got 18. But my stepfather wanted me to he kept me out because I was farming. He got me deferred but I didn't I preferred to go in the service because all of my buddies had done gone.

Interviewer: Do you have any memories about the great depression?

Marshall: Yes a little but really didn't affect me that much.

Interviewer: So it really didn't have any great effects on your family or anything?

Marshall: No everybody was just poor didn't have no money.

Interviewer: Before Pearl Harbor do you remember feeling threatened by the Nazis or the Japanese any?

Marshall: Not really.

Interviewer: Did your stepdad get the sorry did your stepdad get the newspaper?

Marshall: Oh yeah

Interviewer: Did the newspapers have anything in them about what they were doing?

Marshall: Of courses back then I wasn't too interested in the news. My stepfather was of course but of course all we had was a battery radio we didn't have electricity. We didn't have electricity until the day I come out of the army they turned it on.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

Marshall: No really I don't because we heard it I guess on the radio. I remember being in school right after that my teacher gave me a little letter and a key ring that said Remember Pearl Harbor. I wished I would have kept it of course I was a kid and I lost it.

Interviewer: Do you remember hearing FDR's speech the Day of Infamy, Infamy speech? Do you remember?

Marshall: I don't really remember like I saw all we had was a battery operated radio. News traveled pretty slow then.

Interviewer: As a young teenager what did you think about FRD's leadership?

Marshall: I thought he was perfect. Of course all of my people and my stepfather they were stanchd democrats. He'd been through that depression under a republican.

Interviewer: When did it sort of dawn on you that being drafted into the army was a reality or being drafted period was a reality for you?

Marshall: Well it after I guess it got age 16 it was reality I would be drafted.

Interviewer: Did you have a preference of where you wanted to go if they drafted you?

Marshall: No

Interviewer: So you didn't really care what you were gonna be?

Marshall: Well back then I mean when they was drafting you you didn't ask where to go they just sent you.

Interviewer: Was there a particular place you wanted to go if you

Marshall: No

Interviewer: When were you drafted when did you receive notice of being drafted?

Marshall: Well I my birthday was in December and in February I got my notice I was drafted being drafted.

Interviewer: What induction center did they send you to?

Marshall: Fort Oberthrope Georgia.

Interviewer: When you were there did they test you with IQ tests or do you remember anything like that?

Marshall: I don't remember I was tested for IQ but I don't remember whether that was part of that or not.

Interviewer: Okay where did they send you for basic?

Marshall: Camp Robertson Arkansas it's in Little Rock.

Interviewer: Did they select you for any specialized training?

Marshall: No

Interviewer: What did you think of your fellow recruits that were there?

Marshall: They was alright got along with everybody.

Interviewer: Was that your first time

Marshall: First time away from home.

Interviewer: What did you think about being that far

Tape skipped ahead seven seconds

Interviewer: Did you participate in any maneuvers stateside?

Marshall: Nothing except in basic training you know it wasn't really maneuvers just

Interviewer: The war was already over in Japan and Europe for you so how well did you think your training prepared you for the job that you were going to have to do for occupation?

Marshall: Well I think it done a good job.

Interviewer: Would you have felt prepared to fight if you had needed to?

Marshall: Oh yeah we actually took they had changed basic training rules then. They still trained you like you just like you was going into combat.

Interviewer: What were the living conditions like on camp?

Marshall: They was good for us. We lived in four man to a hut little huts.

Interviewer: Where did they place you after your training? What type of unit did you go into?

Marshall: I went to well I was still in the Army I went directly overseas after I got my basic training.

Interviewer: Okay where did you leave from to go overseas?

Marshall: San Francisco.

Interviewer: Okay do you remember how long it took to get from San Francisco to Japan?

Marshall: Seventeen days and nights.

Interviewer: How was the food on the ship?

Marshall: It was eatable.

Interviewer: Eatable did you get sea sick?

Marshall: No

Interviewer: So what was it like living on the boat for those seventeen days and nights?

Marshall: Well you finally got used to it close quarters because I don't know how many was on it I did at that time.

Interviewer: Where did you land when you made it to Japan?

Marshall: Yokohama that's about 30 miles from Tokyo.

Interviewer: Did they house you in temporary or permanent barracks when you arrived?

Marshall: Temporary best I remember we slept in tents for a while.

Interviewer: Did you have any civilian contact right after that?

Marshall: No

Interviewer: So they kept you on a temporary base. What equipment and arms did you train with in Arkansas?

Marshall: All kinds of riffles M1 mostly and carbine small arms.

Interviewer: Go ahead

Marshall: And hand grenades, mortars mostly light guns and rifles.

Interviewer: After the temporary housing where did they take you?

Marshall: We went to Sinbad Japan from there because that's when I joined the paratrooper. Went up there and took eight weeks of jump school.

Interviewer: What caused you to join the paratroopers at that point and time?

Marshall: Well I was making \$50 a month and they offered me 50 more to jump so I thought that was a pretty good deal to jump once a month.

Interviewer: You said you had a problem your third jump as a paratrooper.

Marshall: Yeah

Interviewer: Tell me about that.

Marshall: Well they jumped us one day when really they wasn't supposed to the wind was too high. And before I hit the ground it caught my chute and I landed on my back. And I laid up for about two weeks I decided that was all of the paratroopers I wanted.

Interviewer: So after you got out of the hospital what did you do then?

Marshall: After I was told I could get out of the paratroopers they transferred me to Tokyo.

Interviewer: What division of the air troopers were you in?

Marshall: Eleventh Airborne.

Interviewer: Okay when they sent you to Tokyo what was your job then?

Marshall: Well I went they put me in the first calvary division and they were shipping people home so fast because the war had just gotten over the boys had been over there two or three years. And they short handed me put me in the supply room. Well they seen I caught on quick what to do in there and they put me promoted me to a supply clerk which I liked. But I didn't stay there but about a month or six weeks and this job came up for the general driver. Well they the Captain there at the company headquarters he picked me to be his driver. So I started driving for the general and I drove for him for about six months and his wife came overseas and when she got over there he already she had already shipped her car over there well he put me driving for her and wanted me to be custodian of the house they lived in. So he moved me in his house about like this one not hardly as big and he moved me in the house with him and I had 13 Jap servants everyone had a job they knew what to do all I had to do was make sure they done it. I bought all the groceries and drove his wife anywhere she wanted to go and every night I'd drive them to a party.

Interviewer: Every night

Marshall: Every night they either went to a party or we had one at the house. If we had one at the house I had to see after it make sure all the food was prepared. Of course everybody drank all them people had a bar in the house.

Interviewer: How close did you feel to the other drivers that were

Marshall: Oh they were good friends.

Interviewer: What did you do in your free time?

Marshall: Well I'd go back to I'd go down to the army base where I was stationed go to the club down there and talk to my buddies.

Interviewer: Did you have a lot of free time?

Marshall: At night about the only time I had much free time when I'd get them off to a party somewhere.

Interviewer: Did you write a lot of letters?

Marshall: I wrote my mother once a week I'd write a few.

Interviewer: Did you get a lot of letters from friends and family?

Marshall: Yeah

Interviewer: Do you remember playing cards or reading or playing sports with any of the men over there?

Marshall: I played a little cards not much.

Interviewer: Did you ever get promoted during your time in Japan?

Marshall: Yeah twiced

Interviewer: Okay did you feel that the promotions you got that you deserved them?

Marshall: I think so or they wouldn't have give it to us.

Interviewer: Tell me about some famous people that you met while working for your general and what was your general's name again.

Marshall: Hoffman

Interviewer: Hoffman

Marshall: Hoffman

Interviewer: And he was a what star general?

Marshall: Brigadier one star.

Interviewer: You were telling me earlier that you had met some interesting people.

Marshall: Yeah

Interviewer: Can you tell me about that again?

Marshall: Well I lived almost next door to MacArthur. And his wife and I became real good friends she found out I was from Tennessee and she was from Tennessee. And I'd run into her oh once or twice a week at the grocery store commissary they called it where you buy groceries. See I had to buy all the supplies for that house I run and I talked to her quite a bit. And at one time this general I was driving for he wanted to know if I wanted to go to work for MacArthur. MacArthur had sent our general to send him a driver his was getting out of the service. I told him the one I was working for I'd rather stay with him.

Interviewer: Were you tempted by the offer to go with MacArthur?

Marshall: Not really because my living situation would have been different and I was well pleased with the way I had my own room a private home my own telephone.

Interviewer: Because you lived in the house with General Hoffman right?

MacArthur: Right in the house and if I'd have went with MacArthur I couldn't have done that.

Interviewer: What did you think of MacArthur?

Marshall: I thought a whole lot of him nice fellow.

Interviewer: Walk me through if you can just think back a normal day from the time you got up to the time you got to go to bed. What kind of things you did as a driver and things you did to keep the house up.

Marshall: Well the first thing when I got up was make sure the cook was there which he was. And when the general and his wife got up well I'd see what they wanted for breakfast.

Interviewer: What time did you get up?

Marshall: I usually got up about six o'clock.

Interviewer: What time did the general and his wife get up?

Marshall: Seven thirty or eight. When I knew what they wanted for breakfast I'd get these Japs to fix it send it up to them. They never did come it was a two story house and they never did come downstairs to eat you know except dinner at night.

Interviewer: So after you got them breakfast what did you do then?

Marshall: Well I'd just more or less get servants started on their daily chore and I'd see the general off. He'd leave around seemed like around 8:30 in the morning. I always walked him out the door and of course his other driver would come pick him up. And then I was more or less free if the wife wanted me to carry her somewhere. Of course like I say I run this house and I always had to go to the grocery store or gas station or somewhere.

Interviewer: So then you were probably free you said around until six o'clock when you usually took them to parties.

Marshall: Yeah around six but I was on call all the time I mean she knew where I was at. She'd get a hold of me if she had to because I didn't go two blocks from the house without telling her where I was going.

Interviewer: While you were over in Japan did you ever feel threatened by the Japanese or fear for your or the general's life?

Marshall: No they were really I reckon they was coward down and they was just meek. You'd look at one right hard and he'd go to bowing they knew we wasn't going to take nothing off them we didn't have to.

Interviewer: You said you were in Tokyo what kind of condition was Tokyo in at that point in time?

Marshall: It was completely burnt out they were dropping fire booms on every building there or every main building.

Interviewer: Was it depressing to see it in that kind of shape?

Marshall: Yeah

Interviewer: You said that at one point in time you had the opportunity to go to Hiroshima. What were your impressions of Hiroshima?

Marshall: Oh it was awful it was just flattened out for about I'd say three or four miles square. Burnt completely up.

Interviewer: Could you have been able to tell there was a city there?

Marshall: No

Interviewer: If you hadn't known it

Marshall: No

Interviewer: Was it odd to face that kind of destructive power?

Marshall: Well it was different I don't remember if it was that much shock to me back then or not I'd seen so much damage.

Interviewer: On the other end you said you'd taken a trip to Mount Fuji with the general and his wife.

Marshall: Yeah that was a pretty place.

Interviewer: What were your general impressions now that you look back on your time in the service?

Marshall: Well I wouldn't take nothing for it enjoyed I just wished I stayed on about 20 years.

Interviewer: Now long did it take for you to fulfill your draft requirement that they had?

Marshall: Eight months and something I think.

Interviewer: Okay

Marshall: I think it is on my discharge. No a year little over a year.

Interviewer: A little over a year?

Marshall: Yeah

Interviewer: And then you did what?

Marshall: I volunteered for another year.

Interviewer: And that was during the time as the driver right?

Marshall: Yeah I was in Tokyo then.

Interviewer: Okay and then after that year was up what you decided to come home?

Marshall: I decided I'd just come home.

Interviewer: So where did they ship you to come home what port did you leave Japan from?

Marshall: Yokahama same one I went in. Then went back to San Francisco.

Interviewer: Seventeen days and nights?

Marshall: Yeah

Interviewer: How was the ride back was it any different?

Marshall: Well I think it was a little more enjoyable coming back it wasn't as crowded a little better ship.

Interviewer: Were you anxious to come home?

Marshall: Yeah

Interviewer: Sort of mixed feelings?

Marshall: Yeah see I'd been gone two years almost. But it didn't really seem that long.

Interviewer: So when you landed in San Francisco where did they send you then?

Marshall: They discharged me in Oakland it was right across the bay. And they put me on a train to Chicago and a bus ticket from Chicago to Fulton Kentucky.

Interviewer: I guess if you were driving for the general you got opportunity to meet a lot of the top brass that came through Japan.

Marshall: Yeah I met several General Chase and General Wayneright there was so many I can't recall all of their names.

Interviewer: How good a cook were the hired Japanese?

Marshall: They were good.

Interviewer: A lot better than your counterparts on the base right?

Marshall: Yeah they of course cooked American style for us.

Interviewer: Did you have any friends that were wounded or killed while you were over there in Japan?

Marshall: I had one not in Japan I had one friend got killed in Korea that I was real close to. I understand he was driving a truck and hit a land mine blew him up.

Interviewer: And you said he was

Marshall: He was the general's driver.

Interviewer: And you took his place?

Marshall: I took his place.

Interviewer: Did you have much contact with the general civilian population in Tokyo? You said most of the time they'd sort of steer away from you.

Marshall: Yeah not much no we didn't associate with them much.

Interviewer: Did you come in contact with any other members of other branches of service like Marines or Sailors or anything or did you just

Marshall: No of course I also lived right next door to the Russian embassy. And the Russian no to was a French general lived next door to me.

Interviewer: Did General Hoffman do much with the

Marshall: No

Interviewer: With the other countries generals?

Marshall: Not he was pretty close to the French general but not too close to the Russians.

Interviewer: What were your impressions of the Russians at that point in time?

Marshall: We hated them especially the boys who had been through that Japanese war. When I first got over there of course they were all coming home but I remember one I was riding the jeep with we was going down the street going by the Russian Embassy. And a Russian guard standing there with a gun and

this soldier I was with he just picked up a riffle and pointed it at him, I thought he was going to shoot him. He hated them.

Interviewer: Were there was there a British General located nearby?

Marshall: Yeah they was real friendly Austrailians they were friendly. In fact I had an Australian girlfriend for a while.

Interviewer: Okay you just told me about your

Marshall: Australian girlfriend

Interviewer: Your Australian girlfriend you were multicultural you were open to

Marshall: Yeah

Interviewer: Tell me about that how did that was it hard for a country boy from Tennessee to relate to an Australian?

Marshall: No not really her daddy was a general in Australia. Of course I met her through some parties we would go to.

Interviewer: And you had a car to be able to drive her around right?

Marshall: Yeah

Interviewer: How long did you date?

Marshall: I don't know as we really called it dating we was real good friends for two or three months.

Interviewer: You were telling me to that you got an opportunity to become very good friends with General Hoffman's son.

Marshall: Yes

Interviewer: Was it both sons or

Marshall: No just one. He come over he was in West Point at that time and he came over on furlough. And they just turned me and the car over to him while he was over there and we had a time.

Interviewer: Was he your age?

Marshall: He was my age. See he could get these white girls he'd get me a date and him one too.

Interviewer: What was there to do in Tokyo a bombed out city?

Marshall: It wasn't really nothing we just had to go to some base club you know or of course by him being from West Point he could go to the officer's clubs. He could get me in with him. As far as civilian

clubs I don't know of a one in the city of Tokyo they had all burnt up. They would have been off limits to us anyway.

Interviewer: If there's just one really memorable experience you had while over in Tokyo that you haven't already told me what do you think it would be?

Marshall: Well I guess I've already told you I can't think of nothing really stands out. I guess meeting MacArthur and his wife would be one of the highlights. And by me living I seen him every day I'd see him down at his office or coming out of the house. I'd talk to his wife at least three times a week.

Interviewer: What was it like you said that Little Rock Arkansas at Fort what was it?

Marshall: Robertson Camp

Interviewer: Camp Robertson sorry. Had been the furthest you'd been away from home at that point in time so what was it like to know that you were living in a foreign country? Was that hard for you to realize?

Marshall: Well no it wasn't it at that time it really didn't matter to me where I was at.

Interviewer: Was it hard for you to adjust to life at home when you came back home?

Marshall: No

Tape ended