

Interviewer: That's nice Mr. Greer.

Greer: That's for 60 being a 60 year veteran.

Interviewer: Who gave that to you?

Greer: Veterans Association here in Dickson County.

Interviewer: Really

Greer: Uh huh

Interviewer: Was it a nice ceremony?

Greer: Well they just came in it was disabled veterans.

Interviewer: Oh wow well if you'd like to we'll go ahead and start talking a little bit about your experience.

Greer: Well I'd rather if you have some specific questions you'd like to ask.

Interviewer: Alright

Greer: That might be the best way to lead into it.

Interviewer: Well whatever you say

Greer: Because I might start rambling.

Interviewer: Whatever you say. Why don't we start off with what your full name is and where you were born?

Greer: Hardy Scott is my middle initial Greer I was a junior.

Interviewer: A junior were you born here in White Bluff?

Greer: No I was in Nashville.

Interviewer: In Nashville Tennessee.

Greer: But I've lived you might say in this area all my life.

Interviewer: Can you tell me when you were born?

Greer: November 12, 1924.

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

Greer: Navy

Interviewer: In the navy. Now earlier you were telling me an interesting story about you went to Memphis.

Greer: Well after I finished high school I went to Memphis the signal core had a program teaching radio. And I went down there I was there about five months I think it was. It was a short course like I said after you finish that course you go right into the signal core at that time. And that was the walking unit of the radio communications they carry those big heavy packs on their back all the time.

Interviewer: What year was that do you remember?

Greer: That was in October well October 13, 1942 is when I went in service.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor happened?

Greer: Yes I was home that was on Sunday morning I was listening to the radio.

Interviewer: Really

Greer: Yeah and I finished high school in April of 42 but that was in December of 47 or 41.

Interviewer: Right and what were your impressions when you heard about all of that and FDR's reaction?

Greer: Well at that time I think we had more respect than what young ones have today.

Interviewer: Did you ever think in your wildest dreams that the United States would be touched by what was going on in Europe?

Greer: No at that time I didn't take time to think about what I thought the only feeling I had was that I wanted to do something myself take a part in it. Not that I wanted to be a hero or anything like that but at that time most of them that went in well a lot of them I didn't register for the draft until I got out of service.

Interviewer: Really so how did you wind up in the signal core?

Greer: Through an advertisement in the paper.

Interviewer: I see

Greer: I just applied for it and

Interviewer: So after you got your training done in the signal core where did you go from there?

Greer: From there I went that's when I went on and signed up in Memphis at the naval recruiters. They sent me from Memphis down to New Orleans just across the bay from New Orleans. This is an island.

Interviewer: Take me through a day you get up in the morning and you're down there on that island what happened during a day?

Greer: First after you get up calisthenics, breakfast, then general cleanup of the barracks then you go in for whatever drills you're gonna do that day this is at boot camp. It's just more of physical getting ready plus immunizations shots they hit you on both sides at the same time.

Interviewer: Wow so then you'd have that.

Greer: That goes on for about well I was fortunate I didn't have to stay in boot camp as long as they do today. My boot camp was only three weeks.

Interviewer: Three weeks

Greer: Because they were rushing us through because of the war.

Interviewer: Okay and

Greer: Then after I finished my three weeks I got my leave came home for about a week then I went from there to Houston Texas.

Interviewer: What did you do in Texas?

Greer: Pre-radio classes in class all about 12 hours a day.

Interviewer: Well you must have excelled at it.

Greer: Well I got by I wasn't one of the best students in the course but I was well in fact it took me one month longer than normal because I missed out on something one time and had to make it up. Then I went from Houston Texas to Corpus Christy for advanced radio and radar and maintenance. And when I got there I was put in charge of I think I had six men under me we worked on the line we repaired radios on the planes. And well when I first went to Green Cove Springs with is about 18 miles from Jacksonville there I worked on fighter planes F4Fs and F4Es.

Interviewer: Were you training people at that point?

Greer: Well we were at that time we were at special training stage because we had to repair the radios so the pilots that were in training to be pilots could fly off of aircraft carrier.

Interviewer: Were you training these pilots yourself at any point?

Greer: No I didn't have anything actually to do with the pilots other than just keeping their radios working so they could fly the planes.

Interviewer: I see I see

Greer: And the squadron was divided into four groups' four flights of planes. Well I had one squadron the well these were the old prop planes so you had to climb up one of the wings and everything to get in

to work on them. But I was my group was I was fortunate to have a good group to work with me. We'd be there to check the planes just as quick as they came off of a hopper. And as they came off if they had any problems we got right on it. Of the whole time I was in the squadron we didn't have a plane miss a flight.

Interviewer: Wow I'm sure they appreciated all your hard work. What rank did you make?

Greer: Well at that time I made E5 at the time I got there in Jacksonville. And I made E6 just before I got out. But I was the lead petty officer at that time for those men.

Interviewer: Right

Greer: These other three squadrons were having problems getting their work done. Planes would be down and all every time I'd get my group up where I could just sit back and they'd go on and fly they'd say you go give your group to this man and you take his place. So I worked all four squadrons at one time or another you've got to work that way. So I guess I should realize that that was a little feather that I didn't really work for but I did it.

Interviewer: It sounds like you worked for it if you were able to get all of those men in line to do what they needed to do.

Greer: Well I didn't have to get them in line all I said was let's go. I'd go with them where these others would say you go out there.

Interviewer: Oh that's the secret isn't it right. A good leader always works with them right.

Greer: At that time it took everybody working together because they were in such a rush trying to get the pilots ready to send them over the carriers and all out in the Pacific.

Interviewer: Is that where most of the planes were headed to the Pacific?

Greer: Most of them yeah.

Interviewer: Right

Greer: I think I don't remember how many carriers we had in the Pacific at that time. I know there were three big ones out there. I think there was more than that and there wasn't near that many in the Atlantic because most of the Atlantic was flown from bases Atlanta bases.

Interviewer: Okay what was the name of your squadron?

Greer: I was in the well it was just it wasn't any squadron name for the planes at that time. That was only later after I went back in.

Interviewer: Oh I see

Greer: That they started giving them squadron names.

Interviewer: Did they have a did your squadron have a number back then the one that you were over?

Greer: No just F4F and F4U squadron and then when I went from I left that one and I went down to Cecil Field which is about 18 miles from Green Cove Springs we had ____ which were two man planes. That was for the pilot and the gunner and worked on those quite a while. And the same thing there I still had the same duties as I had at the other one. So it was something to get it all straight.

Interviewer: I imagine so.

Greer: There though they let us ground pounders take a hop with one of the pilots on there to get flight pay extra money. And I was always lucky of course it would be the instructor and about six other pilots so up in one hop. Well I'd let them others pick what plane they wanted to be in and I'd wait and be the last one every time I would up with the instructor and they were flying with the students.

Interviewer: Did you do that on purpose? It just worked out that way.

Greer: It worked out that way every time.

Interviewer: I think I'd rather be up with the instructor myself.

Greer: Oh yeah but once or twice you had a few shaky moments. We'd go up for simulated dive bombing hops.

Interviewer: What was that like?

Greer: We'd go up so high and then come down. They had two different types of dive bombing one was almost straight down the other was what they called skip bombing.

Interviewer: Okay

Greer: Once or twice it was supposed to be straight down bombing and it's cloudy over cast so they wound up he would drop down keep dropping down and he got down to about 500 feet I didn't know what was going on. Because I knew he was supposed to if you get down below 1,000 feet you start the ground starts looking mighty close.

Interviewer: Yeah

Greer: But just as I reached for the microphone to ask him what was going on he told me what was happening. I said thanks. But there was several experiences and of course some things happened that I didn't enjoy and at the time I was in I didn't make any mention of it happening. For instance one time they lined up the planes one row here and then a row in front like that well one row boys started getting out of the plane. The way they come out they had to get on hit the wing coming down well the plane aligned in front of him turned up real fast. That prop wash blew him off of the wing caught his parachute opened it pulled him through the prop of the one behind it.

Interviewer: Oh my

Greer: Well I saw it happen and I didn't see it happen for this reason it wasn't a piece as big as your thumb left of him.

Interviewer: Oh my

Greer: And anybody that saw it had to go out there and scrap it up and put it in a bag. I didn't let on like I saw it.

Interviewer: I understand.

Greer: Because I didn't care about doing that. Then in fact it was years after I got out before I even mentioned that to anybody. It's still I can still see it happening.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Greer: When once or twice I had a pretty close call myself. Went up on wing one and it was a little dewy went up in front turned up blew off the wing and back under the prop of the other one. But I did a belly crawl I got real close to that concrete.

Interviewer: Wow

Greer: Until I got past that prop.

Interviewer: Thank goodness

Greer: So I had some close calls too.

Interviewer: That was a very dangerous job you had.

Greer: Oh yeah it was dangerous. But a person learned to be around those planes and take special care with what he did. And it was my fault because I knew the plane had a slick wing had dew on it but we had to get them up flying had to do it. Then from Cecil Field they started this was right after Roosevelt died they started closing down some of the allied bases and transferred my squadron up to Jacksonville which was another 18 miles from I was in a triangle.

Interviewer: In Florida

Greer: Coming up from those three.

Interviewer: Okay

Greer: Stayed there until the end of the war and there was different planes to work on there.

Interviewer: Do you remember the day the war ended?

Greer: Not the exact date.

Interviewer: Okay but what was your experience was there a lot of celebrating going on?

Greer: Well a lot of relief.

Interviewer: I imagine

Greer: And we were given an extra day off and I remember three of my buddies and myself hitchhiked from Jacksonville down to Miami spent the weekend.

Interviewer: That's a long way to hitchhike.

Greer: Well at that time though

Interviewer: From the top to the bottom of Florida.

Greer: Well think about it at that time people would pick up a service man.

Interviewer: Okay

Greer: They don't they won't pick anybody up now.

Interviewer: It was a different time wasn't it?

Greer: Well it was a different situation. But service men you didn't have to put out your thumb you just stand out on the road and they'd stop and pick you up.

Interviewer: So there was a lot of respect in that area for service men.

Greer: Well that was all over the United States.

Interviewer: I see

Greer: Because people at that time realized that someone that was in service was there for a reason. They weren't dodging somebody or there to get in trouble and you gave them all the help you could. And at the time the pay wasn't as good as it is now.

Interviewer: I've read that.

Greer: A sailor didn't get much pay in fact my first paycheck was \$60.

Interviewer: Sixty dollars what was your living conditions like?

Greer: That was an E5.

Interviewer: E5 \$60 did you live in barracks when you were in Florida?

Greer: Oh yeah

Interviewer: What were your living conditions like?

Greer: You have 100 men in a long barracks and you could hear snoring all over.

Interviewer: What was the food like was the food

Greer: Well the food was good.

Interviewer: Really did you have three hots?

Greer: Oh yeah that's another reason I went in the navy instead of the army. I had a place to sleep and food to eat.

Interviewer: I understand now I've been fascinated by your decorations over here. Can you get that and show us can you tell me about your decorations?

Greer: Well I've just about forgotten what they all stand for now. One of them the solid red one was good conduct medal which was given for four years of service.

Interviewer: Okay

Greer: One of the American Theatre and Victory like this is your Victory one and the others were different I right now off hand I couldn't tell you what they are for.

Interviewer: That's alright that's alright it will come to you in a few minutes probably.

Greer: I'd have to look it up in my records and find out what they are. And this one down here of course I just got that last year from the Veteran Association. That's for all that had served in World War II and are still living. This was given showing that they were in World War II.

Interviewer: I see on it says Patrol Squadron 67.

Greer: That' was Patrol Squadron 67 that's the one when I went back in after being out 19 years.

Interviewer: You went back.

Greer: It was a patrol squadron.

Interviewer: What did you do there?

Greer: I was still working with airplane radios in those.

Interviewer: Did you you retired I assume eventually?

Greer: Yeah I retired from the old P2 squadron was the ones I worked in.

Interviewer: I see

Greer: When I got out of course they had the P3s.

Interviewer: Big change in those years wasn't it?

Greer: Oh yeah

Interviewer: Between World War II and

Greer: Oh yeah well in World War II the patrol squadrons were bombers or dawns mostly. What they were for was looking for subs submarines. And the P2 squadron they would go out and stay on flight about 12 hours at a time. But they carried about 16 or 17 men besides the pilot and co-pilot.

Interviewer: So you worked on those too?

Greer: Oh yeah but they were would be to see one of them you would think it was like a commercial airplane the fuselage of it. But it had communications gear and navigation gear and everything else lined up all the way back it. And they would have a man for each station.

Interviewer: That makes sense. So after the war were you able to use the skills that you learned during the war did you use them after the war for employment?

Greer: After the war I came back I went to college.

Interviewer: You did where did you go?

Greer: Peabody

Interviewer: Peabody

Greer: And got my masters taught for 19 years after that.

Interviewer: What did you what was your degree in?

Greer: Elementary education.

Interviewer: Indeed and you got your masters. Where did you teach?

Greer: Well I taught first over at Fairview well between Kingston Springs and Fairview really. The old New Hope School

Interviewer: Okay

Greer: Taught there for three years then I went from there to Pleasant View in Cheatham County taught three I was principle and teach at Pleasant View for three years. Then I went from Pleasant View to Ashland City just as teacher for three more years. Then went from there to Davidson County over at Cumberland High School taught 7th grade general math or general science there for ten years.

Interviewer: Were you able to go to school on the GI bill?

Greer: Yes I got I got my masters all it cost me was \$25.

Interviewer: Wow

Greer: That was the cap and gown fee.

Interviewer: Peabody is a fine college school.

Greer: At that time it was ranked number two teachers college.

Interviewer: Wow

Greer: Columbia was number one. And I think that's because it's up there in the east because everything they always put east up higher than anyplace else. But you had two of the leading colleges two top colleges right in middle Tennessee.

Interviewer: True

Greer: And well Austin Peay wasn't far behind at that time.

Interviewer: I'm partial to Austin Peay myself since I'm a student there.

Greer: Well I know.

Interviewer: It's a fine school.

Greer: My great-granddaughter is starting there this fall.

Interviewer: Oh really great-granddaughter. So you have how many children.

Greer: I just I had one child she got killed in an automobile accident.

Interviewer: I'm very sorry.

Greer: I lost my wife we had been married 28 years when she died. She had multiple sclerosis.

Interviewer: Very sorry. Did you meet her during the war years?

Greer: No after I got out.

Interviewer: After you got out. Did you do a lot of writing and corresponding while you were in the war?

Greer: No didn't have time.

Interviewer: I understand.

Greer: And of course at that time I could write them and it didn't cost me anything to send them because all our mail was free.

Interviewer: Right so what did you do for fun on your off time?

Greer: Slept when I got a chance.

Interviewer: Well working that many hours I can only imagine you would need some rest. Did you have did you make some good friends.

Greer: Oh yeah I had I was from Tennessee most of my buddies were either from the west coast or the east coast. While a lot of them were from Texas.

Interviewer: Right were you able to stay in contact after the war?

Greer: No I didn't I only had one well I got leave to come one Thanksgiving and he came home with me. And he came back by a time or two after we got out and that's then I had another one from Texas that he was sent to an outpost up on the east coast and then not well I guess I don't know what day it was now but he came by he went down to Atlanta was in business down there. He came up here one time and I got to see him then so that's really the only two that I had any contact with after the war.

Interviewer: Well Mr. Greer thank you so much for your time and for sharing your

Greer: Well now while I was in service well in the reserve I did more traveling than I did while I was in service.

Interviewer: Really

Greer: I spent more I made two trips to Hawaii one to the Philippines several states around I went to.

Interviewer: Did you had you left Tennessee very much before you were in the service?

Greer: No I was remember this was before there were many cars even.

Interviewer: True

Greer: I could walk from well one time I know I walked from here to Dickson didn't see a car.

Interviewer: My goodness wow

Greer: There just wasn't there weren't any and if there were cars gas people couldn't afford gas even if gas wasn't but 15 cents a gallon.

Interviewer: Well we were still in the grips of the depression for so long here in the south.

Greer: I know it I went through the depression I know.

Interviewer: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Greer: I had five sisters and one brother.

Interviewer: Wow what did your dad do?

Greer: Anything he could find from hauling coal to carpentry to farming to logging. But all seven of us finished high school all of us married and all of well this is a picture of us when I came home on leave.

Interviewer: Oh that's great.

Greer: In 1945

Interviewer: Now which one are you? Are you in this picture here?

Greer: Way back here.

Interviewer: Yeah well there's the hat that's wonderful. Where was this picture taken?

Greer: We were where Mother and Daddy were living. I was still in service at that time. There's daddy and there's mother and here is my grandmother over here.

Interviewer: What was her name?

Greer: Cora

Interviewer: Cora was that your daddy's mother?

Greer: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay

Greer: But and the rest of them were my sisters and there's my brother down here.

Interviewer: A lot of pretty girls in that picture fine looking parents too.

Greer: And all of them still living all of my brothers and sisters. And my wife is dead and my older sister's husbands dead. The rest of them have celebrated their 50th anniversaries or better.

Interviewer: Wow nice looking family you have there.

Greer: That's something you don't see too much of today.

Interviewer: No sir that's true I agree with you.

Greer: But now here's this is the girl that's going to Austin Peay going into nursing.

Interviewer: Well I'll watching for her you know we have over 11,000 now so I don't get to see everybody. But if I see her

Greer: She will be going into nursing.

Interviewer: That's a good field. Well Mr. Greer I so much appreciate you taking time out of your Sunday afternoon today and visiting with me and telling me about your experiences in World War II. Sounds like

you did all that you could and I'm sure there were a lot of people that were very grateful that you kept those communications going in the airplanes because that's very very vital work.

Greer: I enjoyed what I did. I don't have any regrets about going.

Tape began to skip and then ended.