

Interviewer: This is Mr. Ernie Woodward. Would you please tell us your full name, when and where you were born?

Ernie Woodward: Ernest L. Woodward. Born in McPherson County, South Dakota, June 10th 1931.

Interviewer: And Mr. Woodward what branch of service did you serve in?

Ernie Woodward: Served in the Marines.

Interviewer: Uh, you said the 3rd Marines before.

Ernie Woodward: 3rd Marine Division. H&S Battalion 3rd Marines.

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

Ernie Woodward: My mother, Myrtle, was an elementary teacher, she taught in a one room school, until she met my dad, and my dad was a farmer during the Second World War He worked at the ship yards in Portland, Oregon.

Interviewer: Now when he farmed what kind of crops did he do?

Ernie Woodward: Little bit of everything, heard cattle, milk cows, pig, sheep, and all kinds of grain, it was a big job.

Interviewer: So you had brothers and sisters that helped?

Ernie Woodward: I had one sister in my family, so I was the boy in the family.

Interviewer: So you probably got worked pretty hard on the farm?

Ernie Woodward: Yeah, we didn't move back to the farm until, I was in the 8th grade so, we were living in Portland, Oregon until the Second World War times.

Interviewer: Now you were telling me in Oregon, you did the pledge of allegiance?

Ernie Woodward: Yeah, I was going to elementary school in Portland, Oregon and each room in the school where I was going to, had a flag and when you said I pledge allegiance, to the flag, uh, then we got into the second World War and in Germany they were saying hi ih Hitler and this one was so much like that one, that we stopped doing that.

Interviewer: Um, you said you moved back to Portland, I'm sorry the Dakotas, what was the reason for that?

Ernie Woodward: I guess, well my dad didn't like to leave the farm when we left it but we couldn't make a living there and we had saved up enough money to get back and get a farm there. And he bought this farm in North Dakota just across the border from South Dakota.

Interviewer: Now, you said during World War 2, you started buying war bonds as early as age 12?

Ernie Woodward: Probably at age 12, I don't remember specifics, uh I was selling Saturday Evening Posts door to door, on a weekly basis, they were each a nickel and the same company also published Ladies Home Journal and that came out once a month, so I was selling both of those on a regular basis making a little money, and then uh, as we got into the war, money became a problem for the government and they were selling these bonds, savings bonds, and they regular bond, you put in \$18.75 and eventually it got out \$25 dollars for it, I can't remember how long it took, must have taken quite a while, but uh, I'm selling these magazines and making a little bit of money, obviously I don't have enough immediately to buy the bond so the thing that they let us do, they sold little stamps, each stamp was a quarter, and a little booklet, you put the stamps in, when the booklet was full, the was 18.75 and you took it and you got your bond.

Interviewer: Now, you said that these bonds you kept through college?

Ernie Woodward: Uh, probably when I started college, I don't remember specifics.

Interviewer: So you let them continue to build..

Ernie Woodward: 8 or 9 years yeah, 10 maybe.

Interviewer: And how much, how significant was that in financing your college education?

Ernie Woodward: Well since that time when I was going to college in this little town in North Dakota, enrollment was not very big but it only cost \$25 a quarter for registration so one of these took care of a quarter. And money was a little bit of a problem in the family even then, was even then so.

Interviewer: I want to back up a little bit when you moved back to uh, well let me, before I get to that uh, the Depression, what recollections do you have of it?

Ernie Woodward: I don't really have very many uh, we moved so many times then that uh, I don't remember, we didn't have a lot of money, and by today's standards we would be very very poor, but moving to Portland when I was 5 years old and my dad had a job and then my mother got a job later, she worked there also in the shipyards, during the second World War.

Interviewer: So both your parents worked in the shipyards?

Ernie Woodward: Yes. My mother didn't worked after we got married, after they got married, she didn't work for a while, she stopped teaching and then she started working when we were in Portland, Oregon.

Interviewer: Now, when you left the farm, did your dad still own the farm, he just left it and worked?

Ernie Woodward: I'm not even sure, he didn't own it I'm sure, uh, probably rented it, that was the standard situation, uh, I don't think he owned it or tried to own it or sell it, I think he was renting it.

Interviewer: Now, you returned back to North Dakota, right?

Ernie Woodward: We, the farm was in North Dakota just, uh, close to the South Dakota border.

Interviewer: But you went to school in South Dakota?

Ernie Woodward: But I went to school in South Dakota, one room rural school, went from Portland, Oregon public school to a one room rural school right in the middle of 8th grade.

Interviewer: And you were telling me that you could have gone to North Dakota to go to school, but they required a somewhat large exit exam?

Ernie Woodward: North Dakota History Exam, yes. I'm in the middle of 8th grade and I have never studied any North Dakota history, so and my grandparents lived in South Dakota right across the border, and we lived with them for a while anyway, so it was convenient for me to go to this one room rural school in South Dakota.

Interviewer: What was um, what was life like on the farm, what kind of chores did they have you do from day to day?

Ernie Woodward: Well, we did a lot of different things, the farm was still everything, I spent more time with the milk cows I guess than anything else, we had half a dozen milk cows and we had to , to uh, milk them morning and night, no matter what else happens, and we sold cream, we had a separator that separated the milk from the cream. And every Saturday we would go into town and would sell our cream. Uh and I milked cows more than anything else, I was in the 8th grade and a handy man, and my dad was handy so he had me doing those things like that.

Interviewer: Now was it a fond memory or was it kind of a pain to grow up in that kind of house?

Ernie Woodward: Well, uh, I learned something's being on the farm, I learned that that isn't what I wanted to do and I didn't have those kind of talents, and uh, luckily when we moved back to the farm, uh, there was a college in this town that was our home town, and uh, my mother particularly emphasized to me the significance of going to college, and uh, money was a problem in the family, and we would not have moved to this town had there not been a college there.

Interviewer: I kind of want to back up a little bit and talk about, you mentioned to me before that you had specific memories of Pearl Harbor. What were those memories and how did you feel?

Ernie Woodward: Well, I was 10 years old and I don't remember a lot about it, but I do remember the President Roosevelt's speech, related to that. December 7, 1941, a day that will live in infamy, remember that specifically.

Interviewer: How did that impact you family, the farmers, or the country rather as far as like the mood, did you notice a mood change?

Ernie Woodward: There were things when people got together, there were supportive of military kind of situations and blood drives were big time things there and uh...

Interviewer: And of course you said things like the bonds and rationing, do you remember any of the rationing?

Ernie Woodward: Well, I remember that it happened but it was a big time problem and uh, it's been so long, I'm struggling to remember the specifics of rationing but yes we had rations. When we got to the farm then in North Dakota, the war wasn't quite over, it was going to be over and we knew that and we moved, and we didn't have to worry anymore because we raised our own things.

Interviewer: So you were more self-sufficient?

Ernie Woodward: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now, how long were you in college before you decided to go into the Marines?

Ernie Woodward: A year and a half.

Interviewer: Ok. And you said you were not drafted you enlisted?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: What were your reason for doing that?

Ernie Woodward: Well, uh, I felt that I was needed and that situation and a lot of significant things that came up for the need for people, so a good friend of mine who graduated from high school with me, we enlisted together so.

Interviewer: What years did you serve?

Ernie Woodward: 51' through 54'.

Interviewer: So the Korean War had already started?

Ernie Woodward: Yep, it had already started and finished just before I got out.

Interviewer: And would you, what percentage would you say patriotic feelings was there for you to join?

Ernie Woodward: Not a lot, not like it would have been in the second World War, uh, no particular pressures, they were doing some drafting at that stage and ironically about a year later they had me drafted into the Marines and they didn't do that until about a year after I went into the Marines, plus got out at the end of our 3 years and then a lot of draftees got out at the same time.

Interviewer: What um, basic training did you go to, San Diego or Paris?

Ernie Woodward: I went to San Diego.

Interviewer: What was that like, could you explain some of the...?

Ernie Woodward: It's been so long I don't remember a lot about it, miserable time, we didn't get off base at all, and things going on 12 hours a day and sleeping was a problem and things like that.

Interviewer: Do you ever remember uh, a specific drill instructor?

Ernie Woodward: No. It was so long ago.

Interviewer: What kind of drills did they have you guys doing there that was maybe Korea War specific?

Ernie Woodward: Well, we had a rifle range and we had a qualifying exam, a shooting exam, and I ended up being a nonqualified rifleman, you shot at 200 and 500 yards and I think back on it, I was near sighted. And I think if I would have had glasses at the time, I think I could have made it but I did not anyway.

Interviewer: I wonder if that had anything to do with their physical exams, you obviously got a physical when you went?

Ernie Woodward: Yeah, I don't remember anything related to the eye problem and I wasn't aware that I had it really.

Interviewer: Now, you still went into the infantry even though you didn't pass this exam?

Ernie Woodward: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: Now, was a lot of people going into the infantry?

Ernie Woodward: Oh, yeah. In the Marines that was about all that you did. And after boot camp, why, many, many people went to different Marine divisions, the 3rd Marine Division was formed right after I got out of boot camp, so we moved to Camp Pendleton and went to tent camp 3 at Camp Pendleton, and that had been closed since the end of the second World War and opened up again right there.

Interviewer: And you think that was mainly because they were trying to send you guy overseas or..?

Ernie Woodward: they were trying to get us ready to, to be in the war, yes.

Interviewer: What type of training did you do at the, what was it called tent Camp 3?

Ernie Woodward: Well, that was where we lived.

Interviewer: So that was like your permanent station?

Ernie Woodward: Yes. We slept in the barracks there, but it was called Tent Camp 3.

Interviewer: Ok, it sound like a little spot in the woods or something with a bunch of little tents.

Ernie Woodward: Yeah, it was mean area at Camp Pendleton, and there were 3 tent camps and at the end of the Second World War, evidently the tent camps were just left open, and then they opened them up and then I was sent to tent camp 3. But I went to some infantry training school before I got to Camp Pendleton, this was just a short time , a month or something like that.

Interviewer: And was that called, that you went through, SOI?

Ernie Woodward: I don't recall.

Interviewer: Ok. What was your life like in , at your permanent duty station, Tent Camp 3, at Pendleton, do you remember it being good or was it still stressful or was there a big relief from being out of basic training?

Ernie Woodward: It was not a pleasant kind of time, uh, and frankly Californians didn't treat us very well, at that time, so when we would go out on Liberty, it was a big time problem, and transportation was a problem.

Interviewer: And why did the Californians...?

Ernie Woodward: Well, I suppose we were wild and young kind of people, I suppose that was it but my perspective of it at least, was that we just didn't get treated well, so we didn't have a lot to do off the base, on base why we, fooled around, I played some ping pong and things like that.

Interviewer: No, you said, that you practiced a lot of landings, a lot of amphibious landings?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: Uh, about how many did you practice in your 3 year period in the military?

Ernie Woodward: Oh gosh, a lot. It's been so long that I'm struggling to remember, but we would go out and be aboard ship and just make landing after landing, after landing and then come back on base for a while and then go back out again, so.

Interviewer: Now did you remember, when the Inchon landing happened in Korea?

Ernie Woodward: I don't remember specifically, no.

Interviewer: Do you think that maybe you guys were preparing to participate in it?

Ernie Woodward: When we were preparing for to some amphibious landing, so that's probably the case.

Interviewer: Yeah, it seems logical, if you were doing so many, they were probably, I wonder why, do you have any idea why they didn't send your unit?

Ernie Woodward: Well, there were rumors that we were going, over and over and over again, but I don't have any idea why we hadn't been sent.

Interviewer: Did you ever meet any Marines that had been to Korea?

Ernie Woodward: Yes, as a matter of fact, we had one who was in our company who had already been there, all the rest of the, most of the rest of the Marines there in Tent Camp 3 were new enrollees and then the officers were older and had been in the Marines and some of them were primary military people.

Interviewer: What did, what kind of impressions did you get from the combat veteran that was in your company?

Ernie Woodward: Well, he had some significant mental problems, uh, and he didn't communicate very well, so I don't have any feelings of in terms of his situation.

Interviewer: Obviously he had been marked, uh, or changed by his experience.

Ernie Woodward: Yeah, I don't know why, I don't know what the situation was, he didn't talk about it and he was a shy man anyway and I don't know.

Interviewer: Was he in a position of leadership?

Ernie Woodward: Well, we, as we moved into Tent Camp 3, I was in the supply section and we got supplies for the whole division there and he had been around a little bit and he knew about these things so he was one of the few people who knew about those things, so he kind of lead us a little bit in that situation, but he was almost illiterate.

Interviewer: Really?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you recall his name?

Ernie Woodward: No.

Interviewer: Was this your first time away from home?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: And how did you, did you ever feel lonely when you were gone?

Ernie Woodward: Yeah, I did, not particularly bad but yeah.

Interviewer: A little bit of homesickness?

Ernie Woodward: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now did you have any buddies that you particularly hung out with that eased your life a little bit?

Ernie Woodward: Yes. Matter of fact, it was kind of ironic, I enlisted and uh, was sworn in, in Omaha, Nebraska, well there was another young man sworn in there and we went to infantry training school together, we went to boot camp together, we were both in the H&S Company 3rd Battalion Marines. So the whole 3 year period that I had in the Marines, he was there.

Interviewer: Was he one of your good friends?

Ernie Woodward: Yeah, he was a snorer however, so.

Interviewer: That was the guy, would you mind telling that story?

Ernie Woodward: Ok, sure. The man's name was Russman and uh, I knew him very well and he start snoring and he slept in the top bunk and we would holler at the guy to wake Russman up and they would wake him up and usually that would be the end of the snoring at that time, then he started dating this girl, they would be out until 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, the next night he goes to sleep immediately completely exhausted, snoring immediately, wake Russman up, the guy would wake him up, and 10 second later he was back asleep snoring, so one night these two guys went over to his bunk, there were 4 screws that attach the top bunk to the bottom bunk, took out the screws and carried Russman outside, and he slept outside that night.

Interviewer: That's funny. Now did that, funny things like that did they happen on a regular basis?

Ernie Woodward: No, no, these things weren't funny.

Interviewer: I guess sleep for you guys was extremely important, your day was probably still really regimented...

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: ...even though you were at a permanent duty station. Kind of, what is the generalization of your whole day to do?

Ernie Woodward: Well, it varied so much, in the supply section, we were taking inventories and there would be somebody from a company we would call if we need some things, and take those and one of my jobs was weekly had to have clean sheets so I collected the sheets from the company and went to the main camp and exchanged dirty sheets for clean sheets, once a week.

Interviewer: That's fun duty, huh?

Ernie Woodward: Yeah.

Interviewer: Um, I kind of want to go back to um, this, the infantry training school, what kind of stuff did ya'll do there?

Ernie Woodward: I remember a lot, we did a lot of, of uh, shooting rifles and things like that.

Interviewer: A lot of walking?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: Uh, what do you remember about your landings, your practice landings, were they usually a big ordeal, you said you would be out for a month on a ship and then you...?

Ernie Woodward: We would just make them over and over and over again, practicing in that situation, so, and I don't remember a lot of the specifics anymore but we were landing there in California for the most part.

Interviewer: And you would, you would, board a large ship?

Ernie Woodward: Yes. And then a small one.

Interviewer: And then those would go ashore?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: And ya'll would attack the beach head and ya'll would do it over and over and over again?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: And that was just basically to keep you proficient at, in case...?

Ernie Woodward: I guess, it seemed like to me at the time we were just doing it more time than was necessary.

Interviewer: Now, was that one of the, was that like a primary mission or was there smaller training going on at your duty station or was it basically, I guess what my question is was that your major training or was there other training going on?

Ernie Woodward: No, the other training was really more, and I suppose we probably spent uh, in the 2 and a half years I was there at Camp Pendleton I suppose 5 or 6 months out on the ship, so no that wasn't um, it was an important thing but we didn't do a lot of that and since I was on the supply section, we didn't do nearly as much of the infantry training as the regular people did, so.

Interviewer: Speaking of supply how as, I know now, in the Army, we're kind of speaking about a different branch, but the supply system is a big gorilla on your back, I mean there's just paper work you have to do and was it that way?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: Like you had to fill out 3 or 4 sheets of forms just to get one thing done?

Ernie Woodward: Yes, and with most of us in the supply section were new in the Marines and we didn't know a lot of things and as we would pass some things out we did it incorrectly because we didn't know, so yeah there was quite a bunch of forms to fill out as a result of this situation.

Interviewer: Did they ever take money away from the supply guys, like your own personal pay check for maybe issuing an item without it being properly documented, you know?

Ernie Woodward: I don't recall that, so I would guess, I think I would remember if that would have happened but I think there were warning about it, over and over again.

Interviewer: Did you ever get on a troop ship, and they tell you hey were actually going to Korea, this is it?

Ernie Woodward: Yes. I was at Camp Pendleton and we were sent to Hawaii, why, I don't know. We were there for about a month and then we loaded up and we were on our way to make an amphibious landing in Korea when the Armistice was signed.

Interviewer: Really?

Ernie Woodward: And then we were sent to Japan, why we were sent to Japan at that time I don't know. Then we went to Japan and spent 3 or 4 months there something like that, then we came back to the United States and the reason most of us came back cause we were due to get out. And came to San Francisco and were discharged there.

Interviewer: Now when you, what year did you go to Hawaii?

Ernie Woodward: This would be summer 53'.

Interviewer: Ok. And you said you spent about a month there in Hawaii?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: What kind of things did you do there?

Ernie Woodward: Nothing, significantly different than what we had been doing.

Interviewer: Just more training?

Ernie Woodward: Yeah.

Interviewer: The troop ship you got on to go to these landings, do you remember how big it was?

Ernie Woodward: It was not as, my memory, as best I can remember it was not significantly different than the ships we were using when we were making these practice amphibious landings.

Interviewer: Now could one of these ships fit a whole, the whole Marine 3rd Division, or would it take several of these large ships to fit?

Ernie Woodward: I don't really remember that specifically either, there were a lot of us on the ship. I would guess more than one for the division but I'm not sure.

Interviewer: How long was the trip from let's say, California to Hawaii and then from Hawaii to Japan?

Ernie Woodward: I don't recall.

Interviewer: But it was long, it wasn't like a day or two obviously?

Ernie Woodward: Yeah, no.

Interviewer: Um, when you were in Japan, or let me back up, what was your feeling, what was the unit like, kind of the ora, I guess maybe of the Marines, when the Armistice was signed?

Ernie Woodward: Well, we were a lot more relaxed there, and uh, we went on Liberty quite a bit more, the financial situation in Japan at that time was such that we had a lot of money as compared to, and Japanese people treated us so well, I think one of the reasons was that we did have the money. And it was kind of ironic the way they did business in Japan, the standard exchange rate 360 yen per dollar, and the thing that was supposed to happen and you were suppose to exchange that right there on the base but uh, if you happened to be out and you had some cash you could exchange and at that time, if you had, we were given military pay currency,

and if you used military pay currency instead of 360 yen, was standard about 300 yen, but if you had American dollars, if somebody had set you a present or something like that you could get 400 yen per dollar, but that was against the regulations. A financial reason I guess but I don't know the specifics.

Interviewer: That's, so you would get paid in American cash you would get paid in some type of military currency?

Ernie Woodward: Military Payment currency is what it was called.

Interviewer: And you could use that on post?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: But you couldn't use it off post but you could exchange it?

Ernie Woodward: Well legally you could use it off post, well, well yeah you could use it off post, I don't think this was illegal to do that and you could exchange this at around 360 yen, you could get on base 300 yen.

Interviewer: What rank were you when you got out?

Ernie Woodward: I was a sergeant.

Interviewer: How did you feel when you got promoted what was it like?

Ernie Woodward: Things didn't change particularly.

Interviewer: Was there more responsibility?

Ernie Woodward: No.

Interviewer: So basically, when you got to your unit and you were on the supply section, you did the same job throughout?

Ernie Woodward: Yes, basically.

Interviewer: So you had quite a bit of responsibility from the beginning?

Ernie Woodward: Yes.

Interviewer: Um, how much, how many people did you supply on a day to day basis, was it just basically your company or was it the battalion?

Ernie Woodward: It varied so much, depending on when they needed something, they called and we got it for them and that varied so much.

Interviewer: What kind of rations did you all eat?

Ernie Woodward: I don't remember a lot of specifics, I remember I didn't like them, I didn't like the food on the base as a matter of fact.

Interviewer: You know that's a reoccurring theme?

Ernie Woodward: I suppose.

Interviewer: That people don't like military rations. I don't think things will change until today. What kind of stuff did you do in your free time?

Ernie Woodward: Well, went off base, I was a big baseball fan and the Pacific Coast League was playing there and I went to some games there, went to some movies, went out and rode around, no one had a car in my company, none of the enlisted men had a car so getting off base was a problem and we went back and forth on buses and things like that. We had a big time problem then, part of the time we were there the bus drivers were on strike so we had a terrible time trying to get back and forth and we tried to hitch hike.

Interviewer: Now were these Japanese?

Ernie Woodward: No, talking about in California.

Interviewer: In California, ok. Um, that's funny, that hilarious. Uh, when you were in Japan, how long were you there approximately?

Ernie Woodward: Oh 3 months 4 months something like that.

Interviewer: And uh, did you get maybe uh, an occupation of Japan medal or anything of that nature?

Ernie Woodward: No.

Interviewer: Um, do you recall the landing sight, the prospect landing site for your...?

Ernie Woodward: No.

Interviewer: I guess maybe probably, probably would have changed based on the situation.

Ernie Woodward: I would guess.

Interviewer: I'm getting a brain cramp. Did you ever have a sense of the big picture momentarily in Korea and how you guys fit into that picture?

Ernie Woodward: No we were in such a narrow kind of situation and the same company for most of my time there in the Marines so it was so narrow that I didn't have a feeling for other things that were happening other than an infantry unit.

Interviewer: Now your unit was obviously a light unit, you didn't have any armored personal carriers, you guys were ground pounders, the only thing basically had were boots, uniform and a rifle?

Ernie Woodward: And a helmet.

Interviewer: And a helmet, do you remember any specifics about the gear you wore, if you particular felt that it was comfortable, or any item that you guy just really didn't like?

Ernie Woodward: Not specifically, no.

Interviewer: Was the K pod, sorry that's today's helmet, was the steel pod, was it extremely heavy?

Ernie Woodward: Pretty heavy, it was little uncomfortable, but not real bad.

Interviewer: Now I know there's like two, I know that's there's an outer shell and an inner shell, a liner, uh, everyone I've seen and I don't know how you would run and not have the two come apart, was that ever a problem.

Ernie Woodward: No I don't remember the specifics of how it was attached but I don't remember any significant problems with it, no.

Interviewer: Did you ever feel like overworked?

Ernie Woodward: No I was a young man, had a lot of energy, not specifically.

Interviewer: Did you ever work with any other branches of service like the Army or...?

Ernie Woodward: Never have any contact with them.

Interviewer: ...or the Navy?

Ernie Woodward: No.

Interviewer: Well, that basically covers it, we did that pretty quick, do you have any last comments you would like to say?

Ernie Woodward: No.

Interviewer: Thank you and again this is Mr. Ernie Woodward, served in the Marine Division, mind giving your company?

Ernie Woodward: H&S Company 1st Battalion 3rd Marine Division.

Interviewer: Ok. Thank you.(end tape)....