

Interviewer: Okay what is your full name?

Newell: Walton Harvey Newell.

Interviewer: When were you born?

Newell: 1917 the 5th of June.

Interviewer: Where were you born?

Newell: In Quitman Georgia.

Interviewer: And that was your hometown?

Newell: Then yeah

Interviewer: And what was it like your hometown?

Newell: I left there when I was six months old and went to Florida.

Interviewer: Where in Florida did you live?

Newell: Madison Florida

Interviewer: Was it a small town or a big

Newell: It was a small town it was about as big as Springfield.

Interviewer: Did you live close to a lot of neighbors or was it spread out?

Newell: Well we was on a farm.

Interviewer: Did you have a close nit community where you lived?

Newell: What

Interviewer: A close nit community

Newell: Well pretty close yeah. I worked away from home a little bit during the time so I didn't have time to visit too much.

Interviewer: What did your parents do for a living they were farmers?

Newell: Do what

Interviewer: What did your parents do for a living?

Newell: Huh

Interviewer: What did your parents do for a living?

Newell: They was farming.

Interviewer: What did they farm?

Newell: What did they farm? Oh corn, peanuts, cotton, tobacco, sugar cane, hogs, and cows.

Interviewer: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Newell: Yeah I had two brothers' one brother from New York and another brother in Duryea California and then one sister in LA. They are all gone passed away except me.

Interviewer: Did your relatives live there?

Newell: No they are gone too.

Interviewer: But when you were in Florida did they live near you? Your relatives

Newell: Do what

Interviewer: Did your relatives live near you in Florida?

Newell: What did she say?

Woman in the background: Did your relatives live close to you when you were in Florida?

Newell: Well my mother me and my mother was real close but me and my dad we wasn't too close.

Woman in the background: Did you have other relatives in Florida like aunts or uncles?

Newell: Well yeah I used to have I had an uncle lived down in Perry Florida. They are all gone now.

Interviewer: Where did your grandparents live?

Newell: Now you're about to get me let's see my grandparents. My daddy's people lived in a town they called Boy Florida and my mother's people lived in Rome Georgia at that time.

Interviewer: And what did they do for a living your grandparents?

Newell: Sawmill

Interviewer: Did you get to see them very often?

Newell: No we didn't have no way of going and they didn't have no way to go so we didn't see each other.

Interviewer: Did you ever see each other on holidays?

Newell: No I didn't even know what a holiday was.

Interviewer: Where did you attend school?

Newell: Oh what little bit I got was in Madison Florida.

Interviewer: And how far did you go?

Newell: I don't know because we didn't live there long we moved out. And my daddy started was working on a working public work he was a sawmill man and he stayed for that for a number of years. And well then we went back to the farm and then he got to be the foreman on a big plantation up here at Greeneville Florida. And he left there went back to Madison and he bought a farm bought a place up there at Cholera Florida he home studied it and that's where they lived at when they died.

Interviewer: Do you remember anything about school how big it was or your teachers?

Newell: No I don't last accounts I was in I think I was in the third grade and I went to school later after that somewhere I don't know where. I went to school after I come to Nashville.

Interviewer: Where did you go to school here?

Newell: Do you know where Amber School is over here in Madison? I believe it's what they call Amber school I went there at night.

Interviewer: Okay

Newell: And worked in the daytime too that's hard work.

Interviewer: Now you did your schooling after the war?

Newell: That was I had done come out of the service.

Interviewer: Okay what do you remember about the great depression?

Newell: Huh

Interviewer: What do you remember about the great depression?

Newell: Oh hard times hard times I mean hard time.

Interviewer: Can you be any more specific?

Newell: Like how?

Interviewer: Well how hard times did you have problems with

Newell: You didn't have everything you wanted to eat for one thing. Most of it we didn't buy no we didn't have no money my dad didn't make enough to buy me any shoes could hardly buy us any clothes.

Interviewer: Was anyone in your family or anyone you knew long term unemployed?

Newell: Say that again now.

Interviewer: Did you know anyone who was long term unemployed?

Newell: In my family?

Interviewer: Yes

Newell: No

Interviewer: So they were mostly farmers and worked in the sawmill?

Newell: Yeah and my we followed the sawmill if that sawmill went out yonder in the woods of nowhere if the mill went out there we went out there. The sawmill built us a house to live in out there pretty close to it. So there wasn't no school around I just didn't go to school for a long time. And finally when we moved back to Madison Florida well no before then I was working with I was working for the NRA there in Madison. And then I stayed there awhile then they let me go and I went home. My mother and them was living on the farm out there and that woman told me said when you become 17 years old I want to sign you up at the CC Camp. Well I did and I put up 27 months in there.

Interviewer: What did you do in the CC Camp?

Newell: Fight fires and dig ditches and build roads.

Interviewer: What did you do in the NRA?

Newell: We growed vegetables for the army I mean for the government.

Interviewer: You did what did you think of Roosevelt?

Newell: Well evidently he was a pretty good feller he lasted from 1933 to the year 45.

Interviewer: Did you think he was a good leader?

Newell: Well he was alright I guess he could have been better or worse.

Interviewer: Do you remember the day that Roosevelt died?

Newell: No I don't.

Interviewer: You don't.

Newell: I was in the army then when he died.

Interviewer: What do you remember about Hitler?

Newell: All I know about Hitler is what I've seen.

Interviewer: Such as

Newell: In pictures I never did go overseas.

Interviewer: But do you remember reading about him?

Newell: Yeah some Hitler was a well he was one of these guys didn't like you to talk back to him. He was the leader and that was it he had the Distopos Gang that if you said to Hitler he didn't like one of his guys would shoot you.

Interviewer: Do you remember much about Mussolini?

Newell: No all I know they said his own men killed him.

Interviewer: Did you have a radio?

Newell: Huh

Interviewer: Did you have a radio?

Newell: No I heard this from a fellow on the train had a radio and you could hear it there.

Interviewer: Did you ever have telephone service when you were younger?

Newell: No well we didn't know what a telephone was when I was a boy.

Interviewer: So how did you get your news?

Newell: Huh

Interviewer: How did you get your news?

Woman in the background: How did you learn what was going on?

Newell: Oh by word of mouth by word of mouth. I remember a long time ago when there just wasn't no work at all and my daddy was still working he just was working and making just enough money. We knew we couldn't buy nothing extra because didn't have the money.

Interviewer: Before Pearl Harbor did you think that the Nazis and the Japanese were a threat to the United States?

Newell: Well I believe I believe old Stalin give the Japs the command to do that I'm not sure. But I believe he did but anyway when Japan invaded Pearl Harbor and like to lost out on we like to got whipped.

Interviewer: Before Pearl Harbor did you think the US would be drawn into the war?

Newell: No I didn't I was in there before the war. I didn't think they was ever going to go to war.

Interviewer: Why did you think that?

Newell: Well everything was going so good at the time the war broke out.

Interviewer: When you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor do you remember where you were?

Newell: I was in Fort Benning Georgia.

Interviewer: Do you remember how you got the news who told you?

Newell: Well they told us about it in the company and we was alerted that night to go overseas. And we was still they got great big ole guns and at every opening of that place they put a gun there had a gunner.

Woman in the background: You were a gunner?

Newell: I wasn't a gunner I was later on a gunner assistant gunner.

Interviewer: Do you think that even though we would go to war that it would be fought in the United States? Did you think that it would ever come to the US?

Newell: Well now if we can go over there and fight they can come over here.

Interviewer: Right

Newell: But the only thing the only reason we went over there was to keep them from coming over here. Well I used to work over here in Nashville I said that to a fellow one day he's been in the service and I told him about it and it made him mad. You can't keep the enemy from coming over here the only way you might do it is to put a row of guards a row just like that all the way around the United States then they might not. Look what happened at New York here a year or two ago. And my sister-in-law lives up there I guess she still goes by my name I don't know. So I've just been on my own nearly all my life. I've had to work for a living I was in the service in the CC Camp and I sent my mother \$25 a month home and I kept \$5 of it and that wasn't much. And then when I got in the army we drawled what they called \$21 a day once a month. You know what that means just \$25 a month. And the year 1942 I believe it was you know there was a piece in the paper that the government said if the soldier would put out some money the government would match it. So then I did that I sent \$50 home every month to my mother that's what they lived on. And they lived on the farm then.

Interviewer: When did you enter the army?

Newell: 1940

Interviewer: And what was your job?

Newell: In the army?

Interviewer: Yes

Newell: Oh a little bit of everything.

Interviewer: What was your main job?

Newell: Well now I don't know because I did so many different ones.

Interviewer: Such as can you give me examples of your jobs?

Newell: Well I did get we did get in the artillery and then we had a job there later on. And then later on we got I was in the 20th field artillery and then later on we moved from there and went to another company another camp and I forget the name of it. And I got to be an assistant gunner on a big tank. And later on we moved to Fort Smith Arkansas and that's where I got injured in 1943.

Interviewer: How did you get injured?

Newell: I was running obstacle course.

Interviewer: And did you fall?

Newell: Well I fell off the top of it when I hit the ground there was mud and when I did my feet just went this way and I tore all the ligaments lose in my knee. I don't have much use for it.

Woman in the background: Was it that tower thing?

Newell: What

Woman in the background: Was it the tower?

Newell: Yeah oh about six foot up there in the air I jumped I fell off of it and hit the ground and when I did that mud was down there one foot went one way and one another. And before I could get my pants off of it it had done swelled up and they had to cut the clothes my pants to get it off of my leg. Then we stayed there I was in 54 tank destroyer armory artillery then and we stayed there awhile then moved from there and I went to Fort Benning Georgia no no Camp Hood Texas. I stayed out there oh about two or three months long enough that I could get a furlough to go home. And believe it or not I went from Camp Hood Texas and I come through here and I spent a night or two with my wife stayed at the Y up here then took off the next night went to Florida spent a night or two there turned around and come back. And I spent a little more another night or two here and took off and went back to Camp Hood Texas. And then when I got there I wasn't there about two or three days before they shipped us out. And we went to another place and we went to a place called Camp Houser Texas. And right there's where some of the boys were going to leave to go overseas well the main one come down told me says I don't think you're going. So if they haven't called your name out you won't go. So they called everybody else's except mine and a few others we stayed back. And I told my wife I says if I don't go overseas I'm coming home and we're gonna get married and we're going to Florida and come back then I'm gonna go back to camp. So sure enough we did and I've been here ever since. I didn't know anybody here I just got me a job as a welder and I went to school to work on automobiles 18 months. And then I went to work at a publishing house and I worked there three years being a working on a press you know worked

there awhile. And I thought the automobile school I went to was just gonna be a hobby but I just like the welding I took it just like to be a regular job. I had to buy me some tools and I got me a welder out here and I worked for a company for 31 years and I retired in 1982 twenty years ago. And I'm still around not even till now.

Interviewer: Why did you enlist?

Newell: Huh

Interviewer: Why did you enlist?

Newell: Well if figured I'm not sure but I figured that my mother and then could use the money.

Interviewer: Were you relieved when they didn't call your name to go overseas?

Newell: No

Interviewer: Why not?

Newell: Well because I knew I wouldn't go they won't take a man that can't see out of the left eye and can't walk and can't shoot a rifle to true. And I figured I wasn't going but I wasn't too sure about that you know. So when the time come they called all the rest of them except mine and a few more.

Interviewer: Where did you do your basic training?

Newell: Well there wasn't very much you could do except march and exercise that's about all you could do. And I remember one time before I left Fort Benning Georgia that I was attached to the horse calvary I don't know if you know anything about that or not. Where they pull a sign by horses I was attached to that and then in 1941 I took my driving training I learned to drive a big truck I took my driver's training. And along with that I took maintenance with it some people don't do that today. If they did that they'd take better care of their car.

Interviewer: I agree

Newell: You take maintenance with it you're going to take better care of your automobile. And in the army in 1942 I drove a truck big truck little truck medium truck whatever anything that had a motor and four gears I could move it.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of your fellow recruits?

Newell: Well I remember two but only one of them I remember now. The other one I can't remember him because I don't remember everything you know. This the last one that I remember was named Erwin Wicks you know them out there in the country.

Woman in the background: A little bit.

Newell: He was in the army with me and he's the one that got me started going with Ruth.

Woman in the background: Good guy

Newell: Huh

Woman in the background: A good guy.

Newell: Yeah I guess he was. Ruth you hear that?

Ruth: Yeah I heard it.

Newell: Sometimes she thinks I'm not sure a good guy. She says she's just joking though. So my life has just been on the go all of my life just about every bit of it. And my mother told me when I left home said if you make your bed hard you're going to lay on it and that's what I've been doing all my life.

Interviewer: Most of the recruits went to fight overseas. Most of the recruits you know and went to training with they went overseas?

Newell: What did she say?

Woman in the background: Most of your fellow soldiers went overseas that you knew.

Newell: Oh yeah we went we was up here on maneuvers and they moved us to that camp down here down like what's the name of that camp down here on the other side of Murfreesboro? Tullahoma until they moved us down there and right there's where we slip up. And Erwin Wicks he went overseas and I didn't.

Interviewer: Where overseas did he go?

Newell: Huh

Interviewer: Where did he go overseas?

Newell: I guess he went to Europe. He went to Fort Embarkation that was in New York City that's where they went to overseas and he went from there I guess he went to Europe.

Interviewer: What maneuvers were you involved in? Maneuvers what maneuvers you were talking about.

Newell: Oh they just learned us to fight and learned us to fight with a rifle and we slept in pup tents and we pulled guard duty and stuff like that and KP and all of that kind of stuff just.

Interviewer: Did you or your family members correspond with anyone overseas?

Newell: No

Interviewer: Not at all?

Newell: No

Interviewer: None of them wrote you back? None of them wrote to you?

Newell: No my brothers they went overseas but I didn't hear from them until they come out.

Interviewer: Do you know where they went?

Newell: One of them went to Japan.

Interviewer: Does he discuss with you what happened?

Newell: No and the other one he was in the navy both of them was in the navy. One of them went to Japan and the other one went somewhere else overseas.

Interviewer: Did you know anyone who was injured or killed in WWII?

Newell: No I don't.

Interviewer: Do you remember the rationing system? Rationing

Newell: Rationing?

Interviewer: Yeah

Newell: Oh they issued us some of that stuff when we'd go out in the field what they called the camp ground you know in the woods. They'd give us that canned food instead of cooking it and them hard tacks was hard you know they were so hard they'd knock a bull in the head with them.

Interviewer: Do you recall a black market for scarce items?

Newell: You know I don't know as I know what you call black market.

Interviewer: It's where you could get things when you didn't go with the rationing it was kind of bootlegging.

Newell: Well wasn't that called something else you know where you'd go to the grocery store and buy so much food and that's all you could buy.

Interviewer: That was rationing.

Woman in the background: That's one kind of rationing.

Newell: That's all I know. Black market where you buy stuff under the table and sell it?

Interviewer: Yes

Newell: Oh well whenever I was in the service there used to be boys that in there that give some of the other soldiers some money and they'd go buy them beer and cigarettes and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Did you think that was morally wrong the under the table?

Newell: Yeah it was.

Interviewer: Did you have a car?

Newell: No I didn't have a car when I was in service.

Interviewer: Did you know anyone who did?

Newell: Huh

Interviewer: Did you know anyone who did?

Newell: No no I don't.

Interviewer: What was your basic way of getting around?

Newell: In the army?

Interviewer: Yes

Newell: Oh army vehicles.

Interviewer: Just army vehicles.

Newell: Everywhere I went it was army vehicle. We didn't walk only one time we walked 150 mile hick one time took us three days to do it. Now that was a long time.

Woman in the background: Where were you when you did that?

Newell: Camp Gordon Georgia. That's where I met Erin Wick.

Woman in the background: Was it summer time?

Newell: Yeah in the summer time.

Woman in the background: Okay

Interviewer: What did you like to do in your free time?

Newell: Well I don't have no hobby if that's what you're thinking about.

Interviewer: You didn't

Newell: Not now

Interviewer: Well I mean then.

Newell: Huh

Interviewer: Then what did you do in your free time in the service.

Newell: You mean my free time in the army?

Interviewer: Yes

Newell: Wasn't no free time if you wasn't on guard you was pulling KP and you if you wasn't pulling KP you was the assistant cook.

Interviewer: Did you feel sleep deprived?

Newell: Huh

Interviewer: Sleep deprived did you get did you not get enough sleep?

Woman in the background: Did you get enough sleep when you were in the army?

Newell: Sometime we didn't because we pulled guard 24 hours a day every day.

Interviewer: Where did you sleep?

Newell: Well we was on guard two hours and off three hours and we would sleep until that guard finished his guard duty and he come and woke you up. And you pulled yours and then somebody else would take over they did that 24 hours a day every day Sunday Monday every day Saturday there were no holidays in the army.

Interviewer: When did you meet your wife?

Newell: 1943

Interviewer: How did you meet her?

Newell: Well she was staying with some people there who lived in North Nashville. Erwin Wicks was the cause of it and I was writing to her about three or four months before I met her. And when I come to Tennessee maneuvers I got me a weekend pass and I come to Nashville we were stationed out there in Gallatin. And I got me a weekend pass and come here that's when I went to the Grand Ole Opry one time took her and her sister and I hadn't been back no more.

Interviewer: Do you remember who you saw at the Grand Ole Opry?

Newell: Oh Ernest Tub, Roy Acuff, Tennessee Ernest I mean Tennessee Plow Boy and a host of others I forget the name of them. Oh that was a long time ago.

Interviewer: Why won't you go back?

Newell: I don't care that much about it. I can hear all I want to hear over the radio.

Interviewer: When did you and your wife get married?

Newell: Let's see 1944 Ruth what year what month did we get married in?

Ruth: June isn't our anniversary in June?

Newell: No October yeah we was married in October 1944.

Interviewer: And you have two sons?

Newell: Yeah now I've got one the older one is dead.

Interviewer: Right

Newell: He passed away two years ago.

Interviewer: Were you ever disappointed that you didn't go overseas?

Newell: Not really because some of the boys says you didn't miss anything. There was a hard ole go over there. I used to know a fellow that lived up the road up here Lloyd Englewood. And he went he went through that death march overseas Saipan death march and he said whenever a soldier fell dead fell down on the ground and he couldn't get up they killed him. Left him lying there and he didn't he was one of the ones that followed through with it.

Interviewer: Do you remember any stories that you friends have told you over the years about their experiences in WWII?

Newell: What did she say?

Woman in the background: Did any of your friends did they tell you stories about WWII other friends?

Newell: Well Erwin Wicks wouldn't talk about it because he got shell shock. And this fellow I know over here used to be in Englewood sometime he would talk about it then sometime he wouldn't. Then sometime he'd bore you to death his wife said he'd bore her to death talking about it. But he's gone now his home is in Georgia he died here about two years ago or something like that he had cancer.

Interviewer: The stories that they told you what did they tell you about? What did they talk about their experiences?

Newell: You mean that fellow that oh he just talked about what a hardship they had over there. He didn't come over name no specific duty or something he was just doing everything and you had to do everything to keep alive.

Interviewer: Do you remember when the bombs were dropped on Japan?

Newell: Yeah

Interviewer: What do you remember about that?

Newell: Well Mr. Truman done that well I thought it was well it killed a lot of people. But I thought it might have been a pretty good thing that's to stop the war because the United States was just losing all the time. That's the way I see it now somebody else may see it different but the United States was losing all the time and the United States and that's the only way to stop the war. You drop it both of them over there on them two islands.

Interviewer: Did you think the world would never be the same because of these weapons?

Newell: Yeah I knew I didn't think the world would ever be the same after that. And we hadn't seen peace since 1940 and we had hard times but the world was in peace.

Interviewer: When you hear that WWII had ended?

Newell: Say that again.

Interviewer: Where were you when you heard the news that WWII had ended?

Newell: Well let me see WWII ended well let's see the war was still going on in 1945. I guess it must have been in 1946 or 7 that way.

Interviewer: You didn't hear about it until then?

Newell: Well I wasn't interested in it I didn't hear nothing about it.

Interviewer: Well when you did hear about it what did you feel?

Newell: I heard about it afterwards but I don't remember what year it was.

Interviewer: That's okay do you did you feel how did you feel about it being over?

Newell: Well in a way I was glad it was over but I hated it because they lost all of them men over there. All the blood and guts that was that big general over there blood and guts what was his name Patterson Patton General Patton. Oh he got killed over there MacArthur was the commander of the Japan over there. And Eisenhower he was the commander and Mark Clark was the Commander of the Army in Russia I think.

Interviewer: Italy

Newell: So I was glad when the war was ended and I heard about a lot of it. We won't ever see peace no more.

Interviewer: Did the newspapers cover the concentration camps?

Newell: No I don't never read a newspaper much. Some my wife listens to the news sometime I do now and their terrible the news is terrible. And I'm just glad it's over.

Interviewer: How long were you in the service? What year did you get out?

Newell: Well if I would have stayed in there until the first of the year I would have had six years in there I guess you would call it six. See I had already been in there in 45 and the first of the year after Christmas that would have been 46.

Interviewer: Some people view the war years as the best years of their life would you agree?

Newell: Huh

Interviewer: Some people view the war years as the best years of their life would you agree?

Newell: No I won't because I don't think that was the best years of my life. Now I'm different I was different from other people. My best years were on the farm back home I'm a farmer and we you know farming is a good life but it's a hard life.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Newell: Well no I guess that's about it.

Interviewer: Okay thank you

Newell: What did that do for you did you learn anything there?

Interviewer: Sure