

John Turner
World War II Veterans History Project
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By: Jean Reynolds
Transcript by Nicole Lomibao

Jean Reynolds: Let's go ahead and get started, Mr. Turner. Let's start with your parents. What were your parent's names and where were they from?

John Turner: My dad's name was James Edgar Turner, Sr. He was from Tennessee and Arkansas. He met my mother while she was teaching school in Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma. My mother's name was Ama Elizabeth McElroy Turner. She taught school in quite a few places until she got married. Then, she had to quit. I can remember here when the first two teachers got married, they didn't have to quit. The lady didn't have to resign. That was quite a while ago, but that was quite a loss of resources when the lady would have to retire.

But my brother and I had built-in kindergarten. She taught us constantly. I almost got started in the third grade when we moved back to eastern Oklahoma, where I was born. But after about six weeks, they started talking about long division. It was all greek to me. They found it out, so they moved me over to the other side of the room. I actually started school in second grade. That's why I graduated at seventeen, worked a year, and then got drafted. But I'm getting ahead of myself. But that was my mother.

JR: How do you spell her first name?

JT: A-M-A. Ama Elizabeth.

JR: Tell me a little bit about your father. What kind of work he did?

JT: Before he was drafted in WWI, he had his own Coca-Cola bottle delivery, when he met my mother and his folks had moved to Arkansas. At my young age, he had a service station [in Chandler] with groceries on the shelf, sort of like a Circle K or 7-11. When the lease ran out on that, he moved down to south Arizona Avenue, which would later become Baugh Market. He died young. He died at 66.

He was a professional painter, but mostly he ran the service station with groceries. He owned it, or had the lease. I remember us kids going from my mother's house running from shade to shade, barefoot, taking his dinner down to him. My mother was a school teacher.

JR: When were you born?

JT: I was born on November 10, 1925.

JR: And where were you born at?

JT: I was born in a little town called Keota, Oklahoma.

JR: How do you spell that?

JT: K-E-O-T-A. Keota. I use Fort Smith, Arkansas as a reference point. I don't know if you know where that it is. It's a bigger town just right across the border. I was born about forty miles west of there. Then you got Spiro, Keota, Stigler, Forum, McAllister and those bigger towns. Up here is Tulsa in Oklahoma.

JR: Do you have brothers and sisters?

JT: I have one brother. He died about five years ago.

JR: Tell me his name again.

JT: His name is James Edgar Turner, Jr.

JR: When was he born?

JT: August 14, 1924.

JR: So he was just one year older than you?

JT: Fifteen months.

JR: You were born in Oklahoma. Your parents were living in Oklahoma at that time. What was it that brought them to Arizona?

JT: It was mostly for my mother's health. She had severe, excruciating pains from sinus problems. Eastern Oklahoma and Arkansas are all damp. People would come back and visit. They'd say, "Why don't you go to Arizona?" Well, things worked for us. Roosevelt paid the World War I Veterans a bonus. The money that my dad got, we used to come to Arizona. That was in 1935.

JR: Going back to your father, you said he was in World War I?

JT: Yes.

JR: Was he in the Army?

JT: He was in the Army, but I don't remember. I just remember that he'd got hurt after the war happened, loading caskets. He was always trying to get the VA to recognize it because he didn't go on sick call when he got hurt. That's sad because he had two of his vertebrae were meshed together. But you know people. I didn't like to go on sick call. I only went on sick call once. They don't like you if you go on sick call. I don't remember. He and his brother both were in the service and they met up in France.

JR: So, Roosevelt paid a bonus to the World War I veterans and that allowed your family to move?

JT: Yes. This was on the throes of the last couple years of the Depression. We grew what we ate; we had a cow and some pigs and chickens. My mother's folks had land; they'd grow things. But, nobody had work. If you study your history and I can remember the early days. I was just six or seven years old. He would be with others waiting for work. He did painting in one of the jobs in Chattanooga; it was painting new railroad cars. Which doesn't sound very exciting, but you had to do it right. He ended up painting, he learned it and he knew.

One thing he taught was when you're painting inside, and you come up to a corner and you want to use up your paint, you need to mix a new batch and stop at the corner. And go on so you don't have two colors. It would create a problem if you had an angle here. That's the way I would do it, I'd be showing everybody. But that was his expertise. Now, when we first come to Arizona, at times he'd get a job painting. He'd paint all day for a dollar. All day. I appreciated that. Now.

JR: That's a lot of work for a little money. Was your family affected by the Dust Bowl, the conditions of the Dust Bowl?

JT: Not like it affected others. The Depression was already there. People that grew crops, it affected them. I remember one time seeing that huge sand thing go over, like out here, which is routine. Oh, it was wicked looking.

JR: When your family came to Arizona, where did you come in initially?

JT: We came to Chandler. The people that kept saying that we ought to go to Arizona, we spent two nights with them in their house because they were close friends. Their son and my mother's youngest brother, she taught them in school in the town where we lived. We were close friends that way. One other person in Chandler was later constable, and had been at the school, he recognized my mother in the early days of eastern

Oklahoma. We knew people out here, but all of our family was in eastern Oklahoma and Tennessee and Arkansas.

JR: When your family came out here, did your family come by train or car?

JT: We came in a car. Someone brought us out. It was a fairly new car then. We came on the old route through Globe on the dirt roads, the way it used to be going to Payson. That took four hours to get to Payson. Now from out here, from our driveway to up there, it's about fifty minutes. As a kid, it scared the daylights out of you going over those mountains.

<Pause 10:18 to 11:32>

JR: We were talking about you guys coming to Arizona and you came right to Chandler. Do you remember what you thought of Chandler? You were only nine at the time, but do you remember what you thought about it being different than Oklahoma?

JT: There's was more to it around the time that I was born, which was about four or five hundred. But it was hot; we came in August. It was hot, but that's what we came for. It wasn't too long before my mother's sinuses were a thing of the past.

That year in September, I started the school here in the fifth grade. I don't know if you know any of the people. My first school teacher was Roy Tribble. I don't know if you ever run until his name or not. Later, he left school and was a lawyer. But he was my teacher for what we call Five B. Then I went on to Five A and so on. That was an interesting time. I was younger. I wasn't old enough to get into trouble at school. I'd watch the older ones do it.

JR: That was at Cleveland, right?

JT: Yes.

JR: Where did your family live?

JT: We lived on South Oregon. It was a block south of the old, old post office. This is post office stuff now, this part of my life. My brother and I shared a vehicle. When I got out of the service, I was still at home. He was at home. We'd drive to work. We would have to park farther away than if we left the car at home. That's the humor part of it. Someone called that to our attention. We changed that pretty quick. We were on one end of the block. We called it 200, but later they said it was 190 South Oregon. Down here on the end at that end building was where the post office was.

JR: Tell me about some of your memories growing up in Chandler prior to you graduating and then joining the service. Tell me what you remember about Chandler.

JT: I was thinking earlier that one of the unusual things was when I was in the sixth grade. One morning, I woke up and there was snow all over the place. You don't see that much here in Chandler. So going to school, it was quite a novelty. By the time recess came around, there was very little on the ground. That was an unusual thing, to see snow here in Chandler. I think it snowed once or twice. Just to see it coming down in some places.

JR: Did you play in the snow?

JT: Oh, yeah. Even at recess, we were always getting hit by the snow. On the other hand, when we lived in Payson, once it snowed for forty-eight hours before it quit. We had thirty-nine inches on the ground. They had to call out the National Guard.

JR: What do you remember about the downtown area as you were growing up?

JT: The main thing downtown was the Arrow Pharmacy on the corner. In those days, there was no road straight through the park area. It was just the whole park. The people got to complaining like the heavier cars gearing down and going around one side or the other. They put the road through the park, which was unusual. Later when I bought my first vehicle, this 1936 Ford-- this ties into this so I'm not just bouncing around-- I got off from the Post office. I'd go on down to watch them practice track because I ran track in high school, the hurdles and 220 and stuff. My car had straight dual pipes and if you shifted just right, it'd pop. I went down there, picking up speed and shifted. I pulled in there by the school where some kids were on the south side of the main building. This patrolman pulled in right beside me, an old granddaddy type to me. He started walking back and forth, giving me a talk and a lecture while rolling a cigarette. I was listening. Then he drove away.

I've gotten two warnings. One has to do with the post office, the other one was going to a singing on Sunday. I was going to a seminar in Phoenix because I was Assistant Post Master. I was going down the freeway, went past an 18-wheeler, pulled over. Next thing here was a patrolman behind me. I wasn't speeding. He said, "Well, Mr. Turner, you pulled back in front of the 18-wheeler too quick." He says, "What if he hadn't put on his brake?" You know he explained it to me. They don't do that to you now. That did more for me than anything. From then on, if I passed them, I got well ahead of them.

The other time, I had a 1964 GMC suburban. I'd take a load from church down to a singing. It was on Sunday afternoon going to Eloy. I was going 70, I'm sure. All of a sudden I looked through there and there was that red light. I slowed down. It was a patrolman for Queen Creek. He said, "Mr. Turner, you goy a lot of bodies in that vehicle and it was going pretty fast." I said, "I was trying to make it by 2:30 to Eloy." We started talking about old times and stuff. He said, "You need to watch it." That went along ways with me. I've never gotten a ticket. I hope I never do. But those things weren't tickets, those were reminders.

JR: Tell me a little bit about the San Marcos Hotel. Thinking back to the late 30's and early 40's, what do you remember about the hotel?

JT: I told you about the palms they set up which were small. When I was in high school, sometimes I'd come home to eat. I'd be running really fast and I could jump over them. I can't jump over them today because they're about 30 feet high. It's amazing that you go and see stuff.

You know how big Sky Harbor is? When I was in the 10th or 11th grade, a friend of mine had a married sister who lived over there on 24th street area. We'd hitch hike over there, ride the street car back and forth until we got tired of it. Then there was a thirteen story professional building, we'd walk over to it. Go up and down the elevator until we got tired of it or feel like they were going to throw us out. Then we do go back out to his sister's house and check in and buy some crackers and cheese. Before we did that, we went over to Sky Harbor, which was just 2 metal buildings and a few airplanes, like a small city airport. Touch anything you wanted to, and come out and start walking, and hope someone would give us a ride. Does that give you an idea of how long I've been here? When you go over and go through Sky Harbor, how big it is. But that was in 1940, something like that.

JR: What other memories do you have of high school? You said you were on track.

JT: I remember before high school, I got a certificate for missing only five words for the year during spelling. I enjoyed most of the subjects. I enjoyed shorthand. The teacher that had shorthand, bookkeeping and typing was the same teacher. It took me two years to get a year and a half credit in typing. She started mixing shorthand with typing. She'd read off what we were transcribing, then we'd go into the typewriter room and translate it. If we made one mistake, we couldn't erase, you had to retype it. I thought, I'd sure like to take that, but I'm not going to do that. They say shorthand is the easiest, quickest thing to forget, that's true. I can

remember a few, but I'd be lost. I knew it pretty good. Her name was Pollard. Linda Pollard.

JR: You said your dad owned a gas station and store? Can you tell me a little bit about it and where it was?

JT: What's called Frye Road, the main drag used to be called Denver. Even the school out there used to be called Denver School. I don't know if it's still Denver. That was Denver Street. A lot of the streets were named cities and states.

But there was another station called, he sold it, called Rio Grande, later called Richfield. A guy across the street had a service station, he sold Shell. Then there were vacant lots all the way down, almost to the Arrow Pharmacy, which was on the corner. Then, there was a building, a grocery store which was Wrights Market, where my brother worked for three or four years.

He [John's father] would buy wood, the Indians would bring in wood for sale. A lot of wood was used in heating and cooking back before Chandler got gas and electricity, before they had phones. It was just a way of life. Until his health was such.... Then he'd had a certain lease, when it run out, he went down to a new building down two blocks south on the other side, on the corner of Elgin and Arizona Avenue.

JR: The original gas station was on the southeast corner of Frye and Arizona Avenue?

JT: It was on the southeast corner. On the right side were old time people called Whitten. They had the All States Motel. They had motels [rooms] with "Oklahoma," had them identified that way. They had about twenty of them. It was his son that my dad leased the service station from.

JR: You dad leased it from the Whitten family. How many years did he operate that service station?

JT: Probably about five, six, seven years, maybe longer.

JR: Was that in the 1930's or 1940's?

JT: It was in the 1940's. It could have been maybe the last part of 1939 or 1941. My brother and I would always take our friends down and head straight to the pop box. He never did gripe at us or say anything. We'd get one for us and one for them. I just wish I'd been older and I could have helped him in it. I was only about nine years old. Even when I was older I'd check tires that'd come in for air and few stuff like that.

- JR: When you were in high school, you said you ran track. What was your favorite part of track? What were you best at?
- JT: I ran the 220 in a medley. That starts out at a 110, two 110s, a 220, and the 440. Lefty ran the 440, he wasn't all that fast, but he could hold out. The old mayor, Raul Navarrete, not sure if you heard his name before or not; he graduated the same year I did. He could run the mile, he mostly ran the 880 and the mile. He could run a quarter of a mile with no problem at all. But 220 was my limit and the 100. I'd do the 100 in the shuttle relay, which you stand here and run back and forth. Exchange the baton as you reach out, then run. Now, the medley relay was the two 110's, I ran the 220 and someone ran the 440. If I started out and there was a couple of girls that I knew were sitting there, I could run fast.
- JR: Did you ever compete? Did you have a competition that was in a certain region?
- JT: Oh, yeah. We had a meet in Mesa. I was running the 200 low hurdles. When you take them good, it feels good. If you can knock a match off the top of a hurdle, you're doing good. They had a track that was a cinder track. It was a good track. I'm sure I would have placed but I hit the fourth hurdle and slid off all the way to the next. That ruined me the rest of the year because I took them too high. Just enough to lose. But the low hurdles was my bailiwick. I enjoyed that. Just running the 220 or the 100 yard.
- JR: Now, you said you graduated in 1943 from Chandler High. Do you remember where you were on December 7, 1941?
- JT: Let's see. I remember the paper when it came out. I was thinking that where I was in 1941. I was at the tail end of my sophomore year, or start of my junior year, thinking that the war will be over by the time I graduate. But it hung on. See, I was still young. When I graduated at seventeen, then I worked a year at the post office. Then, I got drafted before I turned eighteen.
- JR: Yes. Some people have vivid memories of where they were when they heard about Pearl Harbor being attacked.
- JT: Well, I don't know. It was daytime of a morning. I'm sure I was at home, but the paper came. They wouldn't have shown it that day. The radio would have been on. One way or the other, I'd heard about it and that's what went through my mind. I remember a few days earlier, the Japanese guy was visiting Washington, which I don't think he knew they were

going to bomb it. They had certain pride, I think they would have told us they were going to, but they didn't.

JR: You said that in 1943, you graduated and then worked for a year at the post office.

JT: They needed them because everyone was gone, going into the Army. The first thing our job was, mine was sorting the mail to Williams Air Force Base. They had about thirty or forty squadrons. You'd get the squadron, tie it out, then send it. We had the contract clerk post office out there that we dealt through there. Then the military people did the other part. So, it was sorting the mail and the bags to send out there to them. The military would get them and it would already be sorted out to squadrons.

JR: So all the mail for Williams Air Force Base was coming into Chandler?

JT: Yes, until it used be known as Chandler until Mesa. See, a lot of the people came into the base. We weren't big enough to have that many rentals. We had our part of the base, but most of it was Mesa, east Mesa. So, recently, the last two years, it's been known as Mesa or the Gateway Airport because they took over some things. I'd been retired for years, it doesn't make any difference to me. But there was a certain amount of pride.

JR: The Air Force base was kind of part of Chandler?

JT: Yeah. There would always be a group that would come in that were members of the church. We'd go over here to the Church of Christ at 400 block North Alma School Road. They'd come in, they'd work for us and thanked us for using them instead of setting them on the sidelines. Then they'd leave. That's why eventually people would come back here. They saw what kind of weather Arizona had and the people. I don't know, I don't think I ever went back to Pasa Robles, out by Camp Roberts. But that's a different story.

JR: You were drafted. When were you drafted?

JT: I think it was the 29th day of March 1944 [Correction: April].

JR: You went into the Army?

JT: The Army.

JR: Where did you enter service at?

JT: I reported for induction over in Mesa. We drove a bus all night to the induction station to Fort MacArthur in San Pedro, California. We were there for a couple of weeks. We got uniforms, like what you do when you get started. That was the second night I was ever away from home in eighteen and a half years. There was this one time that I went home with my aunt and uncle. I rode with them in their horse and wagon from Eastern Oklahoma, one night. You don't think that's devastating.

JR: How did you feel about that?

JT: Well, it had to be done. Just like overseas. You don't like it, but where could you go? You just buckle down.

JR: How did your parents feel about you being drafted into the service?

JT: They didn't like it. My brother stayed home because he was working at a grocery store. He was the mainstay for their welfare, so he got a classification. I had none. It didn't bother me. I later found out when I was hounding him for a dime or a nickel when I was younger, that he was working and letting half of his salary go to our grocery bill. I owed him. I really owed him and he would say I didn't.

Jumping a little ahead, he started working at the post office when I was in the service. When I came back, he was there. So we had a long time together in church, the post office at work and school. I end up happily with his wife. Both of us were with our first wives fifty-something years and got kids. It's a joy to be around someone that knows all the in and outs of me and her. Her dad was a preacher in the church where we went to. She had two sisters. But it's nice. I love to make her laugh.

JR: Going back to when you first entered the service, where did you receive your basic training at?

JT: From California, they sent me to Camp Roberts. They had a seventeen-week course that you started. First, at Fort McArthur, when they measured me, I thought I wore a size eight shoes. They gave me nine and a half Charlies, that's nine and a half C's. I told them I was a size 8. Then I picked up two buckets of sand in my feet and I just leveled out. You ever hear of someone with an old pair of GI shoes that start running? Your foot slaps. I wasn't heavy enough to get the soles to be in hardly. I went in and weighed about 138. I got out and weighed about 148. I grew and am still growing. That was an interesting story; I was going to tell you that.

JR: So you were doing your basic training at Camp Roberts?

JT: Yes, we got all of our basic training at Camp Roberts. We got all our equipments, signed and left by train to go to Camp Roberts. You ever been there? It's in California. It's a huge place. It had 40,000 infantry and 40,000 artillery training at the same time. The artillery was separated. It's still the National Guard Place.

One of the first unusual things that was scary: about the third week of training, we walked everywhere because it was infantry. We had to go out and dig our own foxhole about this far out that we could hunker down in. Then after we did, they started a lightweight tank, not a heavy one. It's coming all around over the top of us. They were having fun. That was scary. After they went over us, we're supposed to get up and throw a sock of dirt at them. That represented a hand grenade. The sock never did go off, but a hand grenade would. That was what they call the Anti-Tank Range. Certain things you did. You'd march out to there. We were always asking people about who's going through training at other barracks of what was coming up. That was scary. I was a young man. I wasn't walking around worrying about it. If you dug a hole and had a tank or truck drive over you, it would be no fun to know you're right in there.

JR: What was your military specialty?

JT: I was a rifleman. I knew how to take out an M1 and a BAR and a machine gun apart blind-folded. That's what I was in the infantry. I learned how to use the mortars. It wasn't like the Air Force or some of the others. Your specialty was a lot of things, as opposed to the Navy. Each week had a particular deal.

In the meantime, we were always hiking. In some how or another, when you were hiking, you were going uphill in columns of two's. Two or three hours later, you're still going uphill and you're going back to the barracks. You never go downhill. I don't know how they did that. It was always uphill.

One of those weeks, it was the twenty-five mile hike with a full field pack. That lasted all night. About three or four hours into it, we'd have our breaks about every fifty minutes. That was pretty good. I would love to just lean back and close my eyes for ten minutes. But I felt like if I did, I'd never wake up. So all I could do was sit there and lean against my pack and hope I didn't go to sleep. We went the twenty-five miles.

Then they have a nine-mile speed march that you have to take at about fifty minutes. I thought it was longer. We started out. You double time for fifty minutes, then you regular, then you double-time. It wasn't a march, but you did go in columns of two. We did a lot of marching, too. You go to get the nine miles in the proper time. I kept thinking, "It's been

an hour, we'll get our break." Just before they'd say the stop the double time, that's when we'd stop. It was when we were walking. Just before, I was thinking, "I'm going to fall right over on my face." Then they'd stop double-timing and I could rest. That was nice. I kept thinking, "I'm going to get a break here." Finally they way they took us, the parade ground was almost a whole mile long. They had barracks, double barracks all around, regiments. When we came up and I saw the parade ground, we were on the other side of it. I knew there was no break. So we just buckled down, went straight, and headed across and it was over. Nine miles in fifty minutes.

JR: That's unbelievable.

JT: I don't do that on my treadmill.

JR: So you were walking and basically running?

JT: Yeah, it was a run. There's other things mixed with it. You'd go out and run problems. And we walked everywhere. We'd go a climb this three or four story thing. That I wouldn't have done for love nor money. Up those rope ladders. If you don't know how, you work yourself to death. You got to keep yourself in and use your feet to get up. You go over and go down the other side. It would have been nice to have jumped over and broke a leg, but you just don't do those things.

When you go out to the rifle and shooting range, there's different deals. They have the pits. You take your turns in the pits when they're shooting. I don't know if you ever heard a bullet go past you. You hear it in the Western movies. They sort of hit. Then it's pinging, ricocheting. When a bullet goes past you, it's cutting the air. It's just like that. (claps hands) It makes that sound. You're in that pit ready to mark when it hits the target. You hear that, it's amazing.

We'd go out at nighttime. They'd shoot a deal where we could hear it and we could learn how far away it was. You'd see the flash. We calibrated by our thumb. You'd get it to the right place to 50 or whatever it was. When a person is shooting a mortar, they don't see the target. You're up here seeing the target. They fire one for you for effect. You tell them if it's too far, one thumb or two thumbs too far to the right. Then they make the correction and try again. When they hit it, I say, "Fire for effect." And they lob them in. They had mortar squads; they had machine gun squads and regular infantry. I was with the armored infantry. I was the machine gun on a half track. At times when I was there, we were leaving the track going through, clearing out the woods. But that's getting ahead.

JR: So you were in basic training for seventeen weeks?

JT: Yeah, in California. One of the drastic ones is when you crawl under the machine gun fire. You're up and they're shooting about this high above you. You crawl up towards the machine guns. You get so far and there's a telephone pole or tree or something. You hug it and then you're only about this far. You can tell where it is because it's hitting the dirt over here.

The time we crawled through in California, there were three guys over here and I was over here inching along. They had run a regiment right through ahead of us. These were water-cooled 30-caliber machine guns. I had an air-cooled machine gun overseas. But they didn't check it and they ran us through. Before we got through, the water ran out and that barrel would heat, expand or shrink. It threw bullets everywhere. It hit the three guys on the right of me, killed one and wounded the other two. They blew the whistle and said, "Hold your ground." This was at night time. They didn't tell us what it was. I started cheating; I started inching forward. I went under that three or four times. Two of those times was in Texas, one time in California. At night with the tracers going, it's weird.

One time, you go so far, you roll over onto your back. Then take your rifle and bayonet and put it over what represents the bottom rung of the barbed wire. Get it over then and start inching forward on your back until you get under it, then you roll back over and finish. I was there rolling over and I brought my hand up over like this. It took me thirty minutes to get my hand back down.

JR: Did it get caught?

JT: No, it was just there, but it sure did seem like it was that long. It's a wonder I didn't get shot. But you do things like that. Then I wouldn't have had to go overseas, I could have got home sooner. No....

JR: When was it that you deployed overseas?

JT: First, I finished, but I got a delay in route furlough. I came back for ten days. Then leaving here, you knew the next place you were going was overseas. It was a weird feeling that maybe it might be the last time [to see his family in Chandler].

I went to Camp Maxey in Paris, Texas for eight weeks for advanced combat training. There, they get serious. They tell you, "If no one can kill you in training, no one can." That's why I'm here to tell you that that's true. They did stuff in Texas. In Texas, we had problems. It rained once in California, only rained once. The first week, it rained lightning and thunder and all this melodrama. We were going out on a night

problem. It was raining. We got our instructions and our azimuth, you know, your compass reading. We crossed this open field. I wouldn't have been out there for love nor money with all that lightning and stuff. But we did, went across to the lookout. There was the walkie-talkie where they said. They said to come back down for orientation. There's things you do that you wouldn't normally do if you had the election. That was one of several hundred of them.

To get on down to some stuff in Camp Maxey, we did our bivouacking in southern Oklahoma. It's beautiful, all this green and grove and the leaves turning. We were assigned a problem to, well, they said...we had our gas masks ready. They said, "Lay your gas masks here," but they indicated that we didn't need them. Then we had our 22's for shooting blanks at the cadre. They had rifles; they could shoot at us and miss us. They did this in California, too. We'd go down this gulley. You'd learn to see if you saw the bullet hit over here. You'd jump back over here on this side. So they'd shoot right in front or back. Where was I now?

JR: You were talking about bivouacking?

JT: Oh, yes. The cadre had live bullets in their 22s. Before this happened, they threw teargas in on us. They knew what they were doing, they threw teargas in on us. I can see myself now, looking around that huge pine tree, shooting blanks, wishing they were regular, just bawling like a little baby. When we got back to orientation, they said, "Let that be a lesson to you. Do not ever be separated from your gas mask."

Now we can move on fast to the foxhole, to tell you a quick story. It won't take long. I was laying there and it got warm under there. My eyes started watering. I'd swear someone was throwing teargas in on us. But my gas mask was in the half track. I said, "If I live till tomorrow, it's going to be my pillow." But I sweated out the night. Ok, back to Texas.

After we did that and got back, we finished up the eight weeks. Then we were scheduled to go to Camp Myles Standish, a staging area to get ready to go overseas in Massachusetts. We went a long train ride and stopped at Fort Meade for a few extra shots. They like to give you extra shots to work on your teeth. We went down there and were there about two days and got more equipment. Then we went to Boston on the boat to go overseas from Boston. It was a big, fast one. It went by itself; it didn't need an escort. It had 5,000 officers and us peons. It had five, six, seven decks above water and below water. That was a weird thing.

You ever been sea sick? Good for you. Here we were, on the boat. It was nice. I was getting sick. I hate to regurgitate more than anybody in the world. "Regurgitate." I learned that at Chandler High in biology. But

anyway, I hadn't thrown up. I went to what they called the latrine, they called the Head. A Navy guy was in there cleaning up. I looked through. He said, "What's the matter, soldier? You sick?" I said, "No," then turned around and went the other way. About two hours later, we're having an abandon ship drill. Where I was, I was below Slip and B deck, that's below water. But B Deck had to go way up the front, up high for the abandon ship drill. Standing there with the wind, getting the feel of the boat, how it was doing, it just left. Oh, man, I was grateful. I was so grateful that I went back to go and try to get some food. But they said that B Deck had already eaten. You got to eat when B Deck eats. So I went and got me a candy bar at the PX or whatever they call it in the Navy. I never missed another meal. Oh man, I can't go six or seven days without eating. I was glad to not be sick. Then we showed up at Liverpool.

When I tell you like it is so far, it's worse than what I tell you. Whatever it is, it gets worse to you. It's actually worse. When you're overseas, you're there long enough to appreciate the guys coming day in and day out across North Africa, and up Italy, and going into that D-Day. You appreciate the fact that all they had to look forward to was living another day. I was in the same category on a shorter frame. I know some of them got hurt. They tell about Iwo Jima. I'm glad I wasn't there. But I was in a bad place too. Even after I came back, they had three more months of fierce fighting after Battle of the Bulge, reading about it and stuff.

JR: I want to go back just a little bit. When you got on the ship to go to Liverpool, how did you feel because you were leaving the US and going to the battle zone?

JT: Some things you don't like to think about. I guess I was able to put them out. You could start dwelling on how you may never see America again or family, but there are other places to think that, too. I didn't think it. To me, I owe all of my coming through it to God. I don't mean that in a way that's flimsy. More than once during the day, I would say, "Yea, though I walk through the shadow of death, I'll fear no evil, for thou art with me." I think God saw something in me because I was a church-going person as a kid. I never did get scared like you think about battle fatigue or fight. I was concerned, but I thought, "Where can I go? Where can I run to? There's no place to run to." You just do it. It's just like I say about these few days; I wasn't there [on the battlefield] that long. That's what goes through your mind.

Then we stopped at Luxembourg City and they gave us a rifle. We went out and zeroed it in. Hearing those shells got your mind messed up. It's becoming real. You're getting closer and it's becoming more real. From Luxembourg City is where we went on into Bastogne. From Liverpool we went to South Hampton. Its nasty, wet, cold. We spent one night there

and then got on the boat to cross the channel, which was the big dirty boat, the English boat.

On the other side, we got off the boat on LCV's, that's like what they used to go ashore. On the day of D-Day, I went ashore on the same thing, but they weren't firing bullets. On the side of the boat, there's places where they load and unload to raise it above the water. The LCV was rocking like this. When it got up to the top, you're supposed to step off of it. If you missed it or went too early... anyway, I hit it. It helped me running the hurdles, I guess. We got on that, went to shore and waited a little bit. Still you can appreciate the guys.

I ask the question: "Who was it in the Battle of the Bulge? Who was it to know that they had a big buildup?" They knew everything else. There were more American soldiers killed in the Battle of the Bulge than American soldiers going into Normandy. Did you know that? I didn't know it either until I read it in documents, that there were more American soldiers killed. They ran over them. I remember reading the *Stars and Stripes* when I was on front about the Normandy Massacre. There was a group of men that they captured, standing in the snow, the tanks had come by and shoot in amongst them until they thought they all had them dead. At the end of the day, when it was almost dark, three of them got up and started running. I believe God makes sure someone is alive to tell of certain atrocities, to not go unknown. That's what I believe. Let's think what they had to put up with.

JR: When you came into Liverpool, you were traveling forward. What month of 1944 was it?

JT: That was the last part of November and maybe the first few days of December. They intended, and did, send us down to Metz, which is southern France. But immediately, we got off the boxcars and onto the truck and headed to Luxembourg City. Patton and his 3rd Army and 4th Armored Division were ordered up there. The next day after we zeroed our rifles in, it was still dark. We went into Bastogne. You don't know what to expect there.

When I got to Bastogne, they let us out of the trucks. I hadn't been assigned to my squad yet. I went in this building where people lived and had a cow in the back. I never did see them. The stairs went up and for some reason, I went up. That's the worst thing to do, but I went upstairs. I could look over and see the whole building. There were mortar shells and rockets were coming in. Just like it was a thunderstorm. I just laid down and went to sleep.

The next morning I got up. That's the days when I was assigned with the 4th Armored Division as a machine gunner on a half track as a replacement. We spent four days and four nights in Bastogne. Every night, they would glide in. When you'd hear the motor going, they'd already dropped their bomb.

The first day I was at Bastogne, one of the guys I sort of made friends with. He could play a piano. Looking across the street down the way, if you've ever seen a doll house where it's open on one side and you play, that's the way most buildings were. We were fortunate though. Up on the second floor was a piano. We were going to get together later that evening, go over there and he was going to play the piano.

Our squad leader and the guys over us said, "No, you stay here in this building. We're getting a squad together." But the ones that went over there, a bomb hit smack dab right over them. It was like someone had cut a cake and just cut that part out. Eleven guys were killed in that bombing. That's not good.

While we were there, there were dead Germans lying around frozen but had our uniforms on, which made it difficult [to identify them]. But one thing they didn't know or realize, was when they parachuted out, they had their own helmets on. The helmets give them away more than anything.

JR: So the Germans were sending some soldiers in dressed in American uniforms?

JT: To infiltrate. At least three times a day, we were changing passwords. At night, you'd have to know the password or you got shot. This one German, I remember seeing him just laying there. It's no fun looking at a dead person. You know the enemy is there. But frozen and in our uniform. I've read a lot about Bastogne later and they're talking about them parachuting in with their helmets. Somebody wasn't all there. But that was good.

JR: I know that happened in the latter part of December, right?

JT: Yes, because I was in Bastogne on Christmas day. New Years was out in the open. But on one of those days, I was walking guard duty on the sidewalk. Air Force was flying over dropping supplies, that is foodstuff. It was called K Rationing: one loaf of bread, a wedge of cheese impregnated with bacon, some canned goods which were old sea rations from World War I; and a D Bar, which was a hard chocolate; some candy and cigarettes. What went on at our half track, they got my cigarettes because I didn't smoke. I got their candy or I got that old D Bar. Quite a

few days all I had was bites off that old chocolate and the hard candy and little boxes of granulated sugar.

As far as water, I never did get to drink out of my canteen because it was frozen solid. I'd lick snow off the tree. It was all the liquid I got, except one time they brought hot coffee out. We had hot cakes, hot coffee and something else in the back of a truck. We'd line up across the snow to get it. I went over somewhere to sit down. You have a little cup that your canteen sits in. The first sip was too hot. I ate some of my stuff. About twenty second later, it had cooled down. Another twenty or thirty seconds, I started to drink it and it had a little sheet of ice. That was the hot coffee. That's how cold it was.

That's when you're digging the two-man foxhole. It's warm; I have to be honest with you. It's warm under a shelter half and another shelter half, and about six or eight blankets. We were in half-tracks or in our own transportation; we could accumulate a bed roll. We had about six or seven Army blankets. We would put the canvas down and the blankets with one or two on us. The other canvas was on the top. In the next morning, there would be a foot or two of snow on top of that.

It would be warm. Like I said earlier, when my eyes started smarting from the warmth, I thought it was gas. You'd dig two or three foxholes a day; that was no fun. About this far down, it was frozen solid. You'd have given anything for an ax or the old-fashioned heavy pick because all we had was what they called an intrinsic tool, a little spade that bent back and the little pick. It looked like toys. But they would work. Once we get through, it wasn't fun. Sometimes when the tanks were nearby, they had an ax on their tank we'd borrow it. You'd hit that and that thing would split. The ice would split. That was like uptown. Then you get down there, it's just dipping it out sort of. We'd get down about two feet, as long as you're below level. It was warm to protect you. Mostly from, if a shell came in and exploded, they explode up. Someone shooting or coming through, no one would be asleep.

JR: Can you describe a little bit for someone who is not familiar, why the battle at Bastogne was important? What was happening there?

JT: Even in France, we were going through taken territory and holding it. We weren't pulling back out and giving it up like in Vietnam. Those poor guys. They'd go out and fight and come back, go out and fight and come back. You would fight through an area, take it and hold it, whether it's woods, buildings, or what. We were in Bastogne. They had just taken it, was holding it. They were surrounded and from there north, it's what they call the Battle of the Bulge or the Breakthrough where they came through. A lot of my fighting was fighting toward the North, cutting the ones who

came through off to join up with the ones on the north side. A place called St. Vith; you'll see it in the map, Malmedy, up that way. But if they had made it to Antwerp, the war would have went on another year at least. They were heading toward Antwerp.

JR: The Germans?

JT: No, Holland, up North. They don't have France. After I left, I read where Patton and his group went across the Rhine. I never did make it to Germany, but they went into Germany. Like I said, three or four months later, it was over.

JR: Can you describe what the fighting was like and what your role was in that?

JT: Usually I would take the machine gun if you leave the track. You have somebody else that helps you. Someone else has ammunition. When you use a machine gun, you don't aim it, you just...you know how a garden hose is. You watch the tracer.

We had left on this particular morning, actually, it was the last morning. We left the half-track. We took what we needed. We'd gone so far and came to an area where we got pinned down. Someone thought about a tank trap in a tree. So they called for machine gun fire over there. So we set up, aimed over there and all around there, up and down the tree. Then we went on.

But later on, we got pinned down again. This is in where no oaks are, now, you know how woods are [a clearing]. We had to lie there at least two hours until the tanks got up. Coming in front of us, where we got up and run and cross the opening into the woods, still going on against the Germans. But after I made that spray and the indicator was to go on, and we were in back of this barbed-wire fence, I picked up the machine gun, lunged forward, and my foot got caught on a barb on the barbed wire. The machine gun wouldn't have been all that hot, but it would have been hot because of the little holes in the covering. It's called an air-cooled machine gun. Then, my friend that dug in with me got my foot loose. I went up another ten or twenty feet and then another ten or twenty. He was coming. I heard him call for a medic. I never saw him again. He got shot.

I imagine wherever machine guns are, they like to knock them out. I didn't have the most ideal assignment, but it was fun shooting with the tracer. That was the start of that day and there were other days like it. It wasn't this bad because we'd lost a guy. Going across the opening, after we got across, we went through the woods flushing them out. We were

probably twenty or thirty yards apart. For all practical purposes, I was there by myself. We weren't holding hands going through.

But every now and then, like this one time, I stepped up behind this tree full of snow. There was just a little opening, probably about twenty yards or so, there stood a German with a Burp gun. If you know or study a Burp gun, a Burp gun is the fastest shooting gun there was then. It put twenty shells in you before he could get his finger off the trigger. In the meantime, the person with me got shot. I didn't have all the parts to the machine gun so I put it on back of a tank. All I had was my M-1, like the others had.

When I saw him and he saw me, like again, it seemed like it was thirty minutes but it wasn't. I brought my rifle up. When I did, he threw his down and yelled "Comrade." Can you imagine the good feeling that is? That meant he surrendered. One guy, "Comrade." I said, "Okay, comrade." He came over, took his parka and belt off. I took him to the Lieutenant. Went back like a nut. See, I was young, yelling "(German-words)," here come five more. I took them over, they took all that stuff from them then they sent them back to the rear. Then we started on through. Every now and then, there were shots coming in, maybe a mortar. I'm probably here too because a lot of the mortar shells were duds. They probably had a lot of people working forced labor, sabotaging some of their ammunition so it wouldn't explode. I'm here to tell you. Here it comes breaking down through the woods and to have it not explode, that's like a Christmas present. But they weren't all like that.

We come to the edge of the woods; it was getting a long in the day. There was another big opening. You could see them over there and they saw us. When they were waiting to see us, here come the barrage of mortar shells in. They kept saying, "Duck! Duck!" I don't know how much farther you can go once you've ducked. It's the ground or below the snow. But when the shell hit, it splattered the Lieutenant's shoulder. They were using concussion shells instead of anti-personnel. That's why I'm here talking to you. The explosion is downward with some outward. Anti-personnel is like a hand grenade, it explodes out.

So it felt like someone had taken a flat board and hauled it off as hard as they could and hit me on the side of the face. That's the way it felt. I had it ringing for two or three days. I answered the phone and no one would say anything... No, that's just thrown in there as a joke.

But, a little later, when it eased up, a tank was there. The Lieutenant had this wound on his shoulder. I was helping to get him on the back of this tank. Me and the other guys were going to help him on. I hadn't been hit or anything. My assistant squad leader came up and said, "Either one of

you two hit or hurt?" Like a nut, I said, "No." He said, "Well, get off, I'll hold him." I'd heard he had a bad case of battle fatigue. It's bad. He was with him and went back. When he did, I was the last one in our squad left that started out that morning. I was the last one on the machine gun squad. The guy with the mortar squad was there.

We started digging in on the edge. All of a sudden, these guys started walking by. I said, "They were talking German." A little bit after that, we heard some shots. Little bit after that, they sent a runner up who said, "You need to pull back. You're about a mile ahead in front of everybody else." That was nice to hear. When you do, when you're digging in, most guys know where the next guys digging in are, and the next guy, because it wasn't right next to them. The guy who knew where the next guy was, he went down to tell the other guy to pull back. Me and the other guy, there were two guys, stayed here. The runner took the message on. I was way ahead of my time and smart even though I was young, I said, "You know, we should go ahead and go on back now instead of waiting. They're not going to come back over here and all go back together."

So, they agreed. We went back. By the time we'd got back, they thought we better move out of there. That's where the tanks were parked. We crawled on the back of the tanks so they could take us back to where the half-track was. We were a mile ahead. We were about a mile or so ahead of our half-track. We were about two miles or so ahead. We get on the back of this tank. I'm hanging on, hanging on to my rifle, and it's cold.

When we got back to the half-track, I reached for my rifle, but I already had it. I didn't even know it. I jumped off and got off the tank. Right there was the foxhole we used the night before, but I'd be by myself.

I tried to get my hands in my pockets to get them warm but they wouldn't go. If you bought a big long thing of bologna and it had fingers on it, you just try to take it and stuff it in your pocket, you can't do it. They were frozen because of all the cold wind against you. I finally got my gloves, my dress gloves. They didn't even give us gloves [appropriate for the conditions].

This is a side issue. But they asked Eisenhower what he wanted: winter uniforms or gasoline? You can read this. He wanted gasoline. I never was wet from here up. I had a field jacket impregnated against water. I had a long coat, but down here, I just had OD, which was Class X-type of uniform, which was just the same as the dress uniform.

JR: So not very thick?

JT: No. My boots had the galoshes on over them but they didn't protect you against the cold. But that was a side issue.

JR: What about your gloves? Did you have gloves?

JT: Little, brown things that were dress gloves. They weren't packs or anything. But they were better than nothing. So I got them off, trying to get them in pocket and I couldn't. I finally got them in there or I'd put them under my arms. It's hard to tell you how cold it was out there.

There was one night we came in, my buddy and I, we hadn't dug a foxhole yet. We just laid our stuff out behind the back side of the track and pulled it over us. I'm amazed we didn't freeze to death that night. But anyway, the tanks went on, so I was back with my tank driver and the assistant squad leader. One of us would hold him. Him and me, that's all that was there. I went in the foxhole to get ready to lay down. He told me that I need to set the 50 caliber guard for an hour, in about an hour.

So in about an hour when it was my turn, I went out, my pants looked like I had just walk out of a swimming pool. Laying in the snow all day. It's so cold it just freezes. But up here, I was all right. So I sat there behind the 50 caliber just on the alert. I was relieved in an hour by some other people. Went and got back into the deal, sopping wet again. The next morning when I got up, the pants were like they steam dried. They were dry. That's what you go through day in and day out. And thankful you're alive.

But after that day and we'd lost so many, they said we needed to pull back into Luxembourg to get replacements. See they had three units: two up and one back or one up and two back all the time. So we must have been the one up and two back. The way their system is, which works. Anyway, about the middle of the next day, they decided we'd pull back into Luxembourg. So it was just me and the assistant squad leader and the tank driver. We went back, stopped at a little town called Hassell, Luxembourg.

We got to stay in these people's house overnight. They kept a fire going. I got to sleep with my combat boots off, just my socks. The next morning when I woke up, I tried to get my shoes on and my feet were twice the size as they were the night before. I couldn't get them on. I could just barely get my galoshes on over my feet, not over my combat boots.

So, I hobbled down and got a hot breakfast at the place where they had their deal set up. And then after that, I ate. Then, I came back and I was trying to clean my rifle on these people's dining table, hobbling around there. You know things work for me, like I told you. The assistant squad

leader said, "Turner, what's wrong?" I said, "My feet hurt. I can't get my combat boots on. They're really in pain." He said, "You go to the medic." He gave me an order to go to the medic. I would have waited another two days. I would have probably lost two or three toes.

But I went down there, left my rifle all apart on these people's table. As far as I know, it's still there. The first one, they looked at me, then sent me back to the next aid station. There, they took my galoshes and wrapped them in gauze, then sent me back to another one. From there, they had what they call a 104th Field Evac Hospital, a huge tent with guys on litters. From there, they had one of the military ambulances pick me up with some others and took me to that tent. But anyway, the idea was after seeing them, I was worthless to be out in the snow anymore.

JR: You had frostbite?

JT: Yeah, severe frostbite. I didn't know. I was fortunate, except for getting slapped on the side of the face.

JR: All this time you're part of the 4th Armored Division?

JT: Company C, 53rd Armored Infantry Battalion. They scheduled me to go on a train back to Paris. After they got my weapons and hand grenades and all that, so they don't send that back. When I got to Paris, I was there about a week at what they had made into a nice building for a hospital.

JR: Was this after the Battle of the Bulge?

JT: No, it was still going on. It went on until they got it cleared out at least another thirty days and from there on.

JR: So you were sent back in January 1945?

JT: This would probably be the second week in January. Then, that was from the front. Then after a week of them poking needles in me, I couldn't feel it. They decided to send me to the UK, as they call it, the United Kingdom, that's England. So, I was flown back to southern England.

There, I was in the hospital at least a month or six weeks. They kept checking it every day. I was still a litter case when I showed up back going by the Statue of Liberty. It took eleven days on an old ship that every time the wave came, the propellers would come out and shake. But it was going in the right direction. But I didn't walk as such for two or three weeks after they sent me to Brooks Convalescent Hospital, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Then they gave us some kind of therapy. They'd give us a straight jigger of whiskey every morning, which I wouldn't even drink.

This other guy, a little older but younger, he stepped up to the counter. The nurse gave him his, marked it off, then gave me mine. He downed his, I downed mine. It was like swallowing two lit matches. I headed for the drinking fountain. From then on, I'd sip it. But I didn't do it very much unless they forced me.

JR: That was for the pain?

JT: That was to create new capillaries. A lot of this stuff got froze off. It was to make new capillaries.

JR: They were trying to increase circulation?

JT: Yeah. I got a nice interesting story to tell you later. It's embarrassing, but I'll tell it. After I was at Brooks Hospital, I was there about three or four weeks. They determined, well, they called me over to headquarters, they said, "Well, Turner, we're checking your points. Looks like you warrant enough points for getting out." They had a point system. So many points for overseas, points for civilian, for your medals and things like that. It looked like I had one point [lacking], that's the downer. So I went back over to the barracks. About an hour later, they sent a runner and said, "Turner, they want you over again." So I went over there and they were figuring out. They said, "Looks like you got enough points." They probably didn't give me credit for my Bronze Star, my Purple Heart or whatever else. I have two stars for the European Theater. In less than an hour, I was on the train coming home. That was a good feeling.

JR: Was that in July?

JT: No.

JR: That was earlier?

JT: No, well, I'm getting ahead. Let me go back one more. First, I got a convalescent furlough for forty-five days so I could come home. Enjoyed that life. Then I had to go back [to Texas]. I still didn't know what was going to be [happening]. They called me over and wanted to know-- well, I got to get this story in. Things worked for me. When I got back from home, at the train station, I was walking to where we catch the bus to go to the hospital. As I was walking, it was still dark, not too dark, but dark enough. I could look up ahead as far as the house next door across the street. There was two guys standing, leaning against this column. They separated; one stayed here, the other went up into this area, sort of an alcove. I thought, "Man, that's weird." I stood on the front. That's weird. This is what I thought: when I get up there, I'll get as close to the middle

of them as I can. I should have turned around and went back to the train station.

But I didn't. I went on, walked right on through the middle and came on down. About a distance of a couple of these rooms, I heard this running. I dropped everything, turned around and I was ready. They lost their surprise. They peeled off. I saw a place and went in and had coffee until it got daylight. I didn't think too much of it.

But the next day, when I was at the hospital at Fort Sam Houston, they were giving us orientation. They said that we'll probably be getting passes to go into San Antonio. They said, "When you do, whatever you do, don't be on the sidewalk of a night by yourself. Every night an American soldier is killed in San Antonio. Every night." They thought I had \$200 or \$300 on me. They thought I was getting out of the service. They didn't know I was coming back.

You get your first \$100 when you are mustered out. You get your back pay settle, which is nothing. But I didn't have anything, but \$20 or \$30. I'd been home on furlough. That would've made them mad, if nothing else. But, see, I could have been dead. No one would have known it. I just came back from the snow. But something was working for me.

Just like that assistant squad leader. He said, "Turner, what's wrong?" I just told him. He said, "You go the medic." Because I got off of the tank when he got on. I didn't get killed in training. Like they said, if you couldn't.... It worked out.

Anyway, when they said I could come home, and I came home. In a couple hours I was on the train coming from San Antonio to home. I came in early morning, carrying my duffel bag. I stopped by the post office. Then, my brother was working there. I thought I better stop to tell him to call mother, so it wouldn't startle her. He did. I was just a block away. Then, I'm going to get to a funny deal. Well, not that funny.

There was a young girl that I dated off and on. I wrote letters to her. I had her picture in my helmet. Her dad was the principal of the high school, one of the principals. Her mother took my place when I went into the service at the post office. It was never anything serious, but she had graduated. I went to her prom thing. Her parents had me over for dinner one night. We were sitting there, enjoying the meal. You know how bad my hands got frozen? The nerves would twitch. I was eating with a fork. All of a sudden, the fork flew out on the floor. Oh, mercy, you'd think you were watching a comedy. I think they knew. She went to college and things.

JR: What family was that?

JT: Her last name was Wilson. There were some other Wilsons that were teachers, but he was in the Administration. She had one sister. We went to the same church and got to know each other. She was probably about two years younger. I rode with them down to check out entering college in Tucson. It just went away. Maybe they thought I'd never make enough money. But I got paid handsomely with my position at the Post Office. Most of the time, I made more than the Post Master because I had years in. But I never made Post Master because I had different politics. That's another story.

JR: Let's go back a little bit. I want to ask you a couple questions related to when you were over there serving in France and in that area, you talked about how you captured that one single German soldier, and then there were others. In your unit that you were with, did you ever capture any other soldiers?

JT: No. That was my last day. Things were looking up for us then, except there was still fierce fighting. There might have been a few Germans that saw their opportunity to get out of it. They weren't treated like the ones at Malmedy. They hounded into us over and over, "Do not shoot your prisoners." When they interrogated, the stuff they can get out of them and match it up with someone else, the war would have been over a year earlier.

But there are guys, and I don't fault them too much, when day after day, they see their buddies killed or the others killed right before them... My frame of mind hadn't changed. I still had a compassion. When these guys come up and they were going through their pockets, getting their razors and all the stuff. I had pity for them.

But I liked the guy that didn't shoot me. The other guys came out because I yelled. We each got startled. I can still see him. If I'd have shot him, I'd have saw him and what had happened. I don't have to go through that. Shooting a machine gun, you don't know what you hit. You do what you have to do. I would have done what I had to do. And felt clean about it.

I'll tell you one story, I saw a war documentary. It had to do with airplanes. The B-17 was going down. The German plane was coming around for a final kill. He saw the tail gunner there. Instead of hitting his trigger, he just peeled off. Sometime at the end of the war, this guy was still alive. He was able to go through records and found this pilot. They were bawling like little babies.

I would too, I almost am now. I would too if that guy was here. I don't know why. It would just be something we'd have in common. I had no animosity against the Germans except it would have built, it would have built day in and day out, you know, seeing guys. I think about the guys coming across North Africa and up Italy. I don't know if there were guys that would have lasted that long. See, I just lasted about a year and six weeks or so. That's a long time when you have shells going by.

When they checked me out at Fort Sam Houston, I was supposed to have two pair of shoes. All I had was one. They docked me \$5 and something for that pair of shoes I didn't have. Did you know that one bullet whizzing by is worth more? My kids say they're going to make a stink about it after I die. Isn't that a shame? I had no shoes at all when I got to San Antonio. They issued me a pair of low corduroys, which you're supposed to have two pair. \$5 and something.

JR: You can just think about certain people that stand out in your mind, so what do you remember about some of the men that you served with?

JT: Most of the time, most of the ones I was with was in California. There were different ones, but there was never that closeness. There was one guy that walked behind me when were walking in columns of two. One time, he was walking on my heels. But what do you do? He wobbled.

Overseas you're thrown in with the replacements. In the early days, you'd go in as a group. If we'd have took all those guys from California and kept them together, it would have been a different ball game. There were guys almost forty and guys my age. They were drafting them up pretty old because they were at the bottom of the rung. I was just eighteen. It was all new to me, being away from home, but you adapt. I remember a few guys, but none of them would come over and help take your pack off or do this. You did it for yourself.

JR: When you were part of the 4th Armored Division, you were serving as a replacement basically?

JT: Yes. The guys were just like the day that I left. Eight or ten, and that's just in my squad, others were killed. It was going on like that, over and over. As replacements come in, if they're fortunate, I guess they get to stay.

But I don't know if I'd want to change anything about it now. But I'm out of it. If I'd have lost two feet, I'd be different. The two, I don't remember which ones, but the big toe and the one next to it, looked just like a couple of overcooked prunes. I could just see the fact that they had to be taken off. But they came back. I was thankful for that.

JR: What would be your strongest memory from your experience during the war?

JT: There was one time, but I'm just going to be facetious... Going through and getting your shots. Those guys like to josh you. You go into the dispensary, there's two guys giving shots. One guy gets a shot on one side, the other guy gets a shot on the other side. They say, "Okay, break it off, make two lines." I'm glad it wasn't me. But some of those guys got the same shot twice.

After they threw teargas in on us, that wasn't fun. They marched us back to the base and it was just about an hour after dinner. They didn't give us time to clean up, just marched us over to the barracks and we were sitting there eating. All those fumes came alive. We were sitting there eating that good food and bawling again like a little baby. It's all in your clothes.

I remembered that time when I was lying in the foxhole, my eyes smarting.

JR: Did you ever experience that teargas again while you were actually out on the front?

JT: No, no gas. They knew better than to use it. You know the best smelling gas is phosgene. If you ever go by an alfalfa field after someone mows it at the right time, it smells good. Phosgene smells almost exactly like that. If you don't get a mask on, you'll drown in your own vomit. They'd give us two or three different gases when we'd go through the gas chamber. I'd have to say, "Turner, 0363." That's my name with the last four numbers of my serial number before they'd let me out. That would have been a bad time to forget my serial number. Then you got the experience of it. There was a little bit of mustard gas, tear gas, phosgene and something else. No, I think they were ready, but if they knew they used it, the other side would use it. The same way, they shouldn't have shot those guys at Malmedy. We shouldn't have deals going on that, like Bush set up, doing the prisoners.

JR: Where they keep the prisoners of war?

JT: Not to do things to them to make them... We wouldn't have done that. We had comradery. It was a law. You couldn't do it, but they told us the reason why. The war would be a lot shorter. They'd know how to interrogate.

I feel like some were shot that knew about the build up in the Battle of the Bulge. If they could have got that out of them, it would have never

happened. If there is any redeeming qualities of all of this, that's it. And me being embarrassed when my fork went out on the floor.

My family treats me like I'm something special. I know I am in a way. But I want to make sure that I was just there long enough to appreciate the guys that had been there day in and day out. If you don't get killed or wounded, that's all you have to look forward to. I'm thankful.

Two or three times in training, and going to the hospital down the street in San Antonio, I could have been killed. And I wasn't. I caught that helicopter ride down from Payson, got a quadruple [bypass], but I'm still here. They said, "When we give a guy a ride down, he's usually out." But I looked at the scenery.

JR: So you were in Payson when you had a heart attack?

JT: Yeah, I was out. My wife liked to use the clothes line. I'd be shaking it and I'd get the pain. I said, "That's it, I'm going to the doctor." I went down. He said, "No, send him straight to the hospital. If he needs help, we'll get him there." So, I drove to the hospital. They checked me in, got the helicopter ready.

Next thing I know I was at Good Samaritan. Next thing I know, it's three days later. I guess I was out halfway. But I had a quadruple bypass. That scar now, it reminds me of it. I touch it and I go through the wall.

You ready? It's sort of derogatory, but it's my thoughts. Every time you're in the service, they move you from one place to another. They check you and give you all that other stuff. They drill on your teeth like they got guys that need to learn. In southern England in the hospital, I was in the dentist's chair. The guy pushed so hard that the drill quit running. Can you imagine? The drill stopped like getting it caught in something. That didn't feel good.

When I was out, married, my teeth started decaying a little. They had a Veteran's Hospital set up over on Papago called Papago Barracks. I hated to go to the dentist, but if I was going to go, at least they'd do it, I wouldn't have to pay for it. I went over there, they looked and said, "We'll pull all of them, but we won't work on any of them." They'll pull all of them, but they won't work on any.

One bullet going by you is worth more again. I went a few more weeks or a month, and I thought, "I got to go to the dentist." I called Dr. Purnell that was here in Chandler that I'd gone to once or twice as a kid. I went in there, ready to let him do the drill the same way. He put shots in there to deaden it. Man, I thought that felt so good, I wanted to go back. No, I

didn't really, but now, the dentist isn't all that bad. When they do it without any deadening and hitting the nerve. My son, he could tell you, when he was in school, I'd go by and pick him up and take him to Dr. Purnell. He'd tell him, "You better not hurt me, my dad is sitting out there." One time I took him when he was real small. I could leave the post office anytime because I gave them ten or eleven hours a day for eight and gave them back a year and a half of sick leave. He was in there and it was getting past. I should be back at the office. Finally, Dr. Purnell came out and said, "John, Jimmy will be out pretty soon. I had to pull two teeth. He's been able to pick out two toys and he can't make up his mind." He was taking all that time picking out his toys that he was getting for pulling his tooth. Is that true or not?

Jimmy Turner: Yes, it is.

JT: That's him.

JR: Do you remember where you were on VE Day?

JT: What day was that?

JR: That was in May 1945.

JT: I had to have been working for the post office. I usually don't take my vacation until July. I would have been working at the post office.

JR: What was the date when you actually returned back to Chandler?

JT: From the service? That would have been about June or July. July 11. Then by the 1st of August, I was already back working at the post office.

JR: On VJ Day, that's when they signed...

JT: I remember the bombs going off, but I don't remember where I was. I wasn't that into it. I appreciated the guys and I don't fault them for dropping it. That had to get their attention. Someone that would bomb you without you knowing it. The proper thing was to declare war then do it. I know, if they'd have won, it wouldn't have made any difference. I don't remember if it was Roosevelt or someone else that said that they they just didn't realize that they'd woken a sleeping giant. That's what we were. They had to come back, and they did it and we did it. It came down to us young guys. It was for the old guys that had the mind and the brains to keep it going too. And the Cadre.

I'd wake up on Saturday mornings, I'd think that I hope it's still an hour before we have to get up. No, it would be Friday or Saturday morning

because we'd still be doing military stuff. Sunday, unless you're on pass. But waking up on one of the other days, I'd wake up, I'd think "Oh man," because they'd hit the steps, blow the whistle and come yelling in there. That's at 5:00 in the morning. I was hoping it was only 4:00. That was over and over and over.

On Sundays, when I'd get up, I'd hitchhike in and go to church. Most of the time, I'd oversleep. But I'd hitchhike in and I went to church once in Paris because I knew the preacher. But in California, I never did because it was too late. I needed to sleep unless someone woke me up, that was it.

JR: Do you remember when the war in Europe ended? Not the date, but do remember at that time what you were doing?

JT: I remember seeing them sitting around, and them talking about who gets this part and who gets this part. It's too bad they couldn't have done Berlin different. That's sad. Here we were fighting with, not necessarily against, and we couldn't decide how to keep Berlin open as a rightful pass.

JR: What medals or citations did you receive?

JT: Do you see them? I got the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. I was entitled to a Purple Heart. The Combat Infantry's Badge and the Peace Medal, two Battle Stars on my European Operation. The Good Conduct Medal, which when my son was playing war, he lost it out there among the stuff. I didn't know about that for months. That was all right with me. I'm real easy to get along with.

Almost all the people that had me for supervisor, and my brother, will say I was fair and even human. My brother got the hardest end of it because he had to supervise the carriers. They were the, not that there's anything against them, but they worked harder peddling a bike or walking, doing this or that. The inspector told me one time that a clerk at the post office did a lot more jobs than a carrier. A carrier does one job and does it every day. Sorts his mail, put it in the carry bag and puts it at the house. But you've got to know rules and regulations. They deal with people. I'm just saying that because he said it. That's true. The carrier just like Lefty would probably tell you, he was always a carrier. Then we had the rural routes. Everyone wanted a rural route.

JR: Let's talk a little bit about that. When you came back from the war, you said pretty soon after that, you started working at the post office. Did you get married? When did you get married?

JT: I got married October 18, 1946. I was still a clerk and she worked on a PX or warehouse on the base. She rented a room from my aunt and uncle.

JR: What was her name?

JT: Her name was Violet Jones.

JR: How did you meet Violet?

JT: She bought a room from my aunt and uncle who didn't live too far from us. She saw my picture on the dresser. She said, "Who's that?" My aunt said, "That's my nephew, John." And she said, "Oh, I want to meet him." Bingo. She went to church at times. I'd see her at church. When I heard she wanted to meet me, I didn't hesitate. I went down, introduced myself, we went out to eat. We did a lot of going to the old Chandler pool. Then go from there over to Snack Shack, it was called. A drive-in with hamburgers and stuff. She went work early, I went to work early. We usually went to bed early. I only knew her about four or five months. I got to know her real quick. I got the rings.

Of course, I'd known my present wife for years. She said it in a joshing matter, too, but she said she's going to be buried between her two husbands. We have plots over there. There's my dad, my mother, my brother, then it will be her and then me and my wife. That's humor, but we can handle it. My brother and I were together for thirty and some odd years. I had thirty-eight years at the post office and retired with enough credit for thirty-nine and a half because I gave them back a year and a half of sick leave. If you got forty-one years, you might as well not work at all. Why work? We already had a little three-bedroom Melody home in Payson. Later bought a house. We had the best of two worlds for about six or eight years. I can't go up in elevation. But there are a lot of good people up there that I miss out on.

JR: You married your wife and then you had how many children?

JT: Four.

JR: Can you name your kids?

JT: Yeah. There's Elizabeth May. Elizabeth after my mother and May after her mother. And Patricia Ann. We liked Patricia Ann. Johnye Louise. Johnye, we thought we weren't going to have her. I gave her my name. Johnye is spelled J-O-H-N-Y-E Louise. I made a pact with my brother that the first boy would get his first name and my middle name. His first boy would get my first name and his middle name. Anyway, his name is James Louis. My brother's first name and my middle name. His boy is John Edgar. John, my first name and Edgar, my brother's middle name. That worked out. But it seemed like a hopeless things. No...

JR: Did you just stay in Chandler then?

JT: Yeah. I had opportunities to go other places in the post office. I probably could have made \$400 or \$500 more but who wants \$400 or \$500? I liked where I was.

JR: Where did you guys live at?

JT: Well, there wasn't that many places. The beautiful thing about people now is they have the VA or Bill of Rights or whatever-- I mean, the GI Bill. They got all kinds of people to help you get a house. I went through a deal of getting plans, went to the bank a dozen times to finance it. I had money, I had a secure job. Then I went to the bank again. First, I went to the builder where I got a price. Then I went to the bank. He wouldn't do it for that, he had already increased it. So I went to the bank. They might have gone for it, but they were asking what kind of collateral I had. I didn't have a house. I had a savings. I had a good job. And I had a military record. This person had this house almost completed. It was a nice house, sturdy, cement block on South California Street. It wasn't the best in the area, but it was a house. It wasn't quite finished. It cost \$6,000. I paid my \$2,000 I had stuck away on it and that left \$4,000. A lady taking care of an old man brought a note from the guy. I think it was \$60 a month with 6% interest a year on the outstanding balance. That's a half a percent a month. The first month \$40 went to the principle, \$20 went to the interest. I paid that off.

Then I finished putting on air conditioning that I added on. It was a big lot. Then I had an extra rental on the back. It was nice house, but we came by this house in 1960. I think that's when they built this house and the next one and three more down. There was nothing out here. There was no homes, no park and no school. The streets were laid out. We'd come and look through the window. Right here, they had a hutch thing built. A built in hutch, oh, beautiful. We'd look at that and look. We finally had a builder that was a friend build us one in our house almost similar.

Two years gone by and the house was still sitting here. The price on it was \$18,500. I told Violet, "Let's make them an offer." So we did. We offered them \$16,500 and they took it. We probably could have offered them \$15,500. With only \$200 down. They were glad to get rid of it. Well, these were tract homes. A guy had the lots, named Williams, built this house and the next. The only thing different is the elevation. I've enclosed the garage, I've added a west wing thing. \$16,000. I paid it down to about \$7,000, then paid it all at once. In the meantime, we had

about five or six rentals. Why wouldn't a girl want to marry me? I had plenty of money. I'm getting back to stuff.

JR: Let's talk a little bit about your post office career and then we'll have just two questions after that. When you came back, you started at the post office at the one that was on Boston Street, right?

JT: Yeah.

JR: That's where you began. And then when did you move over to the post office on Buffalo?

JT: By then, I had made Superintendent of mails. I don't know, by then I may have made Assistant Post Master. It was probably less than ten years, maybe eight.

JR: Was it in 1954 when they opened up the new post office on Buffalo?

JT: It might have been; it probably was. They were in (unclear) and they remodeled the one old a time or two. They had boxes all over the place. There was no city delivery except for one rural route. It'd have two lines coming all the way down. People were calling for their mail. It just got too much. The government come in and got the property. Well, we didn't have the property, it was the San Marcos's.

JR: The actual building belonged to the San Marcos?

JT: Yeah. This building we moved out of belonged to someone else. It was a lease. Yeah, they had the upstairs, we had the downstairs. Sometimes during a hot summer like this, there'd be water coming down like it was threatening rain outside. Somebody had taken a shower or bath letting the water run over in the middle of the day. I was already assistant Post Master when we were at there. Some of those pictures you'll see.

JR: You said the building was just west of the old Saguaro Hotel?

JT: Yeah.

JR: You said that the San Marcos hotel would use the top portion of the building to hire?

JT: Yeah. You see they used, then, they used all the Suhwaro Hotel. It was only open. All the Korean people they used had come from the eastern coast. They would be domiciled there. I don't imagine they charge them, that's part of their pay. They had about five or six or so up top. Plus, they had two little alcoves or cubby holes where it provided inspectors to come

in and view. They have those things. Inspection station, they could come without you knowing it. They could stand there and watch you work.

JR: Like federal inspectors?

JT: Yeah.

JR: To inspect the post office?

JT: Yeah, the post office was federal. They would be postal inspectors. When they'd come, they'd have their key to the outside door. Is that still there?

JR: Yes.

JT: I think it was inside, it was different from out there. You could get in from the outside. I think they'd have to come in a way. They'd have to come in and go up and they could see everything. I guess it was legal. If someone was stealing.

Actually, one time, the inspectors, they have a system. They go through, weeding out areas. Somebody was getting into the mail. I won't mention his name, he's not there anymore. But it doesn't serve a purpose. But, I went out with him to pick up the mail in the collection boxes so I could attest to the fact that it was picked up. At first I went with them to make sure they mailed these letters. The inspectors. If it developed. What it was was about eight or ten Easter Seals things, with dollars in them. They had the numbers of the dollars. I went with them and came back. The particular carrier they were checking comes in. You tell the guy to leave his mail on top, you rummage through it. I knew the type of mail to look for. If just one is missing, you come to the back, blow your nose and we'll know. We'll take it from there. He came in, put his mail there, I started looking. The old heart starts pounding. I looked and looked, it was pounding more. They were all gone. All six or eight of them were gone. Not just one. So, I went out and blew my nose. When he came in and, then, we were using those mailsters. He jumped up, got his jacket and started off. They confronted him, took him back in and reviewed him. He had two or three of the dollar bills with the serial numbers on them in his billfold already. He claimed he had flushed the envelopes down the commode at home because he didn't want them going to his house to look and see. That was sad. A guy who needed work, been working there since, well, there's no reason for me to say anymore. I just wanted to tell you how they do it.

One other time, they weeded one out. A guy was taking the stamps off the letters for somebody else. It wasn't for him. They were collectors and they started complaining about getting their mail without any stamps on

them. They would put them on the train over in Mesa. They'd still be there or they wouldn't. They had processes. It's interesting. We were always, most of the time, privy to a lot of that unless they'd make it unannounced deals.

JR: Let's talk a little bit more and then you can talk about your post office story when you come to visit the museum. Let's take a look at your pictures and you can talk a little more in detail. When was that post office built on Hulet?

JT: We were usually in one for about ten to fifteen years. I probably wasn't in that one on Hulet for more than ten years. Probably about 1970.

JR: When did you retire from the post office?

JT: November 14, 1980.

JR: You were always the assistant Post Master.

JT: I was not always. The lady Post Master and her sister was the assistant Post Master. She was nice.

JR: What was her name?

JT: Her name was Cooper, Jessie Cooper. The assistant Post Master's name was Jones then. She married a Smallridge. She was always waiting for a rural route. The old rural carrier retired, she got the rural route because she was of the right party. The Post Master system is political. There was a guy named Turner that wasn't related, that worked at the bank that got to be Post Master. I made assistant Post Master after this new Post Master came in. No, I was the Superintendent of Mails. I was the next supervisor below this lady. The new Post Master and this lady got to bickering. They stuck it out on the streets. The inspectors came in, reduced her down to a clerk. And he couldn't let it go, so they finally just checked him out. So there was no Post Master.

Then, they gave the Post Master to a guy that was a Republican that was a good lodge member of some kind. I'd known him and his family for years. He worked for two years. He did paperwork, files and stuff. He had all the desirable things. He applied to become a postal inspector. You needed four years of service. He could count two years for his doing his notary public or that kind of stuff. He already worked two years. He was accepted as a candidate for postal inspector. He went to Washington, he made it. But you're not allowed to relocate into the same place. When he went, I went and saw the committee member of the Republican Party and explained. I was a Democrat, but I knew him for years. He said, "I don't

know who else should get it.” The next thing I know, he was going to be going to the inspectors. I said, “I better go back and see what you’re doing.” He said, “Well, they met last night and they decided.” They couldn’t decide on me. Some of them wanted a lady and they couldn’t decide on her. So they just picked the Chamber of Commerce guy to come in. So he was the Post Master until they told him to either get out or retire on disability. I was still there doing my job. I knew what I was doing. I don’t say this in animosity.

JR: What was his name?

JT: I’d rather not say it. But I wanted you to know why I wasn’t Post Master. I’m going to tell you one other thing. When this Post Master went out, before the other one, my brother and I flew to LA before a board to be considered for Post Master. We were both doing our work with no problem. There’s one guy in Scottsdale that wanted to get it. He was over there at the same time for the deal. One question they asked me, I wished I would have blew my top. They asked, “How can you work with your brother?” We’d been working for years and inspectors in the region and nation and nationwide, when someone would say Chandler, they’d say, “That’s where the Turner brothers are.” Neither one of us could get Post Master because it went from a political thing to a cronie thing.

JR: How is a Post Master elected? I wanted to ask that because you mentioned that political affiliation matters.

JT: The Post Master General is elected. Your Post Masters are not elected. They get in with the committee. Your political committee. There’s a Democratic committee and there’s a Republican committee. They have the say. They have control over the rural route and the Post Masters. Until Truman was in, he blanketed all the Post Masters and the rural carriers in as of that day. It was no more going out if the Post Master changed. It didn’t look like he was going to get it, but that’s what he did. From then on, it was buying consent of the Senate but it wasn’t political. When you satisfy how the people are, they come up through the ranks. I could have got it. When he asked me, we weren’t together at the time, they probably asked him the same thing. We’d served at church together, we’d gone to school together, I wished I’d have come unglued. But you know, I was hoping he would get it. Why would I want to work more than 38 and a half years? Except it would have been an honor to serve as two or three years as Post Master. When they brought the guy over, the Post Master they wanted, some guy named Dunn, I went in and told him that I had nothing against him, but I’m retiring as of November 14, which was just a few days away. I’ll do my own paperwork, I have nothing against you, but I’ve got plenty of time in. I don’t want to work anymore. And

that's it. It was a good pay, like I say, but I was only making twenty cents on the dollar.

I had a guy come in from the base. The lady out there wouldn't give him what she wasn't allowed to give him. He came in here and asked. I told him that she wasn't allowed. I'd called and told her to do this. Oh he hauled off and hit the desk and made a loud noise, like he was going to tear right through me. You get that every now and then. Anyway, I cherish all the years, all the people that worked under me, I don't think anyone would ever say anything unkind about me. They'll tell you I knew my job. I kept listing stamps, did all the personnel work, all the complaints. Even from day one, the person that was our preacher worked at the post office. He was going into the service, going into the military. The lady who he was going to marry worked at the post office, and lived caddy corner from us. This is the one down, the first one. When he went in the service, I got assigned his slot. She had to come over to the house to show me how to do the early morning dispatch, which was probably about seventy or eighty letters, to put in a carrier pouch. It's a pouch this long, you strap it around the center. The mail messenger puts it down on a thing, the train catches it and it goes through. That was interesting. Sometimes the trains would throw mail off. He'd pull up, start to back up to where the train stopped, he backed off into that rut and the train just ripped his back wheel off. We're wondering, "Where in the world is the mail?" Finally, he showed up and got another thing and fixed it. But there's weird stuff.

JR: I want to do a few more questions with you and this is going back to your World War II service. Do you feel like your service in World War II affected the rest of your life?

JT: Yeah.

JR: How so?

JT: I can appreciate things. I was certainly religious before and I'm certainly more so since then. I've been fair. I'm usually the same. I like to talk. I like to fun. I don't think for several months I could have gone out and done hard work, been all frozen up the way I was. I got out and rated 50% disabled. It didn't take them long. Within three years, they had me down to 20%, which was alright, I was working. I still had things that weren't clearing up. You can't be frozen that bad without it being bothersome. To see how people were treated. As long as you treat them fair, you don't have to explain that much. They did. In basic training, I don't complain about that, except that guy walking on my heels. Texas was nice.

There was one time, I'll tell you one other thing. When I was in high school, I was cutting up. A guy was chasing me, I fell right across my ribs. I'm sure I cracked a rib or broke a rib, but I didn't say a thing. I didn't tell my folks or anybody. I was sitting there trying to get a breath with the teacher over me saying, I was just there. But for years, I would have a pain there occasionally like a rib broke or moved. Your friends would think it was funny to come up and squeeze you. I'm in for two or three weeks of pain. We would have tug of war only it was with humans. You'd put your arm around one, the other one and the other one, the squads would pull. I thought, "Oh, boy." I didn't say anything to anybody, you just tough it out. After all the service and going through, I was on the train going up to Camp Myles Standish. I had this big Army overcoat on. We had to put our pack on and I had to scoot my arm in it and I heard something pop. It was the rib. When we got to Camp Myles Standish, I was there about eight or ten days. It was cold and ice frozen harder than I'd ever seen it. We were out doing calisthenics. I was doing push ups, I was favoring my left hand but doing mostly with my right hand. They guy saw it. He said, "Hold on a minute, we're going to have Turner come up and show us how to do push ups." Well, I did, I got through them.

But after that, you have to ask them permission to go on sick call. So I did. I went through the whole story, I didn't blame it on anyone or on the military. I said it happened in school. But I just figured they'd throw the book at me. All they did was tape it up. I went overseas with tape on me. Which I can understand that. I wouldn't have ever gone on sick call if he hadn't have done that. I would have toughed it out. That's the only sour spot that I have with the military. I never did go on sick leave and I could have. I wanted to, but I wouldn't have. I was young, I could do it. They never did pay you much, it was always back pay. They had stuff they held out of it. It was only about \$30 something a month. One time, what little money I did have, I'd loan it to someone. I knew they needed it, I didn't spend that much. Everything works for me. One time I was going out the door and I almost spent my last penny. It wasn't pay day yet because they paid you off in cash. The guy saw me and said, "Turner, don't I owe you some money?" I said, "It's only about \$4 or \$5." It happens. I figured it was a savings if I got it back. I had a little money when I came home, plus I had family.

JR: What lessons did you learn from this time in your life?

JT: I always did the best I could. And certainly don't lie. I never did use profanity. My brother and I used it once. My mother happened to hear us and washed our mouths out with soap. That was no fun. I was about three years old. We were imitating our dad. Ain't that sad? But she heard us. My brother was good. I wish he was here.

JR: You were very close to him?

JT: There's a picture over there. That's us. When they brought the cardboard over, they had one like that, it was just about the same age of us on it. He's the one on the left and I'm on the right. We were considered twins until we were about seven or eight years old because mother dressed us all alike.

JR: Do you have any other thoughts you'd like to share about your World War II experience?

JT: It's nice to collect one or two or three good friends. If you're clean cut, they ought to be clean cut. There was one, but he gave me his money in California to hold for him because we were going to get out furlough. He said, "Whatever you do, don't give this money back to me." They were getting to where they were shooting dice. We were just finishing up our training. If he wanted it to gamble it, don't give it to him. He pestered me and threatened me. I wasn't going to give in, but finally I did. He wasted it away. I just know not to ever do that again. Help the guy keep his own money. I was trying to do a favor. He'd be the one who walked around on my heels. There's only one guy I saw ever who got a GI bath. It wasn't me.

JR: What's a GI bath?

JT: They take him, strip him down and brush him with that stiff brush all over. And it gets to where he smells. That would be other things, make sure and take baths. I don't care how. There would be other things.

Jimmy Turner: Didn't you give Forrest something to hold on to before you left for war?

JT: I did. I gave him a pencil to hold on to and to give it back to me when I got back.

JR: This is Forrest Tate?

JT: Yeah, you know him? He worked a little bit at the post office before he started selling cars. His dad was the old rural carrier that retired. I knew his family. A lot of things about him is good, he's a good friend and good business friend. I bought my first vehicle from him, that 1936 Ford with the rumble seat. You can imagine the girls that got. And the twin pipes. He bought a 1939 Ford Coupe with the money I gave him. And I bought his 1936. It was maroon with cushions, dual pipes. That's when the police came up and parked by me. There was one day he came by to pick me up in his 1939 Ford Coupe. My brother and I had a sedan. We were

out here seven or eight miles. The pavement went out there to Kyrene. There was a tavern there. He'd been over to a girlfriend's over on... When we came home, we hit, what it was called back in the day, West Cleveland. When he hit that, he hit the gas. Like I said, I was advanced way beyond my years. I looked over at his speedometer and he was going 106 miles per hour. I knew not to startle him or say anything. I just sat there and rode it out. I never got in there again. He was that kind in the early days.

JR: So you gave him a pen?

JT: I didn't give it to him. I loaned it to him. That was before the post office was furnishing pens.

JR: He got a pen and when you came back, he gave it to you.

JT: Yeah, I didn't want it. But he gave it to me. He never did go into the service. He was about two or three years younger than me at school. Him and Jerry Skousen. People his age and the age of that girl I was going with. She was about the same age. Forrest made a lot of money. His son's wife goes to church where we go.

JR: I sure appreciate you doing this interview with us.

JT: I know I've been tedious. But I missed a lot of stuff.

END OF INTERVIEW