

TRANSCRIPT – HENRY HARDEN, JR.

Interviewee: HENRY HARDEN, JR.

Interviewer: WILLIAM BUCKNER

Interview Date: March 26, 2013

Location: Capers Hall, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina

Length: 63 minutes

WILLIAM BUCKNER: Alright, sir. If you could state your name for me, your full name.

HENRY HARDEN JR.: Henry Clarence Harden, Jr.

WB: The date is March 26, 2013. The interview is conducted at The Citadel as part of the Veterans History Project, and we will go ahead and begin. Would you mind telling me why you joined the Army? What was your reasoning, maybe some background or family history?

HH: Got drafted.

WB: Got drafted. (Both laugh.)

HH: Yes, sir.

WB: Had no prior interest beforehand?

HH: I had four years of military high school, and I knew somewhat about the military.

WB: And what high school did you attend? What military high school?

HH: Carlisle Military School.

WB: Ok.

HH: Graduated in 1947.

WB: Could you tell me a little bit about that, your experience through high school? Not a lot of people go to military high schools; it's a totally different experience.

HH: There were about 250 cadets at our high school, three companies—really four companies because of Band Company. And when I first got to Carlisle, they had wooden rifles, but during the war, after about six months, we got regular 30-06 Enfields, or Springfields, I forget which it was. It was some kind of World War I rifle, which everybody was proud of. I was in B company first; then I got interested in playing a trumpet, and I learned how to play the trumpet and joined the band. Then I got to be the bugler right at two years—everything ran by the bugle call—Reveille in the morning, right on through to taps call, to class call, to lunch.

WB: Basically what we got here at The Citadel is breakfast every morning and lunch every afternoon.

HH: That first call, Reveille. And I enjoyed being in the band a whole lot because I loved playing the trumpet, and the band got to go on several trips to different contests and things. We won best marching band in the state at Winthrop, and there were six, I believe, there. What I think made us triumph over the other high school bands that were there was that we had a silent drill that went over real well.

After high school, a bunch of my friends thought that it would be a good idea to join an artillery unit up in Savannah. There were about four of us that were friends, and we joined it. We were out there for two weeks training in Fort Jackson, South Carolina, on the 105 Howitzers

and learned all about them, and I think there were eight people that fired a Howitzer. And we had to learn all of the different things to do, like firing them, and we shot them for about two days straight. And one of the things that was interesting was that a Howitzer shell had about five sacks of powder in it, and we were shooting on about three charges. And one of our jobs was that the sacks of powder were connected together with a cord; we would pull out two sacks of powder and rub the cord on the shell rim, then put the sacks in the shell casing, put the projectile back in the shell, and throw those two big sacks of powder in the hole we had dug. And after about two days of constant firing, that pit had a stack of sacks of black powder in it.

WB: A lot of maintenance to it.

HH: We would throw a match to it (Laughs.), and I don't know how much money we burned up burning those sacks of powder. After a while, I got a chance to go to engraving school in Philadelphia, and I asked my commanding officer if I could transfer to a unit in Philadelphia, and he said I could do that and go to engraving school, and I transferred there and went to the armory there numerous times, and they kept saying, "Well we'll let you know when to start coming to drill." That went on long enough to where I got tired of it and just quit going, [Both laugh.] and I might have still been in the artillery.

After finishing engraving school, I went down here to work in Charleston for the W.P. Cart Company until I got drafted in 1950. I went to Camp Polk, Louisiana, for training for around three months, and then got on a train to New Orleans to board a troop ship the *General William Weigel*, and it was a monster ship—and we went to the Gulf of Mexico to the Panama Canal—and that was a real experience—and we stopped in a fresh water lake in the Panama Canal, and we were told that that would be the last fresh water shallow we would get until we got

to Japan. So we spent the night at this lake, and we finished going on through the Panama Canal and went up to San Francisco and took on more troops and headed to Japan—Hokkaido, Japan. And the whole trip—I think it was about 28 days, and I believe there were about 5,000 troops on the boat—we entered the harbor on Hokkaido and went to Camp Chitose, which had just little tents there, and they had wooden floors, and they could hold about 12 people.

We had real intense training on Hokkaido, which was pretty much the same terrain as Korea, and we were there for eight months. While we were there they had these tall wooden towers, and we put nets on them like you have climbing down a ship to get LCP training on assault craft. We practiced going up and down these nets for a pretty good while, and it's not as easy as it looks when you got a rifle and a pack on. (Laughs.)

WB: I can only imagine.

HH: So after that training, we boarded assault transports, and we went out to a beach—and I think the beach was called Tomocokai—and assaulted the beach just like a regular invasion. We climbed down the nets and got on the LCPs and went in and got real wet before we got up on the beach (Laughs.) and had a regular maneuver night.

WB: Kind of like an amphibious maneuver?

HH: Yes! Yes that's exactly what it was—an amphibious landing. We did that twice, we got on the assault transports two times, and we did that and I don't know if they were planning for us to do a little invasion in Korea or not, but we didn't. Finally, after eight months of training, we went to Korea. But this Hokkaido where we were one time had this place where they flew these kamikaze planes in World War II, and they had these little bunkers dug in the ground where they could put these planes underground so bombing wouldn't affect them 'til

Japanese pilots got ready to use them, and that's where Chitose Airport was that we were stationed by. The 45th division I was in was on Hokkaido, and the 40th division was there about the same time we were. They trained on the main island of Honshu, and I think they took the same amphibious training we did. Understand that we weren't really close to them; we just knew what we read in the newspaper, the Army newspaper. I was a squad leader, and a squad leader who trained on a recoilless rifle, and there was a squad leader, a gunner, an assistant gunner, and two ammo bearers in a squad of recoilless rifles.

WB: Now the recoilless rifle that was the one you said you reversed engineered basically and drew a schematic of basically to show everybody?

HH: That's right.

WB: Could you describe that a little bit? How you came about showing them how to do that?

HH: Well, I always liked to draw, and in training in the Army they want you to know how all weapons are used and to be familiar with them. They didn't have any big charts. Let's say you were out in the field and had this chart, and there was an instructor with you with a stick and he's pointing to different things. I drew a big picture of this recoilless rifle and the drawing was a cut out drawing to see how the shell went in the projectile—

WB: To see all of the individual parts.

HH: —and the shell I colored in yellow for the brass, and blue for the gun, which was the recoilless rifle. It was a dark blue that was on the rifle, so it was the same shade. Now the shell had 250 holes in it, the recoilless rifle shell, and the powder was in brown paper sacks inside the

shell, so when the firing pin hit the shell, it ignited the powder, and there was a space around the shell in the chamber and 90 percent of the powder the blast came out the back and 10 percent was used to push the projectile forward, and that back blast is what kept the gun from kicking.

WB: Was a very effective weapon at the time.

HH: You could fire it from the shoulder in a standing position or a sitting position, and it had a built in tripod to it that you could lay on the ground and adjust the elevation with the little telescoping handle on the end of it about midway up the barrel, and the gun had on the back what you would call a throat ring, which regulated the amount of gases coming out the back. And if the throat ring was too big, it wouldn't let enough gases come out, which would cause the gun to kick, and if it was too small, it would push forward; it was letting too much backpressure. It had to be just right.

WB: You had to show people how to do it just right.

HH: We didn't have to mess with it; that came from the armory they made sure that it was just right. The gun just didn't kick.

WB: Now in combat, that's something you want. No kick—you can just keep going and going.

HH: I'm sorry, what?

WB: In combat that's something you want. It allows you to keep going and going and firing off shells.

HH: Yeah, but we didn't do too much of just constant firing. Most rounds we ever fired at one time was four rounds, but you were only supposed to fire three and move because the

enemy—you couldn't hide the blast from it, and the enemy didn't like them, and they would put artillery on you real quick. So you're supposed to shoot it three times then move and get safe behind a hill or a trench or wherever. The breech block—when the gases came out of the breech block when you fired it, they had a pitch to them, so when the shells started going through the barrel, if you didn't have the counter thrust, the weight of the shell real quick would twist the rifle and the gas coming out the back was made to twist anything. It was very stationary when you fired it, but the bad part about it was the concussion noise and you had to be very careful when firing it and make sure that everyone was 50 feet away from the back, because if you weren't it would hurt them, the blast.

WB: Wow!

HH: During a demonstration one time, we put some empty ammo boxes—I don't know—maybe five or six feet behind the rifle and fired it, and it just splintered. It was tremendous force just coming out the back of this thing.

WB: So when you were firing it, where were you positioned at so that particular blast didn't hit you?

HH: Where would I be?

WB: Yeah.

HH: I would be, well I would be real close to it so I could talk to the gunner to advise him about the range and anything I might do to help him hit the target. I was pretty good at judging ranges in yardage. But I thought my squad was the best one. (Laughs). I had a gunner who was real enthusiastic and he was really good at it—it was just a neat weapon to be on. After you fired

it, I mean just firing one round, it would be days before I could hear good. My ears would be ringing, I would have this tremendous ringing in my ears. I didn't really notice not really being able to hear good until I got home, some people kept saying, "You're getting deaf." (Laughs.) But that was the only thing that I got hurt from.

WB: Just loud noises.

HH: What?

WB: Just the constant loud noises.

HH: Well, just from firing that; rifle fire didn't seem to bother us. First time we were on the front line, we were there for roughly 30 days at a time. When we came back in reserve, it was roughly two or three weeks, and we were doing enough bayonet drills and stuff to make you want to go back to the front. We did all kinds of training, and it was some relief. We deserved and we always had good—the company had its own cooks and kitchen and everything and back in reserve, most of the time, they would go to the trouble of having doughnuts and coffee for us sometime at night and that was a really big treat.

WB: I can imagine eating doughnuts—most people probably didn't get that.

HH: Rule on the front lines: sometimes we would get a run on chicken or fish or something like that and think the food got picked over before it got to the front. (Laughs) Seemed like it.

WB: You got bones after awhile.

HH: Yeah, we got or they tried to get us, at least one hot meal a day on the front. The C-rations weren't bad at all; we had a pretty good variety of things. But the South Korean service

core had these big round things they put on their backs to bring hot food up to the front lines as close as they could. Then half the squad would leave to eat, then come back, and the other half would go and eat. I remember that it was Christmas morning or Thanksgiving—I forget which it was—but I went back, and they had brought food up as close as they could and they had roast turkey and dressing, mashed potatoes and stuffing. You know what a mess kit looks like?

WB: No, not really.

HH: Well, there are two oval aluminum containers, and they fold up together into what they call a mess kit. Anyway, you fold it up, and it will hold a good bit of food. They put all that food in the mess kit and ice cream. (Laughs.)

WB: That doesn't sound like it's a very good idea. (Laughs.)

HH: By the time I got back, I had to take it back to the gun bunker to eat by the time I got back, as cold as it was the ice cream had already melted into the potatoes and everything, but it was good. (Laughs.) But they did, particularly back at reserve, we would get fried eggs almost every morning or pancakes—things you could not get while on the front. But they really did a good job in feeding us.

The first thing that I had to do that was out of the ordinary was to take a patrol out to a listening post, which is maybe 200 yards maybe more than that, I don't really remember now, but we had to go out of the front lines at night and there was a little peninsula out in a rice paddy that we referred to as no man's land, and there was a sound power line, which was two power lines which laid on the ground. And you had to take a telephone in case we saw something, but anyway, out there in the dark, we had to hook those lines up with the phone that we carried out there with us, and once we got that done, we had to get our sleeping bags and get in a sitting

position, because that was the only way you could sit in that cold weather without freezing, so we sat there right before dawn, but we didn't hear or see anything. I made a canteen full of hot coffee with the C-ration coffee I had with me and by the time I got to where I could drink some of it, it was cold.

WB: Didn't keep you warm for very long did it?

HH: No, (Laughs.) but it was something. But this one time we got contacted by the squad at a listening post, and they said they could hear a commotion up front, but they couldn't see what they were, so finally it turned out they were coming toward our front line and it turned out to be six women with small children and the children were crying. It was snow, and I mean thick snow, on the ground, and they let them pass and they came on through, and I don't know what they did with them after that. I don't know if they escaped or they turned them loose or what, but they really wanted to get to the Southern part of Korea.

The next thing we did while we were on the front, we went out on a patrol at night, and it seemed like everything we did was always at night and you couldn't see. (Laughs.) We went on this long march the company, two companies, my L company and I can't remember either K or I company, but we went out pretty much together, and we walked and walked and I don't know how far it was, but what we were doing—K company, I think it was, was going to assault this hill, and we met up on this ridge to attack the enemy and make them think all the firing was coming from this other company.

WB: Distraction tactics.

HH: Yeah, so by the time it got dawn and it was fairly light and we were soaking wet from perspiration even though it was freezing cold with all these clothes that we had to wear

from all the walking we had to do and freezing cold, and my hands didn't work worth a hoot. I had an M1 at the time, and it already had a clip in it, of course, so we were supposed to open fire at this hill, not with the recoilless rifles, just small arms fire, so we did. And I fired that first clip, and my hands were so cold, I could not put another clip in that thing. Maybe if someone was running at me with a bayonet I might have been able to put a clip in it, but I just couldn't, my hands hurt so bad, but other people seemed to be able to keep firing for awhile. And it turns out that there was basically a machine gun on this hill that we were firing at, and the hill was very steep, and there was the one clump of bushes, and that's all you could see on the side of this hill, anything that stuck out, and they said there was a machine gunner. They had tunneled through the hill, evidently, because they couldn't go down the hill; it was too steep.

WB: They were pretty dug in.

HH: Yeah, yeah they were good at tunneling; they made real good tunnels. So my squad was the closest one to it, and that was the first time we had shot the recoilless rifle at anything, and, like I was telling you, we were supposed to shoot three times and move, but after we shot three times, we still hadn't hit that hole, and the elevation was wrong. It just wasn't hitting right, and the shell—there was nothing wrong with it; it was just either too high or too low. So after three shots, we hadn't hit the hole, but by this time the machine gun had quit firing because they know eventually we were going to put one in that hole. (Laughs.)

So we decided to fire just one more time because we weren't getting anymore artillery fire where we were shooting, and when you would fire this thing, it would blow piles of snow in air from the back blast, and they knew where we were, and they were on higher ground; they always had higher ground because the further North you went in Korea, the higher the hills got,

so technically they had a little bit of an advantage on us most of the time being able to look down on us, but the fourth shell went in the hole—but like I said, they had quit firing, so I'm sure they went back, and I don't think we killed anybody or hurt anybody, but they said that we—my platoon sergeant—Let's see, it was late that afternoon, and he came down and said that we had silenced the machine gun, and it was the first one that was silenced out of the division. That was a pretty bad experience because it was so darn cold, and I don't think L company suffered any casualties this time. (Cough.)

And the company wasn't able to take the hill, K company, but some medics were able to go up and get a body that had been up there maybe a couple of weeks to bring it back, and they had to go right up close to the enemy right up front on the hill that they were on to get the body to bring it back. When we got back to the front lines, I decided to get me a carbine rifle instead of the M1 because you had 30-round clips, and you could tape two of those clips together and have 60 rounds to fire.

WB: Easy and fast reload.

HH: Yeah, the patrol I went out—I didn't have to go on patrols, but I had volunteered for some because this Lieutenant who was our platoon leader wanted to be a rifle platoon leader. He didn't want to be a heavy platoon leader; he didn't want to deal with heavy weapons like we were.

WB: The dream of every officer wanting to lead a rifle platoon out there.

HH: So he volunteered several times to take rifle platoons out that didn't have a platoon leader, because, for some reason, there wasn't a lot of officers over there.

WB: You even said before that you were a temporary officer or temporary platoon sergeant?

HH: I got to be a platoon sergeant, but I didn't have the rank. Sergeant first class was the highest rank that I got. If I had stayed there a little longer—see you had to be in a position for 30 days before you could get a rank.

WB: Before you were officially ranked.

HH: I would have got master sergeant, which is what it takes to be a platoon sergeant. But after we were in Korea for a good while, the platoon pretty much ran itself, and it wasn't any big deal being a platoon sergeant other than organizing things a little bit and making sure that everyone was dug in properly and passing on information. We went out this one time, this platoon leader and I became real close friends real quick and he was going to take this platoon out, and I don't remember which platoon in the company, and he asked me if I wanted to go along, and I said, "Yeah, I'll go." (Laughs.)

WB: You just volunteered.

HH: I got to be a regular rifleman in a rifle squad. We got to—I don't remember where he got to in this squad and what the squad was doing—but we came under fire, and we were right close to a plum orchard or something because there was a bunch of thick trees with no leaves on them, but the bullets going through those trees made a heck of a noise, and luckily we got into a ditch that was by this grove of trees, and so that machine gun fire didn't bother us, but there was nothing we could do right then because the machine gun fire was all around us. But this one boy that was from Guam that we had received from the first cavalry that we had relieved in Korea, he hadn't been there long enough to stay with the first cavalry, and a lot of those first cavalry men

came into our division, and he was from Guam, and he knocked out this machine gun nest, and I don't know how he did it, but he got a Silver Star for doing it.

WB: Wow.

HH: My platoon leader got killed on this particular raid—my platoon, I believe I was the only one in the platoon that volunteered to go on this thing, so none of my platoon went out on this thing on this raid. And what we were on was called a company sweep, but at nighttime, the enemy would come up as close as they could to observe and do any shooting that they felt they could do, and we were supposed to sort of clean them out of this area that they were in, and I'm not sure just how successful that was. I think we killed a good many of them from what I can understand. The company as a whole had a little bit of it, plus my Lieutenant got killed, but before we got on the front line, he was on a stretcher and I saw him on the stretcher and the medics, evidently he was still alive when the medics got him, but he was dead when I saw him, and they said he had 28 bullet holes in him—he had been shot 28 times—but these burp guns the enemy had, you could pull the trigger, and you could probably shoot 28 times and release, it fired so fast.

WB: That's impressive that the enemy had that kind of gun.

HH: Those little burp guns, they fired I think a 28 caliber and they were just a schematic type weapon; they were good for what the Koreans had.

WB: Right, to fire as quickly as possible.

HH: Yeah, because you could not see what you were shooting at a whole lot, but you knew what direction to fire those things in, but they were—I got a look at one, and they were

terribly made, but they worked. The way they would keep these things cool was—I don't think they were made for that—but they had a casing around the barrel that didn't touch the barrel, and it had little openings in it to where you didn't have to touch the hot barrel, but they would take that off and wrap rags around the barrel then put that casing back on and soak it with water to keep the barrel cool.

WB: Allowed it to fire a lot longer.

HH: Yeah, trying to think of the next time we had any—the main action we saw was that was pretty bad was we were on the front, and a battalion took a hill—Hill 290 or T-Bone Hill it was called—it took this hill one night from the enemy, and you could see a lot of flashing on the hill and fighting going on, and I don't remember how far it was from where we were, but the next morning sometime, the first sergeant and called the platoon sergeants, which is what I was doing at the time, and told us that we were going to relieve this battalion on this hill. They had gotten beaten up pretty bad, and the first sergeant told me to just bring the mortars and the recoilless rifles, and where we were going, the hill that we would leave from to go up Hill 290, there was a pile of ammunition there that we could pick up and not have to carry the weapons and ammunition together to where we were lugging it.

And I forget what you call it when you jump off to leave a position, but anyway, the company got there and the company right away, or the battalion, rather, went down this hill to this large rice paddy that was down Hill 290, and we got there, and there was ammunition all over the place, and I mean it was like all of it was in the back of a trunk and they just dumped it, and we had to go through it and get the high explosive rounds. And there were three kinds of ammunition: there was that the rifle shot; there was high explosives, high explosive anti-tank;

and smoke. And we wanted to get a few smoke rounds and the rest were high explosive; we didn't take the anti-tank because we didn't see any tanks over there while we were there that were running, and the mortar crew didn't have any trouble getting ammunition because it was all the same. And after we got all of the ammunition for the recoilless rifle and everybody was gone, we walked across this field, and they were already going up this hill which was—gee, I want to say—about half a mile, and the guides that had to take us through the minefield who knew where all the mines were laid were all gone, and my platoon was there by itself. (Laughs.)

WB: Had to go through a minefield.

HH: So, finally, we got all the ammunition we needed, and there was a lot of concern about going through this minefield, and there was a man that had stepped on a mine, and, in fact, he was a medic that had stepped on a mine. And he was waiting on help, and that didn't encourage anybody to want to go through this area. The minefield was set in front of our area and went into what you would call no-man's land. Anyway, I could see where the grass and stuff was crumpled down, and I had everybody get into a single file and follow me out onto the field and get into proper intervals in case any artillery came in on us; that way it wouldn't get everybody at one time.

But anyways, once we got up to the hill and got the platoon situated, it wasn't a good place for mortars or recoilless rifles where we were set in, but we didn't know that at the time. We had to go anyway, but that night, we really took a shellacking because they wanted that hill back, and what they were doing was a counter attack on us. They were firing 70 rounds per second, I mean 70 rounds per minute, and they were coming in on us and coming in our position, firing mortar rounds. Artillery, luckily, I don't think they had, or else they would have used it.

Like we had the 155 howitzers, and the shell wouldn't hit the ground. When it would go off, it would go off about 12 feet from the ground, which was the best height for shrapnel coming down. And if you were in a trench and a round hit close to you, the shrapnel wouldn't get you. But anyway, a lot of the artillery went over the hill, and we were surrounded. And they were Chinese or Korean—and I couldn't remember which is which—but they were all around our hill. You could see them real good because our artillery was shooting illumination flares, and they just lit up everything.

WB: You could see them but they could see you, too.

HH: Well, the thing is, we were in the trench looking down; they were looking up into the light.

WB: So y'all's field of vision was pretty expanded; you could just start pouring rifle fire on them while the flares were going down.

HH: Yeah, but with all that artillery coming in, it wasn't a whole lot of shooting, but evidently that kept them from coming up the hill, too, because the shells were coming over, and I know it was killing some of their men, but sitting in that trench not being able to do anything, you knew that artillery coming in, and you knew that just one of them was going to get you.

(Laughs) All you could do was hope and pray, but a lot of men got wounded, and one of the men was in my squad; he was my assistant gunner, and he was—he lost both legs on this particular hill from artillery or mortar fire—I don't know which—but we lost, well I don't know how many men we lost altogether, not a lot killed, but a lot of wounded, and there was a couple that the artillery just drove crazy they were just—they just went to pieces.

WB: A lot of sleep deprivation I can imagine?

HH: A lot of what?

WB: A lot of sleep deprivation I can imagine.

HH: I guess, but they said we were going to get relieved the next day, so we waited and waited, and this one boy who was in my platoon he said, "I'm going to go to the front lines to see if we're going to get relief or what because it's starting to get late in the day." (Break in interview here.)

WB: You had successfully defended Hill 290, or T-Bone Hill as you called it. And were—The last part you talked about was the relief you got. Can you tell us what happened with the relief, about that?

HH: Well when we were relieved we just—I don't remember what battalion relieved us, but when we were leaving the hill, they were coming up on it. I don't recall whether they had trouble that night, but they must have. 'Cause the Chinese were on the hill back—or the Koreans—whichever way you put it.

WB: They just kept assaulting it as they came, huh? (Laughs.)

HH: But, we went in reserved, after we left that hill, and for a while. Then we went back up to the front, and I think this was for the last time. (Pause.) I'm pretty sure that was the last time we went back up that hill. That time was pretty uneventful. And then we were—I don't remember exactly how we went through the process of leaving the front line and going right through the process of leaving Korea. And we left Korea. We went to Sichuan, Japan, for about two days. And then loaded on a ship for Seattle, Washington. And stayed there for about two days—processed. Then we boarded a train for Camp Hill, Louisiana. Took about five days, a

five-day train trip. On the way—I don't remember just what part, I guess about half way to Fort Jackson—the train stopped at a small town. There was a liquor store off on the right side of the train, about, oh, 75 yards or so from the train. The boys got off the train and cleaned the store out. It was a small store.

WB: Everybody was just excited to be home.

HH: What's that?

WB: Everybody's just excited to be home.

HH: Yeah. (Laughs.) And after everybody got back on. After a while, the train left and went on to Fort Jackson. Right before we got to Fort Jackson, the train made another stop. And there was a man; and I know he was expecting the troop train, because he had a horse, or a mule-drawn wagon—an old-type wagon—full of watermelons and ice. And he sold everyone of those in a hurry. (Both laugh.)

WB: Y'all had the money to buy them.

HH: Right. (Laughs.) Everybody wanted a taste of watermelon, which we hadn't had in 16 or 17 months. Processing at Fort Jackson was, ah, there wasn't that much to that other than just—I don't remember what went on there. But we received, finally, a month's leave, and I went to Savannah, which I was from at the time. And I finally bought a car. You couldn't buy a car, a new car, back then, because the steel trade going on. So I had to buy a used car, which was a good one—luckily. I drove—when I had to go back to Fort Jackson, there were several boys from Savannah that got out the same time I did—I gave them a ride back to Fort Jackson to

process in order to get out. When I was going to junior repair school, after I wanted to go in—
There was about two and a half months to three months before I could get in junior repair school.

My grandmother, she always loved to fish, and she and I fished for about every day it
was—

WB: Your grandmother loved to fish?

HH: Yes, she loved fishing.

WB: My grandmother does not like fishing. (Both laugh.) She does not like hooking the
worms, or bait, on there—she doesn't like that at all.

HH: Well, I was raised up on the river, and my grandfather had a nice house on the river,
south of Savannah. That's where my grandmother, I guess, learned to like to fish. When
grandmother was a little girl, she was raised in Darien, Georgia, which is sort of a seaport type of
town, and it was a very followed harbor point in the Darien River. So she was familiar around
boats and water from the very beginning. She loved going out on the boat fishing, and she was
good at it.

But I finally got the chance to go to Washington, DC, to the junior repair school. Got
married while I was there to my high school sweetheart. (Laughs.) We lived in Washington
maybe four or five months. Then we came to Charleston; in 1954 we moved to Mount Pleasant.

WB: So you're not originally from Charleston?

HH: No.

WB: I want to ask, why did you move to Charleston? It sounds like you were pretty far west originally.

HH: Originally, my aunt's father owned a big jewelry store in Charleston, W. P. Cart Company, which is closed now.

WB: Oh.

HH: They needed an engraver, and my aunt knew I liked to draw. I was—And I jumped at the opportunity to go to sculpting school and learn to do something with my hands, which I really like. So I went to Philadelphia to engraving school. And came to work in Charleston, and in 1950, I got drafted.

WB: Did you have any issues, when you came back from Korea? You seemed to have acclimated pretty well. You didn't really have any issues going on. Did you keep track with a lot of your old buddies from your platoon? Maybe some other friends you made?

HH: For a while. I had one of my ammo barriers, from Texas, come and see me for a week, and we had a good time: hunting, and just going over old times, seeing some other boys from Savannah that were in the outfit. And the fella that was my Platoon Sergeant, when I first went into the Army, he and his family came from Oklahoma. He spent some time with us. And my, the fella that was my gunner, he and his wife—and I think he had a son—came to us, no he didn't have any children. And he came and spent a couple of days with us. And I went, five or six years after that, the last one I saw--went to a reunion my gunner had, a Fourth Platoon reunion—as Fourth Platoon kinda started running away, he had to fight the whole company.
(Both laugh.)

WB: Trying to keep everything together? (Both laugh.)

HH: Yeah, he had a nice place somewhere out in the country, and people stayed—He had made arrangements in motel rooms for people to stay in, plus some team members just camped out on the property. But I just sort of lost touch with all of them now. I would like to see some of them again, but I don't have the will now.

WB: I'm sure if there is a reunion you'll get your invite. (Both laugh.)

HH: Maybe so. But I enjoyed—I'm glad I went and all, and got the opportunity to go to Korea and get back. I enjoy looking at my scrapbook now and again. But I was one of the fortunate ones: made it back okay. I guess the only thing wrong is my hearing, which is not good.

WB: Constant fire under that recoilless rifle, huh?

HH: (Laughs.) Yeah.

WB: We'll probably end it here, but one more question I want to ask you is—

HH: Sure.

WB: When, obviously you said you reached, ah, Master Sergeant. That's the highest rank you got?

HH: Sergeant First Class.

WB: Sergeant First Class?

HH: Yeah, that's a step below Master Sergeant.

WB: You said that ah the platoon, after a while, had pretty much ran itself—pretty self-sufficient. Did you have any conflicts, or hard leadership decisions, that you had to make, in your position?

HH: No, other than the time we got separated from the company on a hill, and we had to go through a place that was mined. That was—There were no guys to take us through the minefield, and I just—Everybody was kinda concerned about going through the minefield, and I just got them to get in single-file and follow me through it. I pretty much felt confident that I could find the ground that was trampled on the most and go through alright.

WB: Very observant. That's all that matters in combat.

HH: So, we just got through alright, and went up to the hill that we were going to occupy.

WB: So other than that, no real big leadership decisions? No conflicts with other subordinates, or even superiors?

HH: Nope, just ah excuse me my nose ah— pollen and stuff is getting to me. (Both laugh). You know that stuff. (Laughs).

WB: I know that feeling. (Both laugh.) I know that feeling.

HH: The only problem I had with any leadership was, we were lined up for Command Inspection, well back in the Reserves. This colonel, it was—Well, you could look at him and tell he was a strict fella. He had one of those riding crops he carried around—you know one of those sticks. (Laughs.)

WB: Yeah. (Laughs).

HH: But anyway, right before he got to our platoon, after he had gone through First, Second, Third platoon, he got through them. Just as he was getting ready to walk up to our platoon, my Platoon Sergeant was notified that he and the Assistant Platoon Sergeant—the truck was there to pick them up.

WB: Yeah.

HH: To do a routine back to the base. And he told me that the platoon was mine. And I walked up to where I was supposed to be, where the Platoon Sergeant supposed to be. He stepped in front of me, the colonel—he got there about the same time I got there—he asked me—I wasn't prepared for it. (Laughs.)

WB: You just got the platoon. You didn't know what to do.

HH: He said, "Present and accounted for?" And I said, "No, sir," because I had not gotten the report myself. This one time, I told the truth when I could stretch the story a little bit.

WB: Should have just told him a little fib huh? (Laughs.)

HH: But I don't remember what he told me, but it wasn't nice. (Both laugh.) Everybody in the platoon knew what happened, and there wasn't anything said about it. That's the only time I ever had any kind of hassle with him, 'cause you know you don't talk back to a colonel.

WB: Yeah, you definitely don't talk back to a colonel. (Both laugh.)

HH: That was just an unpleasant experience, but it went away. (Laughs.)

WB: So?

HH: I think that was the last time we had to be in the Reserves, I believe, I don't remember exactly went into the front line. One or two more times after that. I think we did one more time, which turned out to be uneventful. Then after that trip to the front lines, I was taken back to the States. We didn't have to stay in Korea for eight months, because we were in Japan for eight months in Okinawa. That was close enough to Korea to where we got points towards our rotation to Korea. We used to have to stay in Korea for a year.

WB: Y'all's company got kinda lucky on that one?

HH: Yeah.

WB: Well, is there anything else you would like to add to the video?

HH: Ah, no sir. I can't think of anything else. I'm proud I got to do what I did, and it was—I can say the only thing bad that came of it was my hearing, which is—without my hearing aids, I'm no good until you're right in my face and hollering at me. (Both laugh.) I really can't think of anything to add to that.

—END OF TRANSCRIPT—