

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Korean War--Daily Routine of Combat Troops

Personal Experience

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CHARLES C. JAMESON

Interviewed

by

John Jamieson

on

July 11, 1989

1956. He taught math in Ohio for twenty-eight years before retiring in 1984. He moved to Arizona and has taught near Phoenix for the last four years.

Mr. Jamieson has four sons and enjoys the Arizona weather, which permits him to golf year round.

CHARLES JAMIESON

Charles was born on October 2, 1929, in Youngstown, Ohio. He was the third of four boys and grew up in Girard, Ohio. His two older brothers were Navy veterans of World War II. He graduated from Girard High School in 1948.

Charles enlisted in the U.S. Army, in September of 1948, and went to basic training at Ft. Breckinridge, Kentucky. Following basic training, Mr. Jamieson was transferred to the Eighth Army, in Ft. Drake, Japan.

Mr. Jamieson's unit was among the first to arrive in Korea, following the Communist invasion in June of 1950. He saw combat action up and down the peninsula of Korea, from the Pusan perimeter, to near the Yalu River in the North. He was wounded twice by hand grenades, the second time seriously enough to keep him out of the war.

His combat recollections are full of colorful descriptions of fighting North Korean and Communist Chinese troops. He also reflects on the extreme cold of Korea's winter, a lack of food, sleep, and bathing opportunities. By the fall of 1950, he was one of thirty-five men left, out of an original unit of over two hundred [men].

After his discharge in 1952, Charles returned to the United States, where he met and married his wife, Deane. He attended Youngstown State University on the G.I. Bill and graduated in

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INTERVIEWEE: CHARLES C. JAMIESON

INTERVIEWER: John Jamieson

SUBJECT: Combat vs. communist troops, routine of
Army life during this time

DATE: July 11, 1989

JJ: This is an interview with Charles Jamieson for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by John Jamieson, at 2498 Beach Street, Girard, Ohio, on July 11, 1989, at 4:00 p.m.

Will you just give me a little background on where you grew up and the family background?

CJ: I grew up in Girard on Hazel Street, basically when I was younger. Then, we moved to Cherry Street. When I was in junior high, we moved over to Wilson Avenue. We lived there all the time that I was in high school, until I went into the Army.

JJ: You had how many brothers?

CJ: I had three brothers, two older and one younger.

JJ: The two older ones had service records?

CJ: Yes. They were both in World War II, in the Navy. Ken had a ship torpedoed out from underneath him at about fifty miles from England, and Bob was on an LST. He was a radio operator.

JJ: Do you think that had anything to do with your going into the service?

CJ: Well, it may have. I think that we all felt . . . I was too young to go into the Army during World War II. You always looked up to the soldiers and sailors during that time, because that was a very traumatic time in our lives. We always had the best feelings about that.

JJ: You went to Girard High School?

CJ: Yes, I did.

JJ: When did you graduate from Girard High School?

CJ: I graduated in 1948.

JJ: After you finished high school, did you go right into the service?

CJ: No, I went down . . . the Chicago Cubs had a Baseball Training School, and I went there for part of the summer. I got hungry and came home (laughter). That was supposed to be for the whole summer, but I ran out of money. They got you a job, but you played baseball every night. Basically, I was there for about two months. Then, I came home and worked in the MP for a while. Things were slow around here. I thought I'd join the Army, so I enlisted in September of 1948.

JJ: You basically had a summer after high school, then you enlisted?

CJ: Right. That fall, I went into the Army.

JJ: When you went in, did you have any particular area that you wanted to [be in]?

CJ: I enlisted as Air Borne. I was gung ho! (laughter) That was the thing that I enlisted for. When I finished my basic training, they outlasted me. They were all tied up with the Jump School, and I spent two months in a replacement depot. That's really not the place to be for a while.

JJ: Where did you go to basic [training]?

CJ: I went to basic at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky.

JJ: How long did basic [training] last?

CJ: Basic [training] was eight weeks. That was just fundamental stuff. We learned basic military courtesy, drilling, and marching. We were on the rifle range. [We] went out for a couple of weekend maneuver type things.

JJ: What was a typical day like? What time did you start?

CJ: We started at about three-thirty in the morning. [We'd] get up and scrub the barracks. We would have PT after that. Then, we'd have breakfast, and we would start training at about eight o'clock [in the morning]. We had classroom training as well as field training. It would last until about four-thirty or five o'clock, until retreat. We would stand retreat. Basically, we were free [then]. We didn't do much night maneuvers. What we did was cleaning, more than anything else (laughter)

JJ: In 1948 and 1949, the Cold War started to heat up. Was there any feeling that you had to be ready, because of the Cold War and things of that nature?

CJ: There was talk about the Universal Draft Training, and I didn't want to be in that. That's another reason why I enlisted. I figured that they were going to draft everybody, but I don't think it ever came about. It was relax time. I don't think there was that much tension to it, really.

JJ: Your drill sergeants there, were they season veterans from World War II?

CJ: I think [they were from] late World War II. I don't think they were in that much combat. We had an old First Sergeant that had been in World War II, I think, from the beginning. He was ready to retire.

JJ: We get this image of these DI's as real mean, sadistic, "torture you" type guys. Was that reality?

CJ: I don't think so. I was in pretty good condition, because I just came off of four years in high school of playing in athletics. I played baseball that summer. I thought they didn't give you enough.

JJ: So, it wasn't really physically difficult?

CJ: No, I don't think it was. [There were] long hours, I'll say that. Basically, for the fitness part of it, I don't think it was that demanding or tough.

JJ: The next training, did you go to advanced infantry?

CJ: Yes, after I waited around for two or three months to go to a jump school, it never came about. So, they were taking orders to go to Germany. I figured, "Germany wouldn't be too bad. I wouldn't mind going to Germany," so I signed up. They didn't promise me Germany, but they said, "Everybody was going to Germany." I got to go to Japan instead. [I] just

wanted to get out of the Replacement Depot, because the food lines were a couple blocks long. You would go in there, and get "shit on a shingle." Three times a day, it doesn't go too well.

JJ: Was that at Breckinridge?

CJ: Yes. That was at Breckinridge.

JJ: So, you went right from there to an active duty on assignment?

CJ: From there, I got on a ship from San Francisco and got sick right outside of San Francisco Bay. We hit a storm. There was a storm right outside there. For about a week, I almost starved to death. I'd almost get up to where they had the chow (food) line. I'd be down in the hold. It was a troop ship, the Private Dega S. Munamore was the name of it. It would be eight bunks high. You'd be up there, and the light would be right in your eyes. That's where you slept, on the bunks. You had to go up about six flights, six decks, to get to where the mess hall was. People were sick all over the place. You'd be on the ladder going up, and you'd be going back and forth. I was so hungry. I almost got there about four times. I got up there, and they had all of the food. The perishables [were] stacked way into the mess [hall], and I couldn't make it. That's an old story that I heard on the way over there. That's how you tell a lookie from a veteran. A lookie, he looks at the food and up-chucks. A veteran, he just scrapes it right out of his plate and keeps on eating. (laughter)

JJ: How long was that trip on the boat?

CJ: Sixteen days.

JJ: You went into Japan direct, with no stops?

CJ: No. We went right into Yokohama.

JJ: What Army were you assigned to in Japan?

CJ: I was in the Eighth Army. I was at Camp Drake. Camp Drake was the Japanese "West Point." I was in the A-troop, First Squadron, Seventh Cavalry Regiment, First Cavalry Division.

JJ: Was that First Air Cavalry later on?

CJ: We had mechanized combat boots. We were ground pounders.

JJ: Was the Eighth Army Patton's Army in Europe? Maybe I'm wrong.

CJ: I don't think [so] The General we had was Patton's Second in Command. He had served under Patton. General Gay was his name

JJ: You were in Korea in the spring of 1949?

CJ: I was in Japan.

JJ: What were your duties like there?

CJ: When I first got there, we went into another little training period, where we did a lot of training and went to the rifle range and so forth. Then, I had a couple infected teeth. My Company went up to Mt. Fuji for about two and one-half months on maneuvers, advanced infantry training. I stayed behind as a . . . back there until my jaw healed. Then, I went up after our company came back. I went up with another regiment, the Fifth Cavalry Regiment, so that I could take this training. While the company was up [there], we'd CQ (charge of quarters) and things like that. [We would] just watch the barracks, so nobody stole anything out from it.

JJ: [Was there] a lot of cleaning, still?

CJ: Not really. It was pretty relaxed, because there wasn't much to do. We had a sergeant that was left behind with us. There were about five of us that stayed behind.

JJ: You mentioned the rifle range. How much time did you spend there, and what kind of proficiency. . . ?

CJ: We spent quite a bit of time there. This was all summer long. This is our basic thing: we would get up in the morning, and we'd do PE (physical exercise). We would do bayonet training for about an hour. Then, we would have breakfast. The rifle range was only about five miles out. We would march out to the rifle range. We'd stay out there for most for the day. We'd fire to perfect and to be expert riflemen.

JJ: Were they still using M-1's then?

CJ: Yes. We were using M-1's basically, and that's all I fired there. We really learned the weapon well. We learned to break it down completely.

JJ: [Did you learn to] do it blindfolded?

CJ: I can't remember whether we ever did it blindfolded or not, but it was almost automatic, bang, bang, bang, bang. We did it so much, that it was automatic. You could almost do it in your sleep. Every Saturday morning, we would go and march on the Emperor's Plaza. Not Emperor's [Plaza], but twice a month it seemed like that to me, especially in the summer time. The whole Eighth Army would come over and have a big parade in front of MacArthur. We would march by, and we had three companies. We had full T O & E companies, that was three rifle companies and one weapons company in each infantry company. There were nine soldiers per squad, a squad leader, assistant squad leader, and seven riflemen. I think each squad had a BAR man, also. There were twenty-seven people per rifle squad, then thirty-six total. [There was] forty [people], including the Platoon Leader, Platoon Sergeant, Assistant Platoon Sergeant, and the medic. So, the platoon was made up of forty guys.

JJ: You're in Japan for about a year and one-half when Korea breaks out.

CJ: Yes.

JJ: Korea breaks out in June of 1950, and you're still active over there?

CJ: What happened, I jock-strapped it a little bit. After I went to Mount Fuji for . . . we were up there, and they had tents. We did all kinds of night problems. [We did] defense, and we would dig fox holes and set up defensive parameters. We learned all of the different formations that we use, the skirmish line attack, the diamond formation, and how to use it and when to use it. We would have little problems, and we would have a little critique afterwards. Like a squad, we would attack a hill. Then, we would have a critique over what we did and what we did right and wrong. We'd have night problems. We would go out, dig fox holes, and stay out all night in the fox holes. We did that for about two and one-half months straight, with no Sundays off or anything like that.

JJ: You mentioned jock-strapping it. What was the deal on that?

CJ: I came back in November. Our regiment was playing . . . each regiment had a basketball team. I was on our regiment basketball team, which was real nice. We didn't pull any duty or anything, we just played basketball. We had our own barracks. All we did was, we practiced, and then we would go play the basketball games.

JJ: Basketball was pretty big over there in the military school.

CJ: Yes, it was. All athletics were really [big]. Everybody except our First Sergeant liked it, because we didn't have to pull any guard duty or anything like that. The First Sergeant I had, Master Sergeant Bateman was his name. I still remember that, because he was a regular Army . . . he had been in the A troop, First Squadron, Seventh Cavalry Regiment for twenty-four years at that time. He would be reading off the list of names in the morning for roll call. He would use a lighter to see. The lighter would go off, and he would keep on going and wouldn't miss a name. He knew everybody in that outfit! (laughter) He was a tough old sergeant.

We had an Indian with us, and we went out and got drunk. He came in and started doing a war dance around the room. The First Sergeant came out with a hammer in his hand. He hit him on the head and put him back in his room. (laughter) We had first class sergeants and squad leaders and platoon sergeants, and platoon leaders at that time. The Captain was about four years old [there]. He had been with this . . . for quite a while.

JJ: When Korea does get hot in the summer of 1950, the Government's reaction and President Truman's reaction was really quite swift. How soon was it before you were transferred there?

CJ: Not long. It affected us real quick. I was jockstrapping it. I went from basketball, right into playing baseball. Again, I didn't have any kind of duty other than playing sports. The Korean War started, and that cuts me in the very next day. What they did, they sent parts of the twenty-fourth division over to Korea at that time. They thought that maybe a show of American Force would stop the North Koreans. Then, what they did, they made up a couple of combat battalions. They took all of our NCO's and made first class units out of these outfits. They all had combat experience, and they sent them over with the twenty-fourth.

JJ: This would have been late June, in 1950?

CJ: Right. It seemed like the 20th of June.

JJ: I looked the dates up, and the 25th was the invasion across the thirty-eighth parallel.

CJ: Right. This must have been the twenty-seventh that they left.

JJ: Because Truman, I think he took action within two days.

CJ: Right. When I got back to the company, the First Sergeant was the only non-combat [person] that we had left, and the Supply Sergeant. What we did was, we emptied the warehouse, and I think, I cleaned about sixty cosmoline rifles. Me and the other guy were playing baseball, because we got about ten garbage cans, filled them with soapy water, and threw the rifles in. But, they were cosmoline. Do you know what cosmoline is?

JJ: That grease stuff?

CJ: Yes! You can't get that off. The only way to get that off is to boil it with gasoline. What we did, we had about six or eight garbage cans, put fires underneath them, put a lot of soap and water in there, took the rifles apart, and dumped them in there.

JJ: Were these new rifles packed in that cosmoline?

CJ: Yes. We put them all back together after we cleaned them. It took us all night to clean them. I got back to the company, as I said. By the Fourth of July, we were on the way to Korea. We went to Yokohama. We had a troop ship and hit a typhoon right outside there. We had to sail around for about five days in that thing. We used LCT's to land on, and we landed up the coast.

JJ: Inchon?

CJ: No. This was on the other side of the peninsula, on the Japan side of the peninsula. We landed in about the middle, a little bit below the thirty-eighth parallel. We went in and set up our perimeters there on an opposed landing. But, I got wet from an unopposed landing. A couple of motor shells landed next to us and threw water all over us.

JJ: It was supposed to be unopposed?

CJ: Yes. There was somebody around. They had a mortar, or something that they were throwing at us as we went in. There was no machine gun firing or anything like that, just a couple of mortar shells.

JJ: You landed and set up a perimeter?

CJ: Yes.

JJ: What type of defense against tanks did they have?

CJ: Korea was not tank country, so really, we didn't have anything that. . . . We had our rocket launcher that was a 2.36, and they used that against machine guns and things like that. They hadn't used that against any of the Russian tanks. Korea is a very mountainous country. Everything else is flooded with rice patties and things like that. They technically thought that it wasn't tank country. The only tanks we had were little, very light scout tanks. So, we really weren't concerned about tanks, and neither was anybody else, until they brought them in, until the North Koreans came down with them.

JJ: The Russian T-34's, I think they were. . . ?

CJ: Yes, the T-34's. . . . I thought there was a T-33 and a T-34.

JJ: What kind of attitude did you have when you saw those things coming at you?

CJ: When we landed, as I say, the first night we shot about three thousand rounds of ammunition, and we killed three cows in the field out there. What we did, we stayed there. Then, we came back down this side of the. . . .

JJ: You went back South?

CJ: Yes. We went back south, back to Taegu. Then, [we] went on a narrow railroad and went up to. . . . One regiment was up at Yongampo, and they got circled at Yongampo. They got circled and got cut up pretty good. So, we came back and set up.

JJ: Trying to get their flying gear?

CJ. Right. We set up behind them and let them come through. That's where the one general from the 124th [Regiment] was captured. I forget his name. We set up there, and what we did was try to buy time. We set up on the mountains, because there were hills all over the place. We set up there, and we would dig fox holes all of the way around. Then, the first night that I saw tanks, they brought about fifteen of the T-33's or T-34's down below the hill and shelled us all night long. You could see the shells coming. It was like a laser beam shot. We were on the side of the hill. We got down about knee deep, that evening before this started, and we ran into some rock. I know a kid that was in the foxhole with me. We just thought, "That's deep enough. We're alright." [When] that first shell hit, we were digging like crazy! (laughter) We got that

thing down. We dug out boulders, believe me! We finally got about chest deep. I had so much dirt thrown on me from the shells that came down from there. From all that shelling, we didn't have one guy hurt out of the whole thing.

JJ: How far away were they, do you think?

CJ: We were on the hill, and they were right down on the bottom. They just bombed them [from] right down there. We had these 2.36 rocket launchers that bounced off of the tanks. They had nothing to really knock them out. What happened to our artillery was the gorillas had infiltrated through, and they had tied up the artillery. Basically, they overran them and caused a lot of casualties there, so we didn't have any artillery fire. What they did, they brought the tanks in straight, and we were there for about two or three days. Then, they started to swing out and go around us on both planks. [They were trying to] circle us. We marched out that one night.

That's the first time I went on a combat patrol, that day, because we had some civilians that were caught in a railroad underpass, a railroad trestle. They were caught between our lines. They shelled them, and we shelled them. What they used was gorilla warfare. They would infiltrate with civilians and come through, so we stopped. They wouldn't let any civilians through. I went out on a patrol to see if there were any soldiers actually in the group there. It looked like people would get hit, and they would push the people that had not been. They would go back underneath, push the other people out, and they would get hit. There had to be about two hundred civilians in that, little kids and little babies. That really brought home the fact that it was a shooting war.

When we got back that night, we left the fox holes. We left a squad there to keep . . . so that we would have things moving around there. Then, we marched out and went back about forty miles, and did the same thing.

JJ: You got there and it was fall. . . .

CJ: In the summertime it was hot, let me tell you! It was 95 degrees!

JJ: As fall and winter approach, how did that affect the fighting and the conditions that you were in?

CJ: Before that, in the summertime, it was really hot! We were up on the mountain, and we didn't have any access to water. You had to really watch water control. When we were retreating, we retreated all the way back to

the Naktong River, and that was by Taegu. We set up a perimeter there, the Naktong Perimeter. That was in 1950. It first started in the last part of August and the first part of September. We're almost on the way out.

JJ: That's all of the way down towards Pusan.

CJ: We had the whole peninsula there, and we just had a little corner along the river. What we did then, my battalion was a plug battalion. Anytime we had a breakthrough, we would go attack it and straighten out the lines. We'd be in the reserve. We straightened out about six or eight places like that one. That's no fun. It's alright to sit in the foxhole and shoot somebody, but when you have to go out and punch them out of there . . . to straighten them out, was tougher.

In September, we were so bad off at that time, that this is one of the first times I got hit. We had been run off of about four or five hills that night, and they were pushing us back. The Japanese call them bonsai, and they used "monsai." They would come screaming up the hill. That was called "bug-out time." During this time we had integrated South Korean people. I was a squad leader. I had one American, and the rest were South Korean soldiers. Maybe they had a weeks training, and you had to watch them; because if it was "but-out time," whenever they heard anything, they would take off and run. At that time, they were trying to punch a big hole through where we were. Against our division, I think we had seven divisions trying to punch through our division. We had about three divisions against our regiment at that time.

JJ: Were they using armor there?

CJ: I don't know what happened with armor. I'll get to that a little bit later. They didn't have too many tanks left, or I didn't see any tanks after that. I'll tell you why in a little bit.

They kept attacking us. We went to Korea with a full PO & E Company. That meant [that there were] two hundred and five guys. We had two machine guns per platoon.

JJ: Were they 50's?

CJ: They were 30's, the Air Code 30's. I had a grease gun. That was a machine gun, a 45 caliber. It was so heavy and it didn't shoot very far, so I ditched that and got an M-1 after. I spent the one night on one side, [from] about here to the wall.

JJ: That's about 10 feet.

CJ: Ten feet, and the North Koreans were on one side; we were on the other side. Then, they would attack over. This was at night time. They would skylight them on the average, shoot them down. But, they rolled hand grenades over by the bushel basket full. The fuse on them would be sparkling, and you could see them. We didn't dig fox holes, because if they rolled in the fox hole with you, you didn't have a chance. So, there was a time element, too. They kept the pressure on us all of the time.

JJ: You were up against a wall?

CJ: We were on a mountain. They were on one side of it, and we were on the other side. They would come over and, bang, bang, bang. We had about thirty-five guys in our company, at this time, left.

JJ: Out of over two hundred?

CJ: Out of over two hundred. When I got back, we had been bumped off of four hills that night. There were nine guys left when I got wounded.

JJ: Nine out of two hundred?

CJ: Yes.

JJ: Were these casualties?

CJ: Yes. Just wounded or dead. When I got hit with a hand grenade, I saw it. It was about five o'clock in the morning and just starting to get light. What they did was throw a bunch of hand grenades over, then they would attack.

JJ: If you were busy with a hand grenade, you couldn't shoot back?

CJ: No. I saw the hand grenade come over, and I thought it was going to roll down the hill. So, I raced up to start shooting, [the hand grenade] hit on a rock and exploded behind me. I got a lot of fragments in my . . . I had a poncho on my back and on my rifle belt. It just tore that apart. I got a lot of splinters in my legs and my butt. I stayed there until they weren't attacking too much any more. Then, I went to battalion aid. I finally got somebody that got a tag on me. Then, I went back to another battalion. I was

back there for about three days. When I came back to the company again, we were forming . . . another company had come up out of the Fifth Cavalry Regiment. They had relieved our company to take over. This is when the Inchon thing was going to start.

JJ: This is in the fall?

CJ: Right, this is about September 15 or something like that. The marines were going up and around Inchon. We were still down. We were really still hard pressed, because most of their army was down there, yet. They, this Fifth Cavalry, had come up and relieved us, our company. This is while I was in the hospital. They started jumping off. They made three-fourths of a mile. They had five guys left in that company.

JJ: Out of how many to start?

CJ: That was for one day. They had five guys. I went up on the hill with my squad. We had gotten replacements, and I took my squad up on a hill. There were about nine dead G.I.'s right on the hill there. They looked like they just got replacements in. They would come up walking on the hill like nothing, and the machine gun on another hill just cut them all down. When I saw them there, I had everybody hit the ground. We were crawling up the hill, and a machine gun came right down beside me, about six or eight shells. I said, "Scoot them back down."

JJ: They were just waiting for you there?

CJ: Yes, but that broke their back for us, actually, because we pushed, we attacked. It took us about three days of attacking. We punched through them. Then, it was a race.

JJ: Had Inchon happened?

CJ: Inchon had just happened. We coordinated the attacks. When they landed, we attacked.

JJ: So, maybe they were drawing some of their reserves back up there?

CJ: After that first day, the first three days, no. After that, when we finally busted through, we just did. They all left, you know? We went about forty miles that day, after we got out of there.

JJ: Were you on trucks?

- CJ: Yes. After we had made the break-out, got to a road, and got across the river--we were back on the other side, closer to Taegu. I think they were only about ten or fifteen miles from Taegu when we finally stopped them. We got everybody, a whole regiment, our first and third battalions--I don't know where our second battalion was, but the first and the third battalions--leapfrogged to each other. We'd go about twenty miles, and then, they would go through us and go about twenty miles. Then, we'd go twenty miles.
- JJ: The resistance there was not too much once you busted through?
- CJ: Well, except for one spot. Every time we went through, they had the United Nations and American flags waving. We went through this one little town, and nobody was out there. What had happened, when we were on . . . they put about ten tanks on either side of the road, through the houses in the back, and hit them. Then, they came down and waited for their next column to come through, and they hit them with the tanks. A kid from my platoon got a silver star that night, because he went back--he was a bazooka man. They had replaced the 2.36 bazookas with the 3.5 bazooka. That 2.36 millimeter wasn't very big. It was only about a foot long, and it wasn't very thick. But, that 3.5 centimeters diameter was big, and it fired a shape charge; it would hit a tank. It burst through, and then exploded. The 2.3 would bounce off of it.
- JJ: So, you now could deal with the tanks?
- CJ: We dealt with the tanks, but I realized--as I said before, what happened--when we went up the MSR's, every 30 to 50 yards, there's a burned out tank or truck that the Air Force had gotten. That was all of the way up to Seoul. The Air Force did one hell of a job on that over there! Once in a while, you'd come to a tank park where twelve tanks would be burned out. Our Air Force really did a hell of a job there! There wasn't anything at all. That was flat out! Every 50 yards--you could bet on it--that there was a burned out vehicle.
- JJ: Do you think without air power, we would have had a chance to . . . ?
- CJ: Well, if they would have gotten their material down to them--they were giving us all that we wanted and more! Again, we didn't have any tanks over there to fight them [with]. It wasn't supposed to be tank country.
- JJ: Whose idea was that, the Sub-General?

CJ: I don't know. The K-MAG was over there before- the K-MAG was the Korean Military. . . . They trained the South Korean Army. The Russians did their job of training the North Koreans, and we did the South Koreans. Of course, we let them do . . . their officers were. . . . When I first went over there, they'd blow a whistle. They'd be in fox holes. The South Koreans would be in fox holes or in the trenches. An officer would blow a whistle and they would all get up and shoot. After about three weeks, they stopped that. They just weren't very good.

JJ: Say that again about the prisoners.

CJ: Neither side, for the first three or four months, took prisoners.

JJ: What happened if you surrendered?

CJ: You got [shot]. It started in July. In about the middle of July, we found [that] one whole platoon of our Eighth Cavalry had been captured. They wired their thumbs behind them and shot them in the back of the head. Everybody felt the same way: "If they're going to do that, I'm not going to ever surrender." We had guys, too, that were the same way. [They would say], "Oh, I'll take the prisoner back." [They'd get] 50 yards away, and bang! [shot him]. [The soldier would say], "He tried to escape." It's not good psychological warfare. We felt the same way, that they shot prisoners, and you didn't have a chance. I was going to fight him [Charlie] all the way. I wasn't going to surrender. I was going to throw rocks at them if I had to! It didn't matter.

When we did start taking prisoners--and we did--then, we started collecting. We captured over five thousand prisoners, eventually. On the way up--this is in the last part of September--the MSR's. . . .

JJ: What's the MSR?

CJ: Main Supply Route.

JJ: Once you captured them, did they start saying, "Treat them nice and turn them around?"

CJ: I don't know. I really don't know, because what we did, we would swing up around and come back down. One group of about eight hundred prisoners thought we were Russians coming in to help them. They came running up to us. They were real happy, until they found out that we were Americans. What we did, we came up from behind them. They thought we were Russians coming up to help them through. (laughter)

JJ: One of the big sticking points at the Peace Talks was whether POW's in the South would be forced to go back to the North if they didn't want to. I wonder how that changed after.

CJ: I had been gone for quite a while then. I've kept up with it probably more than anybody else. The Koreans were the first. [They were] pretty good soldiers. After a while, they weren't very good at all.

JJ: Are you talking about the enemy, the North Koreans?

CJ: Yes. Yes, the North Koreans were really tough. They were good soldiers. They would get up and go. That's a hard thing to do. When you have machine guns shooting down at you, it's hard to get up and charge up a hill like that! They claim that they would pump them up. I don't know whether that was true or not. They would be on hash or something like that. I don't know.

JJ: Do you think there might have been some kind of psychological ploy on their part to make you think that they were crazy?

CJ: I think that the way they did their attack was a psychological thing, because they would get three, four, or five hundred of them down below a hill and start screaming, "Bonsai!" That was a mild scream. I told my class one day about it, and I let out the whole thing the way they used to do it. They [the class] all jumped!

JJ: How long is it going to be before the Chinese get in? Did you face any Chinese?

CJ: We got busted out of there. We broke Patton's record of travel. We went 115 miles in one eight-hour period through enemy country, straight through with trucks and tanks and so forth. We got up to the 38th [parallel], and we stopped a little bit. Then, bang! We crossed the 38th. We were the first regiment to cross the 38th. We went all of the way up to the North Korean capital. This was in the last part of September. We were the lead battalion. Our battalion was the lead battalion for the whole Eighth Army, all of the way up to the North Korean capital. Then, the Fifth Cavalry moved through us, and they took the capital. We went down to Chinnampo, which is on the other corner. It's in North Korea, about midway up there. It's a port. We had turned our artillery in. We had everything in. We were supposed to march on November 11th, in a parade in Tokyo. We were there, and we had a great time!

We'd go around, and the farmers there would give us eggs. I hadn't had an egg or anything like that. One morning, we went out, and I collected a bunch of eggs. I scrambled about fifteen eggs and ate them all!

JJ: What was the food like up until that? Were you on C-rations?

CJ: Yes, we were on sea rations. [The] C-rations were . . . the first three or four days, you could eat the vegetables. Then, you couldn't eat those because you'd get heartburn. Then, they had crackers and jam. Then, you couldn't eat the crackers and jam. And then, they had a couple pieces of chocolate in there. This is in a dry thing, because you couldn't eat the vegetables or whatever the other was. After about a week or so of C rations, all you did was drink coffee if you had it. I don't know whether it was the tension you were under or what, but. . . .

JJ: Did they set up any field kitchens with hot food, on occasion?

CJ: Not until the winter time. We never had a hot meal until about October, I think.

JJ: As it looked like you guys are ready to win the war and get out. . . .

CJ: Yes! We were ready to go. Our regiment had turned in the artillery, and we had made plans for departure. Then, the Eighty Cavalry was going up the MSR. This was in October, before the real thing started. The Chinese caught them on the road.

JJ: They had made threats to come in--they said, "If you cross the 38th, we'll enter the war." How much did you know about that, and how serious. . . ?

CJ: No. We didn't know a thing about it! The first thing we heard about it was that these crazy Chinese were riding horses up and down! What they did was, on a mountain pass, they blew up a truck right in the front and blew one in the back. Then, they're riding horses up and down the damn thing shooting at people! They did a number job on our Eighth Cavalry. They chopped them up. Our Eighth Cavalry wasn't the same after that. Then, they didn't hear anymore about the Chinese for another month, because this was not anywhere close. This was about one hundred miles past the North Korean capital. It isn't even close to the North Korean border.

After they got hammered, we got everything back again. We got our winter clothes there. On November 11, we attacked a hill. I spent November 11th on a rice patty digging in. Every time I got . . . the hills were not real big, maybe 6,000 feet, but if you're down in rice patties, they're looking right down your throat. I thought I got the million dollar one twice there. I was trying to dig a fox hole. The ground was a little hard then, because it started to freeze.

I had a bath in October. That was the first bath I had since I'd been there. I had to crack ice then to take the bath. The ground was hard. It hadn't snowed yet, but the ground was hard and cold. I'd dig a little bit and get down in a little bit. Then, I would say, "That's enough." They had artillery pieces up on the hill, and they fired down at you. I got hit twice in the shovel. I took big chunks out of my shovel. I thought I got hit twice, because it slammed into my side.

JJ: Did you have a shovel on it?

CJ: Yeah. I had the shovel on my rifle bag, because nobody had any packs or anything left. You carried stuff on your rifle belt, like your shovel and trenching tools and your ammunition. We spent all of that day. We jumped off at about seven o'clock that day. We took the hill the next day. We were laying there and couldn't move a muscle without getting artillery fired on. They called in about five thousand rounds of artillery mortar. They had air strikes on that hill. I watched a B-25 come in--that's a medium two-motor bomber. I watched that thing come in.

JJ: Is that one of ours?

CJ: Yes, [it was] on the hill. I watched them. When they dropped the bomb, that sucker looked like it was going to come right down on my head! Boom! It hit about three-fourths of the way up the hill. But I'll tell you what, it looked like it was going to land right on my head!

JJ: How affective were the air strikes against the . . . ?

CJ: Pretty good, because when we finally made it the next morning, we jumped up and they had blood all over the place.

JJ: Did they move their bodies?

CJ: Yeah. They took the bodies, unless they had them there. Back on the Nantong River, I spent a night with about one hundred dead North Koreans on a hill. They

had been there for about four or five days. In the summer time, it stinks. It stinks there anyway. I sat on a C-ration box. I was eating C-rations. I'd kick a head and watch the maggots come out of the eyes, nose, mouth, and the ears. Like a stream of water, they'd be coming out of them.

JJ: How did the Chinese and their infantry attacks compare to the North Koreans?

CJ: They were a little more disciplined. We didn't see any Chinese until we got about five miles from the. . . . Then, they attacked over on the Marines. They didn't attack us right away. We started a retreat when they hit the Marines pretty good, and we started going back. What they were doing was trying to circle us at the time. Our company pulled a rear guard through our division. We dug fox holes along this road and up along the mountains. We built fires, because it was cold then. It was down to thirty-five below zero [degrees]. We built fires, and then we marched out. We marched all that night and all the next day. We stopped that night, dug fox holes, built fires, and marched out again. We left right away.

JJ: You were trying to make them think that you were still there?

CJ: Yes. We marched all that night. The next morning, we got back to our lines. We just plopped in this village. We got up, and nobody was there. We supposedly had trucks coming to pick us up, and they didn't come. Our captain was a big tall guy, about 6 foot 5 [inches]. We were marching out on foot. This B-29 comes over and dropped a little parachute message: "Get the fuck out of here! The Chinese are right on your ass!" Everybody used to complain about carrying machine gun ammunition, your own stuff, and everything else. Everyone used to complain about the captain walking so fast, but not that day! (laughter) Everybody was moving out!

Finally, we got a whole company on a two and one-half truck, a jeep, and a trailer. We drove about eighty miles. When we got back to our lines in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, they almost shot us coming in. They thought we were Chinese coming in. We saw him coming through. He forgot to send the trucks. He was coming with tanks to get us out of there. We were lucky to get away from that one!

The Chinese, when they would attack, they would blow what sounded like little toy bugles. They did it mostly at night. They never attacked in the day time, always at night. Night time was like day time there,

because we'd have airplanes coming over every ten minutes, dropping parachute flares. They would light up whole valleys. They still would attack at that time. They would blow the bugles, and they would come up and attack the hill.

JJ: [Did they use] the same type of charge?

CJ: They wouldn't scream like the North Koreans did, though. I think they were a little better disciplined. These were all experienced troops. They were the ones that had fought during the Chinese war, when they fought Chang. They were all pretty good. When I got hit the second time, we were attacking a hill. We were going up the finger of the hill. We got almost to the top of that thing when we started hearing the Chinese talking. Then, we started shooting. They had a machine gun, and they started firing it at us. The finger of the hill went up like that, just like a path. A lot of us were around that. I had a squad, and I was up at the front. I saw this hand grenade come over, and I hit the ground. It landed about four feet behind me. It exploded and sort of inverted me. It turned me back. I was numb from the shock of it, from my knees to my shoulder. I couldn't feel anything. We had tons of clothes on. I had eleven suites of pants on. We had long underwear--because of the cold--field pants, anything you could find to put on. I had another hole in my pants, so I started feeling around in the back of my leg. I looked and said, "I got another hole." I came out [of the hole] with blood. I said, "I'm hit. I'm getting out of here!" I slid down the hill, and I took a jeep to the back hospital. I flew down from there, to Pusan. From Pusan, I flew to Yokobama Hospital.

JJ: How bad was that one? Was it big?

CJ: Yes. There's the scar. I don't know how big the scar is. It's about this big.

JJ: Was it one piece of shrapnel?

CJ: No, there was about three pieces of shrapnel in there. It got infected in the hospital. I hurt my back, too. My back hurt worse than my leg did.

JJ: From the explosion?

CJ: Yes, from the explosion. I was taking hot baths in the hospital. They were putting me in a whirlpool type thing for my back. My leg got infected, and they operated on that. I was in the hospital for about a month and a half.

JJ: When was it that you were wounded the second time?

CJ: That was in the last part of January.

JJ: One thing I wanted to ask you was about the cold. How well-prepared were you? Was the supply of winter gear up to what you would expect?

CJ: No, not at first. We didn't have any winter gear. What we had were just the regulation things. Then, they brought in probably--this is when we came back from the Manchuria border. Nobody had anything then, in our outfit, until we got back to the 38th parallel. I hadn't seen an electric light in two months, while we were up there. We came back in November, we were in North Korea because we had Thanksgiving dinner in North Korea. In about the middle of December we were back to the 38th. That's when we started getting supplies in. We got shoe packs, boots with two pair of big thick socks. I hated those suckers. They were fine if you stood still, but if you had to march in them, your feet would sweat, and they would rub your feet raw. You couldn't ever take them off. That's when we got all of the clothes like OD's, field pants, long john's, sweaters, and pile jackets. We had a field jacket that went over everything, and we had pile jackets, sweaters, and OD shirts. I had a couple of khaki shirts on and long john shirts [on].

JJ: How common was frost bite?

CJ: Not frost bite, freeze. Every one of us got frozen hands. If you touched your--we had trigger finger mittens. They would come up to . . . if you touched your rifle barrel with your bare hand, it would just stick there. It just froze right on there. We had pile hats, like the Russian did, the kind of hats that came down and tied over your ears. My toes and fingers. . . . When you were fighting, sometimes the trigger finger mittens didn't work well. You couldn't get it into the trigger of your M-1. You had to take your glove off. It got cold! It got to be 35 or 40 degrees below zero.

JJ: What was the attitude among the enlisted men towards the leadership? How did the officers and the leadership in general. . . ?

CJ: I had probably about six different platoon leaders. Some of them were really good. Some [were] average. The last one that I had, I wouldn't let him lead me across the street. He had been a supply officer back in the rear, and they screwed up some way; and he got sent up there. We were going up a mountain, and he said, "I want a diamond formation." Well, a diamond

formation going up a mountain . . . when there's only little trails going up and your trying to walk in that kind of thing, it wasn't very good.

JJ: How often did you see insubordination?

CJ: None.

JJ: Never?

CJ: None, never.

JJ: [You] just go along with the program?

CJ: Yes. We had one kid that lived . . . this was early in the thing, and he just wasn't psychologically fit to be [there]. He went running back, crying to the company commander. They sent him down.

JJ: What about the overall command? How did MacArthur come across?

CJ: I think everybody thought he was right. They didn't think that you could win a war, but nobody that was there wanted to go into China to fight it! You had your own little scepter here. Basically, what you're doing, you never saw . . . you didn't walk around at night, and you didn't walk around in the day time too much. People shot you if you got up and walked around. You took care of your own little squad, as squad leader, and you took care of your own scepter. You made sure you didn't let your buddy down. That meant more than anything else, "Don't let your buddy down."

JJ: So, you didn't give a lot of thought to the big picture?

CJ: No, not the big picture. I wanted to get out of there alive. That was the thing. The conditions--it was cold. I spent many--you go one hour in a fox hole. There are two of you in a fox hole, and you go one hour on and one hour off, all night long. The only way you stayed awake is to light a cigarette under your coat. You didn't necessarily smoke it; you would just hold it in your hand and let it burn down, so if you nod off or go off, it would fall in your hand and burn your hand--so that you could keep awake. That was a hard thing, because you were always tired! You never really had anything good to eat. You smoked a lot and did a lot of climbing, marching up and down mountains, and things of that nature. You always carried everything that you had. You had mountain bags, in the winter time, to sleep in. You had your two or three days of

C-rations. You had your rifle cartridge belt . . . and hand grenades. Then, you had to help with mortars or whatever. That's the biggest thing. You're always damn tired, always tired!

JJ: [There was] not a lot of quality sleep time?

CJ: No. There was no quality sleep time. When I got up hit the second time, I basically weighed about 120 pounds when I got back.

JJ: You made it back to Yokohama? How long were you in the hospital there?

CJ: I was there for about a month and a half.

JJ: By this time, it's coming up on the summer of 1951.

CJ: Yes. I went back for about a month.

JJ: Back to Korea?

CJ: [I went] back to Korea for about a month.

JJ: How were things going then?

CJ: I hit it lucky. They were making a guard unit back in Seoul, so I stayed in Seoul for about a month before I had enough points to get out. I had a choice of going back to the line for two weeks or staying there for about a month and a half. I stayed. I didn't want to go back and get shot at again, so I stayed! (Laughter) I had the choice of doing that, so I stayed back there. I ran a platoon at the guard duty on supplies. I had enough points with the time that I had been there, and I had two purple hearts.

JJ: Did you get out of the Army while you were still there?

CJ: I was due out that October.

JJ: Did they assign you to a state. . . ?

CJ: They assigned an extra year to you, and you got a Truman's year. Truman froze everybody in the armed services. He extended your time for a year. I finally went back to Girard in August, I think.

JJ: In 1951?

CJ: Yes, in 1951. I had a month's leave, and I went down to Fort Bragg--that's where I met my wife--until May of 1952. It was about the 22nd of May that we got out.

JJ: So, you got out there?

CJ: I got out down at Fort Bragg. I'll tell you what; I've been in for almost four years, and I wanted out in the worst way; but you're cautious. You get paid, and they give you a roof and everything. I wanted out, but it was a little funny.

JJ: Did they offer any money for re ops?

CJ: No, they weren't.

JJ: They weren't encouraging people to stay?

CJ: I don't think it had come to that, at that point. They had the draft going. They had all the bodies they needed, too.

JJ: When you were discharged, what was your rank then?

CJ: I was a Staff Sergeant.

JJ: B4, B5?

CJ: [I had] one locker.

JJ: [Was it] on the top?

CJ: No. [I had] three on the top and one on the bottom.

JJ: Okay, one on the bottom. [You were an] E5, then.

CJ: We didn't go All Force lingo, though. I was a Staff Sergeant there.

JJ: Okay. Did you go to school on the Army? [the Army paid]

CJ: I went to school on the G.I. Bill right at Youngstown State. I graduated and worked at that time. I worked at the railroad. I worked nights and went to school during the daytime. I graduated in four years.

JJ: When did you graduate?

CJ: I graduated in 1956. I went that fall and started in 1952.

JJ: And then, you. . . .

CJ: [We] had two kids. [We] had Kurt and Cliff when we graduated.

JJ: You became a teacher then?

CJ: I became a teacher, right. In 1956 I started at Champion. [high school]

JJ: You started at Champion, really? How long did you teach out there?

CJ: I taught there for three years, then I came to Girard [High School] for 25 years.

JJ: You retired from Ohio and moved to Arizona?

CJ: Right, I retired from Ohio. I was just going to substitute out there [Arizona]. I was out there for a week, and they offered me a full time job.

JJ: That's about all I really wanted to ask you. I appreciate your time. I think it went well. Thank you.

CJ: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW