

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

World War II Project

Personal Experiences

O. H. 739

BORIS ZATKOVIC

Interviewed

by

Douglas Silhanek

on

May 6, 1985

## BORIS ZATKOVIC

Boris Zatkovic was born on May 29, 1922 in Bessemer, Pennsylvania, the son of Mike and Katherine Zatkovic. He graduated from Bessemer High School in 1941 and enlisted in the Army Air Corps in September of 1942. He served as a tail gunner on a B-24 flying thirty-five missions over France and Germany. He was awarded the D.F.C. Air medal with four oak leaf clusters while in the service.

Boris reenlisted after World War II and took part in the Berlin Airlift. He remained in the Air Force until 1963. He was employed by General Motors until his retirement in 1983. He and his wife Betty have raised one child. Boris is a member of St. Anthony Church and the Bessemer Croatian Club, while spending his retirement hunting, fishing, and playing the button box accordion.

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INTERVIEWEE: BORIS ZATKOVIC  
INTERVIEWER: Douglas Silhanek  
SUBJECT: Depression, training, Air Corps, missions,  
Army life  
DATE: May 6, 1985

S: This is an interview with Boris Zatkovic for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by Doug Silhanek, at Mr. Zatkovic's home, on Monday, May 6, 1985, at 7:00 p.m.

Tell us something about your parents and your family and what you remember most about them.

Z: I was born here in Bessemer in 1922. I grew up most of my life here in Bessemer. I went to grade school, high school. I left here in September of 1942 and went into the service. I never got out until January 31, 1963.

S: How about life growing up? What do you remember most about your childhood?

Z: Bessemer was a small town, good town. We never got into any trouble. If we did, it was just minor. Outside of that, I think we are one of the best towns in the world. That is why I came back to it.

S: How about your parents? What do you remember most?

Z: My parents were good people. They were foreign, Croatian. They lived here . . . I think my mother and my father got here in the 1920's. My mother died in 1953 and my dad died in 1958.

S: Were they both immigrants?

Z: Yes.

S: Do you think that hurt you in any way since they were immigrants?

Z: No way, at least it helped me.

S: In what way?

Z: You learned discipline. Without that you can't go anywhere.

S: How about growing up? What do you remember about Bessemer?

Z: Like any other place, you grew up and that's all. Then you come back when you find out there is no other place like it. We had it rough here during the Depression, but I don't think any of us were really hurting. We were never hungry and starved. We didn't have much, but what we had we enjoyed.

S: Did your dad work during the Depression?

Z: No, he didn't work during the Depression, but right after the Depression he started to work again for the cement plant. He worked there before.

S: How did you cope with the Depression since he didn't work, family wise?

Z: We all hung together, all of us kids. I don't think it was rough on us as it was on the parents. We didn't know any better; we were just kids. Nobody had anything, so you couldn't compare one kid to another kid because everybody was the same.

S: How about food wise, clothing, shelter?

Z: Food was all grown on our own.

S: You had enough to get by?

Z: Yes. You raised your own chickens, your own pigs.

S: How about high school? What do you remember? What sticks out in your mind about high school?

Z: High school mostly was trying to get through the damn thing; that's all. Once I left, I regretted not doing better, which we all regret. This town is no different than any other town. We have done pretty good. I don't think we have ever had anybody here seriously in trouble. I don't think there was anybody who ever went to reform school when I was growing up.

S: Do you remember having any favorite subjects?

Z: History was one of my favorites. The only reason it was my favorite was because I had a hell of a teacher, old P. J. Ross. He was one guy you didn't monkey with. He was a history teacher who taught you. We had some good teachers in the school.

S: What did Mr. Ross do that you remember?

Z: He made sure that you paid attention and that you did your homework and that you came to class prepared. He didn't play around. He wanted no excuse, which he never did have an excuse.

S: What do you remember as a good time either growing up or in high school?

Z: Good times . . . We went to dances mostly in the 1940's and the latter part of the 1930's. Every town had a dance at least once a week. Then you went from night to night.

S: Is there anything in particular that sticks out like a special place that you . . .

Z: The Idora Park, the Elms, Cascade Park, Krakusy Hall on the south side of Youngstown, New Castle; you name it, they had it.

S: How about getting around? Was most everything centered around the town or did somebody have a car where you could use it?

Z: Usually one guy had the car and the other ones pitched in. It was 15¢ for gasoline with about six or seven of you in the car and you took off. It was 35¢ or 25¢ to get into a dance. The only thing you had to have was about 50¢ and you were in business.

S: What about Bessemer itself? Did it have any kind of activities, sports?

Z: They had baseball, softball, basketball, swimming. You had three quarries you could swim in. You had two ball diamonds and a basketball court. I don't think we ever had tennis. That was out of our league. There was plenty to do.

S: Can you remember when you first realized the country was going to be involved in the war? Is there anything that you remember? You are a kid growing up and you don't care about anything else and then all of a sudden . . .

Z: We didn't care about that. It was just out of our minds until Pearl Harbor was attacked. That Sunday I was at the Paramount Theater in Youngstown. The manager turned the lights on and announced that Pearl Harbor was attacked. It just completely emptied the theater. Everybody went home. That was when you realized you were in the war.

S: How about you yourself? When did you realize you were to get involved personally?

- Z: When I got my questionnaire to be drafted. I never even filled it out. I still have it. I just enlisted in September of 1942.
- S: What was the mood of the town then? Do you remember?
- Z: A lot of them left before even the war started when they had the draft, the ones who were older. Then gradually as the draft age came up, everybody went.
- S: Why do you think that was so? Do you think the boys thought there was a particular flatter?
- Z: Everybody was patriotic. They wanted to serve; they wanted to go. I don't think there was anybody here who ever rebuked. Some of us left and came back; others were physically unable to serve. Everybody was worried whether you were going to come back or what was going to happen to you.
- S: What did your parents feel about you going? Were they supportive?
- Z: No, they didn't want me to go.
- S: They didn't?
- Z: No. No mother and father are going to want you to go out and get killed. But if I had to go, I had to go; that was it. There were no two ways about it. That is why I enlisted.
- S: Trace your movements from basic training where you were sent; take it up to when you saw action.
- Z: I left in 1942 in September. I went to Erie, Pennsylvania. That is where I was inducted. I enlisted there and went to Fort Meade, Maryland for the Army. From the Army I went into the Army Air Corps. It was the Army Air Corps at that time. I went to Keesler Field for basic training. From basic training I went to Spartan School of Aeronautics for airplane and engine mechanic school. Then from there I went to Garden City, Kansas. From Garden City I went to Tucson, Arizona where I got on an airplane as a tail gunner.
- S: What were all of those stops for? Was it for more training or what?
- Z: From Tulsa, Oklahoma from the mechanic school I went to Garden City, Kansas. Then I volunteered to go to gunnery school. I went to Tucson, Arizona for gunnery school. Right there I got on a B-24. We went to first base training in Tucson, and then we went to second base training at Blythe, California and I think we went to Kansas someplace and then overseas.

S: How would you describe that training? Was it worth it? Did you think it was too much or too little?

Z: It wasn't enough. I was only nineteen years old and didn't know anything. You put a fifty caliber gun in my hand and I don't know enough about it. It wasn't enough time for us. Then they threw you into combat once you got there.

S: When did you first see action?

Z: About April of 1944.

S: Before D day?

Z: Yes, I was there on D day when we dropped the bomb. We went in twice. We made two missions. Once we got just about to the target and they called us and told us that installation at a bridge that we were supposed to bomb was already taken, so we turned around and dropped our bombs into the English Channel, got another load of gas, got another load of bombs, took off, and went back over. We took them back and dropped them in the channel and went back; that's it. They were fast that day.

S: Were you before the first raid? Were you early in the morning then?

Z: Early in the morning, yes.

S: How did that work? How did you coordinate that where the pathfinders were first? Stake me out on that because I don't know.

Z: This was all preplanned. Nobody knew what was going to happen. They thought they knew. Something was going to happen, but they didn't know when. All of a sudden one day they threw everything. There were maybe 2,000 or 2,500 airplanes at once all going over. When they landed, you could see the ships in the channel. Normally you saw the ships in the channel. You didn't know what was happening when you were up there. When they came back, you found out they invaded.

S: You didn't know it was all coordinated.

Z: No, you didn't know anything.

S: You knew what your mission was for that day.

Z: That's it; that's all you knew. When you got there to the briefing room, you got in there and they told you just where you were going and how long it was going to take you and that was it. They didn't tell you that there was going to be an

invasion or anything like that. You just went in. Somebody said that we couldn't bomb. They had an invasion and took the bridge. We backed away and dropped the bombs and took back off for the base; that was it.

S: What were your feelings like?

Z: Scared, that's all.

S: But that wasn't your first mission?

Z: No, that was about my fifth mission.

S: How about the ones before that? What were some of those like?

Z: Just going into the target area and dropping your bombs and going back out again. You always went in formation where the English flew at night and everybody flew by himself. There was no formation at night; they just went in there and came back out the best way they knew how. They dropped their bombs. Everybody was briefed if it was his mission. We flew in formation. We put 2,000 or 2,500 airplanes up at one time. They couldn't protect against that many airplanes. By the time D day got around there was no German Air Force; it was practically wiped out. They had no oil; they had no gas; they had airplanes, no airfield. They bombed everything they could think of.

S: Before D day what were your target areas?

Z: Mostly train stations, airfields, factories, what they could use for the war.

S: You knew about that beforehand?

Z: Yes. You were briefed before you went in there.

S: Before D day were those successful?

Z: Yes, that is what killed them.

S: Did you see the target areas or the results?

Z: No, because they took aerial photos of them. I don't know the difference between the aerial photos and the others.

S: How about any resistance?

Z: Practically none from what I could see. Some of them got resistance, but as far as our outfit, nothing, not a flag. There was a lot of ground fire but as far as pursued airplanes coming up after us, no. We were all down before they got there.



As far as ground fire, you could walk on that stuff.

S: What size was the plane?

Z: B-24. I was with the 491st 852nd Bomb Squad. Captain Mitchell was in my outfit; he was from Poland. He was killed. I never did get a chance to talk to that guy but once over there when I was there. Then we had another kid from Youngstown. He was on my crew, Roger Kimberly. I think he worked for the railroad before he went into the service. I guess he died here in Painesville, Ohio.

S: How about after the World War, some of your missions?

Z: We went to Munich, Berlin. I don't know. I made about five or six trips to Berlin, three or four to Munich. I wound up with thirty-five missions after I got done. Mostly you hit strategic places, at least I thought they were, I don't know. For all I know we were just dropping bombs all over the place. Who knows where the bombs were going to go anyway?

S: Anyone of those in particular that stands out in your mind that might have been scarier than another one?

Z: Munich was the furthest. It was a twelve hour mission round trip. You went from England all the way into Munich and came around. You never flew direct. You always, in case of action, flew around. Then you got to your bombing target and turned around and came back the same way. Anyplace there was aircraft fire, you just bypassed that because they had that all cleared for me. Mostly all of your missions were pinpointed. You knew that you were going to hit fire here. They would divert you someplace else. A lot of times they goofed up and you just flew right into it. There was no turning back. Whoever got hit, got hit and went down; that was it. Once you were in formation, you didn't break formation. You just kept going.

S: Nothing happened indeed that was a mess-up or a foul-up or anything?

Z: None in our outfit. They were further ahead than what we were. He would say that we were going to bomb this certain bridge. By the time they hit the beach and kept going forward, they already took that bridge. If we would have dropped the bombs, we would have dropped them right over our troops. Probably some of us . . . Somebody did drop bombs on our troops because they were too far advanced. They would tell you to go from here to the corner and you were down the street; somebody was going to get it. There could be a mess-up or a foul-up easy. If they got too far ahead of you with your bombers in there, you were going to get it. They were going to do it to you sooner or later.

S: How about free time in the service during the war?

Z: You would get a three day pass once a month, but you were always on alert every day. It was set up for rotation. One crew would always get a three day pass. You would either go to London or you would go to Scotland for three days or anyplace you wanted to go for three days. Then you would come back and you would stay there.

S: What do you remember about any of that?

Z: I remember buzz bombs in London. I remember when we were loaded, we would go out there and look at them. When that son of a gun would stop, it would blow up. The next day when I was sober, I would stop down at the bomb shelter. It was something. They bombed a lot of buzz bomb bases in France.

There was nothing that the allies didn't know about Germany. Everything you can imagine was bombed over there. When I went back on the airlift, I flew past West Germany into Tempelhof in Berlin. When I went through town, there was nothing around that was standing. Everything was leveled. They took a pounding. They bounced right back. Look at it today.

S: They didn't stay down long.

Z: Those Germans never stay down.

S: Why did you decide to stay in there?

Z: I got out of the service in 1945. There were no jobs, nothing paying really good. Life was too slow. I was on flying status and was making good money at that time. I was a staff sergeant; I was on flying status. I think I liked the adventure so I stayed in. After I got about ten years in, then it was too late to get out then. I stayed for twenty. I didn't regret it. It was a way of life. It all depends on how you look at it.

S: How do you compare the wartime Army with the peacetime Army?

Z: Today you have no discipline. I don't think you have a service. You have nothing. You have no inspections, no pride. There is no comparison.

S: How was it for you to go from being involved in a war and then in late 1945, 1946 when you stayed in in the peacetime Army?

Z: Peacetime; I think, was a little better. You had your discipline; you had your work cut out. You worked Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Wednesday afternoon you were off. Then it was Thursday and Friday; Saturday you stood inspection and

Sunday you were off, but you had to make roll call every morning. You did your work. If you were a mechanic like I was . . . Then you flew. You got a job to do. Everybody told you when to do it or how to do it. Some people didn't like that. At first I didn't like it, but then it was my turn to be telling somebody else to do this and do that. It was a different story then. You found out why a noncom has it rough. I never regretted it.

- S: Back in the war what was a typical day like when you found out you were going to fly that night or that afternoon? What was the preparation?
- Z: You were told to be up at 3:00 and to be at the briefing room. First they told you to go eat. You went to eat. You would go to the briefing room to tell you where you were going and what the mission was all about. The night before, the airplane was loaded for a bombing mission. You got in there and they told you where you were going, what time take-off was, how many hours the mission was, where it was going, what to expect on the way, what to expect back like fighters and escorts. Everything was planned, just what you were going to do. When you completed the mission, some of you got to come back and some of you didn't get back. Sometimes everything worked out good; sometimes it didn't work out good. A lot of buddies of mine never did get back. I was one of the lucky ones. We got hit I don't know how many times, but never close to me.
- S: What was the first thing you did when you came back from a mission, say like from that twelve hour mission to Munich or a shorter one?
- Z: The first thing you did when you hit the ground was they gave you a double shot of rum. That was the first thing you would get. We were on an English base, and that was the first thing they handed you, a double shot of rum to settle you in there. They they would brief you. You would get debriefed, what happened, what you saw, what it was like; that was it.
- S: Time on your own then?
- Z: You had time on your own until they told you when you had to go back again for an alert. They would alert you for the next mission. You got about eight hours off and then back to the same old thing.
- S: You are talking about working then almost every other day.
- Z: Sometimes every day. It all depends. Sometimes you went for a six hour mission. Maybe the next day was an eight hour mission. You kept on going like that until you got your thirty, thirty-five missions in. Once you got them completed . . . A lot of times you got socked in. You got

bad weather; you didn't fly; you just laid around. A lot of times the target area where you were supposed to go had bad weather there, so you stayed home; you stayed in. I think we completed about thirty-five missions. I think I did it in about three and a half months.

- S: How about the crew on a B-24? What all is involved in that? What do you remember about them?
- Z: You had a pilot, copilot, bombardier, navigator, radio man, flight engineer, ball turret gunner, two waist gunners, and a tailgunner, which I was.
- S: Same crew go up all the time?
- Z: Oh, yes, same crew. We left the states as a crew and we stayed as a crew. You either got shot down or you got replaced.
- S: Did your crew stay together the whole time?
- Z: All the way.
- S: Was there an advantage in that?
- Z: Yes. You trained together when you were in the states. It was just like a football team. You stayed as a team. Each guy knows what the other guy is supposed to be doing or what he is doing or where he is at. We stayed as a group.
- S: Is there anything you remember about any of the crew?
- Z: Just a buddy of mine, he was from Youngstown. His name was Roger Kimberly; he was the radio operator. He and I were the closest ones together. One of them was from Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, Alabama, South Carolina. I don't know where in the heck the other ones were from. They were from all over.
- S: On a mission would you fight in a battle zone?
- Z: Target area.
- S: Where would you start picking up resistance?
- Z: Right as soon as you got into Europe on the French coast or the German coast. They had all of these places where you were supposed to pick up resistance where we tried to invade them. You would go up to a certain point and turn. Every time you came back, you pinpointed where you got flacked, where you got resistance. Then the next mission that was going that way just kind of detoured and went another way. Sometimes you would go free just like going from here to New York and back and never getting bothered, and sometimes all the way.

It all depended on what the intelligence was on the resistance. I know that we never ran into fighters. Some of the outfits ran into fighters, but we never did.

S: Did you have to be ready for them?

Z: Yes, you were sitting there ready. The hardest part was just sitting there, flying through the flack. All you see is all this going on around you and you aren't going anywhere but sitting there. You just sat there and took it and shook and prayed.

S: What did you hear from home?

Z: Every once in a while you would get a letter from home. You weren't worried about home; you were worried about things here. You always knew and you think--not me. You just worried about yourself.

S: Was there anything you missed most about home?

Z: Yes, my good, old bed. I wished I was home millions of times. I will tell you one thing; there wasn't an atheist when we were up in that airplane. It makes a true believer of you when you are scared. I was only nineteen and twenty. I had never been away from home. Then they took you on the other side of the world to get you killed, and for what? That is what gets to me. Winning a war or losing it is a stupid thing.

S: Did you ever run into anybody who you knew?

Z: In the service?

S: Yes.

Z: Frank Gallo. I ran into Frank Gallo the night before I left here. I wasn't home a week and he got killed.

S: He was from Bessemer?

Z: Yes, he was from Bessemer. He lived right down here on Fifth Street. I had seen him at the NAFFE club in England. He was through with his missions and I was through with mine. I was leaving. I was going back to the states. He told me to go see his wife and his mother and father. I went over and talked to them. I was down at a club here on Saturday night. Somebody ran in and said that Frank Gallo was killed. I couldn't believe it. I had just talked to him the day before yesterday. He was killed right on the base.

S: How did it happen, do you know?

Z: I don't know. I think they were just flying around the

field and something happened in the airplane and he went down.

S: He wasn't attacked or anything?

Z: No, it was right on the air base where he was at. The airplane went down. I never did get the particulars on what happened to him. He was the only one who I ever ran into.

S: Any remembrances, like English pubs?

Z: Yes, their hot beer.

S: Did you ever get used to it?

Z: No, not me. No way, I had to have mine cold.

S: What did you drink then?

Z: Anything you could get your hands on. I don't think I met a half a dozen of GI's who didn't drink. A few didn't drink because they couldn't stand it.

S: Was that a way of handling the pressure, the anxiety?

Z: Just someplace to go.

S: Something to do?

Z: Yes, something to do. If any American says that he likes English beer, he's nuts because I don't know how you could like it. It was someplace to go and do.

S: Do you remember a typical night going to a pub or something?

Z: There was a curfew all the time. Maybe you would leave at 5:00 in the afternoon and by 10:30 or 11:00 you had to be back. Your transportation was a truck called six by. At 10:00 he was leaving. At ten after forget it; he wasn't there. You had to be there. Every place in town closed up. Everything was in a blackout. You went to town for maybe five or six hours just to get away from the base and then go right back. There was nothing usually to do to go in and have a good time. You just went into town and came back. That was about it. Sometimes a lot of guys walked; some had bicycles. They had brought bicycles, but usually you stayed on base.

S: Did you ever get in any trouble in the service?

Z: No.

S: Anything minor, like out after curfew where you had to sneak back on?

- Z: When I went out a few times, I had to break curfew to come back through the fence. You had to be in by a certain time at night. They had bed checks. Anyway, if you were on a crew, the other guys wouldn't let you go out anyway because you had to be there the next morning. If you wanted to go into town, a guy would say, "You better not go. We have a 3:00 wake-up. What are you going to do, stay out until about 10:00 and then try to get some sleep? No, you are staying in."
- S: Are there any commanding officers who stick out in your mind?
- Z: Your commanding officer was your pilot.
- S: Did he impress you?
- Z: When you went out like if you had a three day pass, all of you went together. You borrowed all of the money. You borrowed it from the rest of the crews and you went on your three day pass, came back, got paid, and paid the rest of these guys off who you owed. Most of the money was sent home to your folks like in my case. The ones who you actually associated with were your own crew members. You had four out of nine. Five were enlisted and four were officers. So the five enlisted would all stick together. When they went to town, they went together. Mostly you did everything with the crew.
- S: Did rank mean a lot or did you kind of cast rank aside?
- Z: Sometimes. When you were on base, rank meant everything. When you started drinking, rank didn't mean anything. Those pubs would be what you were worried about, but you never got into any big, serious scuffles. We fought amongst each other. We were all different crews, but it was nothing where we kept a grudge. You needed to leave off some steam sometime or life wouldn't be worth living like that.
- S: What sticks out most in your mind about the war? What do you remember if there is one thing to remember?
- Z: Getting out. I wanted out so bad. I was sick and tired of it. I had three years out there from 1942 until 1945. I wanted out so bad with a passion. Then when I came out and found out that life was too long, I went back in and stayed there.
- S: What was it like when you came home, when you first came home and thought you were going to stay home?
- Z: Everybody came out of the service at the same time. No jobs, no nothing, everybody was waiting around doing nothing. Some of them got work right away; some of them didn't get work right away. I just couldn't get along with this work force. Everything was too dull. There was nothing

- to do here. When I was in the service, I was going all over. I had been around.
- S: How about the people in Bessemer when you came back from the war?
- Z: They treated you good. Bessemer was good. They all welcomed you. Everybody who left a job, I guess they got their job back. I never came back here to Bessemer. I went to Chicago. That was where I reenlisted again, in Chicago.
- S: Did the town have any special party for the veterans?
- Z: I don't know because I didn't stick around that long. I didn't stick around Bessemer.
- S: When you went back in, you said you were involved in the Berlin Airlift. What was that? Explain what your role was.
- Z: I was a flight engineer on a C-54 from Germany to Berlin. I was at Fassburg, Germany. We hauled coal into Berlin. I made 165 missions in on a coal haul. That was the only way they could get coal in there. Russia had a blockade for I don't know how long. My job was hauling coal. That is all we did in stacks. I don't know how many tons of coal stacked. I think it was clear to the ceiling in a passenger compartment. They took the seats out, put coal in there, and we had three missions a day.
- S: Of course, you had a different crew there at that time.
- Z: Yes.
- S: Was there any resistance?
- Z: No, no resistance. You had a pattern to fly. You had to fly so many minutes this way, so many minutes that way, until you got there. I think the mission was about two and a half hours. That was it, round trip.
- S: Was there any protection on the plane?
- Z: None, none whatsoever. They would fly twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. That was one of the best airlifts that was ever manufactured, ever will be manufactured. It was just like a train depot, just steady. You took off and landed, took off and landed. Then the Russians finally gave up.
- S: Was there ever any talk of having fighter planes going in as protection, maybe at the beginning?
- Z: No, no protection on the airlift. You didn't need it. The only thing you needed was that you hoped you had a good



airplane just to get your job done to turn around and go back and get another load to fly your mission. Somebody else would jump in the airplane just to keep it going for twenty-four hours. They got through flying. You got in there; you made the three and came back, three and came back, three and came back. It was steady.

S: What were some of the things you got involved in after the airlift?

Z: Wright Patterson Field, I got involved with B-25's. There were a lot of generals. They had twenty-three generals at this base.

S: When was this?

Z: This was in 1949, 1950. I went from there to Tinker Field. From Tinker Field I went to France. From France I went to Dover, Delaware. I stayed there for three or four years. I got discharged and came back to Bessemer and have been here ever since.

S: Most of the time through the 1950's, was the Army pretty much a job?

Z: It was getting boring. It wasn't a service. In the 1950's it was alright, but in the 1960's, forget it. It was getting to be no discipline, no service, no pride, no anything. When these officers came in, they wanted two-men barracks. They didn't want them big, open barracks where everybody could see you and what you were doing. Today they are involved in drugs and all kinds of junk, drinking. You can buy a fifth of liquor on a credit card on a base and charge it for the next month. Man, you couldn't even sneak a can of beer in the barracks. If you wanted to do your drinking, you had to do it on the outside. When you came in, you were in the service. No discipline, no Air Force, no anything. I guess that was the way I was raised when I was a kid. You either do it or you are going to get the hell knocked out of you.

S: What about adjustment when you were out?

Z: Now, that was hard. When you got out of the service and you are talking to a civilian and you were a serviceman, you have nothing in common. It is hello and good-bye and that is it. It took me two years before I could carry on a good conversation with somebody. I talk service. He talks of the mill; he talks of the garden; he talks about his neighbor and that. I had no neighbors. Who was next to me was my neighbor. He talked about work. I didn't have a job; I had a job in the service. They were two different careers. Then you get adjusted. It takes you about two years, and it is rough too. You are a lonely man.

S: Is it comfortable for you to finally start getting a house?

Z: Yes, that was the nice part. You could stay home and you could do things that you wanted to do around the house because you didn't have that kind of life. You didn't want any beer joints; you didn't want anybody hassling you. If you had something to do, something to work on, you enjoyed doing it. If somebody says that he would rather work in the garden, hey, you love to do that. Maybe you like to paint the house or you like to do this when you got out of the service. After about ten, fifteen years everything else gets old. You are just like anybody else. I built this house when I was in the service. That is why I came home.

S: Is there anything else you can think of as being important that we might have left out?

Z: That's about it.

END OF INTERVIEW