

Irving Stevens  
Veteran

Philip Leonard  
Interviewer

Interviewed at the Louis Miller Museum  
Hoosick Falls Historical Society  
Hoosick Falls, New York

PL: where do you live?

IS: Hoosick falls

PL: have you lived in Hoosick Falls all your life?

IS: yes I have lived in the vicinity all my life

PL: what did you do before joining the service?

IS: I was turning eighteen and went to school for two years because I thought I was going to get drafted but I also worked on a farm

PL: did your father have a farm?

IS: yea, and I worked while going to school and I took double courses that year so I could graduate before getting drafted.

PL: What year did you graduate?

IS: 1945

PL: then what happened?

IS: I went down to put in my physical and they told me I had a heart murmur and flat feet. so they put me in [unclear]. I worked on a farm and did different things here and there. In the woods cutting wood and also masiniary work with my uncles. Then when the Korean War came up I went down to take another physical. They told me I was good enough and they would put me driving a truck that way I wouldn't have to walk with my flat feet.

PL: so then you were drafted

IS: yea I was drafted in the Korean War they took me.

PL: then what happened? Where did you take the basic? Where did they send you?

IS: I went from Boston down to Fort Houston that is the transportation for the army. I took my basic there and my [unclear] before I went overseas to Korea.

PL: what were you preparing for?

IS: more or less truck driving. Before I went in I had already worked for [unclear] and was driving trucks for them.

PL: what did you become a [unclear]

IS: well when I left there I was up to semis

PL: so then what happened?

IS: they shipped me over to North Korea, of course I went to camp [unclear] out in California. From there got on a boat and went over to Japan. I went from Tokyo to the bottom of [unclear]. We then flew in to South Korea. I remember when I got off the guy says to me the plane before you didn't make it, that always makes me happy.

PL: so you got into South

IS: we got into South and they lined us up and there happened to be another man by the name of Stevenson. They called my name told me I was going down to [unclear] two days later they said I was in the wrong place and I was supposed to be back up in South. I went back up. Stevenson said I've been answering for you because you left. I started driving truck over by the air force engineers the truck was a tank retriever. I drove that six months and then went on guard duty.

PL: during that six months what was your job?

IS: my basic job was to pick up heavy equipment bulldozers and shovels, and one day I took the truck out to a rock quarry and they used that truck to drill holes to put [unclear]. And at the end of the day when they went to touch off there was rocks flying all over the place. You didn't realize how close you were so you need to find a place to hid underneath not to get hit.

PL: what did you do on guard duty?

IS: we guarded the airbase for two months. We had four hours on duty. Different companies would take over certain times and we always rotated we always had different shifts. There was always people coming and going and you would even have to hold up your own guys because [unclear] you couldn't tell the difference between north and South Koreans especially in the winter time when they are all bundled up.

PL: it was dangerous because you didn't know who your enemy was

IS: we had guys leave the base and get cut up pretty bad because they were [unclear] I wouldn't let anyone out I would always keep them there till the next morning.

PL: tell us a little more about Korea

IS: on guard duty if you are in the first section you get to sleep. And me and a man named [unclear] we used to take off in the morning to [unclear] which is a harbor where small boats could come in but the big boats when the tide went out would sit on the bottom. When I was driving the tanker I would go and pick up all the oil barrels because we would put them in the back of jets and they would be full of sand. I would watch the

jets come in and they extended the airway because they couldn't stop with enough room. They took down a whole mountain it bulldozers. I was watching them take all the ammunition out of the planes. Sometimes they would miss fire and you wouldn't want to be around then. That was when I was on guard duty and we would also have to go down a guard heavy duty equipment because four Koreans with an A frame could get away with one of the dozers, you wouldn't believe what they could get away with. Then at kilo we would guard are base company C. it was the young kids would try to come in and get the food. I caught a young kid twice. There was one kid who would hangout down by the guard tower eat candy bars and keep the fires going.

PL: they didn't have too much to eat?

IS: no they didn't have too much to eat. We had house boys who would clean up are tents which was better then what people stayed in over there

PL: now most of the Korean people say it was cold during the winter

IS: one time I don't think it got above zero all week. It froze ice right next to our stove. We had little stove we would turn down during the day and up at night. We had heat we had oil. One fellow's job was to run around and refill the oil so we could have heat in the tent. It only snowed a couple of times.

PL: so after this guard duty what was your next job?

IS: I did guard duty until I was ready to come home.

PL: when was that?

IS: October because I ember coming across the International Date Line going over then coming back. The World Series was on and we had it on the ship and everyday it kept getting closer and closer because we picked up another hour on the ship. They had a rescue because a [unclear went overboard and a guy said your talking to long forget it. going over we ran into a typhoon and the propellers had come out of the water and they had to turn one off because it was shaking to much. We had to live at that port and it was very busy. There was boats coming in to take the garbage off and boats to refuel the ships.

PL: so you're on your way home and you came home what happened?

Saw go into pier 96 in Seattle and from there I got flown to New York and stationed at camp killer. I was there for a week then transferred to govern island. I worked in the parts room for two months and got transferred out.

PL: what happened after you discharged?

IS: I went back to work for [unclear] then went and took the test for the post office did that for twenty seven years.

PL: when did you get married?

IS: 1963, I have three children. Two girls and a boy.

PL: what do they do?

IS: one girl is working as a [unclear] for and industrial company, my son works for the post office and my younger daughter works for [unclear] paramedic.

PL: is there anything else you would like to tell us about your service or about Hoosick falls, I know you help the museum.

IS: I use to travel all over, I have a lot of pictures. We use to take care of all the radios for the airport. At night you could watch what looked like fire works but it was anti-aircraft guns. We would also talk about bed check Charlie.

PL: did the Koreans have these mono planes?

IS: yea old single engine, one time they dropped two hundred pound bombs in the river luckily for us they didn't go off. We were still half mile away right outside the city of sole

PL: if there is anything else you want to say knows the time to say it  
Sino

PL: well you are active with the church

IS: yea

PL: thank you very much for coming Irvin