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KS: I just want to thank you again for coming back and doing this interview. You've said that you've spent 32 years in service but what we want to do is focus on the years when you were in World War 2 specifically. Just a few background questions to get started, where were you born and raised?

FB: I was born in Buffalo, New York and raised in Canada [clears throat] my father married a Canadian girl and he went over and lived in Canada for a while and then they all decided to go back into the states. So we lived in Buffalo and because (unclear), we had some mix up with immigration. They required since he was a British subject, he had to go back to Canada to spend the rest of his time. That's why I put 17 years in Canada and through the service I came into the states. So I had a lot of new things to learn from Canadian to American.

KS: What education did you receive prior to going into the service?
FB: I had two years of high school basically. Then I started a trade, carpentry.

KS: When and where did you enter into the service?
FB: I was actually recruited through Buffalo, the recruiting station. But actually then I was transferred from there down to Fort Dix New Jersey. There I was further moved into training, which was Camp Croft South Carolina.

KS: What year did you go to Fort Dix?
FB: It was March the 10th 1945 that I was actually on active duty and doing basic training.

KS: So when you first got there you were doing the basic training?
FB: Right.

KS: What was training like?
FB: Well it was rather difficult. First starting off trying to work out from a civilian thinking to a military. You know you always have a little conflict with things. I found it was quite interesting and challenging for example, the barracks

and the different people. Kind of visualize that I was Canadian for 17 years and then all of a sudden I'm into American set up especially military, which is kind of disciplined and everything is in line. One of the stories that we had about the sergeant our TI Tech Instructor; he had difficulty not just with me but with everybody in the barracks. One night we were only in there maybe a couple of days, 2 or 3 days and got kind of frisky in talk and making a lot of noise. He walked out and each of the barracks that are as you know open bay and he had a little room. He came out and he had his shirt on and his shorts. He wore the shirt with the chevrons on to show them, "hey (points to arm) I'm still boss". He flipped the light and says, "Ok, y'all want to play, let's go". So he has us scrub the barracks down. Cleaning the latrines and moving all the bunks and getting things lined up. We were at that for about three hours. Then he says "Alright, let's go back to bed". He flipped the light out and there was not a sound. So he got his point across, we didn't have any more problems at night.

KS: That was at Fort Dix, right?
FB: No, that was at Camp Croft because that's the basic training. Fort Dix was just a place to process you, where they're going to send you; repo depo type of thing.

KS: So how long did you wind up staying at Camp Croft?
FB: 17 weeks. I took advanced training infantry training too because they were preparing us for the invasion of Japan and I was under in the heavy weapons which consisted of the heavy 30 caliber machine gun and the mortar, the 81 millimeter mortar. So we had different things of that nature.

KS: How did you get sent to the Pacific?
FB: I think it's just that they had enough manpower in Europe and the war was coming down in that time (unclear). So there was still the invasion of Japan so all manpower basically was heading for the Pacific.

KS: How long did you wind up staying in the Pacific?
FB: Basically about 9 months; 9 to 10 months. (unclear) A lot of time you know when we got on ship down to the Philippines it was about a little over 9 months.

KS: When you were going over on the ship to the Pacific, what was the atmosphere like on the ship?
FB: Yes it was rather strange we had our details (clears throat) there, but we're also, I was what they call a casual. That means that we were not assigned to any unit. When we arrived at Camp Stoneman in California, San Francisco there was a black op division there. Now they moved as a unit, and they knew their sergeants, they knew their commanders and they were handled (clears throat) as one big unit. We could even call it a big family. With us, many of us, we were just as a causal. We were to be assigned wherever somebody else had to fill up the

ranks on other organizations. That was kind of sad in a sense because we didn't have, it kind of got lonely you know we didn't know anyone so you were kind of on your own. I always thought it would be nice to send you over as a, with a unit that you took your basic training with did your advanced training with, and then here you're going into combat with people as I mentioned before that you know and are friends.

KS: What was your rank when you were getting sent to the Pacific and when you were there?
FB: As a private.

KS: A private.
FB: Right.

KS: What were your duties when you got to the Pacific?
FB: Basically I was, well first of all you know we were on that ship and we had those duties to do and then once I got assigned into the Philippines I was administration, you know office work and stuff. I also, you know that was a time that we were waiting in the bay there for our advanced training also for beach training to enter into Japan for the invasion of Japan. (unclear)Word came down from the president that they had dropped the A-bomb and therefore our, that type of infantry training and all that wasn't necessary anymore because the Japanese had surrendered. So then we were unloaded from the ship and dispersed; again being a casual I didn't have a unit to belong to so I ended up in Camp Base M in San Fernando the Philippines, Luzon rather. (unclear) I inherited a job as a runner, which is sitting beside the bayside major.

KS: Did you ever have to perform any unusual duties?
FB: Well yes, there was some. My most unusual duty was in Thule, Greenland. That was after the war but it was a project called project Blue Jay. This is where there was a secret base in Greenland in Thule, Greenland. At that time they were building it up as a communications throughout the world so they can work on the missiles and other types of plans. This is where the for tiller of 76 ships, the largest group of ships ever put together to supply Thule, Greenland. It was interesting that once the for tiller of ships came into the sea yard it was like D-Day because D-Day of course had greater amounts of ships than that but 76 was quite a lot. Then they unloaded and they built the base with stainless steel barracks put together from the supplies there and more permanent facilities so in case of living conditions were better and the food and they brought all this and warehouses were built. So it was a massive thing, almost like D-Day to us in a sense it was. Of course they were not fine weapons or anything like that so it wasn't as dramatic as D-Day was but at least the ships were there.

KS: Getting back to life in specific, what was your everyday life like?

FB: Well, it was more or less I had the job. We had certain other KP things to do and barracks but not much in barracks life because they were made out of palms and they were all open; the barracks were all open. There were screens but there were no windows or anything else. The weather was so warm that you just had to have open things. It's interesting that sometimes where the palm leaves, whatever they used for the roofing, thatch like sort of thing that the insects were coming down and drop down on you and you would have to have nets. We had to sleep with mosquito nets all the time because Malaria was very prevalent in most cases. It was really, because the war had ended and there was (unclear) you had an opportunity you had to find mate work and so it was difficult in keeping busy sometimes. We had different jobs to do, I like to say, and at night I used to go and practice how to use a typewriter so I could be a better clerk and become a clerk typist. I was able to accomplish that. It was interesting to see Filipinos going through your camp area. The ladies carried bananas on top of their head and they were selling those. They always had nice big cigars smoking and whatnot. It was quite unique seeing that different type of life that we never had before.

KS: Can you tell me how our equipment that we used differed from what the Japanese used?
FB: Yes, I had an opportunity to also work with the prisoners. We had to (unclear) they had stacks and stacks of clothing on the beaches and the Japanese were using those. I don't know why they were gathering two and three pieces of uniform whether they were going to take them back and make clothes out of them, make different type of clothes out of them or not. I had a chance to talk to a Sargent Major and he spoke English, in fact better English than I. We discussed the weapons and the fact that our weapons were antiquated compared to some of theirs. Like for example, the 30-caliber machine gun was water-cooled. We were about the only ones other than the British that had those and they were in World War I, and so we carried them on through. The fact that they were difficult in combat because the fact that when the barrels got hot the water got hot as well and the steam came floating up from the cylinder over the barrel. The Japanese had an opportunity to spot us and know where our machine guns were located. So that was a bad thing. They also had a mortar, a small one which they called the (unclear) mortar where they could get up closer into combat without (unclear) a lot of these Mortars missile type things into the ranks of the Americans. Americans had 81-millimeter Mortars, which were very heavy, the tripod was about 50 pounds. The base plate, which you sit the Mortar on, was another 53 or 54 pounds. So carrying these things for any distance was very hard work especially in a jungle. So they could come in quickly get up close and take advantage of us. We did have a better rifle, which was called a Garand, and it was a semi-automatic weapon, 30-caliber. They had what we call a boat action type of a weapon where they would have to do a JE shot. They would have to do a maneuver where they bring the boat back and then bring it forward and down again which takes time. With us, we had a semi-automatic, we could shoot eight

shots off rather quickly and so that was to our advantage. The Japanese had also in clothing; they had the rubber shoes that they could be very quiet through the jungle when they were fighting compared to us with our combat boots and we made rather a lot of noise which Americans are very prone to do.

KS: Now I saw on your questionnaire that you are traced to the Bataan Death March. Can you tell me what that was like?
FB: Yes. I had an opportunity then to go only about 5 miles up the road to the camp which was Camp McDonald where our people who were forced to march on the Death March there. First of all I realized the heat that they must have had to experience because I had a couple of canteens and it wasn't long before I had exhausted all the water I had in that walk. I could see for them it was jungle. Visualize a lot of jungle in the Philippines a lot of trees; very heavy vegetation. So I tried to penetrate some of that you know to see how they would escape and I could see where they would have problems. So I really understood what hardships they had gone through and to walk those miles. I also had a chance to go to Corregidor the last (unclear) for the Americans. That's where General MacArthur left to get on to his, he went further inland to pick up the (unclear) but in that area he took off there and then when he left General Wainwright I saw some of their facilities and their caves that they talked about a lot. I remember they called them 'the tunnels' and of course they had a lot of weapons and things were left there exposed but it was a sad day after Corregidor fell then there was only a few other units to help out so that was the last of it. Then we lost the Philippines to the Japanese.

KS: Is there anyone in particular that you remember through your years in the service?
FB: Yes. Again this is not within the World War 2 but my last commander, which was General Charles Higgins. He was a Tuskegee Institute graduate there and he was my commander and also he was the commander of North command, the communications area for all of this area, up here northeast. Which entailed maybe about 30 or 40 units, bases. So what I liked about him was the fact that he was very strict on maintaining an image for the airmen to guide themselves by. As he had said many times that we are military ambassadors and therefore we should conduct ourselves in a proper manner. Also he used to go through the (unclear) and always have a good word for us and if anybody needed some help here he was a general but he had time. He wasn't enlisted and he came up through the ranks and to achieve that was quite an accomplishment but he never forgot the fact that he was an enlisted man and that we do have problems and he was there to help us. So I always have fond thoughts especially being my last commander.

KS: You mentioned about the dropping of the A-Bomb before, what did you think about President Truman's decision to do that?

FB: Yes I thought it was the right thing to do because otherwise I'm sure all of us would've been washing up on the beaches. As we know Okinawa and Iwo Jima one of the last two great battles, they fought to the death (unclear) on the homeland; they would certainly do that again and they would take an awful lot of good Americans with them. After everything was said and done they thought perhaps they could possibly save by using the A-Bomb. They had saved maybe a million of American troops. So I know it was very hard on the Japanese having a bomb like that fall on them. As you know they didn't surrender on the first one and so they hung in there pretty hard. Yes he did the right thing, I know it was a hard decision and it was a very difficult decision but he did it and that's maybe one good reason why I'm here to talk to you.

KS: When did your active duty in World War 2 end?
FB: Basically in February of '46. That's when I had what we called a 'Red Apple (unclear)' and manpower was very short over there and they were trying to recruit men to stay in the services to accomplish these other jobs, occupy Japan (unclear) had to occupy Europe. They had to send troops when I was in the Philippines; they shipped 300 men to Korea because they were having trouble there when the Japanese surrendered there, they had to help the Koreans out. Possibly some of the Russians, they had infiltrated down from the North. So I didn't have to go on that but like I said I guess I lost my train of thought there a minute.

KS: Where did you go when you were done with your active duty? When you came back from the Pacific?
FB: I went to New York, I went to Fort Slocum, which is the first air force, and I became a clerk in the Inspector General's office. I went through Carolina again for processing and they wanted to send me to Europe and I said I just got back from the Pacific and they said well, we have a meeting this morning and if they didn't have all the paperwork together they'd ship you back overseas again. So I finally talked him out of it but I did end up close to home, which was St. Catherine's just outside of Niagara Falls.

KS: What made you want to be in the air force so much?
FB: I guess I always wanted to serve in the military. Even when I was in Canada, I was with the cadets with the Royal Canadian Air Force but that was a school cadet and we did go to different bases and take some training with the military, with the air force there. Their training and their drill is a lot different, not a lot of difference but it's different from the American drill. They carry their weapon on the left hand, flat to the shoulder, where the Americans carry on the right and upright and they march differently. You've seen in the movies maybe the British with swagger swinging their arms and all that and hobnail boots and they go in for that. So I had a little adjustment to do in that sense but I adjusted pretty well. Even like we're talking on the basic training I had some experiences there, one

time we were out doing machine gun practice and I had to sit out in the sun for so long and I didn't think that was a very good idea. Somebody said well why don't you take a pencil and punch holes into the target. I thought well, that makes sense punching and getting all of them and you have to qualify. If you don't qualify then you have to do it all over again and if you've ever been down in South Carolina in the full sun you know that you're going to do something (unclear). So I thought about it and I said ok, so I got a pencil and I punched holes all around the target (unclear) right in the center of the target because I want to qualify. So when they called all those who need to be checked I carried my target up to him but he could see the pencil. When you have a bullet go through a target it makes a clean cut, see I wasn't thinking that way. When you use a pencil, you punch a hole in it and the paper just spreads. He says you didn't hit this target; you punched a hole through it. The pencil, I guess he knew it, second lieutenant so he says ok go get your field pack, put it on and then give me about 70 pushups and I thought well I got to learn my lesson on that. Then again, while we were on the range we did do a certain you know jump and the targets would come up and we would have to fire at them. In order for the target to pop up and down somebody had to be in a hole down there to lift the target up and lift it down. So if they called for number 12, the number 12 target would go up someone would fire a machine gun or a rifle would fire at it and then it would come down. (Unclear) So I had the job to take care of number 12 and then they had a field phone and that's how they notified you. They strung wire along on the ground and they'd say ok 12 up, 12 down like that and I can't remember maybe I was there about 15 minutes doing it and then I blacked out and went to sleep I guess, the sun (laughs). So I slept through the whole target practice. They came and got me but I thought I was going to be in trouble but evidently other people have done the same thing.

KS: If you could use one word to describe your years in service, what would it be?
FB: I would say self-satisfaction because service is a challenge in a true sense. There's no occasion compared to sometimes to some civilian jobs where it's a boxed in type of job. In the military it depends on your aptitude and you initiative whether you want to rise up through the ranks. Like General Higgins for example, he went from sergeant eventually to a brigadier general. So it's unlimited if you take advantage of all the schooling and training they put you through. So I thought, this is a wonderful way to learn, I like the discipline, I like the military, and I like their ways. Also the travel involved was nice too I enjoyed that, I never argued about sending me any place. Overall, I thought it was an excellent career.

KS: So that's ultimately what made you stay in for 30 plus years?
FB: Yes 30 plus years (laughs).

KS: Are there any other interesting facts you'd like to share? Any particular stories you can remember?

FB: More or less into the Philippines there, trying to think. Oh yes we had one story there that was kind of funny to me. When we first got there as green recruits, we were camped in Luzon before we moved further down (unclear) area. We thought that at night there was a Japanese up in the palm tree and everybody was gathered around and saying yes I can see his leg, yes I can see his foot and there's his helmet. The palm trees are about 50 feet high or so, so at night the young GI imagination can get carried away. So we were all there for I'd say, about an hour just looking. We didn't have any weapons with us but then an officer came along and says, what's going on? And we told him, there's a Japanese soldier up there and he says no there's not. So he dispersed us and that was when we all went back to our quarters. We felt disappointed you know? We'll never get into combat (laughs). This was why we did it though.

KS: Is there any other facts you would like to share?
FB: No I can't think too much in that area. Overall or just in World War 2 right?

KS: Either or.
FB: We were in (unclear) and in Greenland quite a bit. I worked with the troops there. That was working on ships and unloading ships bringing in cargo and stuff to build up the bottom part. We had what they called two bases Sondrestrom and Nauseosa and as you know Greenland is owned by Denmark so we did a lot of supplies and stuff there. We had a chance to see some polar bears and some Greenland people and a lot of people want to become Eskimos but they're not. One little story there, the Danish people who kind of supervise them told us we might have to stop putting in the trash area, toothpaste because they were eating it as candy. You know some of the tooth (unclear) was already empty. So they said would you mind stopping because they're doing that sort of thing. With the Greenlanders, we had to be extremely careful because they were receptive to our diseases Tuberculosis and things like that. They had never had any exposure before so they tried to keep us separated. Even when I was in Greenland when they had the dogs and that sort of thing running through over their sleds they liked to come into camp but they tried to chase us to keep us away from them because it wouldn't take long for them to get sick and then we'd have to take care of them in the hospital there. But I think that's just about all I can think of right now.

KS: Well that pretty much concludes our interview I just want to thank you again for coming and agreeing to do this interview with us.
FB: Thank you very much, I appreciate it.