

**Charles MacMasters
Veteran**

**Michael Aikey
Wayne Clarke
NYS Military Museum**

**Interviewed on
January 2, 2001
NY National Guard Headquarters
Latham, New York**

Q: Mr. MacMasters, prior to the war, what were you doing?

CM: I was a college student, Syracuse University. I was there. The first peace time draft started, a whole bunch of us went up to Dean of Man's office, signed up and that was in September. Low and behold, (1940) 1941. Low in behold, I was taken in December for my pre-induction physical. But because I was in college, the draft board exempted me until the end of the school year.

So, in July of '41, I went into the service. I reported to the draft board, took us down to a little place called Adams, New York. And we all got on the platform waiting for the train to come through, and there were groups from, oh there were probably fifteen of us all together from the draft board. We got a little talk about this, how important, how critical our services will be, to follow the rules. I said goodbye to my parents and we all climbed onto the train and headed for Syracuse. And we started getting acquainted riding down in the train. My buddy, that I had a long relationship with, was a young fella who had just finished Cornell University. He had been called up too in the draft. We got to Syracuse. We got our meal tickets. Had an old grey-haired sergeant there to straighten us out as to the military life and don't do anything foolish. Then we were combined with a bunch of draftees who were being picked up in Syracuse, got on the train. And then we ended up, until we finally ended up in Fort Niagara. Again, we were given the talk. Officially, we raised our hand and inducted in the United States Army for one-year service.

My memories are all jumbled together about different things that happened in Niagara. First of all, they started teaching us the facing movement, a little bit about marching. Again, first night I was there I drew KP, and so I had to take my white towel, put it on the foot of my bunk. The sergeant quarter was going to wake me up at some unreasonable hour to prepare food. After my KP duties, then we started drawing clothing. It was kind of a weird procedure because they would give you an over-sized jacket and say, "Well you can exchange it at the next place." Apparently, nobody left there without a jacket whether it fit or not. After being there for about two days, we got on the train again, and we headed south.

And we got out meal tickets again to eat on the car. And we...It took us about two and a half days. Then we finally ended up at a place called Camp Croft, South Carolina, which was outside of Spartanburg. Camp Croft no longer exists as I understand that it's been

developed it into a housing area. They got us off from the train, and we were all marched over to our area. And I ended up in the B Company of the 33rd Training Regiment at Camp Croft. Captain Bannister was the commander.

This is when I started to see different people, different officers with their experiences. He was one of the older-timers that came through the CCC's. He was a good man, and I think those fellas that came from the CC background had a little better grasp than some of the younger guys we got who just graduated from college with their commission. Our NCO Camptree (?) was a bunch of old guys who had come out of Fort Moultrie, the old Southern boys and we were grown Northern boys. It was... We managed to live together quite well. And they proceeded to train us. We went through thirteen weeks of basic training there at Camp Croft. And one of the things I remember is that we went to the rifle range and when we returned, one of the rifles from the, opposite company is A company, discharged. The men were in their barracks and two men shot. One of them was killed, immediately we were hustled out. Boy they inspected us, looked all over to make sure we had no ammunition. They couldn't figure out what happened. It seems that rifle had been fired. The rifle was on the range. It wasn't functioning, and they put it in the rifle rack still loaded. Somebody was told, "Okay, you carry that rifle back with you." And somebody had kind of jammed it into the rifle rack and it toppled over and it fired.

The training was we were down there in July. And it was hot. We were training and went through all the different phases of training. Those were the days when you had to take salt pills, which tended to make an awful lot of people sick. That was part of the drill. For seven weeks, basic training and the next six weeks were advanced infantry training. At the end of that period of time, I was selected... I had been acting as corporal. What had happened, they'd taken anybody that got college experience, made them acting corporals. So, we had our little arm bands with corporals on them. I was the only one in our company or in our squad that had an M1 rifle. The rest of the guys were still carrying the good 'ol Springfield. And the Springfield was the rifle we used when we went out on the range and fired and qualified. Each of us, I think, got a chance to fire a clip from the M1 to see how it worked.

I remember one thing that happened. When we got into our advanced infantry tactics, they were going to show us how the... the infantry mortar a sixty millimeter worked. They were looking for people who had any experience with explosives. Just before I had come into the army, I had a summer job working on construction and I'd help they guys pack some dynamite, so I was qualified. I was the guy that dropped the shell down the tube. It was poorly demonstrated in that everything was wobbly on the mortar and whenever they gave the fire command, you had no idea if the shell was going to go right or go to the left because it was so wobbly. They had the whole battalion out there for us to fire, I think, five rounds. And that was...

While we were there going through our indoctrination, we had a fella come talk to us from the New York Times and he told us very solemnly that things were going to get tougher. The army had now reached a million men, which of course reached a million and then some. Upon graduation, I was promoted to corporal and was put on a cadre for

another training center. That was being set up. I could remember going round to one of the other battalions that was training. I wanted to see how they were doing and get some ideas. I could remember this one corporal had some of these fellas up. He was giving them close order drill. He said to this one fella, "Wimson (?) jump!" I said, "Why do you do that?" And he said, "The guy can't learn to change step." And he says, "If he jumps up in the air, he's got a fifty-fifty chance of coming down in step."

Now while there, one nice Sunday afternoon in December, we'd gone and had dinner at the mess hall and came back. And us three corporals were stretched out on our sacks at the NCO room talking. Suddenly, someone burst into the room and said, "Hey, the Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor!" We went out and there was everybody in the barracks room cleaning their rifles like mad. The warden became very serious at this point. We had all gone through this period of time during that... we didn't know how long we were going to be in. In the fall, they decided well, rather than a year, we should be in for eighteen months. That's when some poor national guys who had been in for a while were coming up with the old battle cry of OHIO - Over the Hill in October - which never happened. Immediately after Pearl Harbor, I was put on... They formed a cadre and in no time, we were down to Fort McClellan. And when we got there, there were still cars parked there from the old 27th Division.

It pulled out in such a hurry that the guys who had cars didn't even get the chance to get rid of them. They just left them parked around the camp. It was a tent city. We moved in and set that up. Within a short time, we started getting guys in. Then we started to train them. For them, we drew Enfield rifles. We got them, open the crates, they had been packed in Cosmo [Cosmoline] line in 1922. And I swear that I was there another year and I swear Cosmo line was still oozing out of unknown places on those poor rifles. No windage, and for elevation, yes, windage no. That was quite a problem. We tried to teach... going out on the range. The guys came from all over from a variety of places over the United States. One of the things at that time, this would be 1942, there were some guys up to forty-five years old. That was something that changed later on. My girlfriend came down and visited me. We made the decision that the first chance we'd get married.

This is about the time I put in for OCS. Plenty of things OCS. I went through a training course there at Fort McLane. That was kind of a pre-OSC course because they wanted to make sure that went from there were qualified and would do well. In about July of '42 I left for Fort Benning was in class '88 which was... We were almost graduating a class in a day at that time. My buddy of mine had been with me, he also went down there. And he graduated in '85, and I was in '88. We graduated weekends apart. All he had was good experience. One of the things, they had a kind of winnowing process. About every two weeks, they would go through a list. And it would be everybody's name would be on that list. And it would be those people you would most prefer, if you were on a combat patrol, who would you like to be with. Would you like to be on a patrol with this individual or that one? And those guys who came out last, what would happen with say Monday morning, we would fallout and somebody would be called out of ranks and they say, "Report to the orderly room." When we came back in the evening, their bunk, the mattresses all nicely rolled up and their clothes were gone. They were promoted to the rank of sergeant and assigned to some infantry division.

We were riding around in old cattle cars. The Calvary used to have them as horse cars. They had them, and they had benches in these long caravans. We would ride in them and go from class to class. We were billeted in what were called an area the Harmony Church area in Fort Bay. Well, upon graduation, my girlfriend came down. We got married. And I was admitted to the cannon school. Now, this was one of the crazy things the army tried, and it didn't work very well. In fact, by wars end, it was gone. The theory was that the regimental commander needed his own close artillery support, where he didn't need to go through all sorts of chains of command trying to get fire support when we needed it. He'd have his own cannon company. And we would have six howitzers in the cannon company. I went through with the training with the cannon company. Then I was assigned to the 81st division, which was at camp Rucker. And I went to the transportation officer and he said he'd never heard of the place. And so, after much searching, they finally put us on the train, and we finally got ourselves over to camp Rucker, which is over by Delfin, Alabama.

I reported to the regimental headquarters. They in turn sent me down to the second battalion of the three 23rd Infantry. Got there, five of us sat waiting to see what our fate would be; how we would be handled in this new outfit. They were out making their fifteen-mile march. And they came back in. We could hear them; the steady cadence of their tramp as they came marching in the battalion area. The battalion commander rushed in. He was a little short guy, kind of chubby. And he rushed into his office and was calling out orders to his different staff people. He came charging out of his office yelling at us admit, "Somebody has stolen my helmet liner. This one doesn't fit. He had it on backwards. That should have been a clue as to what to expect. He did not stay in command of the battalion long. I was assigned to H Company, 2nd Battalion. And from there, I was assigned to the 2nd platoon the machine gun platoon. The first lieutenant got us all together. We all... there was a bunch of us reported at the same time. And he said, "You guys shape up and make me a captain, and I'll see that you get to be first lieutenants right away!" So, we worked real hard. We were training with these companies (mumbles). There was a real flat area that we were working in, kind of rolling fields. We maneuvered in them, and we had most of our problems were fought right on the area.

But then often times, we would go off down towards Florida and train in that area. When we finally had... Well, as you go through company, then battalion, and regimental exercises, then we had our division exercises down in Florida. And then we were told we were going to go into the Tennessee maneuvers. Then we loaded up on trucks, and we headed for Tennessee. We then maneuvered around from Nashville to Cartridge area. It was getting towards spring. We then left that area. We wondered where we were gonna' go. Lovely rumors would fly around there such as McCarthy doesn't want us there, because we are over trained. So, we always had lovely little stories always going around. We ended up doing our maneuver in Tennessee. When that ended, we were hoping to go out to camp Atterberry into Anna prior to shipping out for Europe, only to be told that we were gonna be shipped out to Arizona to the dessert training center. So, that's where we went. Because General McNair was chief of the ground forces, decided that if any outfit could go through desert training, they'd be ready for anything. Because he had just

come back from interviewing the troops that were in North Africa. He figured that was... So, off to Arizona we go! We end up in a place that was the only thing that it had was, I think, five wells. Everything else we had to come up with. We were in a real desert. That was the only time that I was in the army where ever allowed you two hours for a noon meal, a siesta. I can remember we used to get a... You'd get on your cot. You'd take a towel, soak it in water, strip down to nothing, stretch out with a towel on you, and that would help you keep cool for about twenty minutes and then you'd soak up the towel again and put it on you. We then had exercises. We had to make land marches by compass. And you would find you'd go about so far and all of a sudden there is this canyon right in front of you. So, then you had to take your map out, make your offset, go around it and find it. Because if you made a mistake, you wouldn't be in the right spot to get your rations for that night. That was a real challenge. I can remember one exercise where I was an umpire, and we started out at sunrise. It was this one regiment in the attack. You could see them moving out. We'd watch them. About 10:30, you couldn't see a soul. You had to take your field glasses and you look, and there would be bushes about this size and there would be some guy huddled in the shade of that bush. That was about the end of the attack for the day (snickers).

When we finished training in Arizona, they sent us to Californian for amphibious training. I went to camp San Fishbowl. It was a nice area. It was kind of historic and so on. Again, it was a little better, no tents this time. But there were small buildings. They would hold about a squad a building. But they weren't like the old standard barracks. We were there, and we would go down to the coast for amphibious training, where we again would come roaring in our amphibious craft. The ramp would go down and they would scream, "Get off the beach!" Your feet are turning madly in the... through all the sand. It was about when we were in Arizona (?), they finally decided that they were going to activate the Cannon Company. So, I left the H Company and went to the Cannon Company. We didn't start picking up officers from and men from all over the place. Our first meeting, our first day we had a strange occurrence, because when we got there, they decided they were going to fill the outfit up with half infantrymen and half artillery men. And it was NOT a good mix. After we got done, the first day's drill, they said, "Dismissed." The enlisted personnel all disappeared. They were going back to their old artillery barrier or the old company or where ever. The officers were sitting there. We were the only ones left.

It was a poor way to try to choose these guys. It never worked, even a couple of years later when we'd been working together a long time, there was still slippage, an awful lot of slippage. After a while training there at San Vispo (25:59), we went through several amphibious exercises. And they said, "Okay, you're ready for overseas." We went up to Camp Beale in LA Bronze, Sacramento. There we were staging. I was selected to go on to the advanced party to Hawaii. I said goodbye to my wife. She was pregnant this time and she got on the train and headed for home. I was with a party. We went down and climbed on all of those lovely Dutch ships, you know that you read about now Nor-Dam and so on making those trips up and down. I'm sure they weren't the same ships, but they were the same shipping line. The Dutch had gotten... When the war broke out and the Germans made it to Holland, all of these ships were at sea. Apparently, they headed for neutral ports or for allied ports and became under the control of the United States

Navy. There was strange. Okay, we had been eating in the field. While I was in Arizona, I went from about one hundred and forty pounds down to about a hundred twenty-five pounds because of the heat and sweating and everything. And when we got on these ships, the officers... well the ship officers... they had these guys there from China coming around with their little caps on. They had them on silver service, which was a lot different than when we were back in the field where you stood in line, and you waited until your unit was fed and then you ate. We then reported out to Honolulu, and we went out to Scofield barracks and waited for the rest of the outfit to show up, which they did in a matter of a couple of weeks. And from there we started our training.

We did some jungle training out there, and that was always a thrill. Because we'd go out there and there were all these mangrove swamps and you'd be climbing around on some of the branches, and all of a sudden you realize you're not near the earth anymore. You were about twelve feet up in the air climbing just through tall limbs on these things. Honolulu was one of those places you could visit. But by curfew, you had to be back on base. So, you never did see too much of Honolulu. It was the land that... hooker (inaudible) What are these guys standing in line for? And they were all going upstairs into some cathouse. That was apparently the naval commander's idea of trying to keep things under control. It was one of these things too, when we were there, we had our division plus a marine division plus another army division and part of the fleet was there.

So, we'd go into a bar and stood in line. You were allowed three beers and that was it. Make way for somebody else. Things moved. It was a beautiful place to be. We weren't going to be there long. We just had no idea what we were going to do. While we were there, an ammunition shell blew up. While we were there in the harbor, they were loading to get the 77th Division, getting ready to go out. They were loading one of the LSTs (landing ship tank), and it fire started and had explosions on it. It went up, and I think there was some other ammunition ships close by. They went up. So, you could stand out there in Schofield barracks and see all of the stuff going up in the air. We finally trained there, and we were put aboard ships. And for forty-five days, we were tooling around the Pacific before we finally got to the Palawan islands, Western Carolinas. We started out...

We left Hawaii. We went down to Guadalcanal and had us practice an amphibian landing there. Then we loaded up from there, and that is when they told us we were heading toward the Palawan Islands. They wheel out this nice little rubber mat of what Palau looks like. And of course, nobody had been there for years. One of the things they failed to show was that it was a coral island. It had been pushed up from the ocean. There were keys all over and the Japanese had been fortifying the place for years and had done a great job of expanding these islands.

So, we finally headed up there and the 1st Marine division went in on Palau and the 81st went on the adjacent island called Angaur. Their operation lasted probably about five days. And the place was considered secure except for those few crazy bastards that always hold out. We had to kill them in order to get rid of them. A fellow though who was... I can remember standing there watching the place being bombarded. The ships

would circle around, and they would fire, and they would see they would hit the island. Hell, we think there can't be anything LEFT. We just walk in like we were on parade. The Marines lost heavily. In the end, the Army then finally went in and finished up. My regiment was the one in reserve, the 23rd Infantry. We went up to secure this lovely little a-tall called the Ulithi atoll. It was one of these one hundred miles around atoll. We went in, landed with all the fervor and excitement when you have an amphibious landing. And all I found was one chicken running around. I threw a stone and hit it in the head, so we tried to cook it that night. It was so tough, but hey. And that's when we got our first mail in forty-five days. We all sat there. We had stacks of letters. This one captain said, "Now fellows, what you do is put the mail in sequence, and you get the newest one on top, and you read that first. Because if there is going to be any bad news, you want to get it right away rather than have it sneak up on you." I picked up my letter and it said, your daughter is four days old. So, that was kind of a joyful thing.

We stayed on the atoll just long enough for the Navy to come in and start their anchorage there and another airport. Then we went back down to Palau and we relieved one of the, I think, Marine regiments. And then we took up the battle against the Japanese that were in the caves. We went into Palau. We had the Japs in a pocket. They were down inside, and we were up on the top. We couldn't get in easily, and we had them boxed in so they couldn't get out. So, it was a matter of just trying to figure out ways to kill them off as best we could. There were all kinds of caves. This is where we took the cannon company, and we had howitzers. And we would disassemble them and carry them to the top of these ridges. And then we would build up sandbags. And of course, the sandbags... You had to... Because this was coral, we had to go down to the beach to get the sand. You'd have to get sandbags, haul them up one bag at a time. Then you build up a position and your howitzer in there. You wait until dark. Because if you were moving around too frequently, Japanese snipers would nail you, so we wait until dark. They wouldn't fire at night, because they knew it would give themselves away with the rifle flash. So, we would then boar site the mortars on these cave mouths. And we would wait for... to see some sort of movement, and then we would slam a few shells in there. This went on for a month. We had all sorts of unhappy disasters, such as the mortars. We had the place completely surrounded. We had one incident were the mortar company was given a fire order to drop some shells in there. The unhappy thing is that the guy giving the directions was on the opposite side of the circle. So, when he was talking about going right, the tubes should've been going left. They killed some guys from one of the companies, dropped right on top of them. Another incident was one of these things were the guys get tired, get nervous, and get high strung. They would... all of a sudden there would be a fire fight to find out that the first platoon was shooting out the second platoon.

Q: Did your training prepare you for... ah...

CM: No, this was a seize operation. You don't do seizes anymore, that went on in the Middle Ages. This is actually what we were doing, seize. We had them bottled in, and we were trying to wipe them out that way. We finally did. It took a month, better than a month to do that. And then after that, I read where twenty-nine came out and surrendered until the war was over. It wasn't a big island. It was probably nine miles long, maybe a mile wide at the widest point. We were getting ready. We were told we

were needed somewhere else. When the fighting ended on Palau, the army was now invading the Philippines. And we were needed somewhere else. It was at that point that we found that the old division had dysentery. It was in the water supply of this island. The Marines were aware of it when they landed there, because the medics told them what to expect. So, they boiled all of their water. You could put them through all kinds of filters, and they would go right through. So, we ended up a funny thing like stories about the old civil war camp grounds. We'd look around and see fires burning or this or... Each company had a fire going, boiling water so they had water. The war completely bypassed us. And there we had nothing but C-rations and that was just a choice of three. In those days, it was hash, stew, and beans. And so you'd get up for breakfast, lunch and dinner and that was your choice.

Many times, you'd get up and maybe have something for breakfast and then came lunch, you would just have a cup of coffee and maybe one of those hard crackers or something. We did have a duck that was available to the regiment. It would be loaned out on a half a day basis to each company. And then they would go out on a little reef that was close by and use hand grenades to stun the fish. There we had some fresh fish and that was a real treat. So, we had to wait patiently until it was your turn came around. Christmas came and low-and- behold a supply ship came with turkeys and all kinds of good stuff. That was the first decent meal we had in a long time. Of course, we had the class six rations showed up and break, and got booze all over it. And what we did was go down to the company and took one of those great old pots that they cooked in. We just poured everything in there and stirred it up and put a little spices in it and then everybody would come through in the company and get a cup full of that. That's the way we celebrated Christmas then.

Shortly after that, because we all had dysentery, we were supposed to go down to New Caledonia. This was probably the most pleasant trips I had in the army. In that, they loaded the stuff from the cannon company and from the anti-tank company on this one ship. And they put some men and officers from those outfits to go with. So, we quartered right with the regular ships and this was a merchant ship. So, we didn't have any clash with the navy brass or anything. They didn't have their arm guard aboard. They always considered us as a different kind of bird than they were. We had a very pleasant trip riding down. We ate in the regular ship's officers' mess. The other guys were telling us the food's great. They'd ask you if you want some eggs. That was it. "You want some more eggs?" That was great. We had a real pleasant trip going through these tropical islands. And we were almost to New Caledonia at the main port, Nouméa. When during the night, we, I don't know about 8:30, we heard these horns being blown on the ship. And so, "Gee, we must be passing somebody close by." And we go out on deck to see what's going on. Low-an-behold we rammed a ship right in the middle. They were coming north and we were south. The Navy had set up two channels. This was way out of its channel. And the fourth mate who was on watch at that time got the signals and turned the wrong way, so we hit them right in the middle. Low-and-behold the ship didn't sink, but it was an awfully interesting night.

We... From there we finally went down to Nouméa. And I saw the ship that we rammed. And the hole was big enough to drive a jeep through. We went training on Nouméa,

down there in Caledonia. It was interesting, because it was vegetation we'd never seen before. They had a lot of low-lying brush and bushes there. Little small deer would dart in and out there. With a little luck you might get one now and then so you could have some. We were there training. And we were declared fit for duty. And we bolted back up again and we headed on up in to the Philippines and ended on Legazpi. And this is... My brother, who was a warrant officer in communications with the 8th Army, came down and greeted me much to my surprise. It was a great thing. We were there and we were training. And loading up for the invasion, that's where it was going to be, operational intake... We were going to go in to where the Japanese home island. We didn't know at the time. We knew (mumbles). We were arguing and somebody said, "Nah, we're go to the far most southern..." Nobody knew for sure. Then all of a sudden, they dropped the bomb. And this was one of the things that just blew our minds. To think that this thing had such a tremendous destructive area... Because we... You know if you had hard artillery shells like that, what a spread you'd have to have to fight that area (mumbles and laughs). They're artillery batteries. Just before that we'd had seen our first snooper-scope. The one where you see at night. Before that, they fired a demonstration with a VT fuse. And oh that was something to see falling on the contour of the hill. It's, oh my gosh. "This war is getting real fierce." When the war ended, we didn't know what would happen to us. We felt, "Well, we're headed for someplace." At this point, we were told a point system was coming into effect. And since I'd been in so long and since I had a wife and a kid, I had enough points that I was going to be taken back. So, I was rotated back from there, went to the replacement depot. And we were there I think for thirty days before we could catch a ship. We had every... one of those little pocket books that you could find, play volleyball from sunrise to sunset, saw every movie they'd shown whether they'd seen it once or twice. Then finally we came back to the states.

Q: What did the average G.I. think of the bomb at that point?

CM: We thought it was great. It was going to get us home. It was going to end the war. That was all.

Q: Generally, how did you view the American equipment and training?

CM: The American equipment and training? Well, I thought if we had the latest equipment, it was great. The outfit... The 81st Division and the heavy artillery, they were still training up in the Arizona desert with some old converted Schneider 155s. Those ones were where the Germans surrendered to the allies at the end of World War One. I can remember the unhappy incident where one of the shells dropping short in the middle of a company, but it didn't go off. It just buried itself in the desert sand. And very shortly after that, they came in with the new 55s. I like the M-1. I think everybody like that. When we were fighting on (Palawan? mumbles). There was a chemical mortar company there. A 4.2 mortar that we wished that we had that as an infantry rather than a cannon company. We thought we would do better with that than the cannons. The grease gun... That was... We didn't like to have that around, because it was such a rapid fire. It sounded just like a Japanese machine gun. I can remember one fellow came up with this grease gun and gave the Japanese a few blasts, and when that thing went off, everybody started ducking because we thought we had somebody behind us.

Q: How did it feel out in the Pacific with the Marines? What were the relationship between the...?

CM: Once you start fighting, it doesn't make any difference. Once you're in the same position when you're gonna die... Nothing worse than meeting a marine who's just finished basic.

Q: What did you think of MacArthur?

CM: He was not our hero. It was strange because... As I think back now, he did a great job of island hopping. But he was not... did not make himself dear to the troops. We always considered that he was living lavishly while we were going through the miserable rain, desert, everything out there in the jungle.

Q: How did it feel a few thousand miles away? You're a father, what nineteen, twenty years old. Was that a constant thing in your life? Constant thoughts of home?

CM: Oh yeah, right. Yes. I can remember it was when we were in the Philippines getting ready, well what was supposed to come, invasion of Japan. We were near a beach, and in the evening, the sun would still be setting and there would be plenty of light. And you'd see guys by themselves sitting all alone on the beach, you know like you do, going through their thoughts.

Q: Is there one feeling, one thought that you came out with at the end of the war that's carried with you?

CM: Well, I don't know if I'd say there one. Several. I liked the comradery that I had had in the service. That's why I joined the reserve when I got out. And got myself recalled for Korea. Yeah, I think comradery. I had hoped the Americans would be in a position where by our power and good judgement, we could kind of make the world a safer place to live in.

Q: Do you think we've succeeded?

CM: (big sigh) I've reached the point now where it's impossible, mankind being what we are. I hate to think of us down the road... Chinese.

Q: Now after you were discharged you joined the reserves. (mmhmm) What did you do in civilian life?

CM: I worked for the General Electric Company in Syracuse, and then later on, I became a teacher.

Q: And you were called up as an active reservist, when?

CM: 1950. This is when things started. I took my physical. I was lucky. Upon recall I became a unit advisor and was assigned to reserve units down in New York City and was quartered out on Governor's Island, Fort Jay, and a pleasant post. And so, I was there for not quite a year and then got transferred to Syracuse, was there for maybe six months. And then finally sent down to Fort Benning for an infantry refresher course. And then sent to Korea. When I ended in Korea, I was assigned to what was called the United Nations Replacement Center, which was kind of a makeshift outfit. We were supposed to have all of these allies. And they were to be coming into Korea at which point we would train them with American equipment, furnish them with American

equipment. That's what I was doing, infantry tactics usually talking through a translator. I had to be careful there, what terms you would use, such things as... We had Highlanders and Thailand. They don't the feet system. They had the metric system. You had to change the dimensions in your fox hole. I enjoyed that duty, but we had a colonel that drank us out of existence because every time somebody came down to inspect the unit, he would be out cold in his quarters. From there, I went up to the psychological warfare section, which was another nice move, better to be on the cold front line in those days. I was the liaison with the Airforce. And the Airforce was making the leaflet drops. And I would get the leaflets, help set up the schedule for drops and then work it out with the Airforce.

Q: That duty lasted, how long?

CM: Well let's see, that probably started in July of '52 and lasted till March '53.

Q: What was it like to work in the psychological warfare unit?

CM: It was a breeze, very comfortable, lots of crazy things. In other words, here we were trying to convince a foreign enemy that they should surrender and the problem was getting inside their heads, such as, one of the leaflets we dropped showed a figure in black, long gown, boney hand, a scythe, and it's pointing at a grave in the ground. It says, "Don't let this happen to you." The thing of it is, in Korea graves are mounds on the sides of hills, death is a symbol in white, and you drop those leaflets out there and they got them and it just didn't make any sense to them. Oh, a waste of time and paper and everything else. So, it got to be quite a problem to try to get inside their heads. It was all kinds of problems like that. One time in psy-warfare, I was told this, "Well, we've got Chinese in this war now and we've got to get some good psy. war material for them. So, they sent down to Formosa and got a couple of college professors who came up writing dissertations on why one should not fight and so on. And of course, we found out that the average illiteracy for the poor Chinese soldiers was about third grade. And so, we wasted our time there.

Q: There was quite a learning curve in this operation.

CM: Oh yes.

Q: You think it was a successful operation?

CM: Ah (long sigh and pause) It would have to be percentagewise I don't know. If we learn something from that, great. Because... There was a lot that was going wrong. Those leaflets drops... we found out they foot bombs... (mumbles) What they say is that they would open up nine hundred feet broke completely down to the ground or opened up at two thousand feet and we get somebody from one of the battleships saying, "Hey, we've got a whole bunch of leaflets landed on our deck." Ya know. "Thanks." Then one time we had some leaflets unfortunately blew into Panton John and that gave the communist all kinds of room to fret and stew, fret and everything else. So, I don't know. A lot of effort went into doing it, but it wasn't a good operation.

Q: And you ended your career in that unit?

CM: Yes. I came back from that, came back home and got in the reserves again.

Q: And from then on, you became a teacher?

CM: Yes, around the Syracuse area.

Q: Did you feel that your experience, your effort during World War II was worthwhile?

CM: Yeah, when I consider what others had done and what happened to me, I was in the longest of anybody and probably saw the least amount of action. Except somebody from the 98th Division never saw any action at all... I consider that I could have contributed more if I'm needed, but apparently I was not needed.