

**Alfred T. Farhood
Veteran**

**Mike Russert
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Interviewers**

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Q: Sir, could you give us your full name, your place of birth, and date of birth?

AF: Yes. I am Alfred Farhood. I was born in Brooklyn, New York on February 9th, 1920.

Q: What was your pre-military service education?

AF: I went through high school, but I did not have a college education.

Q: When did you finish high school?

AF: I finished in 1938.

Q: What occupations did you have before the war?

AF: I had a few media jobs, which was pretty typical of the times. My first paycheck was \$10 a week [laughs], and then I went into business with my father who was in the importing business. A small family business, Embroidered Linens, which was sold to the department stores. That is what I was doing when the war broke out.

Q: Could you tell us where you were, and your reactions to the news about Pearl Harbor?

AF: I was at the bowling alley at the time when the news came over the radio, and I was, as everyone else was, shocked about the whole situation; wondering what was going to happen.

Q: Did you enlist or were you drafted?

AF: I tried to enlist in the Air Core, but my eyes could not allow me to try and become a pilot, so I waited to be drafted.

Q: When were you drafted?

AF: I was drafted in February of 1942.

Q: Could you tell us about your induction, and then going to basic training where you were trained and so on?

AF: I was inducted here on Whitehall Street, sent to Camp Upton, and from there sent to Fort McClellan, Alabama. I had my basic training there; infantry basic training, and that was for a three-month period. From there I was sent up to Newfoundland, where I was put into an MP company in [unclear], Newfoundland. I applied for and was

accepted for the infantry OCS and my class started in the beginning of January, and I was commissioned a second lieutenant on April 1st, 1943.

Q: Where were you sent from there?

AF: From there I was sent to the 103rd Division at Camp Clayburg, Louisiana. I was a platoon leader in heavy weapons company, in charge of the mortar platoon. I stayed with them for approximately six months, and then I volunteered to go overseas. I went overseas toward the end of 1943, and I was assigned to the 182nd infantry which was part of the Americal Division. I do not know if you are familiar with the Americal division, but it was the only unnumbered division in the United States Army. It was formed in New Caledonia of three separate regimental task forces, and that's where it got its name, Americal Division. When I joined the 182nd infantry, from the island of Fiji, after having been relieved of combat on Bougainville, they hadn't believed the Marines at the time, and there were arrests in the training period, and that is when I joined Fiji Island. From Fiji Island we went to Bougainville, and we fought the Japanese there. We had a tough time for a while, I don't know if you have ever heard of Hill 260.

Q: Well why don't you tell us about it.

AF: Well Hill 260 was an observation post, the highest point on that part of the perimeter. We had to use it as an observation post, there was a huge banyan tree that we built a ladder with steps up to the top to build an observation post. I frequently went up there as a water observer, and one night, not while I was on the post, on the base rather, the Japanese attacked, and they tactic forced on Hill 260. I was sent up 260 with other troops, and I was a mortar observer during that period, and the battle of 260 lasted four, five, six days, during which we were able to retain control of the hill, and we fought the Japanese off, and that stopped their advance for that period. Following that regiment, they made initial advances further inland into Bougainville, until our regiment and other regiments conquered the Japanese and we had a little rest period on Bougainville for a short period.

Q: Do you think you were prepared for the jungle; how bad it was?

AF: As much as anybody else was that were prepared, jungle warfare was a little bit different.

Q: In what ways would you say it was different?

AF: Well, you didn't have an enemy that you could see in front of you, you didn't have an enemy line, we had our own perimeter, but we didn't know exactly where the Japanese were; and they were all over the island. And the Japanese as you know were very tenacious people, and they fought hard, and they would have positions in places you would never expect them to have, on the top of a hill for example where you would never expect to find an artillery piece, you would find a Japanese weapon up there.

Q: Okay, after you left Bougainville, where did you go next?

AF: Well, we were training at that point for the invasion of the Philippines. My regiment made the beachhead landing on the island of Leyte. My particular battalion went into the island of Cebu, which was pretty heavily fortified by the Japanese, and we made a beachhead landing there, and we suffered some casualties although they did not fight

tenaciously on the beach, they were more inland, but they had the minefields all over the beaches and we suffered some casualties with that. We made that much combat good, right through the island of Cebu, and it was a long battle, a tough battle because they occupied all the high terrain. But finally, we conquered the Japanese on the [unclear] of Cebu.

Q: Where did you go after that?

AF: We were in training for the invasion of Japan, and that was, as you know, something not to look forward to actually because we knew Japan would be heavily defended. We were training and our division was slated to go into Japan on the second wave, and we were conducting heavy training when the bomb was dropped in August of 45', when we were actually relieved to know that we were not going to have to make a beachhead landing there, and then we were just preparing to occupy Japan because we knew the surrender was coming up. Our division was on the ocean at the time McArthur on the Missouri accepted a surrender of Japan on September 2nd. I think we landed on Japan on September 5th or 6th.

Q: What was it like occupying Japan?

AF: It wasn't like anything that we expected, we expected there would be some hostility there, but there was no hostility. We occupied an area North of Tokyo, it was a former Japanese camp, and we were on guard, but we had no incidents at all. It was interesting though because Japan is a very interesting country.

Q: In what ways did you find it interesting?

AF: Well, it is a beautiful country, the landscape is beautiful, the people were very polite; the ones that we encountered. I would say we had no hostility at all, and it was an interesting experience. I was able to do a little traveling in Japan and see a few of the natural wonders, and a few of the temples and more interesting areas. We were there until the beginning of December, when we were ordered back to the States.

Q: Okay, and what happened when you arrived back in the United States?

AF: We were well greeted. It was a rough trip over the Pacific coming across, but beyond having a little side sea sickness we made it okay. We arrived in Seattle and we were partially processed there and it was just great to be back in the States. We were greeted warmly by anybody that we met on the streets, and from there we were actually disbanded, and people were sent to the post nearest their homes for release into the civilian world again.

Q: What kind of reception did you have when you reached home?

AF: A great reception [laughing], it was great. The family was great, everybody greeted us greatly, people we didn't know were great, it was a wonderful feeling as you can imagine; and we were lucky as we got home before Christmas, which was a special treat. Camp Kilmer was where we were released, and they asked us if we wished to remain in the reserves, and I accepted. So, my commission at the time was a captain, I had a reserve commission in that grade. Following a few years in civilian life the Korean War broke out, I think it was in June when the North Koreans invaded. In October I was recalled to active duty.

Q: And where were you sent?

AF: I was sent to Camp Kilmer, and there I was made a Post S4; something for which I had no experience [laughing].

Q: What does that mean?

AF: [laughing] The supply officer of the base. It's a staff position, the S-4 being a supply officer. So, I learned the job, and I had a lot of help naturally. It was about six months later when I received orders to go to Korea. We flew overseas at that time, rather than taking the trash shipment. We landed in Japan, and we were processed there, and I was assigned to the 24th Infantry Division in Korea, the 21st Infantry. Two days after arriving there, I was on the front line with the heavy weapons company which I took over from the captain who was being relieved. I was in Korea for six months, and we had a number of engagements in Korea, during which time as I said I commanded the heavy weapons company again.

Q: So, you were there during the winter?

AF: I was there during the second winter.

Q: How well equipped was the American army for winter in Korea?

AF: When I got there, well equipped. I understand the first winter they were not that greatly equipped. We did not, thank God, have a severe winter. We had a relatively mild winter. I know they had tremendous cold periods during the first winter in Korea, with temperatures going down to -35 °F, and many casualties from the cold weather.

Q: Can you describe some of your actions while you were in Korea?

AF: Well, let's say two days after I arrived in Korea, I was on an outpost with my company, and luckily we did not have any problems there. Shortly after that we made advances, and we were on the offensive. Luckily, I came through everything okay.

Q: How would you say that the Koreans compared to the Japanese as a foe?

AF: It's hard to judge. I think they were both pretty tricky. A lot of sneak night attacks, and hard to pin down; hard to locate.

Q: Now you left before the Chinese intervened?

AF: Actually no, I think the Chinese intervened during that period, and it was a tough period. We made all of the advances at that particular time, and I don't recall that my company was under any particular serious attack.

Q: What do you think of the relief of MacArthur by Truman? What did you have to that at the time, especially if you had fought in the Philippines too?

AF: MacArthur was a brilliant strategist, he also had a big ego, I think everybody knows that [laughing]. I think he did a great job in Korea, but he was hesitant to obey the commander-in-chief, and I honestly do not think Truman had too much choice in the matter. I think he had to relieve him to protect his own position.

Q: I know you say you were wounded, which conflict was that in?

AF: I received a [unclear] mortar wound while we were on Hill 260. It wasn't a terrible wound, it wasn't an incapacitated wound, so I was treated and back to duty.

Q: How about your Bronze Star with an Oak Leaf Cluster, where did you receive that?

AF: That was primarily for 260. I was up there during the entire period, and I was the senior officer for a good part of the time up there; as well as conducting the mortar observation.

Q: You were in Korea for six months, what happened after you left Korea?

AF: After I left Korea, I came back, and I was discharged back into the reserve. I remained in the reserve. I was attached to a replacement training company, which was actually the understudies for Fort Dix. We would have our summit training at Fort Dix, working with the academy there, training the recruits, with the idea being if we were ever needed, we could take over a replacement training company at Fort Dix wherever we were needed. I remained in the reserve until I was age sixty [unclear], I was able to get the maximum time because I was promoted to Colonel, and I automatically had five-years' service in that rank before I had to retire. So, in-all, I had from 1942-1960, I had active duty and reserve service, so I retired with thank God full benefits of any officer who was in the service, and it's great [laughing], especially since I live near Fort Hamilton, so I take full advantage of anything they have to offer.

Q: Could you tell me how your service affected your life?

AF: I think my service was one of the best things that ever happened to me. I learned a lot about leadership, I learned a lot about getting along with people; understanding people. I also learned what a horrible thing war is, and how stupid it is. That people can be killing each other. And there's got to be a better way, and I think human beings will never learn that better way.

Q: Did you ever make use of the GI Bill?

AF: I did for a short period. I took some courses in Brazilian Portuguese. I went to Brazil on a business trip, selling some oriental rugs. I had a lot of rugs down there, and I made a trip shortly after the war down there, and then I made a follow-up trip to do some business down there. My business period was not too successful, so I was down there less than a year and then I came back to the States.

Q: What kind of business did you work in?

AF: We still have the family Embroidered Linen business, and we imported [unclear], and we also imported goods from China. And I made one trip to China, to oversee the embroidery works and what not. It was shortly before the Communists took over, and I beat them out by a few months before they got to Southern China where I was.

Q: Did this business continue?

AF: We continued until the middle to late 50s, and the demand for fancy embroidered linens declined. So, I had to give up the business, and my father continued on a small-basis. I had to leave because it wouldn't support both of us, and I went into disability

health insurance, and I was in that for a year and a half, and then I expanded it to life insurance. I sold life insurance for the period, then I was asked to accept a job in the home office in Manhattan, New York [unclear], life insurance company in marketing, and I accepted that job. I was with them until retirement age, and I retired from that.

Q: When did you get married?

AF: I got married after I returned from Korea, and I returned in February of 52', and I got married in December of 52'. I have a daughter Susan, who we adopted when she was six weeks old. She is going to be forty-five in November. She is the best thing we ever did, and she married a very fine young man, and we have two wonderful grandchildren. My grand-daughter Christine will be going to Drew College in the fall, and Timothy will be in his eighth year in elementary school.

Q: Do you belong to any veterans' organizations?

AF: I do not belong to the VFW or any of those organizations. I belong to the Reserve Officers Association, the Retired Officers Association, the Uniformed Services, which embraces officers and enlisted personnel.

Q: Have you ever attended any of the Reunions?

AF: Just one, way way back [laughing], that's it.

Q: Have you stayed in contact with anyone you were in Service with.

AF: I stayed in contact for a while. I was visited a few times, by friends from Massachusetts, the 182nd Infantry, which was composed of people from Massachusetts. I was visited in New York a few times by [unclear] I was associated with, who came down to visit and spend a few days with us. I have not recently kept in touch with anybody.

Q: During your stay in the Pacific, you were on board ship for the Invasion of Leyte?

AF: I tell my brother-in-law who was in the Navy I spent more time on ships than he did, because we were transported by the Navy from island to island.

Q: Were you ever under attack by kamikazes?

AF: No, no.

Q: Any naval action?

AF: Never any naval action, they were all peaceful. We did receive enemy fire when we made the beachhead on Cebu, but that was not terribly heavy. It was the minefield that was the worst part. All the action on Cebu was in the inland.

Q: Speaking of being inland, did you run into any problems with tropical diseases, malaria, and dengue fever?

AF: I was very fortunate; I did not have contact with any of those.

Q: How about your men?

AF: I don't know if you are familiar with Adabrin. Adabrin was a capsule which was given to prevent malaria. Most men were pretty conscientious about that, once and

while we would have somebody who would try to avoid it, and we had a couple of people contract malaria, but on the whole, we did not have a big problem. We did have a fellow officer of mine, in fact two of them, who went overseas with me, who did contract some sort of tropical diseases. One of them was sent back to the States, and the other one continued through the war, but he finally died of some sort of tropical disease about five years after the war ended.

Q: Did you ever get to see any USO shows during either WWII or Korea?

AF: Oh yes, yes [laughing]. Yeah, we had Danny Thomas come over during WWII. And Bob Pope came over while we were in the Philippines, and those were fun [laughing], they were a great relief from the combat and the training. I don't think we had any USO shows while I was in Korea.

Q: Well, thank you very much for your interview, is there anything else you would like to add?

AF: No, I appreciate the chance to have this interview, and it's something I can, when I receive my copy, show my grandchildren!