

**George Edward Swoboda
Sergeant, US Army, War II
Veteran**

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Q: Could you tell me the name your full name your date of birth and place of birth, please?

GS: George Edwards Swoboda I was born in Athens, Wisconsin December 15, 1925.

Q: Ok. What was your pre-war education high school?

GS: High school. I was a high school graduate. I had graduate in June of 43 and I volunteered for the draft as soon as I was seventeen so as soon as I was eighteen December of 43, I volunteered for the draft and I was drafted and joined got into the army in February.

Q: Did you have any pre-war occupations at all?

GS: I actually worked with a fella who bought up these local scrap drives. The town's would collect every kind of metal and every bit of scrap that could be collected. It'd be huge piles and the fella I worked for had trucks. And a bunch of his fellows would sorta stuff load it and hauled over to the scrap place, because that was a patriotic thing at the time. So a few dollars for us and we were young. I was seventeen years old, and it was a little different than the routine factory worker, farm worker.

Q: So, you were in high school when Pearl Harbor?

GS: I was.

Q: How did you hear about Pearl Harbor and what was your reaction?

GS: That's a good question. I was at my neighbor's house this is on a Sunday. It had to be around noon or before noon and they had an old-fashioned radio, one of those that stands on the floor, and I went to visit my friends over there and the news came on. And of course we had an idea, but we had no idea where Pearl Harbor was uh... We just knew that this is something serious. And then in high school the next day in the assembly, they brought us all together and we heard President Roosevelt's speech about the day of infamy... and well, we knew this is a war of course we got more information from the news and so on.

Q: Okay um...Now you were drafted. What branch of service were you in?

GS: I was in the United States Army. I went to Fort... I was drafted in Wausau, Wisconsin and the induction station and then they transferred me to Fort Sheridan, Illinois. We were there for a short period of time and then I was sent to camp Stewart, Georgia. I had some tests and they found out that I could type and the other tests, they found that my eyes... I was severely myopic. I had like a twenty-seven hundred or something like that and which kind of left me out of any kind of combat service. So, they sent me to army clerical school in Camp Stewart, Georgia with a army artillery battalion. So, I went to school there. I also had some normal training, the usual rifle training and so on and the obstacle courses and the boot training... the basic training. That lasted until June of 44. I get a furlough, and then had papers to go to Fort Sam, Houston, Texas. At Fort Sam Houston, Texas I joined what was becoming the Tenth Army. The Tenth Army was the one that was being performed and designed to head the invasion of Japan should it be necessary. And this headquarters was forming, and I would... designed to the medical section. We spent maybe a month in San Antonio and Fort Sam Houston now we boarded a troop train, and the troop trains... instead of going directly from San Antonio to Spokane, Washington, not Spokane, Seattle, Washington... Tacoma, Washington, where ever Fort Lewis is... Anyhow (outside of Seattle Washington) How about Fort Lawton? (I'm not familiar with that.) It was a... it was a port of embarkation station is where he went. Instead of going direct, we went a very circular route up to St. Louis, up to the lower part of the Dakotas to Montana and so on. I guess that was to throw anybody off as to what our intentions were. It was long and it was no air conditioning in those troop trains. And it was an experience. I was an eighteen year old, and this was a great... to tell you the truth, this was a real adventure for a young guy. It really was, in fact, the whole thing was an adventure. Which I know a lot of people who have been lost people, who got wounded, wouldn't maybe didn't think much of adventure, for me not... not getting hurt at all, it was a great adventure. The whole thing was a great experience.

Q: Now was this your first time away from home for an extended period?

GS: No. I was a traveling person. My father died when I was fairly young and it was only my mother and my sisters were working and brothers were working in Chicago. And if you were a small-town Wisconsin with a lumber industry which is dying and there was only dairy and if you didn't want to be a farmer, you had to get out of town to get any kind of work. And that's where they all went. So, I hopped a bus sometimes went to Chicago, and I was probably pretty young to be doing those things, but... It was only my mother and I guess at that age your mother's don't know very much. And I kind of just went. So, I was adventurous anyhow. So, we got to Washington Fort Walton it was Fort Walton I border a troop ship to go to Hawaii and the Puget sound was pretty rough, a lot of people got sick. There were so many seasick people it was awful. I could tell you some horrible stories about people throwing up and throwing up in other people shoes and all over, all over the stair, ladders, the stairway, awful.

Q: Did you get seasick or you...?

GS: I got... Yes, a little, a little. I was able to get over side of it but some of them were really bad. We got to Hawaii, of course, there we pull in the Pearl Harbor and you can still see the ship's underneath the water and all that business. It wasn't that... They

hadn't repaired anything yet. And they put us little... little narrow gauge railroad that took us to, took us to Schofield Barracks, which is the long time camp in Wahiawā O'ahu. And I was going through pineapple fields and all that, that was quite an experience, because they were all still thriving. And the railroad was no more than about five foot wide, I guess, the train was. That's what they used in those days. So, we had training at Schofield Barracks while the higher ups were organizing and... and I suppose getting ready for the big at the big invasion. While I was in Hawaii, I was there from August until we left in March of 45. We left in March. While I was there, I was able to contact some of my boyhood friends, fellas who were in my class in school. One was in Pearl Harbor, one was in with the 70th Infantry Division, which had just come back from terrible battles in, I forget which battle they were in at that time at Tarawa or one of those terrible battles. The 70th Infantry Division was in a lot of terrible battles. And he was in there, so I visited him. Those are the things I remember. I remember going into Pearl Harbor, my friend was a corpsman, so I kicked out a bus up to the gate, he came out with an ambulance, put me in as a patient and we drove in I spent the weekend with him and he got me out the same way because security was pretty tough and... which as it should be. But anyhow, that's what I remember about Hawaii. Hawaii is beautiful. Have you ever been there? (No.) It is, you won't want to come back it's gorgeous.

Q: Have you been back since then?

GS: No, I have not. We talked about it, but I have not been back since then, no. So, we were... I was in a medical section in army headquarters. While I was overseas, while I was there, I got word that my mother passed away, and that was a bad moment in my life, because I was like an anointed to Red Cross because they apparently the telegram had sat in her file for two or three days by the time they let me know, it was too late for go home for any kind of funeral. The Army did give me a three days, four days of R and R at the Isle of Hawaii. So, I got to go to Holo, went up to the camp they had, up by the volcano, by that extinct volcano. And I got to up to see that, so that was interesting. Then come March, we got to go... meantime we had jungle training, the usual stuff you get in preparation for going further in combat. The troopship that we took left in March, early March. It went from Hawaii to... and we talked we didn't, we stayed aboard. We formed up with some ships. That group went onto Ulithi, which is a island that's about this much above water, there's not much there. We formed up there, got there. We had a lot, a lot of ships and we were in Ulithi on April first when they advanced people landed on Okinawa. They landed on April first, and we were all anxious of course. There weren't a lot of... I guess they didn't meet a lot of resistance at Okinawa when they first landed in the first three or four or five days. Well, we moved out to a to Okinawa and we zigzag, and we got it into the harbor there on... we got during the tenth and those three days we were in the harbor. And we were like on about E Deck and well we're in a harbor of course; we were being raided by the Japanese kamikazes and those planes constantly. You could hear the thumping of the guns, the few guns that we had on the troopship. We could hear that from the deck we were below. Those decks were like there were about eighteen inches between cots and about two feet between aisles and every deck had, I don't know, seventy-five or more people on it where our rifles and luggage, duffel bags and all that. We were pretty crowded and

thank God the air conditioning work, but all you'd hear... If you ever got hit you'd be gone down there. We were there for three days. We were allowed to go up in sections for food, then we'd go back down. You couldn't go on deck, because they were coming pretty constant. You never knew when the planes would come over. So, on the thirteenth, they finally decided to land us, and we went down the side and got on each boat and they'd circled and all that stuff. And I'm sure there really was no resistance. There was one artillery man for the Japanese who must have had a mortar or something, so about every twenty minutes a mortar shell would land on the beach but it was like quarter mile away. So, we weren't really in any immediate danger, but that's the closest we came. But it gets very exciting here for me, because we landed. We... I think we, yeah, we walked to where I... We must have gotten to the trucks. There's about a mile and a half inland... We got to get to our headquarters. It was going to be about a mile and a half from Kadena airport. That was the big Airport, and it was right around a hill. So, the first day we got to get our shelter halves and put up our own tents. So, I remember that evening, this is now April, the weather was nice and it was light yet. It was like six, seven o'clock at night and the Japanese came over and the artillery people were shooting and here we're looking I think West, and this plane is coming over and it's... somebody hit it, and it's smoking and it came around it couldn't have been more, than more than... maybe three-quarters of a mile from us. And you could see the plane come over us and you could see the plane crash right over there. I mean this wasn't a movie. This was the real thing you know. It... It... You can't believe you were seeing this, you couldn't believe this is happening. Here I am. What am I doing here? But no harm, no harm, nothing bothered us, but we get our tent set up and spent the night. We were there a few nights and then we got a location and they brought... and since this was the headquarters, headquarters has access to a lot of things, they brought what they call a four-man tent and we put that up and said... but every night every night for the entire month of April, I think it went into May probably, they would come over and they would bomb. They were trying to bomb the airport of course, but I don't know of any bombs fell there. They'd get really close to our headquarters, but we had an anti-aircraft artillery battery right next to us. They did ninety millimeters and they're pretty noisy. So, it came over mid... right around midnight and it would be for half an hour or forty-five minutes, there'd be just barrage of anti-aircraft and the bombs, and the shootin, and the planes land, the planes dropping bombs or what have you. That got so... You got so used to it that after a while you didn't even get out of your cot and go into a fox hole. You just laid there, but that died down. And after it was... the war... the line which was maybe a couple miles ahead of us moved further and further away down south towards Naha. Naha, which was the only city in Okinawa, the largest city of sixty-six thousand population, which was literally reduced to just a pile of cement, rubble, absolutely. And my friend from the 7th Division, who I saw in Hawaii, was there. And one foolish thing I did I worked in a tent and I was typing for this Colonel who was a doctor and the main highway drove right nearby so dust came in and I was never a great typist but he wanted everything letter perfect and I was just glad to have a day off. So, I had a day off and I somehow found out where he was and I hitchhiked down Route five, which is the main road for North and South Okinawa it was at that time that the engineers had built. And I... I found his I found his outfit did just off the line. As I think back on it, I must've been out of my

mind. I don't know what, what... I had no reason other than to say hello to him. But anyhow, I hitchhiked up there. He was the company clerk, and they were off... they were off the line as I said they were every eating. And he said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I don't really know. I guess came to see you." So, we visited awhile then I hitchhiked back, but that was foolish. That was foolish, but I was young and adventurous.

Q: What were some of the things that you typed?

GS: This doctor was a doctor of the Colonel Leach, I forget his first name I think Harold, Howard, anyhow he was writing papers on the effects of the bite of the encephalitis anopheles mosquito, which was in the pacific which was a pretty dangerous insect and had spread encephalitis all the way, and the different effects it had on people, and he was, I guess, doing some research and writing papers on it.

Q: So there was a he was a researcher?

GS: Well, yeah, yeah. The little... it said the army headquarters all over it. So, you had all Colonels in it, I guess. The colonels had different, various parts of medicine. We were doing research and there were a million papers there. And that's what I was doing, and it was for a young man, it was not very exciting. So, I didn't... other than that I had nothing to nothing heroectomy to report other than I showed up. if that... if you can call that something. So, I don't know, I'm probably not a good interview but...(yes, you are very well).

Q: Did you ever hear of somebody that they used to call "Washing Machine Charlie?" I guess. (No) He was one of the Japanese pilots that used to drop bombs at a certain time like every night, I guess. He was everywhere you know no matter what island was heard of Washing Machine Charlie.

GS: Well, I don't remember that name, but I do remember that right around midnight, every night for a period of time that they came over.

Q: Now you mentioned here about in your form about the typhoon, typhoons. What was...?

GS: Oh yeah. Well, time went on and then it got around August... Oh here's the part that's interesting that you might find interesting... In August, we had this typhoon and it's two hundred and some miles an hour winds and I understand there were ships blown right up on shore an APA, which is a large troopship, just washed up on shore. We were in these tents around this hill. And we had them... The Okinawan people had homes that wooden homes that were all abandoned and so on and the feebies and engineers were taking them down. So, we were able to get a bunch of their timbers, which were all interlocked no screws or nails, wooden planks on. So, we got those and we made platform and reacted our tent to it which was thank God we did. The typhoon came when I for like two or three days and the wind was just tremendous, tremendous wind. We just stayed in our tent. It was no real...it didn't blow away. We were anchored good. We made sure it was down, so not other than not that the wind was so terrible, not too much happened to us. So, we were in particular shape, but not too long after that well see then the war ended in August. And in early in September there was a

group from our headquarters was going to be sent to an island called Tokunoshima, which is part of the Ryukyu (*Kingdom). And on that island there was a garrison of Japanese troops, five thousand troops and this group, my colonel and at least five or six officers and ten or eleven enlisted men. And I was selected to go with this colonel. And they flew us... This was going to comprise the surrender party for that Japanese garrison. The main surrender had been long been gone, but there were these islands individual islands that had Japanese garrisons on it. Somebody had to accept their surrender. So, they put us in a DC-3, I guess. At that time they called them C-47. That's what they were. And they flew us to Tokunoshima, which was like two hundred and fifty miles from Okinawa, island Okinawa. We landed the plane hit up hit a hole for a bomb crater and twist it around, but no harm. And we got out of the plane and we're looking there there's all these Japanese people, soldiers, military people. So but we got out. They put us in trucks and we get over there. And the officers had an exchange their usual courtesies and so on. They put the enlisted, the officers rode in cars or in small trucks. Then we got into regular large truck and on both sides of the road... They were going to take us up to a an officer's rest and relaxation camp up in the mountains or a way in and it was mountainous. But on both sides of the road, this was kind of strange for us, on both sides of the road there was a Japanese soldier line up all the way all the way for a first couple of miles and we're sitting in the truck looking at each other and said, "Hope they know they surrendered. I hope they realize that." Then we got to this place and because it was interesting see. We were their guests and we watched them do the things they were going to do. We did have some people that set up a little kitchen for us, but we ate their food and they treated us very nicely. And the first day one of our one of our people was trying to light the stove and it exploded. So, we had some minor problems there in that we had some got some people with some surgery burns. We had to radio the mainland get a plane to come in and for some reason it wasn't coming right away, but... So, we got through that and then about we were probably six or seven days about the second or third day, we had a typhoon. And this is a terrible typhoon. And it just blew everything all over the place in the... but we managed to stay in our tents and... but it wiped a lot of stuff out around any area in on the island. A lot of the natives there had their stuff blown away, and it it must have lasted a couple of days. While we were there a P-51 pilot hadn't made an emergency landing on the local airport and he needed help. So, people that were with us went out and got him and brought him up and we treated him. We had, you know what Nisei. We had some Nisei with us and...

Q: Why don't you explain what they are.

GS: Well, the Nisei were the Japanese-Americans who had been recruited, and they joined special forces a special group with American Army to just help out in many, many situations over there. They knew the language. I guess that's why they were with us because they could speak Japanese. They were Japanese-Americans.

And they were very helpful when these people had these accidents, the one with the gas tank blowing up, and the pilot from the P51. They were so proficient in treating, taking care of and handling the emergency, they impressed everybody. They were great. So, we were in Japanese tents with a Japanese soldier stationed outside, and we got friendly with them. Some of them could speak a couple of words of English most of not. So, it

was kind of a struggle and, of course, we looked at each other say, "Is he guarding us? Or are you protecting us?" It was always that question. Well, right after, right after the storm, these people were, I don't know if they were out there a lot, somehow we had a jeep and one of our sergeants and four or five of us got a little jeep and decided to explore the island. We got down to one spot, this is like late in the afternoon in the afternoon, and we found this building with the women out in front. We went in to check that out but we soon found out what that was. Those were working girl's and God what squalid conditions they were in. It was terrible, mud floor, simple... what they have...kind of like a mattress that they put on. I don't know what they call it. There's like a quilt or something that they put on the floor and that was there. That's where they were active.

Q: Now were they brought there by the Japanese army?

GS: They were, yeah, yeah they were. Well, I say that, I'm not sure. I'm assuming they were. I don't know that they were natives. The Japanese army was famous for doing that, so I'm assuming that's what happened, but if we laughed nobody stayed. We continued our journey and there's some strange things happened. We took the outer road along the outside of the island, and we said, "Well this road goes, point to our map, goes all the way around. We'll go around and come back." And we're going along and from time to time you'd hear the sound of a horn, not a car horn but like a ram's horn maybe. It got dark when we got to this place in the road where the bridge washed out and we were deciding what to do and pretty soon from out of the darkness came all these people. It was like seven o'clock, eight o'clock now. It was dark. They came out and they pushed us across the water, the water across the little brook let and onto the next road, and we thanked them. And none of them spoke English. They just went out and helped us across, which we thought was kind of nice. We kept on going. We got to a village, a walled village and we stopped to see what's going on there. And we got in and there's some kind of a celebration going on. Now the moon is shining, now it's maybe nine o'clock at night something like that, and I'm trying to remember did we have a Japanese soldier what is it in me. Somehow we were able to able to communicate. I guess maybe somebody spoke English, I don't remember that exactly. But we stayed there a while and they brought us food, and we watched some of their dancing which they have that oriental type of music you know. And we just were amazed, we just were amazed. And we said, "Well, I guess we'd better get back." And I don't remember who told us how to get back. I guess we must have retraced our steps or something and yeah. That was it. We went back home and back to the tent and somebody said something about where were you guys with the jeep. It was unauthorized and so on, but that was okay. It was a weird adventure. I wish I had somebody with me who could verify what I saw and have taken pictures or something. That was a weird adventure. So, that's pretty much was it. Then we went back and I didn't do anything beyond that since the war was over.

Q: Can I ask you two things?

GS: Sure.

Q: First of all the Japanese flag, you're doing any...How did you obtain that and where?

GS: Well, we were headquarters and it was all those troupes coming back and what you did was you bought it. I bought a rifle and I bought that, yeah.

Q: Where, Okinawa?

GS: Okinawa, yeah.

Q: How about the atomic bomb, what was your reaction? How did you hear about that and what was your reaction to that?

GS: Well, we got it on the news. We got it on the news and we were all in favor of it. Everybody I know about said, "Well, that's shouldn't last too long now and so on. One of the tragic things always you know you waited and waited and finally the news came and when the news came what's or tragic is that the people on the ship's, the people on shore, everybody started firing guns. I understand thirty people got killed that night by wild shooting and so on. People drank their, their alcohol drinks that they made. You take marmalade and you'd add sugar you put in the fox hole and let it set there for, oh I don't know... It's supposed to be thirty days or something like that, but they never waited that long and it was very potent alcohol. And they drank that stuff and they were climbing trees and they were wild and a lot of wild shooting going on. That was, that was too bad. But after that the place start emptying out rapidly but our officers got transferred back, of course there's no need for the Tenth Army any more. Tenth Army I said was going to be the headquarters for the landing of... We had we had General Stilwell not Stilwell we had Buckner. We had General Buckner, who was called General Kill Japs Buckner. He was our general. Then he get killed on Okinawa and then after that we had Vinegar Joe Stilwell who we didn't see very hardly at all. Nobody left after the war after the war ended, and so we just kind of float around the island. We had it. We got a vehicle that we were able to drive around but that got boring. So, we finally said I and this other fellow said, "Well, longer out here and the government pays for it, why don't we go see the rest of something else." So, we volunteered to go to Japan, just why not do that before we go home. Army being what it is, we went to Korea (laughs). So, around Thanksgiving and the war ended in August, so we're fooling around there for the two or three months. This place had closed. You'd get your food over there. You kept the same tent. It was like everybody abandoning ship. Everybody was leaving. Everybody glad to get home, you know. So, we got an LST to from Okinawa to Incheon, which is a port there by Korea. And so we had another storm with the LSD, and they had some tanks and some trucks on it. And it was very scary because they're a flat-bottomed ship. And they aren't made to take violent storms. And boy we were nervous for a while, because those trucks and so on were creaking in the chains and you thought they were going to come loose and well nothing happened, but we... There's only a few days trip. And we got into harbor there. And what interested us there was these little people with their boat with the little thing in the back. I thought he'd paddle it. And what they would have on it would be firewood because it's a real shortage of firewood in Seoul there was at the time, fuel in general. And they would go to these little islands in the harbor and get what wood they could and bring it back so that they had something to burn. You could smell the country as

you approach the harbor, you could smell a distinct odor. And it was because they used human manure to fertilize their fields in Korea, but they did at that time anyhow. That is the usual wait in the land and we got... we get to go to Seoul. And they put us where ever going to be barracks, because what it used to be was their national museum of something. I'm not sure what they stored there, but it was in a museum where they put us. We were... The museum is located right behind shortly behind the national capital building in Seoul. It's was a big white beautiful building. And they were assigning me to military government. I was going to be a clerk in the personnel section in the military government. This museum was, as you can imagine, with the with the walkway a high thirty foot ceiling with a walkway around it and so on. Bathrooms and all that... The only heat we had there was a little round stove, and remember fuel was short, so they would have coal dust which you'd have to mix with water kind of form a cake and get in the little round stove and heat it. And in Korea in winter time it can be pretty, pretty cold. So, I worked in the national capital building. And what was interesting about that is it was a nice white building everything white. The unisex bathrooms... and they had slit trench tile slit trenches that flushed you straddle it. And so this is the way it was. Of course, when the American Army got there they were no longer unisex, but that that kind of fascinated me. I spent four months in Seoul in the wintertime. They work in the office the usual personnel work and so on. And we toured downtown. There was a street there called Bukchon Street. It had a archway as you enter the street and that's where all this trading and all that went on. And we were allowed to go on that street. There were some sections of Seoul you were not allowed to go into called the Light District. The guys... some guys did get there. But the night clubs were all open. Now Seoul had not been touched by the war. The Japanese had occupied Korea for like twenty years. And near the hotel called the Hanto Hotel there was a nice great theater where we went to the movies, and they had streetcars. The street cars were comic You'd see a street car and it'd be people hanging out of the windows, absolutely a good time (audio fails)... And this was apple time (audio fails)... large wagons with leaving to a farmer's fields. You see it at some twenty story cords... (audio fails). Well, let's see, we didn't do much except the usual things to do. We went night clubbing. We did get invited to... we met... It was customary to meet trades people, professional people. When they finished their work, they would stop at the local... what do you call them... night (audio fails) sit down and there were girls who were paid to sit down with them and entertain them. They'd have a drink or two before they went home. Well, we went - (audio fails) took one of these nights group (audio fails) couple of drinks... One was educated from Stanford or other one had... some time... there was some English. And one of them invited us to his house the next day or the day after. So, we accepted and we were trying to get there the next day of course. And it was a nice home up on a hill and of course you take your shoes off you know. And there's all sliding doors, and there's mats on the floor and you'd sit around in a room and they had like a coffee table. And you'd sit around the coffee table and there's hot tea on there. The gal's in the kitchen she didn't come join us. (audio fails) He calls her out to sing a song, then she goes back in the kitchen. And a lot of (audio fails) and they pass around and they bring out these little squares of beef and put it in this hibachi. And of course they had a big leaf, and they'd scooped up with rice and we had...but they had forks for us. And it was an interesting evening. They asked all the usual information, where're you from... and

back and forth. And they were great, they were very, very nice. So, that was an interesting evening. Well, the interesting thing about Seoul was that it was all intact, street cars ran, hotels operated, movies, theaters, stores, bars, night clubs. Everything was in operation. And we had a lot of troops in town. The American troops many of them took advantage of some of the some of the Koreans you know. We had in our building, we had four or five Koreans who would do everything for you. If you were kind to them, give them some of your candy, give them help, help out with a little food, even give them a little money now and then. They would polish your shoes. They'd make your bed. They'd get you... absolute... like personal servants. And they were... The one the one I remember was... his growth was stunted. He was like nineteen. He looked like he was about fourteen. Nice, nice he cried when we left, when we finally had to go. Nice, nice young man. But there was, there was some of that that went on. And there was a lot of trading on Bukchon Street. You'd have a watch that you'd want to sell and there'd always be someone tugging at you, "How much? How much?" and that kind of stuff. And the shrines were there. There's a... In the center of the city there's a shrine that you go up this a couple hundred steps to the top, I forget the name of it. The local theater, which was out on the main drag had super acoustics. You could sit any place in there and you'd be impressed with the with the sound the valued quality of sound that you got. So, that was good. We spent four interesting months in Korea. We had the snow and we had a vehicle. So, we had access to a vehicle. Rules were pretty lax. Rules were fairly lax. They were not unreasonable but they were fairly lax. You could always request a vehicle and get to ride downtown and go do something and go someplace. That wasn't bad. Some of guys even got to go hunting, because in the north in the hills there was pheasant and there was deer and a couple of hunters got together to do that.

Q: When did you leave Korea?

GS: I left there in, again, early March and it took a month, it took a month to get to San Francisco on a troopship. There were twenty-five hundred people on and we were quarantined in the harbor because somebody thought there might be small pox. So, we spent three extra days in the harbor right near Alcatraz. I don't... We went underneath the bridge and just, just beyond the Alcatraz. I remember I could see it no more than three-quarters of a mile away maybe. And we just stayed on the ship. And then finally, we landed and they put us on a ferry. I guess we went to a place called Camp Stoneman. Camp Stoneman was a was the reception center for returning people at that time. Camp Stoneman, we were processed not much happened, then put on trains. My case back to camp McCoy in Wisconsin... Sparta, Wisconsin. And then I got discharged (okay). I went home and of course my mother passed away, so there was no home but my sister. I stayed with my sister. So, I didn't have the usual welcome home that guys do. So, I had to find a place to sleep the first night I go in town. I did with friends and I met my sister who came to town the next day. So, I stayed there for a couple of months. I couldn't do that forever. She had her own family and so on. And then I took off and I went to Indiana looked for a while there, joined a magazine crew for a couple of months. Then I joined the Coast Guard. I went back up to Wisconsin, then when I got back as far as the left there... I went back as far as Milwaukee. And then I needed a job so then I said let's try ORBIS. So, we applied, a friend of mine and

I, and we got to be... got to work on the cobalt on a (mumble). I was a cold passer is what they made me. A cold passer is the man who when the firemen who has have to have some skill and laying out that coal so it doesn't... We call it clinkers. So, it spreads out and get the maximum heat. You got to pull off the clinkers, you got to keep coal there so he can turn the shovel. That's what a cold pass is. Then there's the ashes you take and you put it onto a conveyor which dumps it over the side. That's as about as low as you can get on of ship. That's... But we worked there for... and that's quite an experience because some of these... You're they're at a port every twelve or eighteen hours they'd be at a port. And these guys go ashore and get drunk. So, many people were alcoholics. They'd get... They'd come back on board loaded. But boy when it come time to run... to shovel that coal, they were right at it. Well, we did is for... We did this for November all of November, half of October and all of November and all of December, well, middle of December. Well, the last got to be the end of November and our firemen went out and got drunk and didn't come back. So, suddenly we were made firemen and the ship had to get from Toledo to Milwaukee. It got there but thank God he put me with a fireman that knew what he was doing. So, we did that. And then in the Great Lakes, many years ago the Great Lakes would freeze over. So, Milwaukee and Chicago, Milwaukee particularly, is where a lot of these ships where... what they call they lay out the ship. The ship anchors and it's all, everything's gone over, all the valves and all the machines. Everything's cleaned, the boilers are cleaned. And I got to work there for December until it was all done. And I went to my sisters for Christmas and that was the end of that. That was the end of my Coast Guard experience. Then it goes on and on and on but nothing to with the war.

Q: When did you get married?

GS: I got married in New York in 1950 on October seventh. Long... Well, I did other things in between that time. I ran a bar and I had an ice cream route, and then I worked for the for the County Clerk in Langley County, Wisconsin. I worked there for eighteen months. I came to New York from my brother's wedding. My brother in the meantime had been a crew chief in the air corps for five years, never left the states. So, he went to school and became an authorized Asian mechanic and airplane mechanic. At that time, there were a lot of flight schools all over the country and he worked on one of those. Then he... In New York, he had met this girl. The only thing he got married and I was to his best man, and I left Wisconsin went to the wedding. I met my wife at the wedding. I went back to Wisconsin and two weeks later I to quit my job and came to New York. And that's a true story. And found a job in New York and lived been happily ever after

Q: How many children do you have?

GS: Three. I have three. I have a daughter in New Jersey, who was by the way, just voted educator of the year for her school. So, I happen to have three wonderful kids very proud of them. And my other daughters are in Florida. When we stay with... Her husband owns a condo on the beach in addition to the house. That's where we spend time for a couple months every year in Florida. And my son, he works for AT&T Wireless and he's a regional manager in Memphis and his wife just became a doctor.

Q: So, how do you think your military career changed your life?

GS: Well having been raised at a very small-town Wisconsin, six hundred and some people, and at that time you really didn't feel a lot of life. We had never seen... We never saw colored people in that part of Wisconsin. The only ones we ever saw was if you went into Wausau, which is like twenty-six miles away and he was the porter on the train. So, we had no experiences along those lines. I did see them when I went to Chicago on those trips and so on. I guess me being where I am I was always destined to go someplace. I was adventurous by nature I think. So, I would have seen... but it was probably the best thing ever happened to me, to get out and see the world cuz I was determine to see it anyhow. I probably wouldn't have seen that much of it. And as I said since, I didn't get hurt and I never felt I was really terribly in harm's way, other people may not agree with that, but I don't remember ever thinking, "Oh boy, this is dangerous." It was a great experience, a great experience. I firmly believe that, that after high school, I'd be in favor of people being forced to leave their town or join something for two years, the military, the Peace Corps some effort that gets them away from home get out in the world, see what's on the other side of the mountain. You become a more understanding person when you get back to among your own people I think. I've always believe that.