

Interview with Garret Delger and Roy Johnson

Interviewer: Leigh Anne Howard

May 20, 2005

Q: I'm in Bowling Green, Kentucky and I am talking to Garret Delger?

GARRET: Delger.

Q: Delger, okay I would have messed that up. Betty Delger and Roy Johnson and we are at the reunion of the 18th Field Artillery Battalion Reunion. So, to get us started, can you explain how you got involved in the military? Were you drafted?

GARRET: Yes. The government sent me a letter and said I was selected to go.

Q: You were selected?

BETTY: Yeah but tell her you wanted to get in second.

GARRET: Well yes, I just missed the Second World War. I was already to go into the Navy as soon as I got to my 16th birthday and the war was over. So, they didn't take anybody, and I just forgot about it.

Q: Until you were selected?

GARRET: Selected five years later.

ROY: Then the war broke out about this time.

GARRET: Right.

Q: Why were you interested in participating in World War II?

GARRET: Well my brother went in when he was 17, went in the Navy, and I thought that was pretty neat. I knew they took some at 16, and I think my folks would have signed...

BETTY: And you had quit school.

GARRET: I quit school because I wanted to go into the service. Partially.

Q: Right. How did you choose to go into the particular branch or area, the Army, I guess, as opposed to?

GARRET: Well, that wasn't a choice. When you're drafted, you mostly go into the Army.

Q: Okay.

GARRET: That's where I was.

Q: What were your first days in the service like?

GARRET: Well, I have a tendency to get into trouble (laughter).

Q: Really?

GARRET: Yeah, we went on a bus from Kalamazoo to Detroit to Fort Wayne and were sworn in. Then we got on a train and went to Chicago, Fort Sheridan. We got some orders there; they said you're restricted to this area.

ROY: They check your IQ there...

GARRET: Well anyway, we took tests there, but the first thing was they said you're restricted to this area. So, five of us got together and thought, "Well there's a PX over there, we'll go over there and we'll

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have a beer." So, when we came back, the sergeant was standing by the door..."What's your name?"... puts it in his back book..."you're on latrine duty the rest of the time you stay here."

Q: Because you were some place you were not supposed to be?

GARRET: Right. We went out of the area. We didn't know it, but...

Q: Well that was trouble pretty fast then.

GARRET: That was fast, yeah.

BETTY: Doesn't take him long.

GARRET: I guess I had to learn to obey orders.

Q: So, this was all part of your training.

GARRET: Well, no, we had just staffed. We were just coming in.

BETTY: Just coming in.

Q: Okay.

GARRET: We were sworn in, and we were going to have shots and get our uniform and all that kind of stuff.

ROY: There's an area in Detroit called Fort Shelby.

Q: Shelby?

GARRET: FOK Wayne, no we were in Fort Wayne.

ROY: You did? We went to Fort Shelby to Detroit.

BETTY: He went to Fort Wayne.

GARRET: Right in Detroit.

BETTY: Honey, Fort Wayne isn't in Detroit.

GARRET: I don't mean Fort Wayne, the city. This is Fort Wayne right in Detroit.

ROY: Was it? I didn't know of any. Well anyway, that's where they worked with me too, Same thing you said.

Q: What was your training like, then?

ROY: Well, then we got shipped out to Fort Sill. We got assigned to there. That wasn't bad at all. It was in December and it was getting later in the month, so they didn't start our training. We got a uniform and even gave a Class A Pass, but we had no training. We could go a hundred miles from camp, I think. Very lenient on us.

Q: That's what a Class A Pass would have allowed you to do?

GARRET: And we didn't know how to shoot or anything...

ROY: No training yet.

GARRET: No training at all,

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Q: So, how long were you there before any sort of training?

GARRET: First of January.

Q: Okay.

ROY: It was about a month, wasn't it?

GARRET: Well not that long. But anyway, it took a while, and we did get in a little trouble; we forgot to salute a major one time...

ROY: Yeah, you can get chewed out for that.

GARRET: He came up the street in Fort Sill and, he was a one-armed major. He was in a general's car, but the flag wasn't out [to indicate] that the general was in the car. We didn't salute the car, and we didn't know we were supposed to. So anyway, he came out and he really chewed us out.

Q: What kind of major was it?

GARRET: An artillery.

Q: Okay.

GARRET: So, an officer in the artillery.

ROY: That's strictly an artillery base, Fort Sill is.

Q: Okay. You said a one something major?

GARRET: Oh no, just a major. He was in a general's car.

BETTY: You said a one armed?

Q: Okay, I didn't know if that was Army lingo for something.

GARRET: Literally, he was one-armed.

Q: Literally, okay.

GARRET: So anyway. Then, there was a sergeant that took us all over the fort and showed us the museum and the jail where Geronimo was in. We learned some history there, so it was kind of neat. Then we started the training.

Q: So, it wasn't too bad? And then you staffed the training?

GARRET: Even that wasn't bad.

ROY: We had our thirty-mile walks; I didn't like them.

Q: Thirty-mile walks?

ROY: Blisters on your feet.

GARRET: Yeah, but the walking wasn't so bad. The worst part was when you started running four miles before breakfast. That was toward the last, before we shipped out. We were getting in good shape. And they did, I was in pretty good shape when I went in.

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ROY: So, Fort Sill was equipped with a Navy mile firing range for the big guns. That's where we used to walk and do different maneuvers and then they put you in there overnight, take you out there and try to lose you. You remember that?

GARRET: Well that was a night compass watch. And then we missed the first march so everything, the directions we tried to do after that were wrong. So, we finally found our way back to camp, and they were all worried because they thought we had walkover to medicine cliff.

ROY: That's where the general jumped off...

GARRET: That's where he jumped off with his horse. He survived it evidently, but they were afraid because of the dark. We didn't come back right away, and they were really worried, "Where are those guys." So that was one of the experiences.

Q: Yeah, can you think of some other things like that that happened while you were in training?

GARRET: In Fort Sill?

Q: Yeah.

ROY: Well you had a tornado that tore the place up. We had to clean the mess up. The town of Lawton's new car dealership had new cars ten miles away that had come out of that dealership...

GARRET: And some of the tiles came off the roof.

ROY: Fifty-gallon oil drums full of oil flew up into the air. Do you remember looking out the windows?

GARRET: I don't remember seeing that. I probably was sleeping.

ROY: That was from the second floor; man, it was a mess.

GARRET: We went on bivouac with our pup tents. And I remember being out there and it started freezing rain, and then we had to pack up and go in. I was on the back of that truck and everything was frozen, my whole uniform. Jacket and everything was frozen, and I went back and forth three times on that truck and that next morning I felt like I had pneumonia. I guess I didn't, but it sure felt like it,

Q: Yeah, how did you get through that?

GARRET: From that? By Monday I was starting to feel better. Just kept on going. I did go on sick though. We had a foot inspection around that time, and I had been in basketball and all that kind of sports and gyms, and I had athletes' foot real bad. The doctor said, "You got trench foot." He thought I had trench foot. But anyway, he told me what to do and gave me some stuff for it and it cleared it up. So that helped.

Q: What else, what happened after training? You got orders to go to Germany?

GARRET: Well I don't understand the whole deal, but anyway, I went home. First of all, I didn't get transferred to the 18th Battalion; I stayed in group headquarters just before they were going to ship out. Because we were training foreign officers at that time with artillery. Fourteen of us stayed back so that they would have enough people to do that. Were you part of that?

ROY: No, I was in headquarters battery at that time.

GARRET: Of group headquarters? That's what I was.

ROY: Not group headquarters, just plain headquarters.

GARRET: Oh, okay.

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ROY: You were in group. Originally, we were stated to go to Korea.

GARRET: That's what I thought.

ROY: Those were the original orders, then at the last minute we were ready to load the train, and they transferred us to, or changed the orders to go to Germany for a replacement of border patrol over there. Then we went to Kilmer, remember?

GARRET: Yeah, but they wanted to beef up the border because they only had two divisions there, and they wanted four. They thought the Russians were going to start something. So, we went over to support two divisions with heavy artillery. But anyway, I went home,

ROY: Did you get caught in the floods with the trains delayed?

GARRET: No, Peyton and I went home on leave after we got done with that and before we transferred over. We came back just in time to get ready to go overseas.

Q: Okay.

GARRET: Well, anyway. We trained those foreign officers and...

BETTY: What about your shots?

GARRET: Yeah, well anyway. I was on my leave when they had the overseas shots. So, I come back, and they said, "You got to get those shots." So, I went to a place for that, counselor, not the counselor but the place where they gave shots. They said, "Well it's too late, we don't have any of those shots, we'll just sign that you got them."

Q: And they didn't give you the shots?

GARRET: I never got them. I'm glad I didn't go to Korea because that would have been bad. Anyway, I got by with that. Yeah, then we shipped out to Camp Kilmer, on a train. It seemed like we would never get there. There was a long train ride...

ROY: It goes so slow, you know, military trains...

Q: This was a military train? With everyone going to...

ROY: Yeah it was strictly military.

GARRET: Didn't they have our mess hall in a box car?

ROY: Well, that part was controlled by the military. Remember, we stopped in Chattanooga? Some of them jumped off...

GARRET: No, I don't...

ROY: Some of the guys...

Q: They took a little break?

ROY: Yeah.

Q: Did they leave without, was it AWOL?

GARRET: Absent without leave.

Q: Absent without leave?

ROY: Yep, and the tavern was there, got drunk a lot of them.

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GARRET: I didn't get in on that. My wife was right here, I swear to it I didn't do that. Okay in Camp Kilmer, what did we do? Oh, I know, Peyton and I went to New York City. We got a pass, and we went up to the top of the tall building, Empire State Building, and we didn't do much more than that, walked around town a bit and came back to the camp. Okay, then we got on, what was it? The marine corp.

ROY: No, we had to come back on that, but we went on the Sturgis.

GARRET: Sturgis, the ship going over. There were four of us, and we played Canasta all the way over.

Q: Canasta?

GARRET: Canasta.

BETTY: Card game.

Q: Yeah?

GARRET: That was our game, yeah.

ROY: We had to go down to Norfolk to get a radar change, you remember that?

GARRET: Well, I don't remember, I must have been sleeping again.

ROY: I had some pictures that I had wrote on the back. Took us sixteen days to get over there.

Q: He's got these cheat sheets; take a look at these photos.

GARRET: I don't remember that. Okay anyway it was a real nice ride.

ROY: I really did remember.

GARRET: We had a real good ride over... smooth... and nobody got sick that I know of. It was fine.

Q: Okay.

ROY: He wasn't in on copping the turkeys. It was during Thanksgiving that we were going over...

GARRET: No, no, no, we went over in July, we came back in November.

ROY: That's when it was. Coming back, we copped them turkeys, remember that? Yeah, you was in on that.

Q: What happened?

ROY: They had about thirty turkeys laying out on a table all cooked for turkey dinner, Thanksgiving... four or five of us... Don Hansen, Pat, you, me, and a couple other guys... grabbed us a big ole turkey and rolled it up in a shirt. Took our shirt off, rolled it up, walked up the stairwell and met three or four officers. They could smell turkey, but they couldn't see it.

GARRET: Yeah, they didn't know where it was coming from.

BETTY: Did they stop you, did they?

ROY: No, when we got on deck, we all climbed in a lifeboat. Ate them damn turkeys.

Q: Were these turkeys for the officers or something? They were for everyone and you just wanted to jump ahead.

GARRET: I think you're going to have to edit some of this out.

ROY: Anyhow, when it comes time to eat our Thanksgiving dinner, we didn't want no turkey.

GARRET: But before that, that's on the way back.

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Q: Okay, that's on the way back.

GARRET: Before that we all got sick, that was coming back, that was a terrible trip back.

ROY: I lost my false teeth, remember?

GARRET: I know you did. He was laughing at us... he hadn't gotten sick yet and we were all feeling bad... and then all of the sudden... BOOM... he went to the rail and... BOOM... there goes his teeth.

ROY: I was throwing up, and my teeth flew out. The fish got them.

GARRET: Anyway, we got to Bremerhaven, and then we took a train down to Bobenhausen.

ROY: Yep, and those narrow German trains.

Q: And what did you do once you got there?

GARRET: Oh, we lived in tents for four months, in squat tents. It wasn't too bad at first, but we...

ROY: We got used to it...

GARRET: And we had a little hot stove that they had. What did they call them?

ROY: There was a name for them...

GARRET: It's not coal, but it's the next thing to it. It's not quite as solid. We got a name for them... Peat?

ROY: Peat, yeah that's what it was.

GARRET: But they didn't last all night. Somebody had to get up or all of us freeze. You know, this was in the fall. We got out of them. It was around the first of the year, didn't we?

ROY: I think it was, January 6, I think that paper said.

GARRET: Anyway, somebody, a lot of the times nobody would get up to keep the fire going, so we'd get up in the morning, it was cold.

ROY: Oh, could see your breath like you were smoking.

Q: Wow, but you went over in July?

ROY: Yeah...

Q: And it was already starting to get cold?

GARRET: Well, no, not immediately but as time...

ROY: But we stayed in tents for eight months, didn't we?

Q: Oh, okay, eight months...

ROY: Through the winter.

BETTY: What kind of equipment did you have in the tents? I mean, did you have clothes to keep you warm?

GARRET: We had a footlocker, and that kind of thing...

ROY: Yeah, they issued us foot lockers...

GARRET: Just a pump and a footlocker...

BETTY: I mean clothing wise? Did you have real good clothing and sleeping bags?

ROY: Yeah, they issued us two sacks...

GARRET: No sleeping bags; we didn't have good sleeping bags. Just a wool blanket sewn together like a mummy bag. That's all we had, and we slept in the snow with those things.

ROY: Then we had army cots.

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GARRET: It had a little cover over it, you know, for waterproof but there wasn't much.

ROY: It was kind of rough over there.

GARRET: It was rough.

Q: And how many of you were in these tents?

GARRET: I think there was about eight...

Q: Okay, so these are the larger tents that you showed me?

GARRET: Yeah, sidewalks inside...

ROY: I think there were about twelve...

GARRET: It could have been...

ROY: Six on a side.

Q: Oh wow.

GARRET: Anyway, we survived that.

ROY: Yeah, remember the first time we got German beer over there in big tall bottles? We didn't know; it was like whiskey.

GARRET: Well, they don't know about that.

Q: Because it was so strong?

BETTY: The German beer?

ROY: Well we all got sick and threw up over everything.

BETTY: I've had German beer, haven't I?

Q: Because it was so strong, probably.

GARRET: They were building us new barracks at that time. This was an old S.S. Camp that we stayed at, and some of the office buildings were still there...

BETTY: What does S.S. stand for?

ROY: Secret Service, Army Secret Service, or German.

Q: German Secret Service?

ROY: You know they trained them special, separate...

GARRET: They were separate from the troops, and the troops were all worried about them, that's who was in control, the S.S. They did all the dirty work for Hitler. Okay, so where are we at?

Q: In the tents.

GARRET: Okay, then we took a trip in December to Baumholder for firing our guns. I was in ammunition, and we had a big job. We drove all the way to Baumholder. It took us all day to get there. Then we got there and, of course, I had to gas up my truck.

BETTY: What kind of a truck did you have?

GARRET: I had a seven and a half ton Mack. I don't know how many rounds of...

ROY: You pulled a trailer on that, didn't you?

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GARRET: No.

ROY: Who was it that pulled a trailer with the gas in it?

GARRET: Not one of the ammunition people. We didn't keep ammunition...

ROY: Don Hansen...

GARRET: Hansen did, yeah, but anyway, I drove all day up there, and it was hard. I had three guys sitting beside me with all the gear shifts between us. It was that big of a truck. My shoulders ached and everything. Then they all disappeared when we get to where we're at, went to eat and everything, and I'm out there with five-gallon cans trying to fill up these 100-gallon tanks. One on each side of the truck. They weren't completely empty, but they took a lot. Then they come up there and said, "Well when you get done with this, you're on guard duty," and I said, "Oh no, I'm going on sick, forget it, I'm not going on guard duty. Those guys just sat there all day; I'm not going on guard duty." So, I didn't go on.

Q: Wow, I'm surprised they let you do that. I think that would be...

GARRET: But it didn't make any sense...

Q: Fifty pushups or something.

GARRET: No, no they weren't that way.

ROY: We had good leaders.

GARRET: They just didn't think about what they were doing, just put my name on the list, So they came by and said that, and I said, "Well I'm not going to do that." Because I would have fallen asleep, and good grief, that's something you can't do... Fall asleep on guard duty.

Q: So, your primary duties over there were what?

GARRET: Hauling ammunition for the guns, the big guns. Every projector was around a hundred pound a piece. Then you got a can, that big, of powder to go with it. We had to supply, I had to supply (inaudible) with ammunition.

ROY: Tell her the range of those guns; she probably don't realize the range of those.

GARRET: It's almost a six-inch shell, and it would go seventeen miles. We'd fire at seventeen miles. I had two things of power that were tied together, and one was about that big, and another one about that big. Most of the time we had to cut the smaller one off so it wouldn't go so far. That was one of the things we had to do, and then we had to burn that. Pile it up somewhere so we could burn that powder.

GARRET: Anyway, at the time, the section I was in, the sergeant moved up ahead of all the ammunitions sections, and I took his place of being sergeant in the second section. Never got the stripes.

BETTY: You didn't get the pay either.

GARRET: Yeah, active sergeant.

BETTY: Active sergeant.

GARRET: December is when we went to Baumholder, and it was really muddy the whole time we were up there. We had 800 rounds of ammunition we had to unload when we got there. Big boxes full of projectors, and they had to have that box, so as soon as you could you had to unload it so the government wouldn't have to keep paying for it.

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Q: Right.

GARRET: So, we really worked hard to get right in on that.

BETTY: How did you get to be corporal? What made you do that?

GARRET: Because driving that truck was the MOS¹.¹

BETTY: Before you could drive the truck, you had to...

GARRET: No, no, you became a corporal because you had to, they needed you to do it and then they'd turn you in to be a corporal because that's what they called for.

BETTY: You went to some school while you were in Germany.

GARRET: This is December, that was '51. I went to school. They had to send two men in Munich to the N.C.O. Academy.

Q: What is N.C.O.?

GARRET: Non-Commissioned Officer.

Q: Non-Commissioned Officer, okay.

GARRET: In Munich, they had a special school, so I went down there with a sergeant, and you had a pass at court, or you'd be looked down on, on rank. Well, the sergeant left after about a week or two, something happened, and they had to go back. So, I was up there alone, and now I'm in charge of all the papers. Anyway, so I got through the six weeks, of course, and I ended up in the top quarter of the class. I had to stand in special formation when the general came by and inspected us... I told him we would be the best outfit in Germany in just a few months. I don't know if we were, but anyway, the Russians decided not to invade us.

Q: You must have done something right.

GARRET: Right. When we were on the border guard there, we could hear the Russians waking up in the morning, we were that close to them.

Q: wow.

GARRET: There was no iron curtain or anything at that time.

Q: So, you could hear them, which meant they could also probably hear you.

ROY: We would talk back and forth.

Q: Talk back and forth?

ROY: Do you remember when the truck tipped over going from Baumholder down the mountainside?

BETTY: That's what I just told him.

ROY: I got a picture of that I got to show you.

¹ MOS - Military Occupational Specialties.

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Q: Oh, that was your truck?

ROY: No, no, that was the truck ahead of me.

Q: Okay...

GARRET: Yeah that was a different...

ROY: Yeah that was a different vehicle, but you had one, too.

GARRET: There was one in front of me... we were passing another convoy which was common stuff. The tank staffed up and... BOOM... hit it on the car in front of us and... BOOM... all that ammunition was upside down and gas was running on it. I stopped, and the officer said, "Don't stop, keep going! We don't want no more." We don't want nothing else to happen, so I had to keep going, and I didn't see what happened, and I didn't take any pictures or anything because I had to keep driving. Anyway, we got in and didn't have to unload it or anything so that was lucky. But the cab went right across the ditch, so there were three guys in it, and one of them got a dent in his helmet. I know that. Nobody really got hurt.

ROY: Saved his life though.

GARRET: Yeah, saved his life.

Q: Having the helmet...

GARRET: But the ditch... they did a right wheelie because they didn't get the weight on top of them like that.

ROY: That was some dangerous roads, going up that mountain. We went up there one time in the winter, you remember that? So doggone slippery you couldn't slow down going down the slopes. You'd slide all the way down it. I slid off the road once...

GARRET: Another thing happened up there at Baumholder was the tank retriever got stuck. We ran into a guy on the side of the mountain got into a spring, and they couldn't get out. So, they took two of our trucks up there with a winch, big, had a hundred-yard cable on that winch. Huge winch.

ROY: I think I have a picture of that.

GARRET: Have you? I'd like to see it. Anyway, we tried to pull that tank, and couldn't do it. We were trying to pull them up... if we were trying to pull them down, I think we could have done it. But we wound up having to pull them up, and we just couldn't do it. We just pulled our truck right to the tank, and the tank was just so stuck.

ROY: Didn't our M43 self-propel guns have airplane motors in them?

BETTY: This is going way back, probably when you were at Fort Sill. You were trained for something else, weren't you?

GARRET: Well yeah, communication.

BETTY: You stayed...

GARRET: Well I was, but when I stayed some extra time...

ROY: Right, I remember that...

BETTY: You're not talking, just wait on him.

GARRET: Anyway, that was the only thing that was left that was open so that's where a bunch of us went in. And we did some traveling over there in Germany.

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Q: Okay, so you were able to see some sights and get around?

GARRET: Partly that, but I also met my dad and my uncle in the Netherlands, Amsterdam, and we went to my grandparents' house, and I had never met them before.

Q: wow.

GARRET: And cousins, and uncles, and aunts, the whole family.

Q: That's pretty lucky. Okay, we are back on tape. Beautiful.

GARRET: Where are we at?

Q: What are some other things you remember about being over there? You were talking about going and visiting your grandparents?

GARRET: Yeah...

Q: For the first time...

GARRET: Yeah, I had never met them before, and I went once later on with a friend, and the two of us went there together.

ROY: What part of Holland were they from? The Hague?

BETTY: No Gronigen...

ROY: My dad's, no my mom's parents, were from The Hague.

BETTY: Oh, The Hague...

GARRET: We were there when my dad was there, and he wanted to see his brother who lived in Germany at the time. One uncle lived in Germany and married a German girl. We had to go to The Hague so he could get permission to go into Germany, but I had a uniform so I could go back and forth. I displayed my papers that I had with me, but my dad and my uncle had to have papers. So, we went up to The Hague and got them one day, and then went back, rented a car, and went over to Germany to see him. After that, then they moved to the Netherlands and they still live there. My uncle and aunt are the only ones that are living now.

BETTY: What did you do with your grandpa?

GARRET: My grandpa?

BETTY: The things that you did, He had never seen...

GARRET: Oh yeah, my dad's brother came back, and he had only been gone five years because he came to the States in '48. Well, he knew then that my grandpa had never seen popcorn, so he took some with us.

Q: Yeah?

GARRET: And of course, we had to buy a special pan there, so it'd work, and while they were in the store buying the pan, I was out by the bicycles. This lady came by and staffed talking to me in Dutch. I told her, "I don't understand," and she said, "You're only gone five years and you forgot the language!" Because I looked so much like my dad's younger brother.

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Q: Oh yeah!

GARRET: She was chewing me out, and then they came out and said, "No, no, that was my uncle that just came out of the store." That was kind of neat. But she was mad, I mean about forgetting the language in five years.

BETTY: That's pretty quick, yeah...

ROY: [Speaking German]

GARRET: But Dutch and German is a little bit different.

ROY: Little different but they can understand one better.

GARRET: I know, especially if people live around the border. Same dialect almost.

ROY: My mom can talk Dutch, my gosh.

Q: Now, were you married at this time?

GARRET: Oh no.

Q: No, okay.

GARRET: When we came back from overseas and that ship, you know, was really rough and we all got sick... So, we came back to New Jersey, and spent a little time there getting ready to ship us out to Fort Custer. Now that's close to home, Roy and I both live within 20 to 25 miles from there.

Q: Okay.

GARRET: So, we got there, and they assigned us to a place, a barrack there, to get phased out. I called my brother, and he came and picked me up and I went home. I think it was the weekend, I think didn't have to come back until Monday and by that time I had a car. My own. Then another fellow, Gene Belco, we drove back and forth every day. We never stayed a night in Fort Custer until we got discharged.

Q: So, what did you do once, I guess, you were discharged?

GARRET: Before I was discharged, I met Betty, and we got married a year later. We didn't start going together right away, it didn't work out. About two or three months later, it started to get better. At this time, well she was dating somebody else. I could see she wasn't interested, so I was going to the university in town. My friend lived across the street, and he was dating a girl there, and she would set me up with girls from the university. I'd go with this one, and that one and nothing ever worked, you know.

Q: So, you took some classes at the university?

GARRET: No, I went to the high school and took some welding classes.

Q: Okay.

GARRET: And Betty came. Well, her girlfriend married my brother. That's how she came down here in the first place. She went to see her girlfriend, and my brother went into the Army. I got out in December, and he went in in January. Between that time, he got married, they got married. So, Betty was visiting her girlfriend because my brother was in Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

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Q: Okay.

GARRET: Then he had to come home that weekend, didn't he? You were already there thinking that you would spend time with her.

BETTY: We thought we had lots of plans.

GARRET: Had a lot of plans, but then he came home so that changed it.

Q: Yeah.

GARRET: And she was invited to our house for dinner on Sunday, and of course, I was there. We started talking a little bit, and she told me she was coming back on Tuesday because her town was in a basketball tournament, and it was at the university where they played. So, she said she was coming with another girl, so I said, "Okay, but I got a welding class."

Q: What city was this in?

GARRET: Kalamazoo.

Q: It was in Kalamazoo, okay.

BETTY: But I didn't live in Kalamazoo...

Q: Right...

GARRET: She lived 50 miles away.

ROY: I used to follow him.

GARRET: He used to follow me up there.

ROY: My mom and dad lived up there.

BETTY: Yeah.

GARRET: So anyway, I got to thinking about it, and I thought, "Well shoot, I'll just skip the class, and I'll go to the ballgame too." So, I see her at the ballgame and...

Q: You are a bit of a troublemaker.

ROY: He's worse than me, a lot worse, is that possible?

GARRET: Anyway, I don't know if it was halftime or at the end of the game and there was another game or something?

BETTY: We played two games.

GARRET: I said, "Let's go for a ride." So just the two of us. She left her friends there, and we went for a ride. Came back either after that game or something and...

BETTY: No, before that game was done, we were back.

GARRET: Anyway...

ROY: What happened? Kissing?

GARRET: No, no...

BETTY: Yeah, yes, we did, that was the first time he kissed me.

GARRET: I did? I don't remember that.

ROY: I can tell by the look in his eye.

BETTY: Yes, it is.

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GARRET: Anyway, she said, "Where we going to go out to eat?" and I said, "Okay." I took them all out to eat and paid for the whole thing. That impressed her and my '52 Oldsmobile, she liked that.

ROY: Good deal, isn't it?

BETTY: Oh yeah.

GARRET: And after that we started dating.

Q: Did you stay in contact with some of the other soldiers in your unit?

GARRET: Oh yeah, because Roy lived in town.

Q: Oh okay...

ROY: Stermer?

GARRET: Stermer lived there and [inaudible] who I went to high school with, [inaudible] another friend I went to high school with.

BETTY: Well, and Pat (Groulx) and [inaudible], you always got Christmas cards from them all the time.

GARRET: Yeah, Pat (Groulx) and [inaudible] they live quite a ways away and we see Don and Dorothy every' so often, they live 500 miles away, but we see them. Ed Hiser in South Dakota, we see him quite a bit. That's the guy I took that other trip within the Netherlands, and Paris we went together, and Belgium, Rode bicycles in the Netherlands and went to a circus there.

ROY: Did you get to Italy?

GARRET: Nope. No, I didn't get to Italy.

BETTY: You never told her about the popcorn thing.

GARRET: Oh yeah, okay that popcorn. So, we bought that pan, we had bought a pan and he has a little potbelly stove.

Q: Right.

GARRET: Just a one room thing with a little closet where they slept in. Well anyway, he'd always sit there with his chair and his feet were right up on the stove. So, he put the pan on there and, of course, his feet stayed there too. All of the sudden it started popping and start coming out and it came up on his pants, and he jumped up and started throwing his arms around and thought, "Well where's that, what's happening?"

BETTY: He had no idea what was going on.

GARRET: And another thing that happened at that time was we rented that '36 Ford to go see my uncle that was in Germany. Well we kept it for a week and took my grandpa for a ride, and I'm almost sure that he had never been in a car before. His first drive.

BETTY: And then you wanted to take his picture on the bike?

GARRET: Oh yes. Well I don't know how old he was at that time. Anyway, you're still riding a bicycle because that's all they had. I wanted to take a picture by the bicycle. Well, he shoved me away; he thought I was trying to help him get on the bike. He didn't need no help. He got on that bike, he'd run a little bit and jump on it and he was gone. So, I didn't get his picture. I did later on, but not on the bike.

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Q: Are there other stories like this that you can remember? That you can tell us?

GARRET: Conway and I went to, where they ski... Garmisch... we went to Garmisch over the holiday. Christmas and New Year time.

ROY: That's pretty, if you ever go somewhere don't miss that. She can tell you a lot about Germany.

GARRET: I think that's about it.

Q: Alright.

GARRET: You want to know the rest of our story about the two of us?

BETTY: No, no she doesn't need to know...

GARRET: We have four children, fourteen grandchildren, and we've got seven great-grandchildren.

Q: Wow, that's quite a family.

GARRET: And a lot of the grandkids are not married yet.

Q: They're not?

GARRET: No there's only a couple of them, three of them. We got a lot more coming; I think. It hasn't been a bad life.

BETTY: It's been a good life.

GARRET: Well I worked at it. I started working in '47. I had three years in before I went into the service, and I could go back to that same job. I ended up with forty-two years and four months.

Q: And where was this?

GARRET: In Kalamazoo. Sutherland Paper Company, but I think they changed the name seven times now.

Q: Probably. Probably eight, I mean six of them in the last five years.

BETTY: Looks like Pat's ready.