Interview with Robert Maynard
Interviewer: Marie Mitchell
March 26, 2004

Interviewer's Notes: The interview was conducted at Robert Maynard's house in Newburgh, IN. The setting was informal, and there are people in the background at some parts. These people are Robert's wife, stepdaughter, and grandchild.

Q: Ok well just so you know who I am my name is Marie Mitchell and I am a student at USI.I am doing this project for my communications class SPCH 499 and it is Oral Traditions and History.
A: This is for your schooling?

Q: Yes, and your name is?
A: Robert C. Maynard. Robert Clark Maynard.

Q: Robert Clark, ok. It is very nice to meet you and I thank you for doing this interview with me. What did you actually do with World War II? You were a nurse is that correct?
A: I was an O.R. Technician.

Q: An O.R. Technician.
A: Upper unit Technician, in the largest hospital the Army had in both wars, a six thousand bed hospital.

Q: Wow that's a lot, six-thousand beds, where was this?
A: New Guinea. The hospital was set up in New Guinea.

Q: In Papa New Guinea?
A: See, it was Alandia New Guinea.

Q: Where's that, Alandia New Guinea?
A: Right above it.

Q: OK.
A: Right above it, it's in Dutch New Guinea. New Guinea is divided in half its Dutch New Guinea and I can't remember the other half. But it was in Alandia, [New Guinea] where this hospital was set up at.

Q: Well, do you want to explain a little bit about the events leading up to the war before you went in?
A: When I went in? Well when I went in, I didn't think I'd have to go because my eyes was bad. But they took me, and they put me into the medical section because of it. I went from here [Evansville] to Little Rock, Arkansas for basic training; from there I went to Louisiana, New Orleans Louisiana, for staging area where they put us in the units. And I was assigned to the 222 General Hospital.

Q: Where was that, was that in New Orleans still?
A: It was in New Orleans, where we were put together. It was 650 enlisted men, 119 officers, because their doctors and 106 nurses.

Q: Were they male and female nurse or was it just female nurses?
A: It was all female nurses. The enlisted men were the male nurses. We were trained to be to be male nurses. Then, we went from there, after we formed our unit, we went from there to Ft. Leonard Wood Missouri for our training. And all of our enlisted people and the doctors went to the station hospital in Ft. Leonard Wood It was two divisions there, fighting divisions, and they fought one another. I mean they fought (laugh) they'd get drunk and they'd fight, and we'd have to take care of them. Anyhow that's where we took all our training at. We left from there and went to the west coast, and went to New Guinea, went to the South Pacific. We was on a big, let's see it was, I think it was four or five units on that ship. It was another hospital unit smaller than ours, and then there were two engineer outfits on that ship. With all our stuff, and when we went to the west coast it took three trains to take us to the west coast with our supplies. So, you see how big it was.

Q: So, you took the trains from New Orleans to the West Coast?
A: No from Ft. Leonard Wood to the West Coast

Q: Oh, Ok. On trains.
A: There were all kinds of trucks, ambulance, and all our hospital stuff was on the train. And all personnel, there was 650 of us, so you imagine that train, and then there was the doctors and the nurses on another train. They separated a lot of us so in case something happened they would only lose that train. That's why they kept us all separate; otherwise they would run the trains all together. We went over three different lines going out there.

Q: So, were you drafted?
A: Yeah, I was drafted. Yeah, I tried to enlist, but I couldn't get in because of my eyes.

Q: Oh Ok.
A: So, then I turned about and got married and 25 days after I got married, I was drafted.

Q: Oh wow, what year were you drafted?
A: 1942.

Q: 1942, wow and you got married 25 days before that. What branch of the service?
A: No branch, the medical section.

Q: Not the army or the navy, or anything like that, just medical?
A: No just the medical section, see the army back then was set up. Well they anticipated a lot of wounded, so they set us up with medical units, general hospitals are in both theaters of wars, there in Alandia. We were in what we called a hospital center; there was one main highway that went out from the base and went around Cyclop mountain from the base and you and a big bay area and the navy operated that big bay area because the navy had a lot of ships would come in there. And you went around a road, they built a road around to the left of the base a town to the end to where the mountain would come down, so they wouldn't have to go way over top of it. Then they went around to the

backside of that mountain. And about 22 miles from the base, from the navy base, back there at the backside, they turned off on another road and that's where the hospital laid. The hospital section back there. There was six general hospitals back there. We were the largest one, usually a general hospital is only about 2500 beds, so we were the largest one they had.

Q: Yeah because you had 6000, is that right?
A: Yeah, and we set up back there -- oh I got way ahead of myself there. First, we went up, we went on down the road farther, to the air force base, air base back there, and up on side of Cyclop mountain. There we built a hospital, we were going to set up, on the mountain side and look down on the valley, but our commander died. And another officer, I can't remember who he was, but he died.

Q: How did they die?
A: Natural death.

Q: Ok.
A: And after that our unit got broke up, after we built this. We had to build our own hospital, that was another thing about the unit. They give you; the engineers give you equipment to work with, but you had to build your own hospital. I mean put up your prefab buildings, you put them up and you roofed them, and you put in the concrete floors, and you put the electric in, I mean you did the whole. We even went up back up on top of that mountain and there we found a beautiful stream up there and we had our own little lake up there where we got our water from. We brought that water down. But then the unit broke up and so they reassigned us, all the enlisted men, and some of the officers went with us. But we went to; I can't remember if it was the 61st or the 63rd, the 61st I think it was General Hospital.

Q: And where was this, was it still in New Guinea?
A: Yeah, still right there back up the road in that big hospital center. This was where that hospital was set up at; they were already built when we went in there, so we didn't have to build that. But we got it all set up. We helped them get it set up for business, and it was business. We had ship, it was ship after ship came back there in Alandia Bay area, with patients that were on deck of destroyers, battleships. They were on deck of anything that was coming back. The ships usually went up and they came back they would get resupplied, come back, it was maybe three days sailing from the front, back there. Well we sat up there and we operated that thing for, I can't remember how long, well until we pushed up into the Philippines. We were leaving the Philippines because when the war started moving up, well you moved up too. They made us break down that whole damn big hospital and move the whole thing up. it was a job, but we had a system, we'd take two hospital beds and put them down, take two mattresses and put one down, and put sheets, bedpans, everything right in there and put a mattress on top of it and take bandages and wrap them up. That's what we did.

Q: Did they train you whenever you went into the service to build and do all that stuff before you went there, or did you just have to know it?
A: We had to go to school, to be trained, if you were going to be a ward person working on a ward you went to school for that. If you were going to be an X-ray technician, you went to school for that. If you

were going to be an O.R. technician, you went to school for that. But most of my schooling was right there in that station hospital. The chief nurse, she taught a lot of us and that was what we did. We did the same thing a nurse does in an operating room: we passed instruments, we assisted the surgeon with the operation, and sometimes he even let us help him, because we'd be short of doctors. And we had to help, we had to make our own plaster casts, we ripped the crinoline up, worked the plaster into it. We had a big long trough made up and we worked out of that.

Q: That's crazy, so what happened whenever you moved up to the Philippines? You packed everything up?
A: Well we sat up there and we were moved up the river and we were set up in limbo; we didn't do a thing. All our equipment was sitting right there in front of us and finally they said, they went out there and they bulldozed the place off and talked about us setting up a hospital because we were getting ready to go up to Japan, and we were already up around Okinawa then, and we set there, we set there, and I don't remember how long, but it was quite a while, but then they came in and said we're getting ready to move out. They said, "we're getting ready to go to." We were in the Philippines, oh they said, "we were going to move out pretty soon." And one of the guys asked the officers, "what do you mean we're going to move" and the officer said, "Well there's something going off." And that's when we bombed Japan. And then the next thing we moved from, New Guinea, I mean from the Philippines to Japan, Tokyo. And we set up in the Tokyo General Hospital in Tokyo. It was built by Americans for Japan back in, wait a minute, I can't remember the year, you can look it up, but there was a real big earthquake and they had to have a hospital, and it was built for that. That was that was for, and we went in over there and we moved them out, we took over that building. Yeah and we set up a big hospital in that building, but it was filthy. I never saw a place so filthy in my life.

Q: They didn't take care of it?
A: No, they knew we was coming in there, so they just filled up all the commodes and everything. We had to clean it all out, but we didn't do it, we hired them and made them come out and clean that stinking mess. Yeah.

Q: That's smart!
A: But I was, I got out of the service in January of 1946, then I was out of the service for about, now it wasn't quite a year, and I, some of my buddies talked me into joining the reserves, so I went back in and I joined the Air Force. And then I went from the Air Force Reserves, at McCullough Air Force Base, Columbus Indiana, and I was working at home and going up there too; I'd do it on the weekends.

Q: Oh, so you were working too?
A: Yeah once a month for a weekend, reserve duty, I'd go up there, I think it was in the 50's, no it must have been the 60's, they closed the base down, and a bunch of us went from there to Terre Haute, and we joined the National Guard, the Air National Guard, there in Terre Haute and I stayed there until I retired. I was 31, no 32 years and three months in the service all together.

Q: Wow, when did you retire, what year?
A: About 1981 or 1982, I'm getting so old I don't remember much. If I had the paperwork here, I could show it to you, but it's all gone. We should have had this (interview) a long time ago.

Q: Will you describe your background to me? Where you grew up and what was your family like?
A: What was my family like? Well let's see my mother and father and myself, and I had five sisters, and one brother. Yeah.

Q: Where did you live?
A: We lived here in Evansville, and after I got married after I had my oldest boy, Bob, he had asthma. We were having a hard time with him breathing and the doctors told us we had to leave Evansville, because of the coal smoke. So, we left Evansville, and moved up to Spencer County, and we lived up there for about, it must have been about two years, and it cleared up (his asthma) so we moved back down here to Newburgh, and everything worked out ok, and I've lived here ever since.

Q: Right, ok, was it hard, you were married for only 25 days and then you went to the service. Was that hard on your relationship, was that hard on your marriage?
A: Yeah, damn right it was hard. It was hard on her, because she came up pregnant, and she had a miscarriage, it was a hell of a mess. So, but I was in Ft. Lennerwood, when it happened, and the CO [Commanding Officer] there, was rank of private, he was a doctor, an eye doctor, and he, whenever I had a problem, I went to him and I came home every weekend. If I wanted to come home, I came home. I had to come on the bus, three hundred and sixty miles I think it was. But I made a lot of trips home, in fact I made so many trips home I made a women across the street, where we was living at, her son was in the service and he never called and never wrote, he didn't even come home at all, and she got mad and called him and talked to some MP's and had them come out one day, two great big burly MP's came out there one day, and knocked on the door and I went to the door and they said, "Are you Robert Maynard." And I said, "Yes." They said, "Have you got any paperwork that says you can be home?" And I said, "Yes." "Can we see it?" I said, "Yep, come on in." They came in and I went in there to the bedroom and I got all my paperwork, and my pass, I had a weekend pass, then I had a three day pass, and then I had to be back, the weekend pass was two days and the three day pass, that was five days I was home. And they, she didn't like it, so they laughed about it when they saw all that paperwork, and I said, "Anytime I want to come home, I can come home." And they said, "Well we won't be back to bother you."

Q: Wow, so how long were you in training, did it take a year to train you? For the medical?
A: Oh, well back then everything was rushed, I was there about nine months, everything no I wasn't there that long. I say altogether it was about six months, because everything was pushed, if you didn't get everything you were supposed to get done in eight hours, you stayed until you got everything done, it was twelve hours, sixteen hours. If it was day and night you stayed day and night. But you had so much training you had to get done and we had doctors to train us. We had, well we had hospital personnel there; they worked with us, the enlisted people, and their doctors, and then our own doctors, came in there and we worked with our own doctors right in there operating on people.

Q: So, how long were you in the war, doing the medical stuff?
A: The war itself I was in there from 19, see I went in there, the middle of 42, to January of 45, cause I came home, I came home in 46, January 1946.

Q: And did your wife have any kids already at that time?
A: No

Q: Did you get to see her during those years, when you were in the Philippines and New Guinea? Did you ever get to see your wife?
A: No, heck when we went overseas there was no seeing your wife anymore; that was it. What we saw was just each other.

Q: Did you get to write her? Write her letters?
A: Yeah, we could write a letter every day or two letters every day... it didn't matter how many letters you would write, you could write, but a lot of times the mail didn't get home, because the letters would get lost at sea. An airplane would go down or something, and they would lose it. There was one time I didn't get any mail for a long time and I couldn't figure it out, and I went down to the base and talked to the general about it and they investigated it. And she was writing, no she wasn't writing because she wasn't getting any mail. And I was writing every day because my officer who was over enlisted men... I can't think of his name now. he was also the officer who censored our mail, our mail had to be censored before it came home, you know so you couldn't write where we were at, but that didn't stop us, you could get around to telling them where we were at, I did. And where am I at?

Q: He was censoring the mail, because your wife wasn't getting it.
A: Oh, about the mail, she said that she was going to divorce me; I finally got a letter edged in black, saying she was going to divorce me. And I started checking into it, asking about it at the post office about the mail, wanting to know why my letters weren't getting home. One day in the unit there was a, I can't think of his name, but he lived in South Carolina, and he came up to me and he said, "Are you Bob Maynard?" And I said, "Yeah." "Your wife lives in Evansville, Indiana?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "My wife's been getting your wife's mail." And I said, "What?" And he said, "My wife's been getting your wife's mail, said she's turned in about half a bag of mail, said she's been keeping it throwing it back in a bag." So, it wasn't too long after that that I got a letter from her saying that the mailman just brought half a bag of mail. The mail got messed up bad back there. I guess that was to be expected, but that almost caused a hell of a divorce.

Q: Yeah, I bet, wow.
A: We were married, I was married to her in 1942, and she died right here in 1985. She had Multiple Sclerosis and she died. We had four children, three boys and a girl.

Q: Are they all still alive?
A: Yeah, the youngest one lives in Florida, the daughter lives in Kansas City and I got one who lives a mile over here (Newburgh) and one lives in Evansville.

Q: Two are close to you then.
A: This is my second wife here.

Q: When did you guys get married? [Second Wife]
A: We got married about 16 years ago, we got married in 1986. She lived here [Newburgh] and I lived there [down the road] we both had double wide [trailer] and our children knew one another, and that's how we got acquainted, after my wife died, I married her. She's been a God send to me. I've been sick and everything else, and for a long time, [phone rings] ... I've got to get it [phone]. I've got a guy who calls here.

Q: Ok.
A: It was a telemarketer. Now where am I at now?

Q: You were talking about how she's been a Godsend to you. We were talking about how you got married a second time.
A: Oh Yeah. That's how I got to know her, then we went ahead and got married in 1986, and I sold my place down there, and she wanted to live here, but I wanted to live down there, but I just let her have her way because I just met her and I already lost everything and I married that gal. And my first wife we went together, I met her on her sixteenth birthday, and I was seventeen, and we went together for four years before we got married. Yeah and that's the reason why I just let her, I get sick and she takes damn good care of me, so.

Q: You can't beat that.
A: No, like I said the other day, I had a heart operation, because I had a heart attack, and I didn't know it, and we were going to bed, and we were sitting here, and she got a phone call, and Brenda [step daughter] there we had to go to Evansville, and tell her, call somebody or something, because that's where she was at or something. And we went down there and I let her drive there and while she [second wife] was in there talking to Brenda I wasn't feeling good. And when she came out, I was underneath the wheel, and she got in and I took out of there flying and went over there to St. Mary's, and she said, "Where you going?" And I said, "I'm going to St. Mary's." And I wheeled in there and walked into that place and the nurse said, "What can I do for you?" And I just patted my chest, and they threw me in there on that damn bed and that's where I stayed. Yeah, and then they decided they were going to operate on me. Called in all my family and talked about it and had that operation. It worked just beautiful, but they must have damaged, they put a damn big tube down your throat, and I think they damaged that valve down there, but they didn't know it, I still have trouble with it, but every once in a while food will come right back up no trouble at all, like if I poke certain ways. Anyhow...

Q: How'd you meet? How'd you meet your first wife? You met her on her sixteenth birthday? So, how'd you meet her?
A: What? Yeah,

Q: You met your first wife on her sixteenth birthday, did you meet her at a club or at a restaurant, where did you meet her?
A: A blind date. Yeah, she was sixteen years old. And a friend of ours, a friend of mine, well it was a friend of both of ours, but I didn't know it; he knew her. He introduced us, he said he'd introduce us, and he did. And we went on a blind date on a hayride.

Q: Was it around Thanksgiving time? Was it around Thanksgiving time?
A: When I met her? No, it was in May.

Q: They had hayrides in May?
A: Her birthday is in May, May the 19th. And she was having a birthday; it was her birthday and so I was with her on her birthday.

Q: Was it just the two of you or were her friends there?
A: No, there was a whole wagon load of us; yeah, we were on a big hayride.

Q: Were some of her friends there too?
A: We went from Evansville to up there by Chandler [IN] someplace, a park, on a hayride, yeah.

Q: So, did you guys go to school together at all? Did you go to high school together?
A: Yeah, we went to Central High School both of us. She was a grade behind me.

Q: A grade behind you. Ok.
A: Yeah, I was just starting in the eleventh grade when I quit. I had trouble with a teacher, so I quit.

Q: What kind of trouble? Did you just not get along?
A: He'd go to sleep in the class all the time; you couldn't ever ask him a damn question. He had big ears and I tore off a blotter one day and I threw it and it just caught him in the ear. He was asleep, and he raised up out of that seat. Everybody was just a laughing and going and he looked around and said, "Maynard out in the hall." Out in the hall I went, and he came out there and he said, "If you think you're smart, you go up into the office and I'll take care of you in a little bit." I started up to the office and I got up to about halfway, well I went past my locker and I went "hum" and I backed up to my locker, took out everything, took my lock with me and went home.

Q: That was it, you were done.
A: That was it. Yep that was it.

Q: Did you get a job then?
A: Yeah, oh yeah, I was working, I lived by an ice company, a little ice company over there on Canal Street, we didn't live too far from it. And a bunch of us boys lived around there, and I made pretty good friends with the guy who owned the place, and I got odd jobs around there. This was when I was real young, fifteen years old, and the first thing you know I worked in the evenings, and he'd take me for that

and that's where I was piddling around when social security first started. I got my original social security card right here. Yeah, I carry it to this day, I didn't carry it in the service, I put it up then, when I came home, why I got it out again, and been carrying it all these years. That's another thing too, my eyes have been operated on; I have lenses in my eyes, I could hardly read at all, and now all I do is read. That's all I do. See this card is for my lenses, one for the right [eye] and one for the left [eye].

Q: Do you still have good health benefits with the military?
A: Yep, but Whirlpool [factory job] takes care of me pretty good. It's about ready to run out. Oh, here is my social security card, [issued in 1937] they were first issued in 1936.

Q: That's neat; did you have to apply to get a social security card?
A: Yeah you had to apply to get one. Yeah, here are the pictures of my grandkids; these are the two in Kansas City, my daughter's kids. My son had two sons, the oldest one died from Leukemia. Oh, he battled with that stuff for about four years. Now I have a great grandson. He's got a son, these two here, they haven't married yet [showing pictures]. The oldest one is married , but I don't look for her to have any children for quite a while. She's young, she's flighty, and young, flighty.

Q: Just not ready. Were there any special rules you had to follow while you were in New Guinea or the Philippines?
A: Special rules, well when you're in the service you have all kinds of special rules. Anytime you wanted to go someplace you had to get permission to go. In Alandia there was a PC craft that had been hit by Japanese, dropped a small bomb down the damn stack and busted the engine. It was in there for repairs. One day a buddy of mine from Minnesota asked me if I wanted to go down to the naval base and see his two buddies on that ship, and I said sure. We heard that the navy ate pretty well, and, in the army, we didn't get good food. All we ate was Spam, Spam, Spam, and Spam. We went down there and stayed all afternoon and that evening we had turkey. They were cleaning out their food locker because the ship was in dock. And we played around down there on a Saturday, and on Sunday we went back down there, but we always had to tell them [the Army] where we were at in case something happened. And we went back down on Sunday and this one guy said, "Maynard there's a guy working here who's from Evansville, Indiana" and he went to get him, and I found out that we went to Central high school together, so I knew him. But he was there and then every time I went down there he would be there, and we would spend time at the Navy recreation area. That's another thing the Navy had it all, recreation area and you could go in there and sit and play games and drink beer and all that stuff and the Army didn't have anything like that, no way, but the Air Force did, but the Army didn't have crap. Feed you Spam is all they knew.

Q: Do you eat Spam anymore?
A: I had so much Spam that when I came home, they had rations, and I didn't know what the hell rations were, and I came home, and I happened to go back there in the kitchen and got into the pantry there and there was these cans and cans of Spam! And I was like what the hell is this? So, I got a sack and racked them all into the sack and took them out and threw them in the trash. My wife's mother was staying with us at that time and asked me if I did anything with all the Spam and I said, "You mean with

all that damn crap you had sitting up there in the pantry? I threw it out in the trash." Oh, she got mad, she threw a big fit. I said, "It's not allowed in the house." She wanted to know why, and I said, "Because if you had to eat as much of that crap as I did you wouldn't want it in the house either." Last year I bought a small can to see what it tastes like, and it was crap. I won't eat that stuff; I think I'd die before I'd eat that again. We had Spam anyway you could think to fix it. It came in ten-pound loaves, a big square. Ten pounds and we had it with pineapple on top of it, cherries on top of it, ketchup on top of it, just about any damn way you could think to fix it. You never seen anything like it.

Q: Did you have any fresh fruit while you were in New Guinea?
A: Did you say fruit? We had Spam. Mention something else, we had Spam! We had dehydrated eggs; they were green. Green eggs, because they were dehydrated, see back then they were just learning how to do that stuff. And they came out green and so we had green eggs and spam. You would go by the green eggs in the food line and you would pass it up. We had fresh bread though, it was good, and coffee, that's what you filled up on, coffee. Coffee is the main thing. Then bread, they baked it and it was pretty good bread, but our food was mighty poor. And there in Frenchaven, New Guinea or in Alandia, I took diarrhea and I went down to 119 pounds, I went to the hospital, and they tried to treat me, I had to go to a psycho doctor. That made me mad and I went back to my unit. I walked into my commander's office and said, "I'm back for duty" and he said, "Are you well?" And I said, "No I'm not well." So, I just sat out in the sun and it felt good, so it went on for a while. I found out we were getting ready to move up to the Philippines to move out. So, I went to him and said, "I want out of this place on the first ship here." So, I was on the first ship out in the morning. And I didn't go again [to the bathroom] for seven days. I thought "Man I'm going to be sick," but I wasn't, it worked out beautifully. It cleared right up as soon as I left; it was a bug. [Family interruption]

Q: As soon as you left you weren't sick anymore.
A: Yeah, I was well then, I started gaining weight, and still had to eat spam and dehydrated eggs and potatoes. Everything was dehydrated because they had to ship so much food, that it would spoil if it wasn't dehydrated. There were a lot of troops over there and they had to ship over a lot of stuff. And food wasn't as important as ammunition and bombs; we had to have something to fight those damn idiots with. We had to kill them damn Japs.

Q: What was it like being in Japan? Were the people mean?
A: Oh, they were good to us. We would get on the electric train and go to downtown Tokyo. We would go to the Hotel downtown and we could get an eight-course dinner for three dollars and a half. We got a lot of fish. There was a lot of rice, but the first thing we learned was that we could only eat the food that was grown above ground. Anything over in the Pacific that grows aboveground was safe to eat. But anything that grew in the ground you can't eat, because of Cystosomatris, a worm that would get in through your feet. It's a bug, have you seen pictures of babies with little potbellies? That's what the bug does to you. It gets into your feet and goes right into your blood stream. We couldn't never go barefooted; we had to wear shoes all the time. If you had shoes on and got water in them, it didn't hurt too much. It's when you went barefooted and it was in the ground, that's when the bug would go into your skin. That was about the worse thing, that and mosquitoes. We had a little yellow pill for malaria.

And if you took that little yellow pill you didn't have to worry about malaria. And I took my little yellow pill every damn day, I didn't miss a day. I turned yellow; your skin turns a gold yellow from the pill, a gold tan. The mosquitoes never bothered me. We had malaria control units that went into the ditches and streams, a drip can up that had oil in it. And it would drop onto the water and create a film and the mosquito larvae wouldn't hatch. That's the way malaria control controlled the mosquitoes. Our hospital covered 86 acres, that's how big it was.

Q: Is this the hospital in New Guinea?
A: Yeah, the hospital in New Guinea. It was 86 acres, and we had everything there, malaria control took care of keeping mosquitoes away from us, water plant system it filtered our own water, it was self-operating, just like a small city. There was so many of us that that's how we had to operate, and if we needed more manpower, they didn't think about giving us more, they just gave us more manpower.

Q: What were the people of New Guinea like?
A: We called them [people of New Guinea] "fuzzy wuzzys."

Q: Fuzzy wuzzys? Why?
A: You have seen these afros, you've seen them out at school, and anyways that's fuzzy wuzzys. You could take and get them to climb a banana tree and get a stack of bananas for fifty cents. I have a box in Kansas City full of my history. My sons would fight over it, so I left it with my daughter and if they want to see it, then she lets them see it. Then I had them two grandson's and I had a Japanese rifle. They go for all that crap. I left it with them.

Q: Did you have any friends with you in training? Did you get really close to people?
A: Did I have any local friends who went in with me? No, the morning I left from here (Evansville) there was about sixty of us at the train station. None of us knew each other. Ten from Kentucky, I didn't know a damn one of them, but they ended up in my unit. We went to basic training together. To New Orleans and then to Little Rock, Arkansas. We were together from the time we left here to the time we came back.

Q: Were you really close friends?
A: Yeah there were six of us that were pretty close, one was from Minnesota, and four from Kentucky. There were three of them from Kentucky that were warden personal. We knew the other three because our hospital was set up in sections. And we got to know each other that way. They had a surgical ward section where you took your patients that had surgery over there and that's where they stayed until they recovered and went to the medical wards.

Q: What did you do in your down time?
A: Down time? Well in down time when we didn't do anything. When the whole unit was down, we just did everything. In my down time I went to an evacuation hospital the fourth evacuation hospital there, in New Guinea. I worked on ENT ward, eyes, nose and throat. And there you did anything. I was over two blind guys. These two people, two gentlemen, were ones that went out into the field to get our

dead people, and the Japs booby trapped them with dynamite. So, when it went off it got their eyes and they were blind. And my job was to take care of them while I was there in that hospital. I taught them to eat, how to find their way's around. I would take them out to the grounds of the hospital and tell them where they were at and have them walk around so they would learn how to get around when they went home. Both of them lived in Chicago, a block apart, and they didn't know one another at all until they were in the hospital. They lived almost back to back in Chicago. One lived on one street and one lived on another street and they didn't even know each other, but they did then. But we worked there with them, and then we went from there back to another unit, where I went to surgery. And then, well we could move around, when we weren't doing anything. We could go on detached service, and one time I went on a ship and went to the Philippines to pick up patients, and we would lay them out of the deck, but the sun was so hot that we had to keep spraying water on the deck and on the patients. We had a canvas overtop of them to keep them cool too. The metal would get hot. We went there and picked up a lot of patients. Once time they were bringing us patients one every minute, and we worked eighteen hours a day. We worked hard and when we got through, we cleaned that place from top to bottom and resupplied the operating room, and when we got done, we laid down on the floor and slept until it was time to work the next morning. That lasted for about six weeks; for six weeks I never saw our tent. Didn't even pick my mail up because we were so busy. Then when we did get to go to our tent I went and sacked out in that cot. Those cots they were really something, wed take our cots and opened them up and we had a big mosquito net that went over it and we'd tuck it in under there and we were on the equator and at nighttime we slept under a wool blanket and a sheet.

Q: Was it cold?
A: That's how cold it got at nighttime.

Q: Was it hot during the day?
A: You could fry a damn egg on the roof. Yeah, most of the hospitals had corrugated asbestos roofing, just like corrugated steel, only it was asbestos. It came from Australia. Great big sheets; they were twelve-foot-long and four foot wide. And you had to handle them very carefully because they would break. And that's what we put on our roofs because it would keep all that heat out, keep the sun out. You couldn't use tin because it would burn you up. If you used tin, you would have to put stuff underneath of it to keep the heat from coming though.

Q: Wasn't asbestos bad for your health?
A: Well, we didn't know a damn thing about it then, you don't think about anything then, in war time you don't think about anything. You just do it, you don't think about what's going to kill your or what going to make you sick, you just do it. If they [Army] say jump in a barrel of fire you jump in a barrel of fire. You just do it, it's that simple. Because you had stuff you had to do, so you do it.

Q: What were your clothes like? Did you have to wear a uniform?
A: Our uniforms, we had to wear regular Army fatigue uniforms. A tee-shirt, jacket, pants and a fatigue hat that had a brim around it that covered the top of your head.

Q: Did you wear Army boots?
A: Combat boots, no. Yeah, our boots were different. They were normal boots with a leather cap, about a four-inch, cap around the top that buckled. It all depended on how much you were out in the rain. In Frenchaven, New Guinea about every four months you had to get a new pair of boots because they would rot off your feet. So, what we did when we got two pairs of shoes was to leave one sit in our lockers. We had big lockers; you had to lock it up or someone would carry it [boots] off. I'd leave that one set in the locker and wear the other set all the time. Then when they would start to rot off my feet, I would turn them in real quick and wear the other pair. And by the time the second pair would get bad, the new pair would come in. Down in Frenchaven, New Guinea it rained so damn much that we were sitting there in the coconut grove. The Palmolive Coconut Grove, as far as you can see coconut trees. Some of the tops of the trees were cut off from where the Japs would sit up there in the top of the tree and they couldn't get them out, so they just shot the top of the coconut tree. But anyhow, it rained so hard there at times, and we would go from our tent to the mess hall, and we would run, and we'd run into those coconut trees and knock the hell out ourselves, it rained so hard that you couldn't see them. And you'd run and it'd be raining so hard that you wouldn't see them and bam, back on your butt you'd go!

Q: Did you eat the coconuts?
A: Well you had to be careful eating them; after they fell you could eat them. But if you would get them down out of the tree, they would be green, and you would have to be careful because they would give you diarrhea. That coconut juice was good, that's what we got the coconuts for mainly was for the juice. But if you needed a bowel movement that would really do it. We learned that quick. Bananas, they used to get your bananas for you. You didn't want to go and get them yourself; they didn't like that. They were good to you, that's one thing about them. During the war our big boys were in there fighting the Japs and they would take them outriggers they have, and they would load them down with ammunition and food and they would take them up and down the rivers and distribute them to our boys. And they knew to bring the wounded back down with them. And they had a thing to lie out on the deck; they would put two of their canoes together and lay strips across the canoes. They would lay the wounded on there. They would bring back ten to twelve bodies at a time. Them natives helped us a lot over there, but the government paid a lot of them too. The government paid them, but they couldn't pay too much because the Dutch government controlled it, and they were only allowed to have so much money. That was between our government and theirs. But what happened with us was individual, whatever we wanted to give them, well that was our own damn business. It wasn't the government's business. We would get four cartons of cigarettes a month or we could get three cartons of cigarettes and one carton of cigars, fifty cigars. But we got to smoke, some of us didn't smoke, and others smoked up a damn storm; I did. I was smoking about a carton and half a week, maybe two cartons when I got home. I was smoking the hell out of it. Then one day I went to work for the lumber company; I worked for them before I went into the service, and then when I came back home, I went to work for them again. But I didn't make enough money, so I went to work for Whirlpool. I went to work for them, then one day I was on the line working, and they were all veterans. That's one thing, there were a lot of veterans. I was at work one day and I said, "I'm about ready for a cigarette," you couldn't smoke on the line, and you had to get off the line to smoke. So, I had a ten-minute break coming up, that was another thing, you

couldn't go the damn restroom and smoke, you went to the restroom and that was it, you didn't go there to smoke. If you got caught smoking in the restroom you got wrote up; if you got wrote up three times you were fired. Yeah, we got to talking about quitting smoking, and I said, "Who wants to quit smoking?" There were about eight of us who wanted to quick smoking, and we threw five dollars into a pot, and whoever stayed not smoking got the five dollars. I got the five dollars! I still don't smoke; I did go back to smoking in 1960, because I changed jobs over there. I went from repair work to head operator and we were running the new side by side model of refrigerators. A side to side refrigerator. It was a pain in the butt. I started smoking, I had a bunch of young boys who were going to college, and they wanted to sit and read their book and do their work at the same time and it just didn't work out. And the foreman told me to get on their asses to get it cleared up, because I had to keep the line going. Finally, I had just had enough, and I went into the foreman's office. He had a big office, where all the foreman's go and get their asses chewed, but I went in there one day at lunch time. I went in there and he looked up at me and said, "What can I do for you Maynard?" I said, "I want to go back to my old job; I don't want that damn repair operating job anymore." I said, "I mean when the whistle blows, I'm going back to my old job." He said, "You stay on that job till I get you relieved." So, I went back out there and I stayed on it for about an hour, I guess. And then they found a guy to take my place and I went back down the far end, back to my regular job. Then I took electrical repair and then on to ding and touch-up. And that's where I stayed until I retired; I stayed on ding and touch-up. That's where the refrigerator gets dinged on the line; I had to go in there and knock that ding out and touch it up. Yeah, I had that job for a long time. In fact, I could do it with my eyes shut [the job]. Just by the feel of it.

Q: Did you like it?
A: Yeah, I did. I liked doing things like that. I liked the operating room too. Yeah, that's what I should have went to school for. And went to work in a hospital, but I didn't do it.

Q: How come you didn't do it?
A: I had two friends in Florida who went back to school [after the war] and they became doctors. We had enough education back then we could have gone to school to be a doctor. That's who was teaching us, doctors and nurses. We'd have an appendectomy come in and the doctor would stand right there and tell us how to do the whole operation and we'd do it. Yeah, a lot of times that happened. The doctors would come in right beside you and they would assist you. They would tell you what to do, how to cut, poke your finger in there and find that appendix and bring it out. Yeah, then we had another doctor, I can't remember his name, in the service you would have a lot of cases of hemorrhoids because of the food they fed you. Back there then we didn't have dietitians like we do now. But there were dietitians but not like what we have now. And, Enkins that hemorrhoid doctor, that was his name, from Missouri, he was a good doctor. We had some good doctors. We had some doctors from the mayo clinic, a lot of doctors during both wars from the best places in the United States. We had one boy come up out of a battle one day and both of his arms were in a cast stuck straight out in front of his body. A shoulder splice, we laid him on the operating table. The cast ran all the way down to his belly button. He had drawings all over the cast showing us what was wrong. From his shoulder to his wrist the bone was missing. And we couldn't see any bone at all, and we didn't understand why they didn't cut his arm off, get rid of it. After we cut the cast off there was almost half a bone all the way down there. His elbow

was still there. So, we cleaned him all up and went into his leg, cut pieces of bone from both his legs and put a cast on them. Then we put the bones from his legs in his arms and shipped him back home. But he was all healed by the time he got home. We didn't want him to move his arm before it healed though. We had some come in with infections so bad that we couldn't tell what was wrong with them or what we should do with them, so we'd fill them up with maggots. And we left them in there for about a week, and then we'd come in and cut them out. And put them in jars and send it the over to the lab. Then the wound would be all nice and clean, rosy, and then you could work on it.

Q: Where did you get the maggots from?
A: Penicillin, we'd call it star dust. Sometimes the area would be too big and infected so we would take the Penicillin and sprinkle it all over the wound and get it all in there, and it would clear it right up; we called it star dust.

Q: What kind of shots did you have to get before going to New Guinea?
A: You name it and we had to have it, diphtheria, malaria, tetanus, oh we had a lot of tetanus, sometimes we had to get tetanus shots every six months. And typhus, well I had shots worldwide. I could go anywhere worldwide and not have to worry about catching something. Yeah, that's just like here a while back the boys [military men] were making a big fuss about taking that shot, oh what kind was it?

Q: Was it a flu shot?
A: No, it wasn't a flu shot; we got those like a dime a dozen. I got a shot that way really long, the needle was really long. Back then we didn't question why they gave us what they did; we just took it. Because we knew it was for our health, we just took it. What was that one that they give you in your hip? Oh, hell I can't think what it was called. But anyhow there were many shots, and this one stung, but then they revised it so they could give it to you in your shoulder. And we didn't have to take it in our rump anymore. While we were overseas, we had to have so many shots that both arms and both rumps were shot.

Q: What was it like to come home?
A: Coming home? Well, let's see I was on a big transport ship coming home. The Army and Navy transport ship; all we could talk about was getting home. I think it was about a four- or five-day sailing trip from Japan to Seattle, Washington. We pulled into Seattle, and went into a big army base there, first thing that shocked us was we went into the mess hall and we didn't have to go get our food or anything. German prisoners brought it to us. We couldn't get over that damn crap, German prisoner waiting on us hand and foot. Then we were there, well while we were there, they were making a train for us to come back East. Oh, I was there in January, no December. Because when I left there we were in the Mountains. We were about twelve hours, about a day, coming out of Seattle. It was mountainous. Then the next thing we knew we stopped, and we had to sit, and sit, and sit. We knew we were on a big train, but we didn't know how big it was. The next thing we knew we were in the middle of the train, but we couldn't ever feel anything because there were so many cars, but the next thing we knew we were moving again, and we started to pick up speed. And we went back up in the mountains, and I mean

mountains. We went through this one place and the snow was so damn deep that the roof, the railroad had people living along the railroad tracks. And this house was completely covered in snow and they had tunneled out to the railroad tracks, the railroad did this for them. The train had a special crew that would go and dig them out. And they dug out a big place for them and in the mornings the train would stop there and pick up the kids and the grocery orders. They would take the kids to the next town and in the evening, they'd bring the kids and the groceries back. Yeah, we had to laugh because it was funny. We were talking to the porter on our train. And the next thing we knew we came to a big horseshoe; we could look over and still see the train coming. We were talking about it and saying, "What's that train over there?" And the porter would laugh and say, "That's us." We had four sets of engines. They were snow blowers. That's what took us though that mountain. It was a big train, the biggest train I had ever seen. When we went overseas, they broke it down into sections so if any sabotaging went on all we would lose would be one train, and the rest of us could be replaced. They were always careful about manpower. Our train went the southern route on the Southern Pacific, that's what we went on. We got to Arizona, and we had to lay over for a freight train coming though. While we were waiting, the Indian women would go by with big brushes and wash our windows for us on the train so we could see out. Yeah, there was so much stuff that went on through my life, I don't remember it all. Just like now I pick up and remember more and more just by talking about it with you. But there's so much that went on that it's too much to remember.

Q: Did the people here [in the U.S.] treat you nicely when you came back from the war?
A: No, nobody said a damn thing; you were just another old body moved in. Nobody said anything. That's what I can't get over today. These boy's, I call them a weaker sex, because they go over there and they come back and all they do is cry. I feel sorry for the ones who go over to Saudi Arabia and Iraq, that area there. Because they are putting up with crap that we didn't have to put up with. They have to put up with filthy dirt, and people don't realize how filthy dirt is. Because over there they are on the damn ground and everything else. It is so dry, and they have to breathe in the dirt and dust. So, I feel sorry for them because of the dirt. We came home and we were just another body. We didn't mean anything to anybody, not anything. Just like you hadn't been away. If you wanted to feel sorry for yourself, like you hear about these homeless veterans, if you wanted to feel sorry for yourself and sit on your damn ass then that's what happened to you. You became homeless. If you didn't get up and get some gumption in, you then you were just a damn dud. That's the way I look at stuff like that. Because the world is not going to stop for you; it's going to go right on. And if you don't keep up with it, that's why I do a lot of reading about different things. I read magazines, and I just keep up with stuff.

Q: Well thank you.
A: That's just the way it is. Life's life, and if you don't jump on the bandwagon it will leave you behind.

Q: Yes.