

Interviewer

Mrs. Mason

When did you first become aware of World War II?

I guess I became aware whenever they took the boys to Camp Shelby.

To Camp Shelby?

Well, wouldn't you? We didn't know there was going to be a war, but they was taking them to train them so you'd know there was something up, wouldn't you?

Wasn't the war in Europe going on then? Yeah.
going on then?

But you didn't think the U. S. would get in?

I never thought nothing about it. They was taking the boys in Jan. of 1941. See, the war wasn't 'til Dec. of '41.

Bomb Pearl Harbor?

And in Jan. '41, all the Battery D's, all the trained guys..What would you call them?

Interviewer

Mrs. Mason

Well, when did Uncle Marshall
leave?

First he went to Camp
Shelby for a year. They
let everyone that was 28
years old or that had a
family go home.

Did he come home?

Yeah, he came home. He
wasn't 28 but he had Jim
Harry. He came back in
Nov.

How long did he stay
home?

About a year. The war
started in 41 and they
started calling them all
back and it took about a
year before they called
him back again.

During the period of time
that he was home was there any
certain way that the war
was affecting your family
life?

Not too much yet. I
didn't think it did.

Interviewer

Mrs. Mason

When did it begin to,
After Marsh left?

Well just little by little.
You couldn't buy this and
you couldn't buy that.
You had stamps for coffee
and stamps for meat, and
stamps for all kinds of
vegetables and fruit. You
could just buy certain a-
mounts. And you couldn't
get automobile tires, you
couldn't even get elastic
in kids pants and stuff.
And you could hardly buy
bluejeans 'cause they didn't
have denim.

What'd you do instead?

Oh, they had corduroy and
anything instead, but I
couldn't buy a pr. of blue-
jeans for Jim Harry.

They had to ration gas,
too, didn't they?

Yeah, they had to ration gas
and they put the speed limit
down to 35 mph.

Interviewer

Mrs. Mason

The Defence factories.

All the women went to work
in the defence factories.

Did you?

No, I had to take care of
Jim Harry. I wanted to but
Marsh wouldn't let me. I
wanted to so bad, all that
money. They hired anybody.
Anybody in the world. Mom
went, you know. She was in
her sixties and Granny Mason..
They worked.

Well what did they do
with all the big money
they were making?

Spent it, I guess.

On what? If everything
was in short supply
and you couldn't buy it.

Well they paid off the mort-
gage on their house. Mom
owed a mortgage on her home,
Mrs. Mason owed one. They
paid them off. Saved it.
Granny saved a lot, but she
worked a lot longer than Mom.

Interviewer

Mrs. Mason

She got something wrong with her arms or something. Mom had to quit. She worked about a yr. or two I guess and had to quit.

Well, how did this affect your social life?

Well, you didn't do nothing except stay home. You couldn't go anyplace. We sold the car 'cause you couldn't get gas. I wasn't working. If you was working you could get gas. Well, I just stayed home.

Did you not have any social activity?

No, I never went anywhere. Church.

How long did that last?

It lasted form '41 'til '45, when the war was over.

That you didn't do anything?

Well, yeah. Lots of people did. Lots of people went, but there weren't too many men around to take you, Dale.

InterviewerMrs. Mason

The only men around were what they called "yeller". Oh, there were some men around that worked in the defence factories or the shipping yards down here. If you had a great big family you didn't have to go. Or if you had aI don't know how some of them got out. There was a lot of 4f's. There was something wrong with them and they didn't go. But there was a lot of men that worked in the shipping yards and factories that didn't go. But very few boys around here from 18 to I'll say 35 that didn't go. If they had bad hearts or flat feet or something they didn't go, but most of the guys were gone.

Interviewer

Mrs. Mason

Well, how was your communication with Marsh?

Well, every letter that I wrote him after he went overseas came home. He never got a one.

For that whole four years?

Just about. He got them from Fay, but he never hardly got a letter from me. When he got home there was a pack of letters like this that came in the mail. Where they stood I'll never know. He might have got one or two of them. Now, when he was in the states he got them, but after he got overseas he hardly got a one. And he said he tried to telegraph to see if everythin was all right. But he got Fay's and I don't know why. He'd get hers and he wouldn't get mine.

Interviewer

Mrs. Mason

Did you get very many
from him?

Yeah, but they'd censor them
though. I got one, I guess
I got one a wk. But they were
little old things in block,
you know. They called them
V-mail. They write them on a
big slip of paper and then
they'd photograph them. And
the letter you'd get would be
this big, Dale. In a tiny
little envelope. They wouldn't
be $\frac{1}{2}$ as big as a T.V. guide.
Just one little slip of paper
and they called them V-mail
and the boys didn't have to
send any stamps on them. They
got their stamps free. I bought
one of them a wk. for him.
And he'd write and say "why don't
you write, why don't you write?"
And hell, I was writing every
day of the world. I never missed
one day. Six cents stamps.
Sure had a time getting them.

InterviewerMrs. Mason

Of course I got \$80/mo. from him and the gov't. You know, they took some from him and they put some in.

Is that what you lived on? \$80 a mo.?

Mom, huh? But that wasn't too bad in them days. I did all right. Didn't have much house payment. I think I payed about a \$7 or \$8 house payment. Not many bills then, you know.

Did you save much then?

Yeah, I saved a little and then when he got back in the states I sent it to him. And he saved some too, 'cause he couldn't spend none after he got in the hospital.

He came back before the war was over, didn't he?

He came back in April of '45, but he wasn't discharged yet. He had to go back to the hospital. He came home for furlough in April of '45, then had to go back to the hospital. The war was over in Aug. of '45.

InterviewerMrs. Mason

What was your reaction when he came home?

I never will forget it Dale. It was Jim's last day of school. Arvis had already called. He'd already called he was coming home. And then I can see Dad now. None of these houses was here. And I kept hearing Dad hollerinh, "Hey, Lip! Hey, Lip!" I thought, "That's Dad hollering at me." And then I saw him down by the orchard, you know. I ran down to meet him and said, "What's the matter, Dad?" And he said, "Bett, Marsh is just trying his best to call you." I had a telephone. "Marsh is just trying his best to call you, where have you been?" And I said, "Marsh trying to call me?" God, oh, you don't know how I felt. He said, "Yeah, he's in the states." And, oh my God, Dale, that was just the most thrilling thing. You just don't know, I couldn't hardly stand it. And then I walked down with Dad and then Mom told me that she'd called and that Uncle Bud, Marsh's uncle had just died.

Interviewer

Mrs. Mason

And Mom told him Uncle Bob, Uncle Bob, and he said he'd be home then. Just for a furlough.

And the day he came home in a cab. He came home and Ras went. Aunt Offie's son. And he came over to see Marsh just before he left. He joined up then. The day Marsh came home he went. He wasn't in there very long, 'course he was just 17. And then Marsh had to go back again up to Louisville.

Well, when the war was over then and all the troopa came home, then was it kinda anti-climatic or what?

All the tropps didn't come home like they used to in the wars, they didn't do that. They didn't just a whol bunch of troops come home, they didn't do that.

Not like they show in the movies, huh?

No, one boy'd come home one time and then another boy'd come home. They'd just discharge them like that. Like you'd see a trainload of troops coming home? Well, they didn't do that

Interviewer

Mrs. Mason

When they signed the armistice then what was the reaction of you and everyone?

Well, Marsh was home when they signed the armistice. It was over in Europe first and then everyone just thought that Japan would....you know. We just almost knew it was gonna be over, see?

It didn't excite everyone too much then?

No. It did when we used to set around and listen to Gabriel Heater. At 8:00 every night we'd listen to him. He was a news commentator. I can just see us all ganged around and Jim Harry was so little he didn't know what was going on. And we'd sit there and he'd tell.. God, the things he wouldn't tell though. Sometimes I wished I hadn't listen to him. He'd tell about--lots of it was propaganda-- the Germans' tanks just rolling over our boys and just kill them. Just leaving laying down and they didn't do that.

Interviewer

Mrs. Mason

You, know, all those things they used to tell you. Boy, Granny and Grandad wouldn't have missed that for nothing in the world.

Well, I wonder why they told you that?

I don't know. They told all that.

I gather to make you hate the Germans.

And so all the boys would enlist and help them out. That's why they showed movies, Dale. They showed all kinds of war movies so that you'd hate them so bad. That's the reason I think they did show those movies, so the boys that wasn't going would enlist, you know. Of course, they took them if they needed them I guess, but it was just to make you hate the Germans.