

Tuesday, April 29, 2003
Interview with Frank Weaver Moody
Resides at 9 Chapparral Drive, Sylva
85 years old, date of birth May 10, 1918

Interviewer: Nancy Potts Coward
Photographer: E.J. Pullium
Audio/Video: Curtis Lambert
Transcript: Kim B. Lambert

Interviewer: Frank, what about your childhood? Tell us a little bit about you growing up here in Jackson County.

Frank: *Okay, first of all, I was born in Cullowhee up where Western Carolina University is now located and I stayed there, well my dad and mother owned a farm, 'til I was six years old and then we moved down ~~to~~ to Sylva. It was near my father's place ^{to} work, down in Dillsboro. He'd been down to Raleigh and-and got an engineering electrical degree, and he was qualified for a good job, so they ^{were} wasn't to many people available for that job, so he didn't want to drive from East LaPorte to Dillsboro every day for work. And the roads were bad,* he had to leave real early of ^{the} morning and get back real late at night. And..I started in my first school year at Webster. It was about two miles from Lovesfield where my father bought a place there.*

I: Your experience was unusual, in that you were in and out of the army before being drafted to serve in World War II. Will you tell us how you happened to enlist in 1936, and what the armed services were like then?

F: *Well, after the eleven years in school at Webster, that was /the last year you could go then, I think it's twelve now. After I got out of school at Webster, during the depression, the work force was hard. My father could have give me a job as a water boy, but he said that men with families needed to work more than I did; I could eat at his table. So I just did odd jobs working around with theaters, and helping my dad do electrical work until my first cousin came by one day, and he said, "We can't get work," says, "Let's join the army." He said, "I'm a-going to." I said, "I don't think I want to do that." So he said, "Well, go to Asheville with me to take my examination, I'll pay your way back on the bus." So I said, "Okay, can't turn that down," so we go off to Asheville. And he was examined over there and passed with flying colors. And the doctor asked me, he said, "You're next." And I said, "I'm just over here with my first cousin, I hadn't planned on going." He said, "Well, you haven't got anything to lose." Says, "Won't cost you anything" says, "If you ever want to get in service, you can see," So I said, "Well, I'll do that." So he examined me, and I passed with flying colors, and so he gave me a handful of bus tickets, too. So we took off, to Fort Bragg, and again we had to stop in Charlotte for another physical, which we passed all right, and then we landed on down to Fort Bragg. Got there just before dark, and we was in civilian clothes naturally, and the soldiers sitting around outside there*

everything went on a mule. And it took three mules to carry a gun, and one of them would carry ammunition, one, two wheels, and one, the bridge. And the mules and horses both, they didn't mind the guns a-firing beside of them. That's all they knew, guns a-firing. And we had to exercise these horses. Even on bad days in the winter time, we had to get them out and run them, and get them back home, and dry them down good before we left them. Look at each one's feet, see if there's any rocks or anything in it, and clean them out. And I (laughs)-- my first cousin--his horse was named, I forget what now, it was a big old horse, anyway it stepped on Fred's foot, and tears was just a-running down Fred's face, and you know when you push on an animal, it'd pick up the other three feet almost. And ~~that~~ ^{the} old sergeant asked Fred, said, "Is that horse a-hurting your foot?" He said, "No sir, a five-hundred pound horse ain't going to hurt nobody's foot." (laughs) But anyway, Fred transferred over in to this horse outfit, and we had a small section for trucks, all they did was haul hay and oats for these animals, that was all. So I got into this motor section and I - I drove a pickup a little while to haul laundry. And then I'd drive the larger trucks, and..I drove a ambulance a while, we had a motorized ambulance. I was real good about keeping stuff shined up. That was one reason I got this new ambulance, and I pulled duty at the hospital, twenty-four hours, once a month to go over there anytime they had anything happen. I had one man had shot his self-- officer. It was the worst deal I ever tried to load up to take in to the hospital. But we did that for whatever that they called us for twenty-four hours.

I: That officer was nearly telling the truth when he said he could get all the men he wanted for nothing. What was the pay for a buck private when you went into the army?

F: Twenty one natural dollars a month. And that didn't pay for ^{the} laundry. They took out a dollar and a half for laundry, and twenty five cents for the old soldiers' home, so all we could end up ^{going to} ~~going to~~ ^{?? drawing around} eighteen dollars, and we just couldn't hardly make it on that. And we could buy our ^{of} ~~booklets~~ show tickets, coupons, and..course we had to go buy all of our ^{articles} ~~toilet~~ ^{toilet} ~~toothpaste~~, shaving cream and all that good stuff out of that. And it took me, oh, two or three months to save up enough money to come back home. On the weekend, to see my sweetheart (laughs).

I: How and why did you get discharged from the Army Reserve, and why did that later seem to have been a bad idea?

F: Well, I'd ^{built that} ~~been there~~ three years at Fort Bragg. I did have some pretty good jobs there before I left. They always gave you something you like just before you get discharged. They put me in a supply room, ^{and} made a clerk out of me, and all this good stuff, and I was part-time operating in the theater too, helping on that. I'd pick up all the little odd jobs I could, and when I built my three years and got my honorable discharge, why, on the way home I enlisted in the Reserve. They said the Reserve, at that time we had a- the government paid our insurance, ten thousand dollars I think it was, and by joining this Reserve, they paid ~~off~~ ^{my} insurance, eight dollars a month, as long as I was in the Reserve. And I didn't have to report for anything like we do now in the National Guard, go two weeks and but that-if you wanted to ~~to~~ you could. I did make two or three different- I

went to Washington, D.C. I hadn't been there. With a signal outfit, and got to stay two weeks one time and got to see Washington real good. And I stayed in the Reserve 'til the war broke out, and they started calling the Reservists in. And they wrote me this nice letter and said if you're married or have children or anything, you might qualify for dependency discharge. So naturally, I had a good job, best one I ever had in my life, I guess, at Fort Bragg, not at Fort Bragg, but at Fontana Dam, the TVA. And I requested this discharge and sure enough, here come that nice honorable discharge, and it wasn't just a few weeks 'til my boss man came out there, and he said, "Moody," said, "I think I got you some greetings from the President of the United States," (laughs) and he did have. And I only had two weeks to sell a trailer and get my wife and everything moved back to Sylva. Anyway, I did that, and then I was drafted. I went off with the boys down to South Carolina, and took the exam and all that stuff again. And because I didn't have my serial number with me, they wouldn't take my old serial number that I had in field artillery, and I was expert gun. They gave me a new one and put me in ^{the} medics, of all things. I thought I'd go straight back into field artillery. So they put me in medics and sent me to Camp Barkley, Texas, and I had to go through basic training out there again.

I: And from Camp Barkley, you debarked for England. Tell about your trip over; how you just missed being a passenger on the Queen Mary

F: Okay, from Camp Barkley to the port of debarkation, I got a ten-day leave with the family. And I came home and stayed that six or eight days, whatever it was, most of it was on the road. And I had to report to -my dad took me to Asheville and put me on a train. I went to Shannon in Pennsylvania, and then Camp Shanks, New York. And of course we was a-drilling and a-working all the time for that. And they-they gave us khaki clothes, and we was going to go to-east. I mean to, well -yes over there where the fighting was ...and then at the last minute they took back our khaki clothes and gave us o.d. clothes, that we was going to Europe. So I got down to the port of embarkation, or debarkation, and they loaded up the big Queen Mary. She was a beauty. I didn't think I'd ever see a ship that big. And they stopped us, and they was twenty people they couldn't take. So they put us on a little old train and sent us to Boston, Massachusetts. And there we got on a LST 512, I saw it on t.v. not too long ago. And..we rode with the crew over there, it was in the winter time, real bad cold. We'd wake up in the morning, that old LST would be a-rocking and everything had iced over. You could see the sun a shining on that pretty ice and everything. But it was really rough, the crew got sick, and we stayed sick all the time. But it took us thirty-one days to get to Plymouth, England. We finally got there, we had to zigzag a lot to get away from the German torpedo, I mean submarines. We dropped depths a few times, but it never did get bombed out or nothing. But, anyway, they sent us then to a replacement depot in Kingstanding, England. That's a place where all the new men go and then they draw from that big pool of men whatever they need on the battlefield. And they would fall everybody out in the company street there of the morning and call out the number of men they wanted, and off they'd go, and we wouldn't know where they'd go or what outfit. But this particular morning they blew the whistle, and we went out, and they called out my name, "Moody." Said, "Pack all your stuff; you're shipping out." I said, "Okay," and turned everybody else loose. And I wondered what old

Frank done now. (laughs) So..put me down there and put me on this little old English train,* it looked like a toy to us, everything was so little in England. But it took me down to Teddington. And..I got off at Teddington, down there and wasn't that the narrowest wide place in the road, and a lieutenant came by in a jeep after while and wanted to know if I wanted to go out to base. I said, "I don't know where I'm going- to get some orders; I'm going to Shaef, S-H-A-E-F." And that was the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, we found out later. So he said, "Come on down and stay with us 'til we find out where you're supposed to go." So I went down there, stayed about a week, and thought, "Boy, this is the best place a man could be in the Army, in the Air Force, they just all laying around and having a good time, partying. They had dances and all that good stuff. But about dark, they'd ~~have a~~ draw of the strings on it, load up them planes and start rolling them out of the woods (laughs). They'd fly out over Germany and bomb Germany, and go on to Russia and come back and bomb again, and come back and they-- the reason they ^{all} having such a big deal, going out, they knew ^{soon as they weren't} might not be coming back and they'd always lose a few. And a lot of them come back shot up pretty bad. But out of the blue sky one day, he said, "I found out where to take you," says, "let's go." So he took me down to Bushy Park, that's right out of London. And that's where Eisenhower's headquarters was just formed and set up. It was what I called "tent city," you couldn't see anything from the air, but, boy, it was a huge complex once you got in there. And my orders were to report to Captain Hartley. I went in, saluted ^{and told him} ~~to him~~ who I was, and he said, "Well," said, "you're going to be a operating motion picture equipment and setting up P.A stuff for General Eisenhower." I ^{said} says, "Yes, sir." And..I had a time,.. we had some little RCA projectors that come from the States over there, and I found out right quick that they op- they run on 110 volts, and we had 220 over there. So I told them we had ~~to~~ had to have a transformer to transform the power down to 110. Then I found out that we had 50 cycle current over there, which was a lot slower than our 60 cycle, and instead of naturally talking, music and everything would d..r..a..g o..u..t on the thing, like the thing was about to stall down, so we had to take care of that, put faster gears in the projectors to speed them up. When I found out what we had to do, why we did it. And it was quite a while before I run a movie for General Eisenhower. But he said it would be military films all along, said, "there won't be no entertainment." "What they would do" is fly out ^{reconnaissance} ~~reconnaissance~~ planes over the war zone, and bring them back, and we had an army pictorial section, they would develop them. And it was my job to show them to the General's staff and make the plans for the next move. And I might add, that we didn't show any American casualties,* everything had to be censored and cut out, and we'd turn the rest of it over to the- to the services and show, that we was - propaganda films you might say- we were winning all the time, didn't lose anything.

I: You told me that you had worked as a projectionist at Fort Bragg, and it was probably a war film that you all showed there that got the assignment for you. Recall that event for us, that film you helped to show at Fort Bragg, and your audience for it.

F: That probably helped a lot on getting my M.O.S. number. I didn't even know what it was. But after I got through this basic training in Camp Barkley, Texas, they always reclassify you and see what else you've done. And I did operate the movie projectors a

lot at Fontana, we had a theater down there. I wasn't really hired for it, but I helped the fella that run it, cause I'd work in the day time and go up there and operate that. But I had helped run some movies at the regular theater there at Fort Bragg. And, I was assistant to one of the operators that run it when I was discharged.

I: I want you to tell about when President Roosevelt..(laughs)

F: Okay, President Roosevelt was down there to see one of the war movies one day, he -he-he visited all the big army posts, you know. And they brought that film with them, and gave it to the major, my boss man there at the theater, and wanted us to run it. And we got up there and it scared this major to death, cause he had the President of the United States in there, said, "Now, you fellas check this stuff real good." said, "nothing can happen." I said, "Okay, we'll do the best we can, but we can't keep the power from going off or the film from breaking, but we'll do our ^{very} best to make a good show out of it." So everything worked out real good, and it tickled the major to death, and the President was satisfied with it, I never did get to speak with him or anything, but course they always got all that security around him, we was there in that projection booth up there. But I still feel like that and a few other things landed me up with the job that they was needing a projectionist at that time, and I had three years previous service helped me some too, they didn't want a recruit in there showing for the General's staff and Eisenhower. And that...

I: General Eisenhower liked John Wayne, Will you enlarge on that statement?

F: Oh, yeah, my basic deal was to show these war films to Eisenhower and the staff. But our little section grew, and I got other operators, and we got to getting entertainment films once in a while, we'd show them. And we got to taking it, films, out in the boondocks I call it, where people were camping out, and I know I was running the last movie a lot of people seen, just before the invasion. They's a English ^{WAC} wife took me and my equipment up there just before they's leaving the beach there at England. And we ran a movie, and they moved out to the beach right after that.

I: Now, Eisenhower and John Wayne.

F: Oh, yeah, let me get across the English Channel first. (laughs) After the invasion why we had a Supreme Headquarters ^{forward echelon} ~~for~~ and I was on it all the time. And every time Ike would move, I'd move. And I thought by being close to a Four of Five Star General, that I'd never hear a gun fire. But I found out who they was after when I got into that. Cause we've had to train bombed out in front of us there in England and they'd send a jeep out ^{to get us} just... And when we started sending our equipment overseas, after they got the beach head established, why, I packed all my equipment, amplifier, projector and stuff. I was the first man-- they were trying to go ahead with the advanced party -that's ^{where} I got my three battle stars, I guess -the fella ~~said~~ behind me, some of them had been there longer than I had, but I left before they did. But anyway, like Nancy said, that all these big General's and people have aides decide everything that they want to do or see and I

could tell that Ike wasn't too happy with the entertainment films that he'd picked out after we started getting a few. So he come back and talked with me one time at the projector, I was putting the film up and everything. He said, "Sergeant Moody, ^{do} you ever get a western movie in?" I said, "Sir, we do." I said, "I got it in color John Wayne, Tall in the Saddle it's a brand new one, it just come in from the States." He said, "Well, after the troops have seen that," said, "we'll look at it." (laughs) And I called this colonel and told him when they got oh, passed around through the troops that I had this movie, he wanted to know what the name of it was, and I told him John Wayne, Tall in the Saddle. "Oh, he don't want to see no westerns." I said, "Well, he said he did." "Oh, well, okay." So we set up a little place out—a castle out there outside of Paris, and I ran this movie. Oh, Ike really liked it, oh, he was just going like a kid watching that horse riding and shooting. Cause he'd seen all the war he wanted to, all these old war films you know. But from that time on, we didn't have anything but good comedies and westerns for entertainment films.

I: Go back up to Britain again, take you back from France to Britain. I asked you about bombing in Britain, and you told when the Germans released the first V Bomb. What are your memories of it?

F: I was running a movie for General Eisenhower and Chief Air Marshall Tedder in a little dark dining room there in London. And we didn't hear ~~that~~ ^{but} that this was ~~a~~ ^{the} ~~big~~ ^{big} bomb — ~~but~~ that's the first one that came over. ^{But} That thing hit about three blocks from where we were, and we never heard no such a noise. The projector fell off the table, and film rolled around. And after everything quieted down, we walked down to see the crater ^{where} ~~where~~ that thing had hit. And it was still smoking, and they's pieces coiled up, stainless steel, I picked up one of them, still hot, and I still had it if I could find — I believe I gave it to ^{Dwight} ~~Clyde~~ Moses, he's a historical teacher. But, anyway, we found out then that old Hitler had some stuff that we didn't- hadn't seen before. So anytime one of those things would hit, it would tear up a city block. It was that powerful. And it was powered by gasoline, just run out of gasoline and fall ~~where~~ ^{where} ever they designated it to fall. And they started coming two or three of the day and started coming at night. You could see them with fire flying out of them at night. Anywhere they'd run out of gas and fall in London, it would tear up a city block. And I've seen places, driving by and seeing a big house or car sitting in front of it, and come back two or three hours after that and there wouldn't be nothing but a big hole in the ground, they's that powerful. The Air Forces got onto them real quick and they started shooting, trying ^{to} fight-- fire them and get them in the air before they got there over the Channel, and they got a lot of them. But the biggest thing that they got after was trying to find out what part of Germany they were coming from. And we had a terrible time there for a while. We'd sandbag around our tents and everything. But when they finally found out where they's coming from, they laid the eggs on that bombing still, and they slowed down.

I: Officer's ^{privileges} are always assured. What privilege did your Major long for that he never received, yet it was an ordinary thing, ~~can you~~ ^{to you}?

F: Yeah, this Major Hartley, which was my big boss, he was the boss of everything in-, save special service. All the activities, sports, and everything else. He wanted to meet Eisenhower the worst in the world. But he-he went as far one time - in the winter time to drive a jeep and wait on me, take my equipment into this place and run a movie, and come back out. But as far as I know, he never did get to speak to Ike, and Ike didn't speak to him. But Ike wasn't that far ahead of everybody, he was down to earth except some of the officers he had ^{to} be strict on.

I: You lead into my next question. There ^{are} stories you tell of General Eisenhower that make ^{us} ^{like him} ~~laugh~~. Why did you all go by boat, not plane, when Headquarters for the Supreme Command were moved to Paris? And you mentioned this but tell us again, what were his orders about who saw the movies first?

F: Well, first of all, when we ^{'s} shipping our equipment over the Channel, we sent it over by plane. But ~~of~~ all of Ike's Supreme Headquarter personnel had to go on a boat, LST just like the troops did. (emotional) He said he wanted everybody to walk ^{over} ~~on~~ the ground at Normandy Beach.

I: What were his orders about the movies?

F: Oh, yeah. He said to never cancel a movie to the troops for him, said wait 'til all the troops had seen a movie and then if it was any good to ^{him} (laughs) He really liked good comedies, too, as well as westerns. They was one film entitled Up in Mabel's Room that was a real funny comedy. I hadn't seen or heard tell of that movie since. But he really got a kick out of it.

I: Curtis wants to know how many movies you showed the General, over what period of time. Can you possibly estimate?

F: Oh, it was at least once or twice a week on the military film. And entertainment film, it may be once every two weeks where...

I: And that was over a period of?

F: Oh, months.

I: You were in Europe for twenty one months, about, so that would be the key.

F: He left a little before I did to come back to campaign for ^{the} ~~the~~ presidency, you know. And we didn't ^{have to} show much after the war was over. We turned them over to regular G.I. movies. But I burned I don't know how many piles of film that I couldn't show the troops cause they just wasn't anything good to look at. You know you can't win a war and ~~and~~ a fight on one side.

I: You mentioned Eisenhower leaving before you did. I think he shook your hand when he left, and you told him what?

F: Yeah, he called all of us in the room together there, before he went back to run for president. And said--thanked us all for the good work we'd done and this that and the other. I told him, I said, "I think I'm shaking hands with the next President of the United States." And he said, "Well, if I do make it," said, "if I can do anything for any of you people..." (laughs) So I thought of that when I got back home, but I never did want--get into that Washington race up there.

I: ABC, NBC, or CBS, ^{couldn't resist} putting this question to you, so I'm going to put it. What about Eisenhower and the woman who was perceived to be his mistress?

F: Okay, I knew her well. She was a good secretary, and she ^{cheated} showed him a lot. But they did have a few dances and parties for the General officers and ~~class~~ ^{class} has to have a little fun. But everybody thought, even back in the States, that because Aunt Mamie wasn't a-going over there that he was shacking up with her, we call it. (laughs) But I do know, in knowing both of them well, and taking care of her trailer and a lot of stuff, and when she died, on her death bed she told the people around the bed, she said, "I've always been accused of sleeping with Eisenhower and ruining his name, but," she said, "we never have been intimate or slept together, but," she said, "I would have if he would have asked me!" (laughs)

I: Tell about the Battle of the Bulge as viewed from Paris. You all were in Paris at the time.

[?]
F: Okay, our headquarters was in Paris. We was right next to the Versailles Palace--where I stayed. In a little old French Hotel. And when the Battle of the Bulge broke loose and everything started going bad for us up there. See, we just about slowed down because we thought we had it ~~worked~~ pretty well. But old Hitler thought "he got everything together and says, "fight to the last man." And course a lot of his people knew they'd already lost the war, but they didn't--but they couldn't disobey orders so they ^{couldn't} would go out there and throw you everything they had against--on that Battle of the Bulge, ^{up} it was really bloody battle, and it was a bad winter time, cold, snow. And they created what we called the Red Ball Express, to haul men ^{and} supplies and ^{ammunition} and it lasted hour after hour, two or three days. You couldn't cross the street in Paris hardly, hauling stuff up there. And the French thought they was losing the war again so they started pulling down their swastikas, and putting up--I mean pulling down their French flags and American flags and putting up Hitler's swastikas again. Now, I seen that, and I know it, ^{up} I brought one of them swastikas home with me. (laughs)

I: By the time your operation moved to Frankfurt, Germany, it had become a big one, I'm talking about your movie operation, you were ^{Chief of} ^{section} motion picture branch. Describe your duties, ^{how} many worked for you, and the film exchange and the pick-up at Heidelberg. Just the whole deal that was going on in Frankfurt.

F: Okay, first of all our runways were bombed out pretty bad in Frankfurt. We had a hard time ~~α~~ landing when I went up there. But about all the good planes would land in Heidelberg. That's when they started bringing all the entertainment films and stuff to Heidelberg, We'd have to drive a jeep down there to get them once a week. And by that time we'd moved into I.G. Farben building, which is the biggest building I guess in Frankfurt, it's a huge building. I had a picture, I was going to bring ~~it~~, I couldn't find it. But anyway, by that time I was manager of thirteen movie houses, and I had to provide operators and equipment and film. Course I had a lot of help. They was all good.

I: What were the difficulties in reopening those two rebuilt movie theaters in Frankfurt, and what was your scheme that you hit on to solve the problem?

F: Okay, these incendiary bombs had bombed the roof out, they's a leaking real bad. They's big movie houses. And ~~we~~ got that to going pretty good, so we decided we'd open up 35 millimeter movies, that was the big movies like we had. Up until now we's using these little portable projectors. And once we got those kindly where we could operate them why, I took my- two of the best operators I had, one's from San Jose, California, he was a business agent and everything out there. And he said, "Sir, I just can't operate this, I can't read a thing on it, don't know where the oil is," and said, "they won't tell me where the carbon is to make the arc lights." And they's just holding back everything." So I suggested to the -my Major, I said, "Why can't we just hire the Germans back, we have to feed them anyway and let them run the theater?" He said, "that's a good idea," we'll see if we can locate them, so we found the manager, owner both of them. Of course, I guess their husbands were prisoners of war or something, women was looking after it. It tickled them to death to hire the people back that they had. Operators and all, most of them was women operators, and they ~~was~~ ^{were} real good. So we hired all them back, and all I had to do then was see that they got the film and picked the film up. We run all kinds of good movies then. And I might add that these Germans that worked there was surprised to see that these concentration camps were going on right there around them. At least they didn't act like it, didn't - claim that they didn't know that these people was dying right around there like that. Now I tried to get on the good side of them, I 'd bring them donuts and coffee, I wasn't supposed to fraternize with-I's sorry for them, and I knew they's doing their job and hadn't fired no shots at me, so the more I could play up to them, the more I could get out of them, information like that.

I: Tell about how you all celebrated VE Day.

F: Well, we celebrate that VE Day just like we celebrate anything that we proud of. Well, we knew that it was ~~α~~ coming, so we had a lot of fireworks we'd shoot up in the air, everything we could shoot that wouldn't come back down and kill somebody, we let it loose. We had a real blowout there in Frankfurt and ~~Newark~~ ^{Olympic} games place, it was a huge place where they had all those track races and all that stuff.

I: Coming back to the states, you got demoted from the LST of your trip over, to an English fishing boat. Was the trip better or worse, and did you get home for Christmas?

F: Okay, I did- I was one of the first ones to get eligible to come back home due to points we earned by being in a war zone. We got to Camp Lucky Strike, that was one of the places where we was waiting for a way home. And I think I told you that this nice big ship sitting out there in the ocean, I thought, "Well, they're going to be good to us now, they're going to let us ride back in style, but I don't care about standing in line all day like I did on the Queen Mary." But I ^{didn't have} done anything to get on the way back home, so I missed it, it pulled on out and blowed its horn, we waved it goodbye, and they waved us goodbye. It got on out there quite a ways out in the ocean, hit a couple land mines, blowed the whole front end out of it. We didn't -we was glad we didn't get on that one. They saved most of the people with lifeboats. But then a little later on we was called and we got on this U, not USS, I said that, it's His Majesty John Cropper, it was a pretty good-sized ship, but it was a fish boat, and it didn't have any accomodations decent to live in, but we just glad to get inside of it anyway; get started back home. But anyway, instead of sleeping on beds, we had hammocks, swing back and forth for thirty days, coming back home. And I'll not tell about all these garbage cans that fell over and all that shush that hit the walls. But anyway, we's a hoping to get home for Christmas, it's in December. And we got to where we could see the land, we's tickled to death to see that. We landed at Norfolk, Virginia. And that little small crowd of us, they wasn't no band to meet us, and no bugle, no flag waving, all that stuff, just like we hadn't been gone. But they did put on a real good steak dinner that night. We spent the night, and then we shipped on to Fort Bragg the next day for, waiting discharge.

I: Did you get home for Christmas?

F: Nope. (laughs) Lot of them took off. We got to Fort Bragg in time to get home, but a lot of them took off and went on home anyway, so they'd be home for Christmas. But I knew I didn't want to get in trouble, so I ^{seen} "I'll just take another day or two." But I got home the day after Christmas.

I: By this time, being a soldier had sort of become a habit with you. So you stood over twenty more years in the 210th Military Police Company, North Carolina National Guard. How did that come about?

F: Well, when I got back home this time, I thought I'd be through with the military. I didn't plan to making no career out of it. I got back home and stayed out of the military, I guess two years, and then they wanted to put a National Guard unit in my hometown, Jackson County, that would be the most Western unit in the state. They had one in Waynesville, twenty miles east of there. And they started trying to get up people that would join it. And Woody Hampton, I guess you knew, he was our first company commander there. And they said they'd give us our rank back and everything if we'd come back and get organized, get better organized. I said, "Well, I'm through with the military, but I'll help you get an Armory around here somewhere." At that time we didn't

have anywhere to meet except the community building over there, and it was pretty crowded. A lot of people there then. So we met there at the community building, got better organized and was there meeting, the National Guard, for a long time, I guess over a year or two years. Before we finally started the Armory out there. But I told them to begin with, I said, "When you get the Armory going," I said, "I'll be done." And after they got the Armory okay and everything, got the money and everything, got the grading done, why they built it within a mile of my home, so I just kept staying on and on, and I'd just go for one year at a time. I thought I'd quit everytime. We started out as infantry, and I didn't want ^{inf}infantry. But we got in two or three different things over there, we got inf-but they changed it to Military Police at the last. And when I finally got in time to retire, I threw in the towel.

I: But the joke was on you. After thirty-one years of service, you applied for retirement pay, and in return you got a "Dear Mr. Moody" letter with this statement: "an extensive search has failed to locate the military ^{personal} records necessary to complete action on your request." What happened?

F: (laughs) Oh, well, my unit clerk out there told me, said, "Frank," said, "you're just going to have to come up with some proof that you've been in the Army." I said, "Well, I've got it." I had every discharge that I had, still got them. About a dozen of them. In the National Guard, I'd get one every two or three years and then start another one. But I ^{have} had the first one I got at Fort Bragg, it's pretty yellow now, but you can still read it. But if I hadn't a-had all that, I wouldn't have got a dime. I wouldn't have ever been recognized, I don't think, because they had a huge fire out in St. Louis, and it burned the building up and all the records of fellas my age. But after I sent all that in, why here come back my nice big thing. (laughs)

I: You had to prove not only that you had been in service, but also that you'd come back alive. Mark Twain once said, "The report of my death has been greatly exaggerated." And that was true about you. How did you end up dead? At least in the newspapers.

F: Yeah, I was back home, and I was a-working for Dayco over in Waynesville, and I usually ate lunch there at Clyde's Restaurant. And this one time this lady brought my dinner out there and brought a picture out there of me, said I ~~had been~~ killed in action in the invasion. She said, "You're the first dead man I've ever served a meal to." But what had really happened, James Moody from Haywood County had gotten killed in the invasion, and they got my picture over his obituary for some reason. And of course I took that home and showed it to my wife. I said, "you're living with a dead man." (laughs)

I: You have a certificate signed by Dwight D. Eisenhower, and you say you ^{were} waw there when he signed it. It says in part.. "technician 4th grade Moody distinguished himself by outstanding initiative and devotion to duty." You were asked to perform one last duty for Eisenhower when you received a call from the Pentagon to attend his funeral. Were you able to go?

F: *Yeah, I was working at Dayco then, and they'd called my home and my wife told them I was over in--working. And they called me there, and said, "you've been requested to attend Eisenhower's funeral." And I said, "When is it?" He said, "It's tomorrow afternoon." I said, "I can't make it." He said, "Yes, you can. I can tell you which plane to catch out of Asheville," we'll have a car waiting on you, JFK Airport. We got a seat in the church for you." I said, "Well, I'll have to go back home and check with my wife. * Ask her for a favor right there." I went back home, and you know these women, they've got to have their hair fixed and all this stuff. She said, "I can't go, no way." And I didn't really want to go myself, so he called me back that night, I told him to call me back later on. I told him I just declined, but I wish a thousand times I had a-gone on.*

I: Will you try to evaluate how the Army and World War II shaped your life, either for the good or for the bad?

F: *Well, for the good, it's taught me how to take care of myself. I've tried to eat well and sleep enough, and eat the right food, and take a lot of exercise, still do, I walk a mile or more every day. And that's the good part of it. And the bad part is all the things that I wish I'd done that I didn't do. Stayed at home more with my wife and kids and all this stuff. I spent a lot of good weekends out training when I should have been there with them I guess.*

I: Frank, we thank you for sharing your experiences with us, ^a And the many others who in the future will view this tape.

F: *We thank you.*

{Fade to music,}

Various photos, letters, citations, newspaper clippings.