

ORAL MEMOIRS

OF

J. W. YOUNG

An interview conducted on

May 17, 2016

Interviewer: Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai

Angelo State University

West Texas Collection

“War Stories: West Texans and the Experience of War, World War I to the Present”

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WONGSRICHANALAI: What's your name?

YOUNG: OK. I go by J.W. Young. James Willard Young is . . . But I, I go by J.W. Young.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Yes, sir. And . . . And where were you born and where are you from?

YOUNG: OK, I was born in . . . outside of Harlingen in South Texas.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: And I lived down in the town of Primera or [unclear]. The first stop on the railroad.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Oh, OK.

YOUNG: On the Southern Pacific.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: And it was a vegetable growing area.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: And I went to school there until I was a senior. Then they sent me to Harlingen from Primera. And my last year I graduated from Harlingen High School.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK. What year was that?

YOUNG: That was in '49. The year '49 and '50 I think. And . . . And then I was farming with my dad. And I had already had my own tractor and equipment. When I turned 19 I joined the Navy. And that was in '51, January of '51.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you have any siblings?

YOUNG: I wasn't married at that time.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right. But did you have any brothers and sisters?

YOUNG: Yeah, I had one sister—older sister—and two brothers, two younger brothers.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: And they served in the Air Force.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK. But growing up did you . . . I mean how much do you remember about WWII?

YOUNG: The air base in Harlingen . . . My dad and uncle got the contract to clean all of the vegetation off of the base before they started building the air base. And they mowed and raked and burnt everything. Even the open field that didn't have nothing in it, they had to run . . . to rake it all. And then as the base was built, my uncle worked as a carpenter. But my dad was farming . . . was farming and our house was about 6 miles from the airfield, lined up with one of the runways. So, the B-17s and the B-24s would come in and line up over our house to . . . when they were coming in after gunnery practice to land. And they had a lot of T-6s, trainers in formation. Sometimes we'd see P-38s. We would find the . . . some ammunition and empty shell cases in the field where they were cleaning the airplane out before they land. And . . . And so we . . . We built model airplanes and all. And as Boy Scouts participated in scrap drives to . . . to get . . . And we bought, in school . . . We bought saving stamps. You know, like a savings bond. And I think that \$17 was the smallest bond they sold. It was \$25 when it matured. And I can remember that. And in another time at JV Day, when the war was over with, we said, "Let's go to Harlingen to see if there's any celebration going on." And, about 2 miles outside of Harlingen, we hit a mule and busted our windshield on the car. And, so, we turned around and went back home. So, we don't know if there was any celebration going on or not at that time. And . . . And then we . . . We . . . As kids, we would choose up sides and go into the pasture where we had brush and trees and we would have our own wars. You know, it would be one of them be the enemy and then the other. And that was Sunday afternoon pastime. So, we . . . We grew most of our own vegetables. And so the only thing that was scarce was gas. And tractor tires for the tractors. If . . . If you had steel wheels available and you had a flat tire on your rubber tires, they wouldn't give you a . . . a form to fill out to get a new tire. Because you had the steel wheels. So, you had to put the steel wheels on to use and, at the end of the war, the warehouses was plum full of tires. And I remember that because it was hard to drive a tractor with the steel wheels for the front. And I remember that. And I was driving at about 8 years old. I was driving F-12 Farmall and plowing fields by myself when I was 8.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Wow, wow.

YOUNG: And on the farm, we all worked.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So this . . . This is South Texas? You grew up in South Texas?

YOUNG: This is South Texas, yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK. What region are we in now would you say? Uvalde.

YOUNG: This is Hill Country.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Oh, this is Hill Country, OK.

YOUNG: I mean, right north of here is where all . . . Well, between here and San Angelo. And Robert Lee. Do you know where Robert Lee is?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Yes, sir.

YOUNG: I got a neighbor that worked in the gas plant at Robert Lee. And . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK. OK. So, why did you join the Navy?

YOUNG: I did not want to be drafted.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: So, I decided I'd rather spend 4 years in the Navy than take a chance on what I would do if I was drafted. And my, my cousins and my uncle, a lot of them joined in '38 and '39, before the war broke out. And my best man at my wedding later on was a tank commander in Europe at the end of the war. And he wound up with a Purple Heart, but we think it was from a car wreck. But he . . . But he would tell us these stories that when Patton was with the Battle of the Bulge, they put all of his 50 or 60 tanks on a railroad on flat cars. And every night they moved to a different location. And the Germans did not know how many tanks that we had in reserve. And said all the trouble was every train had one or two of the wheels that was a little flat on one side. So, it'd go \*bump bump\* all night. And . . . But . . . And then he wound up in Czechoslovakia at the end of the war. He was . . . That's where he was with the occupation forces. But I really figured that I'd have a better career. And I wanted to go in the Seabees. Construction. Because I was driving caterpillars and stuff on the farm. And I wanted to get in the Seabees and when I got out of boot camp, I went to San Diego for training. They . . . The boot camp was scheduled for 16 weeks. They kicked us out after 9 weeks and sent us all . . . put us all on the sea duty on, on ships. Now, they offered schools to us if we wanted to go be a medic. But we knew that if you go be a medic, they'd transfer you to the Marines and you'd be a Marine, and . . . But being able to stay on one ship for my whole term formed a, a pretty good family. And . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: Well, why did they cut the training short?

YOUNG: They needed . . . They needed people.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: And . . . and . . . And they had so many people volunteering to get in the Navy, they didn't have places to put them at the boot camp. And . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: Now, you said that your . . . you had uncles and cousins who joined.

YOUNG: Yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Before WWII. What branches did they serve in?

YOUNG: One of them, my uncle that came out a senior master sergeant, he joined the . . . just joined the Army but he wound up in Army Air Corps. It wasn't the Air Force then. It was the Army Air Corps. And he was with a team of 12 mechanics that adjusted the bombsights in the bombers and the automatic pilots that they had. And they . . . They moved from all over, this

team of 12. And . . . And, at first, they put stamps . . . They had to put stamps on their mail. Well, we steamed off the stamp and that's where they was. You know he told us where he was. But he wasn't married, and he'd tell us where he was by putting it underneath the stamp. And then they had it where you just put "Free" on there and you didn't have to put stamps on your military mail. And so then I don't know what he did from then. But sometimes he'd be in the Aleutian Islands and sometimes in Panama, you know in . . . in . . . And he retired after 20 years in the Air Force as a senior master sergeant. And he's already passed on. He did get married after he was . . . after the war was over. And so . . . But . . . And my best man at my wedding, he was in the tank corps. And my mother raised him and his sisters more or less. Because his daddy died early and his mother worked. And we lived in the country and they were . . . I remember them eating our evening meal with us a whole lot of the time. And, and one of his sisters is still alive. She's in her 90s, but she's still alive. So . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: So . . . But, with all of this, it doesn't seem like your family had a connection to the Navy. So, why did you join the Navy?

YOUNG: Like I said, I didn't think I wanted to sleep in a wet foxhole.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Oh, OK. Fair enough.

YOUNG: That was . . . There was a group of twelve of us that was in . . . got out of high school. And we ran around together. And we all went to the Navy recruitment station and I was the only one they picked. And that . . . That was probably the main reason we all decided that we would go join the Navy and we had bad tales about the Air Force, the Army Air Force. Because the . . . Most of them were training in San Antonio and, at that time, there was a wet year like it is now. And . . . And they were all sleeping in tents. And the ground had water in the tents. We heard stories from the older ones that was going through training and we all decided we were gonna join the Navy. And . . . And I was the only one they took out of the twelve.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right.

YOUNG: And so I don't know why they took me. But I went in and . . . and we got out of boot camp and after nine weeks . . . nine weeks they sent us to Treasure Island for . . . to go aboard the . . . the *Yancey*. The AKA-93. And it's made with the same blueprint as *Uvalde*, the 88, was made from.

WONGSRICHANALAI: What class ship was it?

YOUNG: AKA . . . Attack Auxiliary . . . Cargo auxiliary. Attack Cargo Auxiliary. And they were made in 1943. They built from 88 to 124 number for invasion of Japan. And we had more anti-aircraft guns and . . . and heavier guns for transport. Our job was to land troops on the beach with our landing craft and supplies. And the *Yancey* . . . I don't know about the *Uvalde*, but the *Yancey* was at Okinawa, on the invasion of Okinawa. And they got their cargo unloaded on the beach in a day and a half. And they evacuated all the wounded they could and went back to Manila to a hospital facilities in the Philippines. And that was the last action that they saw in World War II. Of course, I met some of the people that served on the . . . But they've all passed

on now from our reunions. And that was good to know people that was on it all the way through, you know, World War II. And then they went to the South Pole under the expedition with Admiral Byrd. And, in October '47 National Geographic . . . and got about half of the Geographic with the story of the expedition down there with pictures of the *Yancey* and the other ships that went. And the *Yancey* carried the dogs and we had a carpenter in Corpus Christi that was on the ship at that time that took care of the dogs. And he was a Hispanic guy. And he said it was cold. Being from South Texas, it was . . . It was cold. And then I . . . Everything started to be routine on the trips over. Three weeks in the States, sixteen days going over, about three weeks of supplying the fleet no matter . . . off the coast of Korea or . . . One time we went up the Inchon River. And then we brought back shot up airplanes. Most of them was Corsairs that they were using over there at the early part of the war. And we brought back the extra torpedo warheads that they had stored at Pearl Harbor. We made one side trip and picked up all of the explosives, the warheads, and brought them back to the ammunition at . . . on the Sacramento River to be recycled, I guess. But that was . . . That was a rough trip back, I remember too. And all the explosives we were carrying. But . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, what year did you join the *Yancey*?

YOUNG: I went on it in March of '51.

WONGSRICHANALAI: March '51.

YOUNG: And I got off of it in October, about October 25 in '54.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: Cause the ship was leaving and they didn't want us flying back from Japan. That's when the seventy-five of us got off at one time.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right.

YOUNG: And my primary. . . I wanted . . . Like I said, they didn't put me in the Seabees. And then I wanted to be on a boat crew on a LCM boat crew. And I was working on one for about a week, and that was a good job. And then they . . . They moved me to the . . . from the stern of the ship . . . from second division to first division. And my cleaning station was on the forecastle, right on the bow. And with 75-100 extra people on the ship, the one barber could not pay much attention to the new guys. He was only cutting hair for the old guys. And so we got to Japan after sixteen days leaving Oakland.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, this was still in '51?

YOUNG: '51

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: I bought me some clippers, hand clippers, and I went into the business of cutting hair at night. And . . . And only charging 50 cents a haircut. And the supply officer came down below deck one night where I had my business set up and he said, "I think we ought to let you help out the barber." So, I cut hair for about a week in a closet. And . . . But my cleaning station on the ship, nobody was assigned to take care of it but me. And here they had me in this room cutting hair. So, the petty officer told me to report the next day to a working party down in the cargo holds. Not . . . Not go to the barber shop. He said, "You're my man, not the supply division man." And so about 10 o'clock, or maybe a little sooner, on the loudspeaker they was looking for me. Wanted me to get to the barbershop. And he said, "Oh, no. You're on this working party today." And by noon I was transferred to the supply division as a ship service striker or, you know, to be a ship service personnel. And we get back to the . . . the States. The barber on the next trip, he didn't make the ship. So, I had . . . They put me in the barbershop, and I made second class petty officer in 2 years. And that was my primary job. But at general quarters, we had all different assignments on guns or . . . And the first 2 years, when we was in Japan or at sea, we had a lot of time we spent manning the guns. Every time the North Koreans would hit south with the aircraft, sometimes it'd be 2 or 3 hours, we'd be on the . . . standing by in case they got as far as we were. And so every, every sailor on the ship had a primary job and a secondary job under different conditions. And . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: How . . . How many crew members on a ship?

YOUNG: We had about 300 to start with but around 200 normal. We . . . Now, if we had all of the landing craft, we would have a lot. Maybe up to 400.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Wow.

YOUNG: If we had crews for that. But we were taking supplies over and getting back, bringing back stuff and . . . But it was sixteen days going over, usually three weeks over there, maybe one week of loading stuff to come back, and fourteen days to come back because we went on the Japanese current. Two days shorter. And we'd do the same thing over and over. And while we were over there, that was our—in the war zone—that was counting towards our time to qualify for the Korean Medal. And . . . But even southern Japan and all of China Sea and all was in the war zone at that, at that time.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right.

YOUNG: And so they . . . They said that you needed at least 60 days in the . . . in the war zone to be qualified. You know, to . . . But we had a lot of . . . a lot more time than that. I had a total of 29 months in the . . . of sea duty. A total of 29 months. In the 4 years, 4 months of leave time and, and then 2 months of boot camp, and the time that the ships were in dry dock wasn't sea duty. So . . . And that's the reason that . . . But I had a total of 29 months of actually at sea duty. And it . . . You got used to the routine, you know. I had a month and a half of . . . of shore patrol duty on the base in Sasebo, Japan on temp . . . temporary duty with the military police for six weeks. And we worked 24 on and 24 off. And, and that's the only time, besides boot camp, that I stepped in a barracks. Well, they were quonset huts. And, and we ate real good because we were served . . . We went and sat down in the mess hall, and we were served our meals. We didn't



have to stand in line and all that while I was over there for the six weeks. But we . . . Our biggest job . . . The Japanese people was no problem. Our biggest job was the servicemen getting drunk when they come ashore. And being a barber, I didn't stand no watches on the ship. So, once a week I caught shore patrol if we was in port. If we was in San Francisco or if we was in Oakland. I caught extra duty one night a week as going on shore patrol. And . . . And they're like taking us to a police station and assigning us so many blocks to patrol. And usually around 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, they'd come and dismiss us so we could go back to the . . . to the ship. Sometimes we . . . In Oakland, I'd go home for a couple hours after I got married. I'd go home for a couple hours as long as I was back at the ship at 8 o'clock muster. And one special, I guess . . . One special thing that occurs if you're the only barber on the ship, the captain comes down and calmly relaxes while they're getting their hair cut. And he'd tell me that, that "I like to come down here. That way there's no restriction on me talking to a barber." So, he would tell me some of his problems with some of the other officers and . . . and "I need to do this What do you recommend?" And . . . And I said, "Well, there's ways." One of his problems is he wanted to be aboard ship but he wanted the executive officer to take command of the ship to see if he could handle it. But the only way he could do that was if he was off the ship. So, I told him, I said "Well, instead of you coming down here to get a haircut, if the ship is gonna be moved from one berth to another one or go across the bay to another base," I said, "Let me know and, and I'll be giving you a hair cut in your off . . . in your cabin." So he said, "Let me . . . let me think." So he thought about it and he came back and sent me word one day. Said, "I need a hair cut at 2:00." And I went up to his cabin and he sat down in his chair. And it was low. It was a bad place to cut hair. And I put the stuff around his neck and all and there was a knock on the cabin door. He said, "Come in." And it was the executive officer. He said "Sir," he says "The pilot is here to move the ship from Treasure Island," which is a receiving station, "over to the supply depot." And he said, "I'm busy right now. Why don't you go ahead and take command and move it over." And so he said, "Yes, sir." So, he leaves, shuts the hatch, and the captain gets up, and we stand for about 3 hours looking out the porthole watching all the movements and all. And, of course, I had a list of people who needed a haircut but I couldn't leave. I couldn't leave the captain's deal. And . . . But he, he told me, he says, "As long as . . ." Cutting hair on a ship for 4 years is unusual for one barber, you know, to be there that long. And he would say, "As long as you keep the hair where it'd pass inspection, there's no need for you to stay on board the . . . the ship unless you got a special duty when you're in the States." And that was a . . . a sore place with some of the officers because in order to have special liberty, you had to fill out a form. And the . . . And it had about four places for your petty officer to sign, the section officer, division officer, and then the executive officer. And we'd get a new man, you know, a new officer. Well, it would go up to him, and after one or two special liberties, he'd disapprove it. He said, "You're going on the beach too much." And that was when my wife had an apartment there in Oakland. So, it came back to me one day with his disapproval. And I told the guy that was right over me, "I want to go all the way to the executive officer." And so he took it back and said, "You requested to go all the way to the executive officer." The executive officer said "OK." And, man, here comes this guy down here and says, "I never want you to put in another special request for nothing because you made me look bad." I said, "Well, you and the captain better get you heads together." I said, "He gave me liberty all the time. While we's in the States." "Oh, OK." I never . . . I never heard anything more back. But I did have to pull shore patrol and all during that time. But . . . And there in the trip . . . We took a trip to the Philippines from Japan. And we were restricted to four square blocks on account of the communist guerrillas that was there at Subic

Bay. And . . . And all they had there was domino parlors there in the Philippines. And, so, we go and talk to the recreation officer and say, "You want to go with us this afternoon for a swimming party out to one of the islands?" So, we got a sack lunch from the cook and everybody got two cans of beer. And I didn't drink, so I got two cans if somebody else is gonna drink. And we get some of the landing crafts, we go find us a beach on a little island and have a swimming party and, and killed an afternoon, a Sunday afternoon, you know. And . . . And that was an enjoyable time. And . . . And our captain, if we were in a position, anchored out that there's good fishing around the island someplace, he'd pass the word that the fishing boat was leaving in fifteen minutes and anybody that liked to fish, grab their fishing poles. And we'd get in there and he's one of the guys at that point. The only trouble is if you didn't want the fish, he took all the fish. But if you wanted to clean it and let the cook cook it for you, that was OK. But you didn't throw nothing back in. He . . . That way he didn't have to buy food. He had a lot of fish and didn't have to. Because officers get an allowance for their food. And . . . And that . . . That would take care of some of the . . . The captain would get an allowance for his food. And, so, that would help him on his allowance.

WONGSRICHANALAI: What kinds of fish would you catch?

YOUNG: We caught, off of San Diego, there were yellow tails. And, and we . . . We caught all kinds of groupers? Groupers. And of course once in a while, we'd catch a shark. But we'd fish the hemp beds off of the islands off of San Diego. And there's also . . . We had good fishing sometimes in Japan. But in order to catch the fish, we had to get out from the bay. We had to get out in the clear water because, you know, all their sewers come down the creeks over there. Ones that they don't put in the hunting buckets. And you ask them where to go during a hurr . . . during a typhoon, they said, "Find a empty hunting bucket up high on the side of the mountain." They said, "Get, get down in that. That's a safe place." But . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you serve with the same captain for your 4-year tour?

YOUNG: No, we had about . . . For about 2½ years, we had the same captain. But the rest of the time we had a captain just one trip at a time. What they were doing, they were getting their sea duty in for three months to make it look good on their record. And so we changed captains. The captain we had when I went aboard made admiral. And he was an engineer. And he . . . He inspected ships for repair. And we saw him a lot around the Navy yards. And he'd have a pair of coveralls under his arm. And once in a while, they'd ring a bell if an admiral come aboard the ship. We'd hear the bell being rung and it wouldn't be fifteen seconds, he would step into the laundry and shut the door. And if we was in there working, he'd tell . . . He'd say "How y'all doing now?" And he'd put on his coveralls. And then he'd go out across the patch way down into the engine room. Well, everybody was looking to where he went and what he was doing. He said, "This was my ship. My last ship I was commander of, you know." He said, "I just like to come back and see if they're taking care of her." And he would have a cup of coffee with the boys in the laundry. And . . . But this was after he wasn't the commanding officer no more, you know. But this . . . This one that we had for three or four years, we had one pin-up picture on the back of the door going into the laundry. And on duty nights and a lot of times, if the laundry was running behind, everybody would pitch in and work some shifts. Even if you was the barber, would be helping down there in the laundry. And every time he inspected, he would pull the

door, look at the girl and, and then open the door up again, you know. But all the other pictures he saw, he'd rip them off the . . . the locker or wherever. But that was a clean pin up picture and he never . . . He never . . . Nobody ever did have us take it down.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So who was the captain who you were talking about cutting his hair?

YOUNG: Captain Kusebach.

WONGSRICHANALAI: How do you spell that?

YOUNG: I have no idea.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: It . . . It's probably on some of my papers.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: But . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: How long was he captain?

YOUNG: He was there about 2½ years.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: And he . . . He was a good seaman. During the typhoon, I've seen him bring a ship in and maneuver it around without tugboats and get it up to the dock. And . . . And there'd be some pictures in there of the warehouse in Sasebo. It says, "The best fighting men in the world passes through here." Or something. That was an Army port. I mean, that one building belonged to the Army. And I'd see him come in there with a couple landing craft, pushing, put the ship up against the dock. And it was like coming through this opening here. You had a dock there and a dock there and dock over here. And he'd bring it in there and turn that ship around. And without tug boats. And he would not let the Japanese tug boats that burnt coal get close to us. Because that soot from . . . would get all over the ship and he was protecting the workers. And the Navy had some diesel tugs and that was OK. And . . . But otherwise, he wouldn't let those . . . And they were . . . They'd send out two coal-burning tugs. He'd get on the microphone and tell them "You keep your distance out there." But we went through two or three bad typhoons over there. And . . . And two of them was at sea. And that was the best place to be but we did one tied up to that dock. And there was a lot of sheet metal and debris, you know, flying off of the buildings. But as far as I know we never had no damage from the typhoons. But you never seen it rain as hard in Tokyo Bay one day. You couldn't . . . You couldn't see nothing. I mean if you're standing at the bridge, you couldn't see the 200 feet to the bow. It was raining so, so hard. And big, big drops of water. And that day we left Tokyo Bay and went to sea for a week. And we . . . I think we stayed in the typhoon the whole week. And we had two guys on the base that didn't get back to the ship. They said they never got no wind in the harbor. But we had aircraft carriers and

everything else out there during that time. And . . . But being auxiliary type ship, we was around carriers, battle ships, hospital ships all kinds of supplies.

WONGSRICHANALAI: When did you first hear about the Korean conflict?

YOUNG: I guess I was in high school.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: You know, I mean . . . I know that we started talking about it while we were still in high school. I don't know when the draft started back up or was it still going on. I don't know. I had two of my cousins that went to school with me. They were a little older. Both of them went to A&M. And, when they graduated, they sent them in the Army. Both of them went to Korea and did one year of duty. And that was in that period between World War II and Korea. And they . . . The older one, as soon as he got over there, he wrote a letter to his dad and told him to send his shotgun to him because the shotguns they had over there was riot guns and said they weren't any good to shoot pheasants. And there was a lot of peasants in the country. And, and I don't know if he ever got his gun over there or not. But . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: Well, I mean . . . So, what did you understand about the conflict? Like why . . . Did you understand why the United States was involved?

YOUNG: Because we had MacArthur over there and . . . and he had conflicts in his blood. And at the time we were there and Truman wouldn't let him bomb the bridges between North Korea and China whenever the Chinese started coming across. We thought that Truman was doing the wrong thing. But now looking at it, we wasn't capable at that time because we downgraded our services so much. We wasn't ready to have a war with China. And so he was looking at the long term. We was looking at the short term. Of course, the guys getting shot over there and freezing to death in the mountains was different . . . would have a different aspect of what to do. And . . . But . . . But I believe in another term if MacArthur had been able to stop the Chinese from . . . and North Korea, they would be consolidated as one country now. And I don't think Vietnam would have happened. If . . . If they saw that we meant to get in there and . . . and get to see to the end of the conflict. Because they're still a mess over there.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, what did you think the United States's role in the world was? What was America supposed to be?

YOUNG: I . . . I think that they always think that they have to be granddaddy. They have to take care of every little problem. I mean, because a lot . . . It seems like here, lately we're . . . We're just trying to solve all these other peoples' problems. But the problems have been there for so long that you . . . You can't . . . Some of them will never be solved. Like Israel and . . . and that problems there. I . . . I don't know on ISIS toady. Are we gonna have to kill every one of them? Or are they gonna realize that they're killing their own people if they don't believe exactly what they believe. And . . . But I've been . . . I've been a Christian all my life, I guess. And if you . . . From the beginning, in the Bible, there's been conflict and . . . and Moses, when they came back out of the wilderness, they killed a lot of people then. Because they wanted, they wanted to take

over their country. And I . . . I don't know if that is right or wrong. But it seems like that the countries in South America, the big countries—Argentina, Brazil—they kinda take care of their own problems but in Honduras or some of the other—Ecuador—seems like there's still a lot of dissension between the natives and wanting to take over. We . . . We had a thing with Ecuador—the company I was working for after I got out of the service. We built tennis courts and running tracks. We did it for Saudi Arabia, all of the people over there in the Far East, and we'd ship everything down there to Ecuador. We's finding to go down there and do a job. They turned the government upside down. Of course, we didn't send nothing unless it was paid for here first. We learned that. And with little profit. We don't know what happened to all of that stuff but when we take stuff over to Saudi Arabia and all, they did not want new S10 pickups. They wanted used, everything used. And of course none of it was gonna come back, but they didn't want brand new stuff. They wanted . . . They wanted all the equipment used. And just like China building that big dam, they bought all . . . all of the used equipment in South Texas. I know in South Texas because I was working on a Coast Guard station across the channel. When the ships would come in, they had a ramp on the back that would lay down just like this on the dock and take them 24 hours to get all the . . . the backhoes and rotators and everything on that ship. Of course, the driver would get out, they would spray it with chemicals, then they would drive it. Killing all the bugs before it went aboard the ship. And we could see them right across the ship channel in Corpus watching that. So, same thing, you know. The . . . But I don't know. I don't have the answers.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right.

YOUNG: Myself, this election . . . I was always raised a Democrat. And . . . And I can see both sides but people doesn't have any morals anymore, you know. You don't know. They'll tell you one thing one day, and then the next day something else. And so . . . But let's get back to . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: Well, but as a young man, did you . . . Did you think the United States was correct in intervening in Korea? Did you believe in the mission?

YOUNG: No, because they went in with the United Nations and was part of that.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right.

YOUNG: So, they had to fulfill their obligations. Now, they more or less took over. There . . . There's a lot of countries want to be involved in the United Nations but they don't want to carry their own weight. And . . . And I can see that, you know. But . . . But on . . . We haven't said anything about what I've done after . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right, well let me . . . Let me ask you a couple more questions. So, did you ever interact with any Koreans?

YOUNG: Actually, not, not in . . . in Korea itself.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: But at the receiving station there in Sasebo.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK. In Japan, right?

YOUNG: In Japan. They had a lot of Korean soldiers and stuff that was on liberty and all. And that's the only time that . . . I had a cousin that was master at arms on the receiving ship. And it was just a hotel for transit, you know. All kinds. They would try to work them a little bit in the mornings, then give them liberty cards to go to town in the afternoon. And . . . And he . . . He . . . He dealt with a lot. But we dealt with a few on the streets. But I didn't. We never had any that was drunk or stuff like the American soldiers and sailors.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Well, did the Japanese and the Koreans you met, were they grateful for the United States being involved?

YOUNG: I can't . . . I can't say that. I have met . . . I've been to Holland, and I met . . . There was a lot of Korean visitors over there that talked a little English. And I . . . I talked to them and I believe that some of them appreciated what we done. Because they would take their time to . . . I would say "Are you from the North or the South?" "Oh, we're from the South." And . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK, you mentioned earlier, you were talking about the food you ate in Sasebo. The food, the cuisine. Do you remember any good food you had?

YOUNG: See, every restaurant that we, that we could legally eat at had a red "A" on a sign outside the door.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: Well, most of it, if they had . . . They were trying to serve American food. You know, was trying. But there was a few restaurants, especially the ones that was out of town up on the hills a little bit, you go up there. No sign, no nothing, you know, and we, we would go up there and eat and the noodles and the other . . . But we don't know what kind of meat we was eating. But it was . . . We know that it wasn't dog or cat because there was no dogs and cats in southern Japan. But here we . . . Only time that we would get away from the main corps, if we got tired of all the noise and stuff that was going on, we'd pick out a trail and we'd come up to a village. Of course, they don't speak English, we didn't . . . But we couldn't drink the water, so we had to drink their green beer. Their . . . It wasn't Sake, it was beer. It came in a great big bottle but I . . . I didn't drink but you could quench your thirst with a little bit of that, and it didn't give you the runs or nothing, you know. So . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: Why couldn't you drink the water?

YOUNG: Well, they didn't have no purification system up in the hills. And now the water that was served in the restaurants in town, we never had no trouble with it . . . with that. But, of course, you go to a village away from the main stream and you have the community bath in the middle of the village, and we . . . And, and they didn't think nothing of it. They'd come up and pull off their clothes and jump in there. And, of course, if we . . . if we were out on one of the

islands, we did the same thing, we . . . You know. But, the people, they were all friendly, you know. The emperor must have really . . . They believed him when he said that was it. And nowadays it's not like that, you know. So, I can give that much credit to them that we didn't have any trouble with them. And I actually had about 12 months that I qualified for Japanese occupation before they gave their independence back while I was over there.

WONGSRICHANALAI: How did your service affect your family at home? Were people worried about you, you family members?

YOUNG: My dad missed me because I wasn't helping him on the farm. My wife, we got married after I'd been in the service one year. I was courting with her in high school. We got married on my first leave. I'd been over to Korea two times or three times. I think at least two times. And she . . . I decided that she was gonna come out to California and it . . . It worked out real good for her coming out there. But she, she missed me, of course, you know. But she spent about a year and a half living with a friend of a friend, an elderly lady that rented her out a room and let her use the kitchen facilities. And so they got along real, real good. She treated her like a daughter and . . . and then we got an apartment. But, of course, she got a good job with Kaiser and that kept her busy. And the longest I was gone was ten months. At one time we were gone ten months. And it was . . . We missed each other, you know, but it's something we knew we had to do, you know. And . . . And we didn't . . . We had our first daughter four days after I got out of the Navy. There in Oakland. And . . . And the Navy moved me back home. Being second class petty officer, that was one of the breaking points from third to second. They moved you, your family, whenever you moved. So, that was it. And . . . But after . . . After I got out . . . After I got out of the service, I farmed a year, because I had my equipment and all.

WONGSRICHANALAI: In South Texas?

YOUNG: No, my daddy moved to North Texas.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: North of Greenville.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: And he moved all my equipment up there and . . . and I had between fifteen and twenty head of cattle that I'd bought and put in his pasture. And I farmed a year and I didn't go broke but I didn't make much money. So, I had the opportunity to go to school in Corpus under the GI Bill to be a carpenter. And I went to Del Mar College for four years at night and . . . and got my certificate for journeyman carpenter through the carpenter's union. And this year, I'm a 60-year member. I've stayed with . . . They stayed with me and I stayed with them. And so this year I've been a member to the carpenter's union 60 years.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Wow.

YOUNG: And that . . . Very few of us, this year in San Antonio, there's only six of us that've been there 60 years. We got one member that's been there 70 years. He's getting pretty old. But my affiliation with the service didn't stop with that because I worked at the Naval base in Corpus Christi.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: I did a lot of work with the Coast Guard stations. I was a superintendent on a job to build ammunition bunkers for the *Wisconsin*, the Battleship *Wisconsin* in Ingleside. And . . . and I've been aboard the *Wisconsin* in Charleston and I do a little artwork with . . . with rocks and stuff. And I got a Coast Guard emblem in a boat bar there in Corpus. When we were building the boat bar, I incorporated this emblem out of rock into the wall of the building. And without any special permission or anything, I just did it, you know, as their brick layer was laying the blocks and everything. I said "Here, we're gonna put this right here. Put it in there." And the captain of the facility walked by and looked at it and he said, "That looks nice. Where'd you get that picture at?" And I said, "That came out of the inside door of a [unclear] that the Coast Guard patrols with." And he said, "I never seen one like that before." And he didn't say nothing else. And then . . . And then they had an admiral's inspection as we were finishing up the job. And he walks by and he looks at it, shakes his head and . . . and I also got Texas rocks in some DPS facilities.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Oh, excellent.

YOUNG: Around . . . I did a lot of . . . They built another building since I left, but I did three major jobs for the Department of Public Safety in . . . in Corpus.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Very nice.

YOUNG: And the only . . . The only drawback, every time a highway patrol sees your pickup, he pulls you over. Maybe he'll drag you out and see if you got enough money to go buy coffee.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Fair enough.

YOUNG: We used to have one here in Uvalde that I knew down there in Corpus. And I'd catch him on the back roads, and I'd just block the road and I say, "What are you?" "I want to check and see if you're hunting deer." But . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: And when did you move to Uvalde?

YOUNG: I bought a place in '73 up here north of a little town of Reagan Wells and built me a house over the years. In '95 I moved up here. Twenty-one years ago at Thanksgiving I moved up here full time.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Mhm. Why did you move here?

YOUNG: I came up here when I was in high school. I had kinfolks here in Uvalde and in Concan up the road here. And I . . . I came up in . . . We'd go to Garner Park or Leakey to camp for a



week or two, you know, sometimes. And a loan officer in Corpus was involved in a little subdivision and I didn't know that it was him until a friend of mine told me, "Go look at a place over here north of Reagan Wells." So, I went over there and here was this loan officer there. And I said, "What are you doing up here?" And he said, "I'm subdividing this place." And I said, "Well, I seen a lot over here that I might want to buy." He said, "Well, give me \$15 down and if you don't . . . Think about it for a day or two and if you want your money back I'll give your money back." And . . . and I bought it. It was cheap then but he wanted to carry the papers. He wanted the interest off the money, you know. And . . . But I got my house and everything up there in the hills. And it was all ready for me to move in when . . . But do you eat Luby's Cafeterias?

WONGSRICHANALAI: No.

YOUNG: You're not familiar with Luby's?

WONGARICHANALAI: No.

YOUNG: That's a cafeteria chain in South Texas. San Antonio, Temple, down in the Valley, and all. I did a lot of work for them in the 80s and early 90s and that was my last job. I was building a Luby's cafeteria in Corpus. And the day that we served 300 workers, the workers that worked on it. They fed them the first meal. And I had my pickup all loaded, my house sold, [makes whooshing sound] and came up here.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Very nice.

YOUNG: And I've been working at the museum of Fridays ever since I came up here.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Excellent.

YOUNG: And . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: Real quick question. Do you remember what the state of race relations was like in the Navy when you were in the service? Was there any . . .

YOUNG: Well, the . . . The Hispanics, no problem.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: We only had two Negroes that was on the ship at that time. One . . . One of them, he was a lot of trouble because he drank a lot of that Akadama wine over there. And . . . and . . . But the other one, he worked on the deck force. And you wouldn't even know that there was any difference in him.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

YOUNG: In my construction deals, I got some real good friends that are colored. And . . . And they would put us in jail if they heard us, if we were out by ourselves, the way we talk to one another. And . . . and . . . And grandpa called me up. He said, "You're the best black engineer I ever seen. I need some advice. You want to come over and tell me how to do this?" Of course, he was calling it something else you know, and we got . . . They live in South Texas there and they work in . . . He did work for an oil company. He . . . He passed on now. And one of his grandsons played for the Dallas Cowboys.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Wow.

YOUNG: His grand . . . His grandson, I'm not gonna mention his thing but his grandson, when he was maybe eight, nine, ten-years-old, he come up and spend . . . Him and his dad would come up . . . up and spend the weekend up here with, with me when I was working on my house. They'd come up and spend the weekend with me. And right now, you talk about we have a lot in that subdivision up there. I have an Italian daughter, so called. She says, "I'm your Italian daughter." And then I got another that says, "I'm your Mexican daughter." And I got three daughters of . . . My wife and I got three daughters and a son. And . . . But everybody want to be my daughter.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Very good.

YOUNG: Yeah, so. No, I'm . . . I'm very open-minded. You know, of course God . . . God made us all. That's the way I look at it.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Well, it's just when you were in, President Truman had just desegregated the armed forces.

YOUNG: Yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, there. It was just right . . .

YOUNG: Yeah, it . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: In '48.

YOUNG: As far . . . As far . . . As far as . . . We never had any trouble with the segregation part there doing what we did on the . . . on the . . . with the shore patrol and the military police. We didn't have any. Only thing that I ran into once or twice is . . . And I guess it'd be . . . It didn't make any difference what color they were. But once or twice we'd run into a very large black soldier that would be drunk. Had just entirely too much to drink. And we had an 11:00 curfew and they didn't want to observe that 11:00 curfew. And . . . And we would know not to get in his reach, you know, because he was much stronger than any of us. And we . . . We would get maybe four, five, six, seven guys and kindly persuade him to walk into the landing. And we had a steel gate and a brig here. And we always had gringos in there, you know. They'd been drunk and brought in and leave them in there to sober up for the . . . the liberty boat that came in to pick them up and take them back. And . . . But if they got too, too rough and once we got them in the

bull pen, it didn't make any difference what color they were. Especially in the winter time. Just get a fire hose. And you didn't have to force . . . You didn't have to shoot them hard with it. Just wet them down a few times, and they sobered up real quick.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Real quick.

YOUNG: They sobered up real quickly. And . . . And that never was said. I had, with the Chinese . . . I mean with the Japanese on May Day, it's a communist big party. I was standing at the front gate of the naval base and they were about 10,000 marching in. And they marched by the naval base down and headed downtown. And they were about . . . They covered the whole street abreast, you know. And once they got past the naval base, we got in the paddy wagon and they took me to the train station. And that time all I had was a little belt club, not a night stick. Because I carried a special rosewood little club, and that's all I had. And they put me there in the train station. And they told me, they said, "Any service people in uniform comes in here, you put them in a holding room here and call us. And we'll come with the paddy wagon and take them to the base." Well, before it was over with, 10,000 or more people that were marching had the last rally and speech right there in front of the train station. And here all I was inside and I didn't have any military people show up in uniform, so I didn't have nobody with there. And, and they gave anti-American talk and . . . and all. The Communist Party did.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right.

YOUNG: I guess it was all . . . I heard "American" once in a while but I didn't know that much about Japanese to know exactly what they were saying. But that was one remembrance that I had. And I said, "What would I have done if they'd came and got me?" You know, I couldn't have done nothing with that little stick. But not . . . Not being right in combat, we were support team you know. But we were doing what had to be done. And at Inchon, was the day that they had to cease fire. We had an airplane out here at the museum for a while. It was twelve minutes late getting back across the parallel that day. And I . . . We were steaming up to the Inchon River, so I know where I was at the ceasefire or the so-called ceasefire.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right.

YOUNG: And, and this airplane, the *My Mary Lou*, it was a Douglas A-26 invader. And I know where it was when I was there. And it had a boo boo and I got a picture . . . a picture of the fuselage up in Illinois. And I went up there and worked robbing stuff off it to work on one out here. And I worked about nine years, and they moved it. The Continental Air Force, used to be the Confederate Air Force, moved it over to New Braunfels. They're working on it over there. But we took it apart, took all the cables off, all the pulleys and everything out of the wings. Checked them all, got them all rectified, put them back in. And so we . . . I had a little experience.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right.

YOUNG: But there's an organization called Collins Foundation that has a B-17 and a B-24 and about twenty or thirty military aircraft that they . . . The B-25 and the B-17 and the B-24 gives

rides at airshows at about \$400 a person. But they take ten people and that only covers the gas. And they fly for about an hour. Take off and go around. They have to land at the same airfield that they take off from because after World War II, they passed a law . . . Congress passed a law that they could not use military aircraft to transport people from one location to the other. The airlines, TWA and all them, they got Congress to pass this law saying they could not use military aircraft as a passenger plane. And . . . And so they, they could only . . . Now, I've gone to Houston and got on the B-17 and flew back here as part of the crew. That's OK.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Right. That's different.

YOUNG: I didn't have to pay no \$400 because I was working on another airplane out here. But that was a really a nice experience of getting about four hours. And I got about one hour in a B-25 doing some acrobats in a B-25 as part of . . . just riding along you know. But . . . And then the L-4. That's an observation plane that was used in Korea. And I flew it twelve years here given once in a while a ride to a child of a relative that flew them. And . . . And demonstrating to the school kids out here at the airport.

WONGSRICHANALAI: That's great.

YOUNG: And so . . . And I understand if we have time today you want to run by and take some pictures of those airplanes we have?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Let's see what our schedule is.

YOUNG: OK.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Let's go take a look at some of your pictures. I think that's it for my questions. Thank you very much for doing this.

YOUNG: OK, did I do OK?

WONGSRICHANALAI: You did fantastic. Great stories, wonderful stories.