

ORAL MEMOIRS
OF
RUBEN HINGUANZO
An interview conducted on
April 2, 2016

Interviewer: Dr. 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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The following document has been edited.

WONGSRICHANALAI: And I'm just going to ask you several questions, and you're welcome to not answer or pass on any of these questions as you see fit. Um, well first off, what is your name?

HINGUANZO: Ruben Hinguanzo. H-I-N-G-U-A-N-ZO.

WONGSRICHANALAI: And where were you born?

HINGUANZO: I was born here in the United States, near Waco here, in Elk, it's a little bitty town.

WONGSRICHANALAI: In relation to Waco, where is it?

HINGUANZO: Uh, I don't know now but I know where I was born.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK, and so you grew up in Waco, in or around Waco?

HINGUANZO: Yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: When was that? When were you born?

HINGUANZO: 1931.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK, what do you remember about growing up, in this area?

HINGUANZO: In the where?

WONGSRICHANALAI: In the Waco area.

HINGUANZO: Uh . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: Your childhood, do you remember anything about that?

HINGUANZO: Well, when I was three-years-old, my daddy took us to Mexico. Um, there was no work here in the United States, so we went to Mexico for about three years with my grandfather and grandmother there. They had uh, they were growing cotton and stuff like that, and we would help. Well, daddy helped them out. I tell you right now, when we came back, I was six-years-old, by the time I came back. And most of time was picking cotton and working in the fields.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

HINGUANZO: Any what?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Siblings?

HINGUANZO: Sibling-?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Brothers or sisters?

HINGUANZO: Oh yeah, I had three brothers and three sisters.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Are you the youngest? Are you the oldest?

HINGUANZO: I'm uh, I'm the third, the third oldest, and then there's a younger one. The other ones passed away already, my two big brothers. And I'm next and my younger brother.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Well, very good. And so, do you consider this area—Waco area—do you think is . . . What part of Texas is? Would you consider this West Texas or would you consider this East Texas?

HINGUANZO: I really don't know. I think it's East Texas. [laughs]

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK, that's fine, that's fine. So, when and where did you enter the armed forces?

HINGUANZO: When'd I join?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Yep.

HINGUANZO: I was seventeen-years-old. And uh, we worked in the fields and a friend of mine invited me to join the service. And I went and signed-up and my mother and father had to sign for me. Course, they cried a lot. They didn't want to sign for me.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Why did you want to go?

HINGUANZO: Uh, I really didn't have no reason. We didn't have nothing to do and I was just going to school and uh, I didn't want to work in the fields no more. And, uh . . . I have no reason. I guess I just wanted to go in the service. And uh, that's all. And we took basic training in Arkansas. No, in Tennessee. No in Arkansas.

WONGSRICHANALAI: How did you convince them to let you go?

HINGUANZO: Eh?

WONGSRICHANALAI: How did you convince your parents to let you go?

HINGUANZO: Uh, I really don't remember that much. I don't remember but I talked to them and finally, uh, I told them that I wasn't doing nothing and that I wanted to go with my friend. So, they, they agreed finally. Of course, they cried a lot and they finally agreed to sign the papers and let me go.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Do you remember your friend's name?

HINGUANZO: What?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Your friend's name.

HINGUANZO: Yeah, Julian Ramon. We went together to basic training and, after we finished, they sent me to Okinawa and, uh, they sent him to . . . I don't know where he went to.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Let's back up a little bit, do you remember anything about World War II, that period when it ended?

HINGUANZO: World War II, oh no. I don't remember World War II. I wasn't old enough.

WONGSRICHANALAI: I know but you were living in the United States at the time and so do you . . . No memories of that period?

HINGUANZO: Nothing, nothing about World War II.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK, well let's talk a little bit about basic training, what was it like?

HINGUANZO: Very hard [laughs]. Very hard. Uh, it took me a long time to get, because I wasn't used to exercising but it was, was hard for me until I got kinda used to it. And the most hard to me was carrying that rifle that they had there in my time, the M-1. And they weighed at about 45 pounds. That sure was heavy. And then you had to run. We had to run. That was the hardest thing for me.

WONGSRICHANALAI: And now, which branch was this, the Army?

HINGUANZO: Army.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Was there a reason that, uh, Julian, your friend, was there a reason he wanted to join?

HINGUANZO: No, I don't remember, cause he just, he just asked me let's go in the service and, course, I agreed because he was friend of mine. And like I said, I didn't have nothing to do so, we went, but I don't remember if he had a reason for going though. They asked me the other day . . . I was, uh, I was on TV. They came out here and asked me and interviewed me and took pictures. And they showed a little film about me. And, uh, they asked me about that but why did I want to go in the service and I, well, you know, a lot of people say well, I want to defend my country. But at that time, it was, we didn't know anything. We were too young to understand about, uh, defending our country. We just wanted to get away from here, I guess, but after awhile you get used to it, you know?

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK, so did you meet a lot people from all over the United States in basic training?

HINGUANZO: Oh, well yeah, but most of it after I was there, because I was in three different places. They sent me to Okinawa. And when I was leaving there, that's when the Korean War started. And, uh, I was leaving and the war started, and they . . . We were in a ship and they told the ship to report to the nearest port but we came onto San Francisco and they gave me my 30-day leave. But, uh, I just spent about 15 days, and they sent me to report to the nearest port, to where I was supposed to go. We were going to Korea, so, I went to where we were supposed to go, and there we left and we were on our way to Korea.

WONGSRICHANALAI: What was the unit you were with?

HINGUANZO: Well, mine was a force field hospital, that was the one up there when I went up there. I don't remember what. We didn't have a unit when we were going up there. Cause, uh, we just finished basic training. But, uh, but I wound up in the force field hospital. I'm a clinical specialist. I work in the hospital. And, uh, we treated the soldiers that were coming back, that were hurt. And, uh, then since I was the only one that, in the medics that had infantry training, they put me in charge of the hospital, and, uh, we learned there in Japan. We stayed about a week in Japan, or two weeks, setting up tents and understanding how to set them up and what not. And then we went up to Korea and they put me in charge of taking care of the hospital. And then they, uh, they overran our soldiers and the Chinese and Koreans and, uh, we were only five miles behind the lines and we had to move back and the next day we started moving back and we wound up in Daegu, Korea. And that's where we set up for the rest of the time. And they put . . . They made a corporal and put me in charge of the whole unit there, and I mean the security. And so I had about 10 or 15 men that protected the hospital. And that's what I done most of the time. Protect the hospital and we worked in the hospital too.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, did you require additional training beyond basic training to become a clinical specialist?

HINGUANZO: Oh, in the hospital?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Yes.

HINGUANZO: Oh, yeah, in Okinawa. I learned it by what do you call it, uh, being there.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Experience? Hands-on experience?

HINGUANZO: Eh?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Hands-on experience

HINGUANZO: Hands on experience, Yeah. I learned it the hard way, They put me . . . I worked in Okinawa, in the emergency ward for a year, about a year and half. And I learned and I took classes there. And, uh, advise and everything, and I finally got the, got used to treating patients and everything. But I took their vital signs, gave medications. Uh, worked with the women and men in the ward. They were, uh, contagious ward. And we had to wear a mask

WONGSRICHANALAI: What sorts of diseases? What sorts of contagions had they been exposed to?

HINGUANZO: Uh, I don't remember how many different things we had. Um, I can't remember. But, it was contagious ward. Everyone was contagious with, I can't tell you, I can't tell you what it was. They died there too. I wasn't used to seeing death. I was 18-years-old when I was in Okinawa. And, uh, one day I went into a room, I was taking care of this patient, and, uh, when I went in there, I try to . . . He was all covered up and I tried to pull the blanket and I couldn't so I tried to wake him up and he had his feet against the blankets and I couldn't take them off. And they . . . I started pulling them off and I found out that he was dead. And it scared me because I was young then and I had never seen a dead person and he died there. And I had to go get the medics, so they knew he was dead and carry him off the bed in there. And to [unclear], somewhere, wherever they took him. But, yeah, it scared me. They wanted me—when I was taking training as a medic—they wanted me to see a childbirth and uh, I didn't want to. I refused to. Well, I was too young, I didn't know nothing about childbirth or anything. And that only part of it that I've done. But, uh, I assisted on, they wanted me to assist on operations and everything else too.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Why did you enter the medical field? Was it voluntary or . . . ?

HINGUANZO: No, that's where I went. That's where, when they sent me to Okinawa, that's where they put me, in the medical . . . They need medics but I was about the only one . . . Me and another sergeant was the only ones that had infantry training but they put both of us as in the medical platoon there and that's where we wound up. I mean, uh, I have no reason why they put me in there. At that time they put you wherever they needed you. It was, well, that's what war is anyway, because they don't put you what you took training. They put you where they need you, especially if you had infantry training or like you had. I didn't have medical training but they taught me there.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So in Okinawa, did you treat civilians as well or was it . . . ?

HINGUANZO: Yeah, we treated civilians, uh, we treated civilians also. We got along with civilians. They were, uh, you know that, there were . . . Most of them were, uh, civilians that were left out of World War II. And, so, there was, uh, they were real nervous about us being there then because they didn't, uh, but they work with us. We had a lot of them working with us at the hospital. They didn't understand English too good but we had to teach them slowly. And, uh, they were real nice people. I liked them.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you learn any Japanese?

HINGUANZO: Eh?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you learn any Japanese?

HINGUANZO: Eh, *sukoshi*.

WONGSRICHANALAI: What does that mean?

HINGUANZO: A little bit. Yeah. Yeah, I learned a little bit and I got along pretty good with them. As a matter of fact, I took the language up there in Okinawa. But, I forgot now because nobody, nobody talks to me no more. It's like if you learn Spanish and nobody talk to you, you forget it. Yeah, but I did learn the language.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, you were on leave, you went back to San Francisco when they announced the start of the Korean War.

HINGUANZO: No, I was coming from Okinawa.

WONGSRICHANALAI: You were coming back from Okinawa.

HINGUANZO: Yeah, I was coming back from Okinawa when the war started. I was back in Korea about a month after it started.

WONGSRICHANALAI: What did you understand about the cause of the Korean War?

HINGUANZO: Very little. You know they don't call it a "war." It was a "conflict." But how come nobody . . . I get mad sometimes here because they mention so many, so many things about World War II, Vietnam War, the Iraq War, and all that. But they know very little, they mention about the Korean War. But, you know, we lost so many people there too. But they . . . I went to a meeting one time, to a reception one time about the Vietnam War, and they told me to tell them, to speak a little bit about the Korean War. And one of the things that I went and told them was it was a war. We lost many men there too. And y'all refuse to acknowledge that, that existed. And then after that I went to here in Waco to the, to the, like the police station, but it was the courthouse, and they were setting up a plaque, a big statue like that for the Korean War. And, yeah, no for the Korean War, for the . . . no for the Korean War, they were setting up a little bit. And there was only about five people there. That's why they refuse to acknowledge that there was a war. And I told them at that meeting when they let me talk about it. I said, "Why are you ignoring the Korean people, the people that died in Korea?" I said, "We, we were there, when the war was going on and it was a war." I don't care what they call it. And we lost a lot of people and we should acknowledge that they Korean people that went and fought for the United States too. And they said, well, yeah, but the ones that were there, and yet still, you never hear too much about the Korean War. No, but we did lose a lot of people and we helped a lot of people, because when we were there, in Korea, we worked with a lot of Korea people, because they, they were there, the civilians, and they lost a lot of people too in there.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, your hospital unit in Korea treated both civilians and soldiers?

HINGUANZO: Do what?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you treat both civilians and soldiers in Korea?

HINGUANZO: Uh, let me see, did we . . . Well we, we treated a few of them that were just minor sickness or . . . But not very many. But we did treat some when they were sick and feeling sick. The doctor would look at them and give NPOs or whatever they needed, but just minor thing, not too much, yeah. But we did treat a lot of patients because they used to bring them in the helicopters and they would land right in the hospital there, and we would treat them. Look at them and send them wherever we needed to send them. Like they do in, uh, the M.A.S.H

WONGSRICHANALAI: M.A.S.H.

HINGUANZO: [Laughs]

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you like the show?

HINGUANZO: Oh, yeah, I watch it all the time. They still show it. Yeah, yeah. I watch it. It was one of my classics, like what we done. Except that they used to joke and everything else, and we didn't do that. It was serious on our part.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, there were a lot of trauma patients?

HINGUANZO: A lot of what?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Trauma patients, patients who had been shot or . . .

HINGUANZO: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. Yeah, there were. It's like the ones that still exist here in the United States, yeah. I was reading the paper, I think it was today or yesterday, that uh, there's a lot of patients still with that trauma that they come from Vietnam and everything else. And, the hospital here and other places, they refuse to acknowledge that they're sick. And they take too long to see these patients. But that how come a lot of them are committing suicide too. You know, because if you let it get to you like, like me, I never did let it get to me, what I've seen. And, uh, but if you let it get to you, a lot of people are weak. If you let it get to you, it will. But, you know, its true, because when I came out there, I used to drink a lot. Uh, because I started drinking in Korea. And when I came back, I used to drink here for a long time, even when I was married. Until I realized what . . . I joined a church and I got saved, and so, I quit drinking, quit smoking. But it's a reality, it's a reality for them people, and it took me a long time to realize that had God saved me. Otherwise, I'd still be sick of that, still drinking.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, you started drinking in Korea, during the war? Was that to cope with what you saw?

HINGUANZO: Well, everybody drinks and smokes when they have time in there. Everybody starts drinking. They don't want you to realize . . . They don't talk too much about that but it's true, yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: I'm curious, what sorts of drinks were these? Were these Korean, were these American?

HINGUANZO: Well, even the . . . Well, beer mostly.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Imported for the . . .

HINGUANZO: No, it sure it's the American beer, they imported from here. And they sail it there at the PXs. You can buy 'em for a dollar a six-pack. And, uh, even the Koreans put beer joints there and they sell whiskey and American whiskey and beer. I don't know where they got it. But, yeah, it did. But they got it from us, I guess. Yeah, but it's all beer imported from here. Because all the PXs, they sell you beer, yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, how many places were you stationed in, in Korea? You probably moved around?

HINGUANZO: No, no. Once you set up . . . Once we set up the hospital in the second part, the second hospital, I stayed there until 1952. Uh, about a year and half also.

WONGSRICHANALAI: And where was this located, do you remember?

HINGUANZO: Daegu.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Daegu?

HINGUANZO: Mhmm.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you ever learn any Korean words?

HINGUANZO: Yeah, the same thing in Japanese, I learned a little bit there. [Speaks in Japanese, Translations: "Where do you live? Do you understand Japanese? I understand a little bit."]. [Laughs]

WONGSRICHANALAI: [Laughs] That's very nice. So, did the Korean people that you interacted . . . What did they understand about what the United States was doing there? Did they appreciate . . . ?

HINGUANZO: Oh yeah, yeah, they wanted, they wanted like there in Daegu, they appreciate and they respected us a lot. Uh, but they did, they understand what we were doing for them, yeah. [Section omitted per the interviewee's request.] But the Korean people, they understand, oh, the United States built . . . My granddaughter, she sent me some pictures from out there, but I forgot where that went. But they rebuilt Korea, when we were we just Quonset huts made out of grass and that's where they lived. She sent me pictures and they built real tall buildings. The United States rebuilt Korea, the whole thing, now. South Korea, it's rebuilt by the Americans and so is Okinawa. They rebuilt them, got rid of them Quonset huts huts and all that. So, we done a lot, we spent a lot of money, we done a lot for them people that we supported. Except North Korea, I don't know what they're gonna do. They look like they're . . . they want to start another war, yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So did you grow to understand the conflict after you had been there, and also the United States's role? Because you said you didn't understand why it started.

HINGUANZO: Yeah, but after awhile, you start learning all about, you know, why we're there. One of the things that I told one of the ones that interviewed me is that, you know sometimes, you know, I was too young to understand that, and one of the things that reminds me of that is, we attended a lot of this, uh, the celebration of, what is it, the when they have a parade here, but the soldiers and all that in Waco, they have a parade . . .

WONGSRICHANALAI: Memorial Day? Is it Memorial Day?

HINGUANZO: Memorial Day in, uh, yeah, Memorial Day. We attended them and me and my wife, and we would sit down and watch them and I always wear a cap that I have, and my ribbons and all that, and then I, what, uh, what I feel so good about it is young people, young people come out there and say, "Thank you so much for defending our country." And that's when it makes you feel good. My granddaughter said she didn't understand too much but she said that one day she was coming under the barracks in the morning to go eat breakfast and they started raising the American flag and she said when she started hearing that song, the American flag, she said she stopped and saluted and she said her heart just pounded. She feels so good about that and I do too. I stop and salute all the American flags, all the time. And, well, I just sold my house but I always have an American flag on. Yeah, you start to realize that it was, uh, it why you were and what you had done for those people. Once these American people here, they start really . . . Well, the Koreans knew that but the American people start to realize that you helped. Our country is safe because of what we done in there.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you correspond, did you write to your parents while you were in Korea?

HINGUANZO: To do what?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you write back to your parents, to explain to them what you were doing and all that?

HINGUANZO: To who?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Your parents.

HINGUANZO: Oh, my parents, oh, yeah. Yeah, they were all proud. One of the . . . My granddaughter, she's there because of me. She always used to . . . She was young and she always asked me what I've done up there and I would explain to her. And how proud I was about what we've done. And she was only little, she would listen to me. As soon as she was old enough she joined the Air Force. And she always wrote to me. She says, "Thank you, grandpa. I understand what you were talking about now." And she wants . . . She always wants a picture of me, and things that I've done in different areas. Because I was in Korea, Okinawa, Japan, and then, in the reserve, we went to Germany. And, uh, I realized too that, uh, that what the United States did there for Germany too. After the war was over, you know, Germany's got cities built underneath.

I went up there, and we would go the stairs, long stairs like that, and you could see a whole city built under there. And we were in a hospital there, and when you wanted to go to another hospital, you go down and you go underneath, yeah. It's what they done during the war. And, course, the United States helped them a lot too after the war, and they were the ones that started that war.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, your parents must have been worried about you though, in Korea.

HINGUANZO: Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah, they were. Sure they were. But I used to write to them often and . . . And I'd send them little gifts and things like that where I was, wherever I was, and, uh, I bought them a home. That's one of the things that helped me too, cause, I sent them a check, so they could buy a home. They never did have a home. We rented all the time. And I sent them the money and I told them to buy a home. And they used . . . I used to send them the payments to pay that home. That's one of the things that I've done for my parents. They're both dead now. But, uh, but yeah, I used to tell them what they done and they were real proud too. Yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Do you remember what sorts of technology you worked with in Korea?

HINGUANZO: Like what?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Uh, medical tools, new medical tools, or new weapons, or new electronics. I mean, helicopters were new.

HINGUANZO: No, um. No, I didn't . . . not in Korea. In the reserves, I worked with tanks. As a matter of fact, I drove a big tank for down on my H station. And we used to go to . . . to Killeen and train for two weeks each year and, uh, I drove big truck. It was a huge one. We use it as an aid station also. Oh, well, I got some pictures of me driving in one. Yeah, I drove two or three different kinds and I'd . . . That jeep that they got, that new one, the, oh, what is it? Oh, I forget the name of it. They got the new jeep. I was the first one to train on that for the medics. Yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Do you remember anything about the food that you ate in Korea? Or in Japan? Exotic foods?

HINGUANZO: Well, let me tell you a secret. In Korea . . . Japan had good food. In Korea, one day we got tired of our food there so we went to a cafe in Korea up there to eat. And we were eating and it was real good. And we told them what kind of meat it was. And they kept trying to tell us what it was and they said, "Meow, Meow." [Laughs]. It was cat food, "meow." I said, oh, no. But it was real good. They used to kill dogs. They used to eat the dogs in . . . I used to get mad because I was in security. And they had a dog one time, pulling a dog, and I took it away from them, and, oh, they got mad at me. But they used to . . . There were no dogs, very few dogs in there. When they see a dog, they take him and kill him and that's what they ate. Yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Were there any other animals that you encountered in your travels?

HINGUANZO: There wasn't much left. There was no animals left. Because that's what they ate.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, what would you say is that most challenging aspect of you service?

HINGUANZO: Hmm . . . I don't know. There was . . . I can say everything was a challenge to me and especially, you know, learning the trade in person there, in Okinawa and in Korea and all that. And, uh, that's what helped me in the reserves too, because I'm . . . My MOA was a clinical specialist. And when I made E-7 . . . I made E-6 and the E-7 came up and, uh, I took a lot of tests and, uh, they . . . They said that, "No, you can't get that E-7 yet. You're in 91-B." I said, "No, I'm a 91-C, that's a clinical specialist." He said, "You" . . . I said, "Yeah, I'm a clinical specialist." So they gave me the rank E-7 and put me in charge of the all the medics. And, uh, that . . . Oh, I was a teacher too in the reserves. They, uh, after I made my E-7, I went in, they told me to go teach. I taught math, reading, uh, weapons, the M-16 and, uh, 45 weapon. And then, uh, I taught how to, how to take it apart how to take it apart, clean it, put it back together blindfolded. The 45 and the M-16. And let me see, map reading, the M-16. Oh, first aid. I taught first aid to the whole troop, how to help a soldier when your wounded. How to save him, in order to get him back to the hospital.

WONGSRICHANALAI: What were race relations like when you were in the service?

HINGUANZO: Uh, between what, the, the soldiers or the people?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Uh, both. Let's start with the soldiers

HINGUANZO: Well, we respected each other. We helped each other. You learn to love the people that you're that . . . that you're working with. And, uh, cause we saved a lot of them in the hospital. Uh, so you get to respect them. And then the people that, in Korea, and Okinawa and all them, you learned to respect them too and they learned to respect you too. Uh, mostly because we work together. And uh, they understand what we were doing for them. And we helped them a lot.

WONGSRICHANALAI: When you first joined, President Truman had just desegregated the military, right? Was there still talk about that? Were there any challenges?

HINGUANZO: Not that . . . No, not that I remember. I can't. I don't remember that. No, I can't tell you nothing about that.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

HINGUANZO: I remember what you're talking about but, about Truman. But not very much.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, you were in Korea until 1952?

HINGUANZO: Yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: And then you returned to the United States?

HINGUANZO: Yeah, I came, and I stayed at, uh, here in the United States until they discharged me. And, uh, I stayed out 20 years and then a friend of mine who worked with me said, "Let's join the reserves, the National Guard Reserves, the Army National Guard Reserves." So I joined at 42. And they only make you if you can make you 60 before, you make your twenty. I mean make your 20 before you make your 60 and I made my 20. I fit in my 20, and then they . . . The reason I got 21 and half is because, Desert Storm started. When I was getting out and they held me up and they wouldn't discharge me until the Desert Storm was over and then they discharged me, but they held me a year and half of it more. But I was 60 already but I made 21 and a half years.

WONGSRICHANALAI: in the reserves?

HINGUANZO: And believe it or not, used to run four miles. Every day, at 60. We had . . . That's exercise. We had to do daily when we were in Ft. Hood.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, during the 20 years before you joined the reserves, what did you do?

HINGUANZO: Oh, I was working. I'm a machinist. And then, after that, after I went into the reserves and I stayed there and I got a job at the TSTC, that college, and I started working, just as a utility man, but then I got promoted and I was in charge of, uh, the cleaning there at TSTC. And I worked 20, I worked 20 something, well I retired from there too. I put 20 years in there.

W: How did you meet your wife?

HINGUANZO: Hmm?

WONGSRICHANALAI: How did you meet Ramona?

HINGUANZO: Yeah. Oh, at the dance in, uh, the Mexicans used to have dances on 2nd Street here in Waco. And, uh, that's how I met her. Because she was 15 and she was dancing already and I learned how to dance and I met her there. And we dated for a while and I went back—I was in the service then—and then when I came back, we started going together. When I got out of . . . with the regular army, I came out and we started dating and, eventually we got married

WONGSRICHANALAI: Was she supportive of you joining the reserves?

HINGUANZO: Yes and no. Well, it's hard for a, for a . . . We had three children already and it's hard because I had to leave every year. I had to leave once for two weeks to Fort Hood. And I'm leaving by myself but the thing is I was working for TSTC and they pay you. They pay you for the two weeks that you have because that's a state job. And I got paid and by the army. And she eventually had to take care of the kids by herself and that was hard, it was. But, uh, I don't know. I guess it must have been alright. We been married 63 years. So.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Now when did they send you to Germany? What year was that?

HINGUANZO: Oh, that I can't tell you. I don't know. But, uh, they send me and six of the medics and they sent us to Germany for 28 days and, uh, were worked in the hospital and, uh, we worked there and when we was off, we used to go around and see Germany. Uh, but uh, we loved it, we loved to work. Germany was real good too. It was real pretty. But, uh, I don't even remember the year that they sent me out there.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you interact with German civilians? Were they friendly?

HINGUANZO: What?

WONGSRICHANALAI: German civilians.

HINGUANZO: Oh, yeah, were they what?

WONGSRICHANALAI: German civilians?

HINGUANZO: What about them?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Did you interact with them? Were they friendly to Americans?

HINGUANZO: Uh, let me see, were they . . . Yeah, yeah, they were pretty friendly. Uh, not . . . Well, it's kind of hard to say that because some of them were and some of them weren't. You know, it's very, very difficult to say. Uh, most of them were in business and they served Americans and everything else. And there were . . . [Laughs] Yeah, some of them, and some of them weren't. Yeah, well, we fought against them. You can understand that, yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Was there anything exciting about your time in the reserves?

HINGUANZO: They what?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Anything exciting about your time in the reserves?

HINGUANZO: Uh. Not exciting. Only because it . . . No, we had a lot of training but most of my training was in taking care of the soldiers since I was a medic. I had, uh . . . I had uh, I forget how many people I had and, uh, when we go for two weeks out there, I had to put medics on each unit. We had a headquarters, A Company, B Company, and C Company, and I had to put medics in all of them too. Two medics on all of them was a track so they could, or a jeep, so they could help the people, where they're firing them tanks.

WONGSRICHANALAI: You were a medic in the Army. Uh, why didn't you enter the health profession when you were a civilian?

HINGUANZO: Well, I wanted to go to work at the hospital, uh, but I had an appointment at the post office too. I passed the test but then I went in and applied at the VA and I had to wait. But I had to find a job. I had to find another job. By the time they tried to call me, I was already working at another job. So . . . But I did try to go in the VA.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Was returning to civilian life—after Korea, after you were discharged—were there any challenges to returning to civilian life?

HINGUANZO: Uh, no, not really. Not really, because at the . . . at the . . . That was part of the training like I had when I was in the Army and it was just part of it and, you know, you get used to it but, uh . . . So there's not any challenge coming back to civilian life because, in the reserves, you only go two weeks a year and, uh, then you come back, doing the same job. I was working for TSTC. And, it uh, it was OK. Yeah.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, your granddaughter is in the Air Force. Did your other children . . . Did any of them join the armed forces?

HINGUANZO: No. No, but I got a lot of nephews that did in Dallas. My brothers, uh, nephews and sons, they both joined the Army but they got out. But some of the other ones didn't. We got two or three in Dallas that are joining the Army and, they, they get the experience from my granddaughter.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Well, I'm curious. You joined the Army. Why did she join the Air Force? Why didn't she join the Army?

HINGUANZO: Well, like I told you a while ago, we didn't know that much about anything. We didn't know about the Air Force or the Army or anything else. But see one of the things that I hadn't, that hurt me to start with, that I was in the 8th grade when I joined the reserve. I was only in the 8th grade and I didn't have much education. But a lot of the training that I got was in person, you know, when Okinawa and them things in there. But when I got out of the service, the first thing that I done was go back to school and finish my . . . my . . . my high school. And I finished, I got a diploma and then I went into a . . . the two years of business college and I finished in 4-C college—it's a college that you take business on there and I took two years of it and I graduated there too.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, after your service of many years, has your idea about the United States changed in any way?

HINGUANZO: Well, yeah, of course. Like I told you, you get to realize that you're living in a free country and you had part of it to doing that, to keep the United States as a free country. Yeah, you feel like you're part of it. Before you didn't even realize that there was a free country, that we lived here but now, I realize that we fought for this. What we have, we fought for this and that helps a lot.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So, do you have any advice for young people who are joining the military today?

HINGUANZO: Oh, I tell them . . . They ask . . . They talk to me a lot. "How was it?" And my nephews that are joining up there in Dallas, they talk to me and I tell them it's a good thing for young people to join. You learned a lot. Like me, I was just a farm boy but you start learning a lot, not only on yourself but you learn about the people that you work with and the people that

you support. Like all the places that I was. You learn about them people that you're helping and eventually you get to be proud that you helped them people. I feel, when I look at my medals and all the things that I've done up there. It may . . . To people it might seem that I didn't do very much but I did, especially working in a hospital or working with the people of Korea and all of them. I had to work with a lot of people in Korea. And so, it makes you feel good, very proud. Like I told you, when you go to them, to them parades, and people say, "Thank you for what you've done for this country," it makes you feel real good. Sure does.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Do you know what happened to your friend you joined with, Julian Ramon?

HINGUANZO: [Laughs] No. Well, he, he was living in Houston but he's back in Waco. He divorced or his wife died. And, uh, well, he was divorced and then he got married and his wife died. But I don't know where he's at no more. We don't, we don't call each other no more.

WONGSRICHANALAI: But you used to stay in touch when you were still in the military?

HINGUANZO: We done what?

WONGSRICHANALAI: You used to stay in touch with him?

HINGUANZO: Not really because when he went . . . When I went to Korea he went to Korea too but he was in front lines fighting. And I never did hear from him. I heard from him after we were out but, other than that, I don't know what he done during that time. No, but we didn't keep in touch during that time. But we kept in touch after we got out. You know, talked about what he'd done and what I'd done and everything but he says he was a prisoner but I don't know whether he was or not.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Well, is there anything else you'd like to add?

HINGUANZO: I don't think so, unless you got something that.

WONGSRICHANALAI: I think we've covered a lot and I really appreciate you taking the time to talk to us.

HINGUANZO: Yeah, that's good.