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University of California  
Berkeley, California

Stanley Rudney:  
Oakland Army Base Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by  
Martin Meeker  
in 2008

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Interview #1: March 12, 2008  
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01-00:00:24

Meeker: March 12, 2008. This is Martin Meeker interviewing Stan Rudney and this is for the Oakland Army Base Oral History Project. So let's get started. Maybe we should just start with when and where you were born and maybe you can tell me a little bit about your family background, too.

01-00:00:45

Rudney: OK. I was born in Brooklyn, New York August 24, 1917. My family lived in Upper Montclair in New Jersey, but my grandmother insisted I be born in New York. I never lived in Brooklyn. I lived in Upper Montclair until I start going to sea in 1936. I had previously gone to sea in 1935 on a British ship between New York and Saint John's Newfoundland. I graduated from Montclair High School in June 1936, and from 1936 until the war started in Europe, I was on many merchant ships. For a six month period, I attended New York University downtown but ran out of money and went back to the ships. After the war started, I worked on the docks in Staten Island New York for a British company that owned a stevedoring company. From December '39 until June of '40, when the French capitulated, we had the contract to load ships for the French War Commission. After I left that, I worked in the steel mill in New Jersey for a year. In June of 1941, I went to Newfoundland on a lend/lease project for the Newfoundland base contractors. Newfoundland was to be the first place to restrict the Germans in case England fell.

01-00:03:05

Meeker: What does that mean, the first place to restrict Germans?

01-00:03:09

Rudney: Well, the United States government felt that if England was going to fall Newfoundland would be the place to defend North America. The lend/lease project came about when the United States loaned Great Britain 50 destroyers, and for that, they got a lease on Newfoundland, Bermuda, and Trinidad for a hundred years. And the United States was fortifying these three locations in case England fell. And unfortunately, that's not taught in American history anymore. We built three locations in Newfoundland. Stephenville, which is a very large airport, and it was called Harmon Field. It was out on the tundra. There were no cities. There was nothing nearby. In fact, when we first went there, we didn't even have drinking water. We drank snow. And there were 40 Americans sleeping in one building. It was a very difficult project because of the tundra, and you had to dig out about 16 feet of tundra and then put gravel in and cement on top of that. To the best of my knowledge, the airport is still there. I was there in 1985 and the airport was operating very well. Then we built a large installation, Fort Pepperal, in Saint John's Newfoundland, in a place called Quidi Vidi; it was a complete city. It could have housed about 40,000 troops if necessary. And the third Army base was in Argentia, Fort

MacAndrew. And across from Fort MacAndrew was a large naval installation. I was in the war zone as a civilian from June 1941 to February 1943.

01-00:05:36

Meeker: What kind of work were you doing on these various assignments?

01-00:05:39

Rudney: I was hired to do the unloading of ships because of my background in the maritime industry. I ended up in Saint John's really operating the American part of the Newfoundland Railroad. The railroad was in terrible shape and the United States government loaned them eight million dollars to repair the railroad and buy new rolling stock.

01-00:06:12

Meeker: So what did operating the railroad mean?

01-00:06:16

Rudney: Well, we needed it to transfer material to the other bases. Much of our material that came from the United States was sunk by torpedoes. After December 7, 1941 most supplies came by ship. In February of '43 I came back to the United States, and then I volunteered in the Army in June of '43. By volunteering, I could choose the kind of unit I wanted to be in, and I was assigned to the 1054<sup>th</sup> Engineers.

01-00:07:09

Meeker: Can you describe the 1054<sup>th</sup>?

01-00:07:15

Rudney: The 1054<sup>th</sup> was a headquartered unit — it was called port repair and construction.

01-00:07:23

Meeker: And this is part of the army, yes?

01-00:07:26

Rudney: Yes. Part of the US Army. And we were stationed in Savannah, Georgia, at Fort Screven.

01-00:07:35

Meeker: When you volunteered, what was your first rank?

01-00:07:39

Rudney: I was a private. In 1935, I joined the Naval Reserve and I was discharged in 1939. And because of that service, I got an extra 5% in wages. In the military, every three years, you get an increase of 5%.

01-00:08:10

Meeker: So what sort of work did you do in the context of the Naval Reserve?

01-00:08:17  
Rudney: It was called the weekend Navy. We'd go to meetings. This was in Jersey City, New Jersey, and occasionally we'd go out on a destroyer. These are the old four stacker destroyers. I was to be trained as a gunner's mate. We spent time on the bridge. We didn't make too many weekend voyages because Naval Reserve at that time was very short of money.

01-00:08:56  
Meeker: So I'm surprised that the Naval Reserve would have let you go in 1939, being that they must have been preparing for war.

01-00:09:03  
Rudney: Well, the draft didn't start until late in '39 or '40. And those particular destroyers were wet from the time they left the dock to the time they got back. And those were the destroyers that were given to Britain under the lend/lease project.

01-00:09:32  
Meeker: A lot of which were lost, yes?

01-00:09:34  
Rudney: Yes.

01-00:09:35  
Meeker: So can you tell me a little bit about your basic training for the Army once you enlisted?

01-00:09:44  
Rudney: Well, it was basic training. In Newfoundland, because of the need and also my desire, I operated caterpillars, D-4 Cat, D-8 Cats. I ran a crane. I ran a pile driver. I worked with explosives. In fact, I was the demolition sergeant in the 1054<sup>th</sup>. Now, in September of 1943, a tree fell on me and broke my left leg in two places.

01-00:10:36  
Meeker: Where were you?

01-00:10:37  
Rudney: In Georgia, and there's a letter here you might read.

01-00:10:54  
Meeker: OK. [reading] So it says, "To whom it may concern: This is to certify that the technician fourth grade, Stanley Rud — " Rudney — is that how...

01-00:11:07  
Rudney: My name was changed by the Army.

01-00:11:08  
Meeker: OK. Is this the original spelling or...?

- 01-00:11:13  
Rudney: Yes. That was the original spelling. The Army changed it.
- 01-00:11:15  
Meeker: They decided it was too complicated or something or...?
- 01-00:11:17  
Rudney: No, no. I was in the criminal investigation division and I sent a lot of people to prison.
- 01-00:11:23  
Meeker: So they changed your name because of that?
- 01-00:11:25  
Rudney: They changed my name so when these people got out of prison after the war, that —
- 01-00:11:32  
Meeker: They couldn't find you?
- 01-00:11:33  
Rudney: They wouldn't recognize me. Couldn't find me. Because most of these people were involved in the New York criminal organization.
- 01-00:11:37  
Meeker: Interesting. Well, we should talk about that in a few minutes if you're all right. "Is qualified to attend officer candidate school or hold any construction job where his abilities can be used." So... And then it goes on to say that you served as a soldier. "He has been honest, conscientious, and obedient." Many construction jobs. "Very highly skilled as a rigor and workman." So it says, "The officers and men of this unit regret that such a fine soldier and skilled man cannot accompany this unit overseas, but he has sustained a slight leg injury on a recent job and the medical officers will not pass him for duty status." So is that what you were interested in showing me?
- 01-00:11:37  
Rudney: Yes. Well, the slight injury was my leg was broken in two places and I had a cast from my toes to my hip. 1054<sup>th</sup> went overseas to New Guinea. The unit was ambushed by the Japanese and they were on Owen Stanley Mountains and many of them were killed. The reason I know this... A very close friend of mine was in correspondence with people from the 1054<sup>th</sup>. After the 1054<sup>th</sup> went overseas and I got out of the hospital, I was transferred to the 1057<sup>th</sup> and we were moved to a place in the Okefenokee swamps in Florida called Camp Gordon Johnson, which was the hellhole of camps of the United States. And we had 10,000 Africa core prisoners there and 5,000 Italian prisoners. I volunteered to go to the Navy Yard in Charlestown, South Carolina to bring — with a group to bring boats down to Camp Gordon Johnson. There were boats and barges. These were things that the Navy didn't need and the Army was preparing people to be able to do things for the invasion of Europe. The Army did have four amphibious brigades. One landed at Casablanca, and I

think the second one landed in Sicily. The third one landed at Anzio, Italy, and the fourth one, I believe, landed in the Philippines. I was in charge of a small open boat. It was a crazy kind of thing but we all seemed to make it. We were out in the open ocean in these small boats, but eventually we got into the waterway system, crossed Florida. There's a canal in Florida and then you go across Lake Okeechobee and come out at Fort Myers, which is near St. Petersburg.

01-00:15:12  
Meeker:

On the Gulf Coast. Yes.

01-00:15:14  
Rudney:

Yes, St. Peter's on the Gulf. Right across from Tampa. And then we took the boats from there to Camp Gordon Johnson, which was located at a place called Carabell, and Carabell is in the Okefenokee swamps. We liked Saint Pete so well that we disconnected the injectors on a diesel engine so they wouldn't start and this lasted for three days. We had two lieutenants who weren't very knowledgeable about boats, and eventually, after about — I think it was about three to five days to a week, a major came down from Gordon Johnson, rounded us up, and said, "You know, you fellows got the boats this far, you better get them to Gordon Johnson, otherwise you'll get court martialed." So we reattached the injectors and started the boats and went to Gordon Johnson. A lot of things like this happened in the Army.

01-00:16:25  
Meeker:

What did you like about Saint Petersburg? What was attractive about that? Or was it simply the dread of going?

01-00:16:29  
Rudney:

The weather was beautiful. The people were wonderful and the girls were lovely.

01-00:16:37  
Meeker:

Was it a big military town? Were there a lot of people coming through?

01-00:16:42  
Rudney:

There were very few military in Saint Petersburg. At that time, there was an Air Force installation in Tampa where they trained the pilots. At Gordon Johnson, I became the captain of a tug. At that time, the Army did away with the Chemical Warfare division and were training the people in the Chemical Warfare division to be boat operators for the invasion.

01-00:17:12  
Meeker:

The invasion at Normandy?

01-00:17:14  
Rudney:

Yes. This was a small tug. Well, we trained I would say hundreds, maybe thousands of troops to be capable of running boats across for the invasion in Europe. Most of these people left — this training started, I believe, in about February of '44, and it lasted until April or probably May of '44. These people

were all shipped overseas and we had very little to do. We used to go fishing and have fun, and one day I asked the company commander what's going to happen to us, because this was a headquarters unit. And he said, "Well, you're going to OCS."

01-00:18:27

Meeker: What do you mean by a headquarters unit?

01-00:18:28

Rudney: Well, this unit supervised many units. See, in the Army, there's a headquarters unit and then there's many other units assigned to the headquarters unit. August 31<sup>st</sup>, I was sent to New Orleans to the Transportation Corp OCS.

01-00:18:52

Meeker: And OCS is...?

01-00:18:53

Rudney: Officer's candidate school. This was at a place called the New Orleans Army Air Base. We had a relatively rigorous training in all activities, from loading ships to being administrators. And I was graduated on December 20, 1944.

01-00:19:40

Meeker: As what?

01-00:19:42

Rudney: Oh, as a second lieutenant.

01-00:19:50

Meeker: OK. So that you said that was September 1944?

01-00:19:54

Rudney: No, December.

01-00:19:55

Meeker: December of 1944. So let me just recap here, because you had a really busy couple of years and I want to make sure that we got everything down. So beginning, say, December of 1939 through the first half of 1940, you were contracting to load ships for the French War Commission —

01-00:20:16

Rudney: That's right.

01-00:20:18

Meeker: — and that was in New Jersey?

01-00:20:19

Rudney: No, Staten Island in New York.

01-00:20:20

Meeker: Oh, Staten Island. And then you worked in a steel mill, I guess, in New Jersey for a period of time?

01-00:20:27  
Rudney: Yes. For a year.

01-00:20:28  
Meeker: For a year. And then you went to Newfoundland to work on the lend/lease project to build these major bases out there.

01-00:20:35  
Rudney: Yes. That started in June of '41.

01-00:20:39  
Meeker: And it looks like you were up there until —

01-00:20:41  
Rudney: February of '43.

01-00:20:42  
Meeker: All right. And then...

01-00:20:44  
Rudney: Now, that was supervised by the US Engineers.

01-00:20:47  
Meeker: OK. You were not an enlisted man at that point in time?

01-00:20:53  
Rudney: No, no. I was a civilian.

01-00:20:54  
Meeker: You were a civilian at that point. OK. Was that a union job?

01-00:21:00  
Rudney: No. There's no union — there were no unions in Newfoundland.

01-00:21:03  
Meeker: OK. How was the pay on that? I mean, what was the attraction to go up to Newfoundland for two years?

01-00:21:10  
Rudney: The pay was excellent. The minimum wage at that time was 37 ½ cents an hour. On the docks, when I loaded ships, French War Commission, I was getting a dollar ten an hour plus, because I was an assistant foreman. In Newfoundland, I started at \$5,000 a year, and after about three months, my wage was increased to 5,500 a year.

01-00:21:41  
Meeker: OK. And at this point, you weren't married, were you?

01-00:21:44  
Rudney: No, I wasn't.

01-00:21:45  
Meeker: OK. Because that would have been sort of a hardship, huh?

01-00:21:47

Rudney: That's right. No, I was single.

01-00:21:49

Meeker: And you said that some of the — you know, you operated some heavy equipment up there and you also helped unload ships. How was that done? Was that — that was all break bulk then, right?

01-00:22:00

Rudney: Yes, all break bulk.

01-00:22:02

Meeker: So were you operating cranes and...?

01-00:22:04

Rudney: No, most of it was done with the ship's gear. You know, ships could load and unload themselves.

01-00:22:10

Meeker: Yes, if they have cranes on them.

01-00:22:13

Rudney: Well, they had large booms. In fact, in those days, they didn't use many cranes. Some places had gantries, but under most conditions, the ships loaded and unloaded themselves. That's why they needed longshoremen.

01-00:22:32

Meeker: OK. OK. Do you have any, I guess, memories of that Newfoundland period of time? You know, you said that a lot of ships, supply ships that were coming up were getting torpedoed. I mean, was it — it sounds like — and then you were working in pretty extreme conditions.

01-00:22:51

Rudney: Yes. Newfoundland was noted for its large amount of snow. We could not eat any of the local food, because at that time, many, many people — I was told half the population had tuberculosis. Newfoundland is a very, very poor place. It's primary industry at that time was fishing. And there's no longer any fishing. The Japanese and the Russians have fished the place out. That's the hole — what they call the Grand Banks. Conditions in Stephenville were terrible because it was early in the development of the airport that was being built there. In Saint John's, living conditions were much better. We had pretty good housing. The food was good. We had the ability to talk — spend time with the local people. There are many — at that time, there were British and Canadian troops there, and then some American troops also. It was kind of fearful at times. The German reconnaissance planes flew down, we believe, from places in Greenland. Now, the reason for this was that Saint John's Harbor was a place of concentration for the convoys, and at all times, there were from three to six submarines around Newfoundland. And the reconnaissance planes came down to see if the convoys were forming. They were...

01-00:24:50  
Meeker: So the submarines, are those Allied or German?

01-00:24:54  
Rudney: German submarines.

01-00:24:55  
Meeker: Oh, OK.

01-00:24:58  
Rudney: We had kind of a gentleman's agreement. You don't bomb Saint John's and we won't shoot you down, because they could have destroyed Saint John's very easily, because Saint John's is a circular harbor dead end narrow entry. [showing a photograph to the camera] Here's a picture of the Steam Ship Roslin going into Saint John's Harbor.

01-00:25:59  
Meeker: The S.S. Roslin. Was that a ship that you worked off of?

01-00:26:01  
Rudney: That's the ship I worked on. Here's another picture of the S.S. Roslin.

01-00:26:05  
Meeker: All right. OK. I think I can probably — here it goes. That's the S.S. Roslin in Saint John's Harbor and — is this also in Saint John's Harbor?

01-00:26:18  
Rudney: Yes, that's another picture of the S.S. Roslin.

01-00:26:19  
Meeker: Yes, it looks like a very similar picture. Just needs to focus on it. Here it goes. OK, so these are the booms on it, right, that loaded and unloaded the cargo?

01-00:26:38  
Rudney: That's correct.

01-00:26:40  
Meeker: What sort of work did you do? It sounds like — I guess it sounds like you were working on the base in the Harbor, but you were also working on the ship?

01-00:26:50  
Rudney: Well, in 1935, I worked on the Roslin for the summer, and then I went back to high school and graduated.

01-00:27:00  
Meeker: OK. Oh, OK. So you were up in Newfoundland several years before you went to go build the bases up there?

01-00:27:12  
Rudney: Yes.

01-00:27:13  
Meeker: OK. I understand now.

01-00:27:13  
Rudney: Before I went in to the Army.

01-00:27:15  
Meeker: OK. So this picture of the S.S. Roslin going up is from New York.

01-00:27:21  
Rudney: 1935.

01-00:27:21  
Meeker: 1935, OK. So these buildings on the hill, are those defense batteries or something?

01-00:27:30  
Rudney: They were the original communication that Marconi developed when he started building radio and that was called Signal Hill.

01-00:27:46  
Meeker: OK. And — but those were — dealt with defense and everything, right?

01-00:27:48  
Rudney: Yes.

01-00:27:50  
Meeker: Yes. Thanks for sharing those. Those are great. OK. So then what happens is you —

01-00:28:01  
Rudney: I came home, volunteered in the Army, June 1943.

01-00:28:04  
Meeker: Yes, and then you — that was when you went into the 1054th?

01-00:28:08  
Rudney: 1054 Engineers.

01-00:28:12  
Meeker: And then you were injured and your — the fellow members of that — was it — the 1054<sup>th</sup> is a brigade or a division or...?

01-00:28:21  
Rudney: No, it was a — again, it was a company headquarters.

01-00:28:24  
Meeker: A company, OK.

01-00:28:26  
Rudney: That would pick up troops when they went overseas.

01-00:28:30  
Meeker: OK. So then they went overseas and then that was when you basically ended up heading down to Florida, right?

01-00:28:38  
Rudney: We went — that's when we were transferred to Florida, after that.

01-00:28:41  
Meeker: So were you still a member of the 1054<sup>th</sup> when you lived in Florida?

01-00:28:43  
Rudney: No, the 1054<sup>th</sup> went overseas. Then after I got out of the hospital, I was with the 1057<sup>th</sup>.

01-00:28:51  
Meeker: OK. And was that an engineer division, as well?

01-00:28:53  
Rudney: That was — yes, an engineer unit.

01-00:28:56  
Meeker: Did you fully recover from your injury? Were you able to basically do all the work that you wanted to do?

01-00:29:00  
Rudney: Yes, I fully recovered.

01-00:29:02  
Meeker: How long were you in the hospital?

01-00:29:04  
Rudney: Eight weeks.

01-00:29:06  
Meeker: OK. So it was a pretty good amount of time that you needed to fix yourself up, huh?

01-00:29:10  
Rudney: Yes.

01-00:29:11  
Meeker: This Florida period of time sounds interesting. Why did you — why was this base — what was it called again?

01-00:29:20  
Rudney: Camp Gordon Johnson.

01-00:29:21  
Meeker: Camp Gordon Johnson. Why was it considered a pit?

01-00:29:26  
Rudney: Because it was in the Okefenokee swamps.

01-00:29:29

Meeker: OK. So really steamy?

01-00:29:30

Rudney: There were no facilities. Our showers were with brackish water. Our living conditions were deplorable because it was in the sand. There were no floors in the huts. I lived on the tug, so the conditions on the tug were a lot better than the conditions in the camp. You know, we had 40,000 Americans there at one time and they were training for the Pacific.

01-00:30:10

Meeker: And you also said there were prisoners of war there?

01-00:30:12

Rudney: That's correct.

01-00:30:13

Meeker: Did you ever have any interaction with them?

01-00:30:18

Rudney: Not a great deal. They were the Africa corps. Most people don't realize that there were hundreds of thousands of prisoners brought to the United States. Many were in farms in Minnesota and those areas, and these people after the war went back to Germany and then came back to the United States because conditions in the United States were much better than Germany.

01-00:30:47

Meeker: So the Germans that were working up on farms as prisoners of war then came back after the war to settle?

01-00:30:53

Rudney: That's correct.

01-00:30:53

Meeker: Were these prison camps in Florida, were they work camps? What sort of work were the prisoners doing?

01-00:31:00

Rudney: Not in Florida. Because of the conditions of the swamp. They had their own stockade. They had guards on the stockade. Occasionally, they would leave the estate, try to escape from the stockade. But they weren't very successful because in the Okefenokee Swamp, there's all sorts of poisonous snakes; water moccasins, copperheads, coral snakes. A fair amount of alligators and these Germans would follow the roads and normally would get bitten by the coral snakes, and coral snakes are very poisonous, and they would die. In general, the prisoners of war were pretty peaceful. They were captured in Africa by the British and the British had taken all their personal property away, and they were pretty well fed and they were — we had machine shops where they worked, and the Italian prisoners did nothing. They just loafed. And again, because of the Okefenokee Swamp, there wasn't that much

activity. Most of this land at one time had — I was told was owned by DuPont and every tree we knocked down, DuPont got paid for it, because they used — DuPont used to take turpentine out of these pine trees, and we no longer use turpentine for anything, I believe.

01-00:32:55

Meeker:

So these prisoners were mostly infantry men, right? There weren't...?

01-00:32:59

Rudney:

No, they were from the tank war.

01-00:33:03

Meeker:

Oh, OK. All right. But they weren't really high value in the way we would talk about, you know, leadership officers or...?

01-00:33:11

Rudney:

No, no, no. Most of them are just enlisted men.

01-00:33:14

Meeker:

So then you were sent to the officer training camp or school?

01-00:33:19

Rudney:

Well, it wasn't a camp. Officer training school in New Orleans.

01-00:33:24

Meeker:

OK. And you graduated there in December '44 as a lieutenant?

01-00:33:28

Rudney:

December 20<sup>th</sup>. Now, this is a critical time in American history.

01-00:33:33

Meeker:

Tell me about it.

01-00:33:34

Rudney:

This was the time of the breakthrough on Belgium, the Battle of the Bulge.

01-00:33:40

Meeker:

How did you experience that?

01-00:33:42

Rudney:

I didn't go there. Some of my classmates were sent there. Because of my nautical experience, I was to be trained as a captain of a vessel for the invasion of Japan.

01-00:34:00

Meeker:

Oh, OK. And what sort of vessel did they think that you would be captaining?

01-00:34:04

Rudney:

The Army had developed a vessel which was going to be a small supply vessel, which had lots of power, and some of these vessels were used during the Korean War as spy ships. Now, after being there 11 days, I was sent to Staten Island, New York. There was a tug strike and they had no crews to

operate tugs, and our unit was sent there. If you're interested in the orders, I can show you.

01-00:34:45

Meeker: What unit were you in at this point?

01-00:34:49

Rudney: I was with a boat outfit.

01-00:34:51

Meeker: So when you were in this officer training school in New Orleans, I wonder how the officer training was much different then, you know, the basic training or the specialized training you would have received as an enlisted man. Like what sort of special training were they giving you in the officer's school?

01-00:35:15

Rudney: Well, you were going to be an officer. Normally, the Army got their officers from West Point or ROTC. So the training was — let's call it the schooling was in all aspects of administration. Some technical. In fact, I taught some of the maritime problems — maritime education. We did KP. The Army at that time — each unit was a total intricate unit. They had their own — each unit fed themselves, had their own supply. Did everything on a unit basis. A company — they had a company and that was a complete unit. It did everything, but they no longer do that in the military. In Iraq, they have almost as many civilians as they do military.

01-00:36:49

Meeker: Supplying all these things to the military?

01-00:36:50

Rudney: Yes, they do — they feed the troops. They supply the troops. In fact, much of the transportation is done by the civilians.

01-00:37:03

Meeker: Interesting, isn't it?

01-00:37:05

Rudney: Yes. It's all — and it's all done by — under corporations or corporations did the — do all the supply work. So it's very different now. The troops — the infantry troops just go out and fight whatever hours they are, and then they go back to the Green Zone. We didn't — and during World War II, troops would be out — well, I had friends that were out for 120 days, and we lived on canned rations and...

01-00:37:45

Meeker: MREs.

01-00:37:45

Rudney: Beg pardon?

01-00:37:47

Meeker: MRE's, right?

01-00:37:49

Rudney: Yes, yes. Well, it was — the military is totally different now than it was then. They talk about brigades, but I really don't know whether a brigade is just made up of officers, enlisted men, and that's it.

01-00:38:06

Meeker: How would a brigade have been different then? I mean, what were some of the characteristics of it?

01-00:38:10

Rudney: The brigade — well, here the amphibious brigades, which had about a thousand — well, 1, 200 men at that time... They were a complete unit. They did everything themselves. There was no civilians involved.

01-00:38:28

Meeker: So you had cooks, you had repairmen.

01-00:38:33

Rudney: Well, we had cooks, we had medical people. We had supply people.

01-00:38:43

Meeker: In addition to infantry men and officers?

01-00:38:46

Rudney: Well, the infantry — we're just talking about an amphibious brigade. The infantry had companies and then they had a — after a company they had a battalion and then the battalion had a regiment and that was how it used to be. I don't know how it is today.

01-00:39:08

Meeker: Sure. OK, so you were about to show me something about your orders.

01-00:39:44

Rudney: OK. This is headquarters of Camp Gordon Johnson and here's the orders — unit to go to New York.

01-00:40:04

Meeker: So a new permanent station at New York. Port of embarkation, 13<sup>th</sup> of January, 1945. So, you had mentioned this key point in December of '44, you know, about the breakthrough in Belgium, and I'm kind of wondering, you know, as a member of the Army, what sort of news did you get of the developments and how did you experience that? Was there a point at which you as, you know, a member of the Army thought that the tide had turned or that the Allies were going to win? Were there points at which you were in despair that, you know, Germany was looking like they were going to be able to pull it off?

01-00:40:56

Rudney:

We were just told that they were losing so many young commissioned officers that they needed officers wherever they could get them. And our class was probably 75 officers — new trained officers. And I don't know how many were sent overseas, but many of them were sent right to the breakthrough in Belgium. I was very fortunate to get sent back to Camp Gordon Johnson to get trained to be an officer running a ship during an invasion.

01-00:41:40

Meeker:

OK. So now what happens after you're then stationed in New York in early 1945?

01-00:41:51

Rudney:

What happened?

01-00:41:53

Meeker:

Well, what happens there? What sort of work did you do?

01-00:41:55

Rudney:

Well, I ran a tug at night.

01-00:41:57

Meeker:

OK. During the strike?

01-00:41:200

Rudney:

Yes, during — there was a strike and we had Army officers running tugs at night. One night the tug didn't operate properly and it was heavy on the bow and I went down below deck and somebody was in the process of stealing, I estimated, about five tons of sugar. I got in touch with the security division of the Army at Governor's Island, which was the headquarters at that time of the New York area, and also I notified the people in Brooklyn Army Base of my find. I read the log of the tug, the tug was going to Brooklyn the next day for fuel. Apparently, the tug went to Brooklyn and everybody was picked up and sent to prison for stealing.

01-00:43:10

Meeker:

And who were the culprits?

01-00:43:14

Rudney:

They didn't know who the culprits were. I mean, they were probably people from the New York criminal gangs. Incidents happened later on which indicated that there was a lot of pilferage of sugar and other material at that time. I believe it was a dollar a pound, so five tons of sugar was a lot of money. Two days after this incident, the colonel in charge of Staten Island called me to his office and said that I was off the boat and I was now in the CID, which is a criminal investigation division in the Army.

01-00:44:05

Meeker:

Now, was blowing the whistle on this related to your being moved to the criminal division?

01-00:44:12  
Rudney: Yes.

01-00:44:13  
Meeker: The fact that you reported this theft?

01-00:44:15  
Rudney: Yes, yes.

01-00:44:18  
Meeker: OK. So the reason was you were seen now as a trustworthy man to do this, I guess?

01-00:44:24  
Rudney: Yes. I was given a top secret clearance, so I could go anyplace anytime. The colonel told me to meet with the FBI. I used to report to them once a week about things that were going on.

01-00:45:01  
Meeker: Did you have a cover?

01-00:45:04  
Rudney: No, no, no. The only person that knew I was in the criminal investigation division was this one colonel. It was kind of funny. When I went into his office, he pulled some of the shades down. I asked him why he was doing that. And he said, "Well, now that you're in the CID and only I know about it, we can't have anybody else be involved I this." So in the Army, they used to cut nine copies of your orders, and he kept out two copies and burned the rest. And the two copies — one I got and one was sent to my 201 file in Washington. There was a fire in Saint Louis and all of the records from the Revolution on were destroyed.

01-00:46:23  
Meeker: Yes.

01-00:46:23  
Rudney: You heard about that?

01-00:46:25  
Meeker: Yes. I have heard about that. And so you have the only remaining record of this, it sounds like?

01-00:46:40  
Rudney: See the way the paper is destroyed?

01-00:46:53  
Meeker: Yes. So NYPE, meaning...?

01-00:47:17  
Rudney: New York Port of Embarkation.

01-00:47:18

Meeker: Port —

01-00:47:20

Rudney: — Port of Embarkation.

01-00:47:20

Meeker: Port of Embarkation. OK. All right. So what does that — what does this say? This is restricted...?

01-00:47:29

Rudney: I'm out of the boat outfit. I'm now here. But there's other orders — I can't find the orders saying it was a criminal investigation division. You can see I was transferred with that sentence. [reading orders] And it doesn't say anything else? There was an order written and it's kind of crazy that... I mean, this is a big installation and they issued one order transferring me to the water division of the United States Army.

01-00:48:32

Meeker: Well, tell me about some of the work that you did working for the criminal division.

01-00:48:42

Rudney: Well, I used to roam around the port and they assigned me to a pier to help to supervise the loading of ships. It was very difficult to pin things down or pin people down. One of the incidents was the link to longshoremen stealing the remains and the personal property of people who had been killed. And I stopped that.

01-00:49:41

Meeker: Was that — that sounds like mostly just petty crime.

01-00:49:45

Rudney: Petty crime. There were big crimes. Truckloads of lumber, truckloads of other things were stolen. One night I was invited to a party at the hotel, Saint George in Brooklyn. And there was a very beautiful girl there and I asked her to dance and I asked her what her name was, and her name was Connie Shannon. And I said, "Your father is the superintendent of all civilians." And she said, "Yes." And she says, "I don't like my father. He has set up a group to steal the morphine out of the first aid packets. My father arranges to have the cigarettes stolen out of the K-rations. My father has developed an organization that does other criminal things." And I took Connie home that night, she told me a lot more about her father and the things he was doing, and all this I wrote up. Now, I will tell you later why this is important. And then on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, the day they dropped the bomb, we got orders to come to San Francisco. On that troop train was a major general and 400 officers. Originally, it was to be a group that would be in Japan after the invasion and be administrators. But the invasion didn't take place. Now, the major general and 40 officers, I believe, were kept in San Francisco and the other 360 officers went to Japan in the Army of Occupation, and I was one of the 40 that

was kept. Again, the reason I was kept is that I had all the civilian and military experience around ships and cargoes and things like that.

01-00:52:33

Meeker: So can you tell me more about this Shannon character and...?

01-00:52:38

Rudney: I'll tell you more about it later. What I know was determined in 1950 when I was in the Army.

01-00:52:48

Meeker: OK, good. Keep the story going, then.

01-00:52:51

Rudney: OK. And we arrived in San Francisco the first of September or about Labor Day of 1945 and my first job, September the 5<sup>th</sup>, '45 was assistant to officer in charge of commercial forwarding.

01-00:53:29

Meeker: Commercial forwarding subsection traffic?

01-00:53:31

Rudney: Traffic.

01-00:53:31

Meeker: Traffic section, pier operations.

01-00:53:34

Rudney: Yes.

01-00:53:37

Meeker: OK.

01-00:53:40

Rudney: Now, because of my background, my first job was to settle bills and complaints that people had not been paid for activities that they had done. A very good example was a Berkeley pier where they used to put fuel aboard ships out in the Bay. But the people that ran this installation had never been paid. Now, the way this thing developed, the ships would take munitions at Concord and then come here, get their fuel, and then make the convoy and sail out of San Francisco. The bills I had on my desk came to about \$35 million.

01-00:54:45

Meeker: Who was writing the invoices? Who was — who wanted to get paid?

01-00:54:48

Rudney: These were invoices from various suppliers. All sorts of things. Not only the fuel but all sorts of Army supplies. I said, "Colonel, many of these things took place when I was in Newfoundland in 1941." He said, "Lieutenant, get the bills paid." And I thought for about two days, "How can I get these bills paid?" I came up with the idea, with a rubber stamp, "To the best of my

knowledge, this work had been accomplished." I went to all of these people and I said, "Send me three copies of your original invoice. One for the disbursement officer in San Francisco, one to go to Washington, and one for me." And most of these bills were stamped and sent out and people were paid.

01-00:56:07

Meeker:

So you were able to get three copies of the invoice and...

01-00:56:11

Rudney:

Yes. In fact — well, many of these people said, "Well, we already sent the invoices." I said, "Well, do you want to be paid?" Send me three copies of the original and then you'll get paid."

01-00:56:24

Meeker:

Why did you want three copies?

01-00:56:26

Rudney:

Well, one for the local disbursement. One for Washington, and one for me. So we had a record of who got paid.

01-00:56:40

Meeker:

Were you concerned about fraud in some of these bills?

01-00:56:45

Rudney:

No, I wasn't concerned. And I had no way of determining if and when this work was done.

01-00:56:51

Meeker:

Was this — did you have a particular account you were working out of or was this really — you had sort of a blank check that you can write to these — to these...?

01-00:57:02

Rudney:

It wasn't up to me. If the disbursement officer felt that it wasn't legitimate, he wouldn't pay them. I was just part of the lifeline to do these things.

01-00:57:13

Meeker:

So it sounds like one of the — your first task was really to sit down and pay bills.

01-00:57:17

Rudney:

This was my first task. OK. Where is my second duty?

01-00:57:35

Meeker:

Right here. So assistant to OIC, meaning...?

01-00:57:40

Rudney:

That's officer in charge.

01-00:57:43

Meeker:

It's assistant to officer in charge, commercial forwarding subsection, traffic section, pier operations. It sounds similar to — oh, relieved from. All right. So

the next one is assistant to officer in charge, inbound cargo subsection and shipment survey and code, marking subsection, traffic and peer operations. So there's some new — new functions there. What did those — what were those new functions? What did they mean?

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02-00:00:00

Rudney: Here's a four stack destroyer [showing photograph].

02-00:00:07

Meeker: So this destroyer was one of the early ones that was —

02-00:00:11

Rudney: Most of them were built in World War I but those destroyers were given to the British.

02-00:00:16

Meeker: OK. So these were the ones that you were...

02-00:00:20

Rudney: I was on when I was in the Naval Reserve.

02-00:00:21

Meeker: Yes, so... Let's see here. Got to get a picture of a four stacker.

02-00:00:35

Rudney: It's the second one. Korean War.

02-00:00:37

Meeker: OK. So this one's from...

02-00:00:39

Rudney: World War II.

02-00:00:40

Meeker: Forty — '45 and they had already changed your name at this point, huh?

02-00:00:46

Rudney: Yes.

02-00:00:51

Meeker: So when did that name change happen? When you left New York?

02-00:00:56

Rudney: November of '45.

02-00:00:57

Meeker: November of '45. So this is your new card in response to that and this is...?

02-00:01:02

Rudney: That's Korea — that other one's Korean War.

- 02-00:01:03  
Meeker: Korea. Yes. All right. So tell me about this new — your second duty...?
- 02-00:01:18  
Rudney: OK. There was a tremendous amount of war material here in San Francisco, most of it around China Basin. That whole area had amphibious vehicles, other kinds of vehicles, and my orders were to get rid of them, because the war was over and there was so much stuff. And again, I thought a while and contacted Judson Murphy Pacific. Now, there used to be a steel mill in Emeryville.
- 02-00:01:57  
Meeker: Do you need to get that?
- 02-00:02:00  
Rudney: Yes. Judson Murphy Pacific agreed to take the various amphibious vehicles. They would pay the government \$11 a ton. Now, what I did is I got a heavy tank and I ripped out the engines and literally destroyed these amphibious vehicles and put them on a railroad flatbed and they ended up as reinforcing iron in Emeryville. Now, there were a lot of these. There were hundreds of them, because the amphibious vehicles had a very rapid death rate on the invasion and the invasion of Japan would have been tremendous. Now, other supplies that they brought back.
- 02-00:02:56  
Meeker: Well, these vehicles, were they being sold or were they basically just being donated to — for reuse? For civilian reuse?
- 02-00:03:04  
Rudney: No, these were manufactured vehicles.
- 02-00:03:06  
Meeker: Yes.
- 02-00:03:08  
Rudney: And manufactured amphibious vehicles. And then I literally ripped the engines out and ripped them apart so they couldn't be used, and then put on a flatcar and brought over to Emeryville and melted down into reinforcing iron.
- 02-00:03:25  
Meeker: But so the product — like the remnants of these vessels, were they being sold for like scrap or were they just being —
- 02-00:03:34  
Rudney: They were sold for scrap.
- 02-00:03:35  
Meeker: They were being sold, OK.

02-00:03:36

Rudney: Yes, they were scrap. And Judson Murphy Pacific agreed to pay the US government \$11 a ton for the steel.

02-00:03:46

Meeker: And that sounds like a pretty fair price, I guess?

02-00:03:48

Rudney: At that time, it was probably the market price.

02-00:03:51

Meeker: OK, all right.

02-00:03:54

Rudney: And there were hundreds of these vehicles, and many other steel kinds of apparatus. We didn't have too many guns here but other steel things were sent to Judson Murphy Pacific, melted down, put in the reinforcing iron. Now, a lot of other supplies were brought back, a lot of medical supplies. And the federal government agreed that they would not put these things on the market, and they were in first class condition and... What we would do is take them down to China Basin where they had a concrete area and just run a tank over them and destroy them.

02-00:04:43

Meeker: Why is it they wouldn't be sold? Was it fear of competition with the private sector or...?

02-00:04:47

Rudney: Well, a fear of flooding the market, because there were millions of dollars worth of medical supplies were sent all over the world. We had a lot of hospital ships and these were stored overseas, and they didn't want to leave them there, so they brought them back and they could have destroyed them there, but they didn't. So we just destroyed everything. There were some vessels, cranes, and some boats brought back, and I took those up to Rio Vista where there's fresh water and brackish water to be stored. And they were stored and many of those things were used during the Korean War.

02-00:05:43

Meeker: So there was — the kinds of material that was stored were ships and cranes and larger equipment?

02-00:05:48

Rudney: No, a lot of things. In some areas, the equipment that the military was using was just dumped into the ocean. It was cut up so it couldn't be used again, because Caterpillar didn't want the competition.

02-00:06:11

Meeker: Interesting. Where were you stationed at this point? Were you...?

02-00:06:15

Rudney: Fort Mason.

02-00:06:16

Meeker:

So were you — you were actually living on the base at Fort Mason?

02-00:06:20

Rudney:

Yes. I can show you pictures of it if you want to see them.

02-00:06:24

Meeker:

Well, what was it like being in San Francisco in 1945?

02-00:06:28

Rudney:

Well, we called it the Battle of Van Ness Avenue?

02-00:06:33

Meeker:

What does that mean?

02-00:06:34

Rudney:

Well, we were literally — Fort Mason's on Van Ness Avenue.

02-00:06:37

Meeker:

Sure, sure.

02-00:06:40

Rudney:

And overseas you used to get a medal for a battle, and we didn't get any stripes. I can show you a picture.

02-00:07:21

Meeker:

Well, actually, I want to hear about the work, but I wonder if we can just pause and you can tell me a little bit —

02-00:07:26

Rudney:

Well, I spent a lot of time at Oakland Army Base. There was a lot of equipment coming back.

02-00:07:32

Meeker:

Well, before we get into that, I want to hear more about what life was like, you know, while you were stationed in San Francisco. What kind of...

02-00:07:40

Rudney:

Life was very good. There were lots of officers quarters. The war was over. Many people were discharged. The reason I wasn't was that my boss was a lieutenant colonel and he had been down in New Guinea and had jungle rot in his hands. He wore gloves at all times. We called him Colonel Gloves. And he called me to his office one day and... Well, prior to that, I tried to get overseas, and I had arranged with a colonel who was taking his ship around the world to pick up troops and end up in New York and then I'd be discharged from New York. And the colonel — my boss normally signed everything I put in front of him, but he read this and he said no. He pointed to the leaf — silver leaf on his shoulder. He said, "Lieutenant, I'm a lieutenant colonel and you're a second lieutenant." He says, "You know, I have this jungle rot and I'm getting out of the Army. And there's only two people here that can do this job; you and

myself." And he says, "I'm getting out of the Army. You're going to stay here until the job is finished."

02-00:09:31

Meeker: And the job he was referring to was?

02-00:09:34

Rudney: All of this mess that... See, later on, I was made officer in charge of the whole operation.

02-00:09:45

Meeker: OK. So then this is April of '46, just a few months later, officer in charge commercial forwarding unit, traffic subsection, pier operation section. So this is not —

02-00:09:57

Rudney: Actually, I did all of this before that, and then they made me officer in charge.

02-00:10:00

Meeker: OK. So you had already basically been doing this work and then you were made officer in charge?

02-00:10:04

Rudney: Yes. It was cleaning up the mess.

02-00:10:06

Meeker: So what was your work then around the Oakland Army Base, in particular?

02-00:10:11

Rudney: A lot of this stuff came into the Oakland Army Base and there used to be an office. I had an office in Oakland Army Base.

02-00:10:18

Meeker: Well, just kind of give me an overview of what the Oakland Army Base functioned as.

02-00:10:25

Rudney: Originally, Oakland Army Base was used as a supply center for sending things overseas. Now, all the buildings that are still there were controlled by a quartermaster. The quartermaster received the various supplies that were being used by the Army overseas, and then they were turned over to the Transportation Corp, and the Transportation Corp was responsible for loading them on the ships and getting the supplies to where they were needed. We loaded all the ships. Now, San Francisco was very different in those days. Not only did we use Fort Mason, but San Francisco had railroad tracks on the Embarcadero, and railroad cars would come in and put on a car ferry and take it to San Francisco, and then they had little engines which would put the cargo on piers and then the ships would tie up the piers. So we not only had Oakland Army Base but we loaded ships along the Embarcadero.

02-00:11:54

Meeker:

So basically what you're saying is that cargo would come in from points in the United States — around the United States to Oakland?

02-00:12:05

Rudney:

Yes. See, all the railroads came into Oakland. At that time, there was Southern Pacific, Santa Fe, Western Pacific. We had Sacramento and Northern, which used to run railroad trains down — just down below here. Used to come through from Walnut Creek and then they'd go out on the mole and the mole is still there. Also, there used to be a naval supply base, which was all torn down. I don't know if you remember that.

02-00:12:39

Meeker:

Well, yes. That's a little bit of what we're studying here, so...

02-00:12:41

Rudney:

Yes. Well, the naval supply base was a very, very large base right next to the Army base where up until probably 1980, used to have aircraft carriers and ships come in for repair and ships that would carry naval supply all over the world.

02-00:13:08

Meeker:

So this sounds like a pretty big and difficult task that the Oakland Army Base had to do, which was you know, accept material from all over the country and somehow coordinate that with the various ships that are then taking that out.

02-00:13:26

Rudney:

Absolutely. Yes. There were two locations. There was the Inner Harbor and the Outer Harbor at Oakland Army Base. And they're being used today, I think, along the Estuary and the old Inner Harbor.

02-00:13:42

Meeker:

In a commercial capacity?

02-00:13:44

Rudney:

Yes.

02-00:13:44

Meeker:

Was the whole thing then being used by the Army?

02-00:13:47

Rudney:

Yes. It was all used by the military. Now, we used commercial ships. The Army had some ships. At one time, I was told the Army had more ships than the Navy. And this is probably true. But they were all loaded by the ships or sometimes we had little cranes that would load the ships. But they were basically loaded by ship because the ships had booms and winches and it was all small packaging. There was no containerization at that time.

02-00:14:18

Meeker:

So that means that it was basically draftees and enlisted men who were doing all the shipping?

02-00:14:26

Rudney: No, they had civilian longshoremen.

02-00:14:27

Meeker: OK, all right. And so they would come on the ship and do the loading when the ship was in dock?

02-00:14:35

Rudney: That's right.

02-00:14:37

Meeker: OK. How were the logistics of this done? Who was in charge of that to figure out that, you know, when a certain supply train arrived, that it wasn't going to sit around for six months, that there was a ship there that was going to go out on, and that, you know, when a ship was there ready to...

02-00:14:54

Rudney: We did most of that at Fort Mason. You see, Fort Mason controlled the whole area.

02-00:14:57

Meeker: OK. Well, can you describe that process, because that seems to me like the main function of the Oakland Army Base, which was really to sort of act as a transportation hub.

02-00:15:06

Rudney: Well, let's say a railroad — a railroad car would come in with general cargo for let's say Guam. It would be unloaded and put in a warehouse. Now, most of these ships, like a liberty ship, would hold from 10,000 to 15,000 tons of cargo, so you would assemble the cargo first for a specific location. And after you had the 10,000 tons, you would get a ship, and then you'd load the ship with that cargo. So you would accumulate the cargo for a particular location. Now, when you had enough cargo, you had to ship.

02-00:15:58

Meeker: Was there much cargo that was perishable, that you really needed to plan in advance to make sure it was not going to sit in the...

02-00:16:04

Rudney: Yes. Later in the war, they had a class of ships called the C1, C2, C3, and C4. The old hospital ships were C4s. Also, the tank ships were C4s. C1 was a refrigerator ship and the C1s, I guess, would carry eight to 10,000 tons of refrigerator products. We tried to get as much fresh food overseas. In fact, out of New York, we loaded some liberty ships with eggs and they were supposed to take the northern route. And when they were about three quarters of the way, they were notified that there was a group of submarines, so they went south, and when the ship tied up at the dock, the eggs were all rotten, and I understand it was quite a mess getting those rotten eggs off the ship.

02-00:17:14  
Meeker: Oh, no.

02-00:17:15  
Rudney: But this was a whole shipload of eggs.

02-00:17:18  
Meeker: Where was — it was going from New York? What was the destination?

02-00:17:21  
Rudney: Probably Le Havre. Le Havre in France.

02-00:17:26  
Meeker: Oh, OK. All right.

02-00:17:26  
Rudney: See, Le Havre was the big — nearest big port to where the invasion took place. But — OK, we get back to San — to the Bay area. So we would accumulate enough cargo for a ship and then we'd order the ship. Now, it takes a lot of railroad cars to make 10,000 tons.

02-00:17:50  
Meeker: And that's in essence why all those massive warehouses were built.

02-00:17:55  
Rudney: Warehouses. Yes. All that warehousing. And it's still there, I believe.

02-00:18:00  
Meeker: Yes, yes. Those really big long ones, right?

02-00:18:03  
Rudney: Yes, and they're extremely large. They're probably a hundred feet wide or maybe a little more, and they're probably 400 feet long.

02-00:18:14  
Meeker: Did you ever do any of the contracting or working with the longshore leaders? The union leaders?

02-00:18:23  
Rudney: Yes. Because I had been on the docks in New York and they knew I could talk their language. I became very friendly — in fact, there was an incident — some colonel in Japan found a Japanese religious installation and it had some very excellent bells, Japanese bells, and he decided that they would have a good home at West Point. And somehow General MacArthur found out about it and he demoted the colonel and said he wanted the bells back. Somehow got on a railroad car and were headed for West Point. And the longshoremen had specific orders not to let those bells leave San Francisco. And they came to me and they said, "Stan, you know, we're in trouble. We got orders not to load those bells but they're on the way to West Point and we'd appreciate it if you'd stop them." I got the railroad and the railroad said they're going to be — the cargo was on the train and it would arrive in Saint Louis. Now, the Army had

officers on all the railroads, and I notified Saint Louis, and they found the bells and they shipped them back. The longshoremen's union offered me a book that would give me — as a civilian, the opportunity to work on the docks, and foolishly, I didn't accept it. I told them I didn't want it.

02-00:20:45

Meeker: What does that mean? I don't understand.

02-00:20:47

Rudney: Well, when you join the union, you used to get a union book that you kept a record of what ships you worked on. And those jobs were scarce after the war, but if you had a book, you could get a job and while I was going to U.C. Berkeley, I worked nights and I didn't have a book. But I would work more frequently if I had a book.

02-00:21:16

Meeker: So they wanted to kind of make you an honorary member of the union?

02-00:21:20

Rudney: Yes, of the union, because I did them a lot of favors.

02-00:21:22

Meeker: What — so what — so how was this bell job a favor? I guess I don't understand.

02-00:21:27

Rudney: Because they were in trouble.

02-00:21:30

Meeker: Why were they in trouble?

02-00:21:30

Rudney: Because they were not supposed to send the bells back and MacArthur had tremendous power and he could have created great problems for the longshoremen's union.

02-00:21:44

Meeker: So what you're saying is the longshoremen basically made a mistake in —

02-00:21:47

Rudney: They made a mistake —

02-00:21:48

Meeker: — in sending them off to West Point.

02-00:21:48

Rudney: — and I solved the problem. I... This happened frequently.

02-00:21:55

Meeker: Yes. It's a complex...

02-00:21:59

Rudney:

Another incident that happened... Some colonels that had been discharged, wanted to start a steamship company. And they had gotten financing from somebody in Chicago and they got hold of five C2s, which is a large cargo ship and 3 C1s, and the name of the company was Pacific Fareast. Later on, Alioto got a hold of the company and they had trouble getting cargo for those ships. And they came to me one day at Fort Mason, and they were all out of the Army, and I knew them as commanding officers. And, you know, I was just a measly second lieutenant. And they said, "You know, we can't seem to get any cargo. Our rates are too high." And I had just been working on the rates for Matson and I said, "Well, Colonel, I have to go to the bathroom. Why don't you sit at my desk." And they got the rates that Matson had suggested and they undercut Matson and they got cargo.

02-00:23:45

Meeker:

Were these guys friends of yours or friend with you or...?

02-00:23:49

Rudney:

Well, not friends, but they had been commanding officers. I knew them and, you know, I was really not an Army officer — I was more of a civilian. I never — I didn't care whether they were colonels or generals. You know, if they're nice people and they had spent time in the military and they wanted to go in business, and they were entitled to these sorts of things. I mean, they had gotten five or seven ships and they had no cargo for them, and why not get some competition going.

02-00:24:29

Meeker:

All right. So one thing you mentioned that I just wanted to follow-up on about the command structure in the Bay Area. And so it sounds to me like what you're saying is the Oakland Army Base was really under the command of the leaders at Fort Mason.

02-00:24:47

Rudney:

Oh, absolutely.

02-00:24:48

Meeker:

So who was — who would have been the highest ranking officer at the Oakland Army Base? Just to speculate, I guess.

02-00:24:56

Rudney:

Probably a colonel.

02-00:24:56

Meeker:

Probably a colonel, OK.

02-00:24:57

Rudney:

Yes.

02-00:24:57

Meeker:

OK. And then the highest ranking officer at Fort Mason would have been...

02-00:25:00  
Rudney: A major general.

02-00:25:03  
Meeker: A major general, OK. So basically, Oakland Army Base would have been one amongst many bases that would have been under control of this major general?

02-00:25:15  
Rudney: Well, the whole San Francisco Embarcadero, which had many, many piers, many, many ships, lots of supplies... Well, they actually ran troop ships. Now, Camp Stoneman up in Pittsburgh was the accumulation spot for bringing troops in. Then troops would be put on a ferry and brought down to Fort Mason, because Fort Mason could handle troop ships better than Oakland.

02-00:25:52  
Meeker: OK. Why is that?

02-00:25:54  
Rudney: Because they had piers and it was designed that way.

02-00:25:59  
Meeker: It was — so how — the difference being that Oakland was more designed for cargo?

02-00:26:04  
Rudney: Oakland was principally cargo.

02-00:26:05  
Meeker: OK. So there weren't actually a lot of troops, at least during this period of time, World War II, and immediately thereafter going through Oakland?

02-00:26:14  
Rudney: No. They all went through San Francisco and they were brought down from Camp Stoleman on a ferry to the troop ship and then overseas.

02-00:26:25  
Meeker: OK. Was that an alarm going off or something?

02-00:26:34  
Rudney: 12:00 o'clock we have a siren on the street.

02-00:26:37  
Meeker: Oh, OK.

02-00:26:40  
Rudney: You happen to be here the day they test it.

02-00:26:42  
Meeker: Yes. It's not that loud, I just wondered. So the kind of — maybe it's easier to say what kind of cargo generally didn't go through —

02-00:26:53  
Rudney: Oakland.

02-00:26:54  
Meeker: — Oakland rather than what did, because it sounds like most every...

02-00:26:56  
Rudney: Ammunition was all loaded at Concord naval supply depot. All general cargo came into Oakland Army Base. That would be food, clothing. Petroleum was loaded at the Berkeley pier, and general supplies all went through Oakland.

02-00:27:33  
Meeker: OK. So — let's take food, for example.

02-00:27:36  
Rudney: It was all canned food.

02-00:27:38  
Meeker: It was all canned food, so there's — you're not having a lot of Central Valley farmers or local farmers providing any fresh food or anything like that, so...?

02-00:27:47  
Rudney: No. Later in the war, there were some put on refrigerator ships, which was done in Oakland.

02-00:27:54  
Meeker: OK. And so refrigerator ships would go through — what kind of — what kind of fresh food would there be? I mean, you said eggs, I guess, probably would have been one of the things, no?

02-00:28:01  
Rudney: All sorts of — as much vegetable as you could get on the refrigerator ship.

02-00:28:07  
Meeker: Where were they getting these from? Were there coming from — you don't know?

02-00:28:09  
Rudney: Well, mostly from the Central Valley.

02-00:28:13  
Meeker: OK. I mean this is a project about Oakland Army Base and I want to try to figure out what the core functions are, and it's a little difficult because it sounds like there's not a whole lot of people involved, it's mostly cargo.

02-00:28:30  
Rudney: It's all cargo. Lots of lift trucks and lots of trucks. As I said, you got the four railroads coming in here. You got the Santa Fe and the Northern Pacific, Western Pacific, Southern Pacific.

02-00:28:44  
Meeker: Now so you were working at this at the time of demobilization after the war?

02-00:28:49

Rudney: That's right. Yes.

02-00:28:53

Meeker: Can you describe that process and how that changed the kind of work that was done on the base, if it did?

02-00:29:00

Rudney: Well, you were getting all these — you were getting a lot of returned supplies. Those things that — have you ever heard of Tracy general depot?

02-00:29:14

Meeker: No.

02-00:29:17

Rudney: At Tracy there was a general army depot, which was a large supply depot. There used to be many throughout the United States. And those things, like guns, rifles, clothing... All of the stuff that you would need to run an army would be stored at Tracy. Now, during World War II, when supplies were needed at places... I mean, they were ordered to come in on a railroad car, put in a storage area. You know, a ship came, you'd put it aboard the ship. So, you know, you had massive amounts of supplies. At the Battle of Okinawa, there was something like 700 ships. Now, I would say maybe 25% of those ships came from Oakland Army Base. I mean, there were Marine supplies out of Pendleton. Los Angeles had a port. I don't know much about what went out in Los Angeles, but they shipped cargo out of there. And the Navy had a port where they shipped stuff. The Marines had a port. The Navy supply depot had a lot of cargo that was for the Navy.

02-00:31:30

Meeker: So it sounds like what you're describing is that from during the war to the years after the war, the main transition that happened was the flow — the direction of the flow of material from the States to the War Theater and then from the War Theater back to the States.

02-00:31:21

Rudney: That stuff after the war was over.

02-00:31:23

Meeker: OK. So how long did you serve in this capacity at Fort Mason?

02-00:31:31

Rudney: I was separated in September of '46 at Camp Beale.

02-00:31:35

Meeker: Where's Camp Beale?

02-00:31:40

Rudney: It's now Beale Air Force Base in Marysville, California.

02-00:31:47

Meeker: OK.

02-00:31:52

Rudney: And I finally got out of the Army in November because I had a lot of accumulation, vacation time. I didn't have any vacation while I was in the Army.

02-00:32:02

Meeker: So you were basically on vacation — using your vacation time in the last couple of months?

02-00:32:07

Rudney: Yes. I think I had 59 days.

02-00:32:11

Meeker: When did you meet your wife? Was that —

02-00:32:16

Rudney: I first met her as a little girl. She had some relatives in Caldwell, New Jersey, and I lived in Upper Montclair and I have a sister that's five and a half years younger than I am. My wife used to visit her relatives and her relatives introduced her to some people in Montclair and my sister knew these girls. I came home and I was working on a vessel. I guess it was 1939, maybe the — early in '39 and I came home. My mother was in the hospital with a cancer surgery and I came home to bring some stuff and my wife was a little girl and she was with my sister. And then after I was commissioned, I had ten days delay en route to my first duty and I was in New York. It was Christmas of '44 and I was in New York and my sister said, "Well, I want to go over and see Bea." And I said, "Well, who's Bea?" And she said, "Well, you met her when she was a little child." And my wife had just graduated from nursing school at Cornell University, New York Hospital. And I met her and I didn't see her again until maybe April of '45. I was in New York but every other day I worked around the clock. And I was too tired to court anybody or do anything. As the war slowed down, I started dating her and then in August of '45, I was shipped to San Francisco, and she visited me in November, 1945. We had talked about getting married and I was always afraid that I was going to get shipped to Japan because of the kind of work I did. And then I didn't see her again until November of '46.

02-00:35:02

Meeker: At which time you —

02-00:35:03

Rudney: I got hepatitis at Camp Beale. Those days, they would change the needle, but they wouldn't change the syringe, so thousands of people got hepatitis. And I wanted to go to a VA Hospital, but she said, "No. I want you to go to New York Hospital." So I went to New York Hospital and I was in bed for a month with hepatitis. We finally got married in June of '47.

- 02-00:35:38  
Meeker: OK. So there's a lot happening in just a short period of time here. Well, then in June in '47, did you want to come back out to the West Coast or were you going...?
- 02-00:35:49  
Rudney: No. I didn't like the culture of the East Coast.
- 02-00:35:55  
Meeker: What does that mean?
- 02-00:35:58  
Rudney: Well, it was a very close family culture. See, you hear about veterans having various kinds of mental problems.
- 02-00:36:17  
Meeker: Yes. PTSD. [Post traumatic stress disorder.]
- 02-00:36:20  
Rudney: Yes. There was an incident in Staten Island that gave me that... In February of '45, there were two tankers waiting for the convoy to make up... One was a Norwegian large tanker with diesel fuel and an American tanker with high octane gas. All the bombers need high octane gas. And the United States was providing all the fuel for high octane bombers. And the Norwegian lifted its anchor and the tide was coming in and they couldn't get their engine started. And the tide forced the Norwegian tanker to hit the American tanker and static electricity set the high octane gas on fire. The American tanker had a four inch rifle for protection and had an American gun crew and that exploded and the two ships burned. I commandeered the tug and went out and tried to bring back the bodies, and I've never gotten over that.
- 02-00:38:00  
Meeker: So you weren't there to rescue survivors, you were there to...
- 02-00:38:05  
Rudney: I was there to rescue the survivors, but there weren't any survivors.
- 02-00:38:09  
Meeker: How many people perished?
- 02-00:38:14  
Rudney: I would say probably about — maybe the Norwegian had a crew of 75 and the American ship probably had a crew of not only — they had this naval group for the guns, probably 150.
- 02-00:38:36  
Meeker: So you had to basically sort of collect the bodies, it seems like, kind of...
- 02-00:38:42  
Rudney: Yes. That was... The high octane was very voluble. The ships didn't sink, just a tremendous fire.

02-00:38:52  
Meeker: Massive heat.

02-00:38:54  
Rudney: Oh, terrible. The smell was just terrible. In fact, I couldn't change my kids diapers because the smell reminded me of that.

02-00:39:04  
Meeker: So how did this relate to you wanting to stay or not stay in Cornell area when you and your wife married? You mentioned that this had some relation to that.

02-00:39:17  
Rudney: No, I just wanted to get away. I wanted to leave New York. I was offered jobs there on the docks. The French government offered me a job because of the work I had done — when I worked for the French War Commission loading ships. And I had friends whose families were running large corporations. I just wanted to get away.

02-00:39:52  
Meeker: So which of these job offers did you take?

02-00:39:56  
Rudney: I didn't take any. I went to Albuquerque. And Albuquerque, I worked as a powder monkey on a top secret job. We were building tunnels in the mountains to store atomic bombs, and then we built a road to Kirkland Air Force Base, which is still there.

02-00:40:26  
Meeker: And this was the civilian jobs?

02-00:40:30  
Rudney: Yes. This was 1947, '48.

02-00:40:30  
Meeker: What company were you working for here?

02-00:40:33  
Rudney: Peter Keywit.

02-00:40:34  
Meeker: What was it?

02-00:40:35  
Rudney: Peter Keywit. They're still in existence. They built the Richmond-San Rafael bridge, you know. They do a lot of heavy work.

02-00:40:44  
Meeker: Big civil engineering firm?

02-00:40:47  
Rudney: Yes.

02-00:40:49  
Meeker: Yes. Did your wife join you down in Albuquerque?

02-00:40:51  
Rudney: Yes. She joined me and she worked at the hospital there, Saint Joseph's Hospital. And then in February of '48, went back in the Army. It was supposed to be for additional training. Actually, I did the transportation logistics for the invasion of Russia.

02-00:41:23  
Meeker: Well, let's hear about that.

02-00:41:26  
Rudney: Well, at that time, we had the bomb and they didn't. Certain people in the Pentagon felt that because of what Stalin had done and what he had accomplished — he had taken over the whole Balkans and part of Austria — that we should have war with the Russians. And fortunately, Harry Truman was a historian. The Russians defeated Napoleon. The Russians defeated Hitler. He didn't want us to get involved. Here is a picture of the class of men who were at that meeting.

02-00:42:22  
Meeker: What row are you on?

02-00:42:24  
Rudney: Fort Eustis, Virginia.

02-00:42:32  
Meeker: OK. So who was the commanding officer that was charged with...?

02-00:42:40  
Rudney: It was a school. I don't remember who was in command.

02-00:42:41  
Meeker: Oh, OK. So the school — transportation officer's course and this — how does this relate to the proposed invasion of Russia?

02-00:42:52  
Rudney: Well, part of the schooling was to develop logistics for the transportation activity for the invasion of Russia.

02-00:43:05  
Meeker: You know, it's interesting. In this picture I see four or five African American officers. What can you tell me about them? Do you remember them at all?

02-00:43:17  
Rudney: Yes.

02-00:43:18  
Meeker: Because this is about the time that Truman also integrates the armed forces.

02-00:43:21

Rudney:

Truman didn't integrate the army until about 1950 — well, it started in '48. It became real effective in '50. Up until that time, most of the American units would be black with white officers. We had a problem at Staten Island. The black troops that used to unload the railroad cars cargo for the ships wouldn't work. They did things and were put in a stockade and then Colonel Clayton come in one day and said, "Lieutenant, I want you to solve this problem. Well, you know, we can't have black troops doing what they're doing. We're not getting any work done."

02-00:44:26

Meeker:

Doing what they're doing meaning...?

02-00:44:28

Rudney:

Well, they would do things and get put in the stockade so they wouldn't have to work. The winter of '45 was a very severe winter. Lots of ice and snow. So I thought about it a while and went to their officers. I was the second lieutenant. They were all captains and I said, "Colonel Clayton sent me over to see if I can solve your problem." And he said, "Lieutenant, anything you can do would be very pleasurable. We have a lot of problems here." I said to the company commander, "Pick out your three biggest, most intelligent enlisted men." And I said, "We're going to have to do things that are not necessarily military procedure." So I got a silver dollar and I got the three best, largest enlisted men. And I said, "Here's a silver dollar. And a guy who comes up with a silver dollar is going to be the first sergeant." And a very intelligent black private came up with a silver dollar.

02-00:46:03

Meeker:

What do you mean, 'came up with a silver dollar'?

02-00:46:04

Rudney:

I threw it up in the air and I said, "Whoever gets — gets the silver dollar is going to be the first sergeant."

02-00:46:13

Meeker:

All right.

02-00:46:10

Rudney:

I say, "From now on, you're the first sergeant." We called out the men and said, "In the morning, you've got 12 railroad cars to unload and as soon as the 12 railroad cars are unloaded, the men can go back to the barracks. After lunch, you got 12 more railroad cars. And after that, they're through for the day. No more retreat. At 5:00 o'clock they can leave the post. I'll arrange for the men in the stockade to be taken out of the stockade and then go to work. Tomorrow morning I want you to line up the troops and I'll explain what we're going to do." And that next day, the first sergeant lined up the troops and he said, "You black bastards. If you let this lieutenant down, I'll kill you." We had no more trouble after that.

02-00:47:42

Meeker: So what do you think it was that he was able to do that the white leadership wasn't?

02-00:47:48

Rudney: The white leadership didn't understand the culture of these people? They were not soldiers. They're not military people. And you set certain areas of what you want them to do and when that's done, that's it.

02-00:48:09

Meeker: So it was sort of the ongoing expectation that they're there to serve was unfamiliar or objectionable to these...

02-00:48:23

Rudney: The white officers tried to treat them as military people, and you can't do that. I mean, this is our problem today. You know, the only people that can get these black kids to do what they should be doing and finish school are their parents or other blacks. Whites can't do it.

02-00:48:49

Meeker: Yes, interesting. So that was your insight, that then you basically elevated one of the black enlisted men to a leadership position.

02-00:48:59

Rudney: That's right.

02-00:49:00

Meeker: OK. Can you tell me more about the work that you did in transportation logistics?

02-00:49:11

Rudney: Well, I spent a lot of time with the longshoremen. It was principally getting cargo off of ships and getting it either destroyed or up to Tracy or whatever. It was unbelievable, the amount of stuff that came back. The Army had developed a van that could fix anything from eyeglasses to a 50 caliber machine gun. And, you know, drove them up to Tracy. Sometimes they'd be ripped off and I don't know how that happened. My responsibility was to get them to Tracy the best I could. In the east, at that time, the longshoremen used to steal a lot of stuff. And it was part of their culture. They felt they were entitled to it.

02-00:50:39

Meeker: They considered it part of their pay.

02-00:50:40

Rudney: Yes.

02-00:50:43

Meeker: Was it the same on the West Coast or different?

- 02-00:50:45  
Rudney: The West Coast was different. The longshoremen here were organized different. You ever hear of Harry Bridges?
- 02-00:50:58  
Meeker: Yes.
- 02-00:50:59  
Rudney: See, in the East Coast, the longshoremen were principally run by the Unprincipled Unions. Here on the West Coast, it was very different. It was more humane. One night when I was working for the French War Commissioner, two guys beat me up. Blacken both my eyes, broke my nose, and worked my stomach over. And I come to work the next morning, the union leader pulled me aside and said, "Stan, those fellows that beat you up got concrete shoes. We can't have people beating up management." I never saw them before. I heard they just had gotten out of prison. Whether they thought by beating me up, the management, they could get a position in the hierarchy... If you wanted to work in Staten Island, every payday you put \$5 into a card game, whether you played cards or crap. You put five bucks in. If you didn't, you didn't work the next week.
- 02-00:52:27  
Meeker: So it's interesting. I mean, these guys that beat you up, were they longshoremen?
- 02-00:52:34  
Rudney: No.
- 02-00:52:33  
Meeker: No. OK. So these were just outliers but you said that there was a collaboration between the longshoremen .
- 02-00:52:45  
Rudney: Well, the union controlled the longshoremen.
- 02-00:52:47  
Meeker: Yes. Well, how was it — you know, I mean, you said that it was more humane in the West Coast and you mentioned the area bridges. What do you mean by that?
- 02-00:52:53  
Rudney: Well, they had an office and you'd go to the office, and if there was a job and you were in line for it — because they tried to hand out employment across the board... And there wasn't a payoff... Once in New York, I was unloading a shipload of Scotch whiskey. This was after the war had started in Europe and what you'd do... You'd line the men up against the pier and you'd go work. One of the stranger mafia came to me and said, "Stan, I appreciate it if you'd put that little guy to work." I said, "He's awful small." "Oh, please, put him to work." "Fine." And I put this kid to work and one day I went down in the hold

and I said, "Why are you working here and why are you connected?" He said, "I married into the family of an undesirable."

02-00:54:16

Meeker: So was he sent there to pilfer some material?

02-00:54:19

Rudney: No, no, no.

02-00:54:20

Meeker: Or just he needs to get a job?

02-00:54:21

Rudney: He was there to work with the longshoremen and get a feel of what went on.

02-00:54:27

Meeker: And then maybe move up in the union management.

02-00:54:29

Rudney: Yes, possibly.

02-00:54:31

Meeker: OK. So again, on the West Coast, what's going on is there's...

02-00:54:36

Rudney: It's more humane. You go to an office and you put in your book and if there's a job, you'd get it.

02-00:54:46

Meeker: OK. You mentioned this one good experience you had with the longshoreman and you helped him solve a problem. Were there any — was there any labor strife or any difficulties that you had to deal with?

02-00:54:49

Rudney: No, I never had any of the strife with the longshoremen or with the union leaders.

02-00:55:04

Meeker: So you wouldn't have engaged in those sort of negotiations or problem solving?

02-00:55:08

Rudney: No.

02-00:55:11

Meeker: It was more on an operational level?

02-00:55:12

Rudney: That's right. I was in the military. I was a second lieutenant.

02-00:55:17  
Meeker: OK. We just have a few minutes left on this one tape and I wonder if we could just...

02-00:55:23  
Rudney: Let's talk a little bit about Oakland Army Base. As I said, Oakland Army Base originally was not too unlike Emeryville today. Mudflats and that sort of thing. And when they decided to build a base, they needed fill and the fill came out of Hiller Highlands. You know where Hiller Highlands is located?

02-00:55:49  
Meeker: No.

02-00:55:50  
Rudney: OK. Hiller Highlands is a development on Ashby not too far from Highway 24.

02-00:56:01  
Meeker: Oh, yes, yes. I've seen that.

02-00:56:03  
Rudney: It's a big canyon. Now, the fill came out of there and it was carried down to Oakland Army Base and put in there. And then, in order to support the piers, they just drove a lot of piling. This has all been told to me, so I never tried to verify.

02-00:56:24  
Meeker: This happened before you arrived?

02-00:56:24  
Rudney: Yes. This was probably in 1939, 1940 when they built the base. They drove a lot of piling to support the decks and everything else. And they drove the piling down and they hit hardpan and they cut it off. But they hit hardpan, they didn't hit rock.

02-00:56:47  
Meeker: What is that — what's the difference?

02-00:56:52  
Rudney: Well, nature in many places puts in... I guess it's silicon or whatever and it just forms a surface or pan. But that's not the bottom. That's not the hard rock. And about 1950 — now, these are the docks alongside Highway 80, when you go up on the bridge. All these things collapsed.

02-00:57:30  
Meeker: Were they just sinking or was it like a full collapse?

02-00:57:32  
Rudney: No, they were sinking. They couldn't use the piers anymore.

02-00:57:43  
Meeker: And so were you assigned to remedy this or tear this stuff down or...?

02-00:57:47  
Rudney: No, they just tore them down.

02-00:57:49  
Meeker: Because they didn't need them anymore.

02-00:57:51  
Rudney: Well, it wasn't that. It would be too expensive to do anything. And as you say, they probably didn't need them anymore.

02-00:57:59  
Meeker: Did the other — the other piers survived, then, it sounds like?

02-00:58:03  
Rudney: As far as I know they did, because they were more ashore.

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03-00:00:00  
Meeker: So let's take you from this period of time that you were working in Albuquerque. When did that particular job end for you?

03-00:00:36  
Rudney: I got called back in the Army in February of '48 and I went to school there.

03-00:00:43  
Meeker: That's right, OK. All right. You know, can you tell me a little bit more about what you were learning to do there and what sort of plans you came up with for the invasion of Russia?

03-00:00:54  
Rudney: Well, it... As you say, it was a basic review. It took three months. You see, there's all ranks here from majors down to second lieutenant. They also do this to prepare you for advancement.

03-00:01:23  
Meeker: Did you want a military career at this point? Were you considering it?

03-00:01:30  
Rudney: I had thought about it. Once as a sergeant, I went to a base in Savannah, Georgia, and took the exams to fly a P51. Well, I passed everything and when I was walking out, they said that — "Oh, we didn't give you the eye test," and I flunked the eye test. They said I was color blind. And as I walked out, a warrant officer said, "Hey, Sergeant, you seem depressed." And I said, "Yes, I passed everything and they won't let me fly because I'm color blind." He said, "What do you think caused that?" I said, "Well, I'd been to Newfoundland for a couple of years. Got snow blindness." And he says, "Well, I'll take the test for you." And I said, "You know, forget about it. You know, I don't want to go

through it." And then, four months later, they wanted people who were colorblind because they could pick out camouflage where people with normal sight couldn't, because camouflage is developed for normal sight. But, you know, I'm the kind of person — I don't want to fight City Hall.

03-00:03:15

Meeker:

OK. So they were looking for pilots who were colorblind then?

03-00:03:20

Rudney:

Yes. And they wanted older pilots because the young guys were — did their thing and now they wanted people who had more experience and could be leaders and didn't have the killer instinct the same way as the younger pilots.

03-00:03:44

Meeker:

They had the survival instinct.

03-00:03:46

Rudney:

Yes. And shortly after that, they discontinued training pilots.

03-00:03:52

Meeker:

Army did?

03-00:03:53

Rudney:

Yes.

03-00:03:54

Meeker:

And it went to Air Force, I'm guessing?

03-00:03:55

Rudney:

It was the Army. Called it the Army Air Force. It didn't become the Air Force until '47.

03-00:04:01

Meeker:

OK. So this was much later?

03-00:04:03

Rudney:

Yes. This was '43.

03-00:04:05

Meeker:

Yes. Or much earlier, rather. So were you — in the course of this transportation training, were you actually beginning to draw up plans or it was really just...

03-00:04:09

Rudney:

Yes. We had drawn up plans. In fact...

03-00:04:20

Meeker:

What did those — what did some of those plans entail? What was your function in doing that?

03-00:04:23

Rudney:

A lot of information was from captured German documents that had been translated. In one incident, I was working one day putting all this together. This time, I had an MOS, the logistical officer. Normally, it was a stevedoring officer, but now — at this particular time, I was a logistical officer. And a major and a lieutenant colonel come in the office and they said, "We were sent here by the general. We had been in — we were — both had been in Vienna for a period of time and we're back here now, and it was suggested that we come in and be interviewed by you. Who was assembling this information?" So I said, "Well, tell me a little bit about what was going on." They started telling me about the incidents in Vienna and what they knew and what they didn't know in a usual way. You know, it sounds to me like you guys have been sleeping with the same women as the Germans did. And this lieutenant colonel says, "Lieutenant, I'm going to have you court marshaled. You can't talk to me that way. Well, here's the documents, and then — they say the same thing that you said." I said, "Why don't you go see the general." And the next day they came back and apologized.

03-00:06:12

Meeker:

Well, so what did you mean by that comment? What were you getting at?

03-00:06:16

Rudney:

The information that they got. And this has been true of our intelligence, even today. These guys don't know what the hell they're doing, they don't know what they're looking for. I mean, our intelligence in World War II, thousands of men got killed because of poor intelligence.

03-00:06:40

Meeker:

Yes. But so it was obvious to you that they were getting bad intelligence?

03-00:06:44

Rudney:

Yes.

03-00:06:45

Meeker:

Well, you know, this brings up an interesting question to me, and you know, the few people I've interviewed who were servicemen for a long time. And there's this — I mean, it's a very hierarchical organization.

03-00:06:59

Rudney:

An admiral just got fired for the same reason.

03-00:07:05

Meeker:

Meaning?

03-00:07:07

Rudney:

He disagreed with the President. And he's on the field. He knows what's going on. He's been in the service for 45 years. He's got a feel for these things. And he's getting fired because he doesn't agree. Look at the generals early in the invasion who said, "We need more troops. We can't do it with this. We don't

have enough supplies." They didn't even have armor for these kids. We didn't have any of this in World War II, but it was a different kind of war.

03-00:07:47

Meeker:

Well, the question that it brings up is that, you know, this is a really hierarchical organization in which, you know, those down on the hierarchy, their sole task is to take and execute orders given to them from above. But what happens when you're down the line and you have questions or you disagree with what you're getting? Were you ever — I mean, it sounds like this is an example of being in a position —

03-00:08:08

Rudney:

Well, I'll tell you this happened to me during Korea. OK. Here, we were called back...

03-00:08:19

Meeker:

OK. So here you are called back to service.

03-00:08:21

Rudney:

Yes. Fifteenth of August, 1950.

03-00:08:25

Meeker:

All right.

03-00:08:30

Rudney:

I belonged to a reserve unit at the Presidio.

03-00:08:34

Meeker:

OK. Were you — where were you living at this point?

03-00:08:36

Rudney:

In Oakland — behind Oakland High on McKinley Avenue. You know where that is?

03-00:08:43

Meeker:

Yes. So a move, you know, mid-September 1950 to an intensive training unit. You'll be retaining your present position as far as practical. Projected movement to —.

03-00:09:04

Rudney:

The commanding officer of this unit was getting a divorce and he wanted to get away from the Bay Area. And he was a major. And by having a unit called up, he became a lieutenant colonel. And I worked with this person on Staten Island during World War II. The unit got called up and we got sent to Virginia. There was just a few of us. A battalion headquarters and we'd pick up all sorts of companies. I'm the battalion supply officer and I'm the only guy in the unit who's ever been around the docks. And I'm a first lieutenant. We get to Virginia and the Army and the Navy are having a problem over a place called Little Creek Line Depot. I was sent to Little Creek Mine Depot to get it

ready for troops, 250 troops. Now, part of my units didn't speak English. They were from San Juan, Puerto Rico. They were all draftees.

03-00:10:25

Meeker: Interesting, OK.

03-00:10:27

Rudney: Bill Telkin, my commanding officer, calls me in one day and says, "Stan, the Army and the Navy are having a problem and they want to reactivate Little Creek Mine Depot and there's nobody else around here that can handle that job. Told him I'd go there with about five enlisted men. And the place is a bloody mess. Well, just prior to this, I got sick in the orderly room one day. I go to the hospital, they put me in a bed, and that night a major with a Czechoslovakian accent comes in and says, "Lieutenant, I've got to operate." I say, "What are you operating on?" He says, "You've got a ruptured appendix." So I had a ruptured appendix. He operated on me. I wasn't totally out. He asked, "What are you doing in the Army?" I said, "What do you mean?" He says, "You've got a bilateral hernia, also. I'm too tired to work on a hernia." And I said, "Well, don't do it. I might need this to get out of the Army." They kept me in bed for ten days. And the day I got out of the hospital, my second son was born at Fort Monroe. After ten days leave I went back to duty and they sent me to Little Creek.

03-00:14:04

Meeker: Where is that?

03-00:14:04

Rudney: It's near Norfolk, Virginia. The Norfolk Naval Amphibious Base and they train navy and marines there. Norfolk is a big navy base. Well, I don't know what happened, but anyway, I was the C.O. I'm still at Fort Eustis and I was duty officer one night and a duty officer is an officer in charge of the post at night. And it was a rough night and I was dirty. My uniform was dirty. I had a 45 automatic and I didn't give a damn about anything. The next day I was in review by the regimental commander. He's a brigadier general. I didn't know it but I was number two on the promotion list for captain. They hadn't told me. I didn't find this out until later. And I came in and I salute and the first remark I get from this brigadier general is, "You don't salute very well, Lieutenant." And when he said that, I thought, "This guy and I are not going to get along." And he goes for the records and he says, "You just had your appendix out?" "Yes." "And you're commanding officer at Little Creek?" "Yes." "What's happening there?" And I told him place was a mess and I don't know what the hell the Army is fighting the Navy about. That was upsetting. And he says, "But there's no quarters at Little Creek for you. What do you do?" And I said, "Well, I have the sergeant drive me from Little Creek to Norfolk, and I take the ferry from Norfolk to Newport News and my wife picks me up." He says, "That is not permissible." I says, "Yes, well, that's right, General, but you don't give me any quarters." He said, "Well, maybe we can get you quarters at Fort Story." I stated that my wife would not like that, and that was the end of

the conversation. Well, the next day at a battalion meeting Bill Telkin says, "The general wants you out of the regiment." I asked why. He says, "He just wants you out of the regiment. What do you want to do?" And without thinking, I said, "Get me a hardship discharge."

03-00:17:24

Meeker:

Because of the hernia?

03-00:17:25

Rudney:

No. Just because the general doesn't want me in the regiment and there's nothing for me to do in the Army. I could have a hardship discharge. This is probably April and nothing happens. I'm no longer assigned to the unit and nothing happens. And one day, I was in the library and a captain who I had been commissioned with said, "Stan, you — you seem upset." And I said, "Yes. I'm waiting on a hardship discharge and they're giving me a bad time." He says, "I work for the inspector general. Why don't you come see him." I went to see the inspector general. I saluted. He salutes back. He says, "Your name's awful familiar to me, Lieutenant." I said, "General — Colonel, I've never seen you before." He says, "I haven't seen you either. Tell me about yourself." Staten Island. "Oh, you're the guy." I said, "What do you mean, I'm the guy?" "You remember Joe Shannon?" "Yes." "You wrote up the information on Joe?" "Yes." "I sent him to prison for many years." He says, "Where'd you get this information?" "From Joe Shannon's daughter." And the next day I was on my way home.

03-00:19:07

Meeker:

Wow. So it came full circle then, huh.

03-00:19:14

Rudney:

Yes. By direction of the President of the United States, I was separated.

03-00:19:24

Meeker:

So what is this?

03-00:19:31

Rudney:

This is orders getting me out of active duty.

03-00:19:33

Meeker:

OK. Is this is not your discharge, though.

03-00:19:37

Rudney:

I was never — no, this isn't a discharge. I'm separated.

03-00:19:40

Meeker:

Oh, you're separated. OK.

03-00:19:42

Rudney:

I'm an officer. I've got to serve out my five years. I'm sent home.

03-00:19:50  
Meeker: You're sent home. So you still needed to go back and serve out your five years in order to get your discharge?

03-00:20:01  
Rudney: Yes. I'll show you the discharge later on.

03-00:20:04  
Meeker: So you did get a discharge?

03-00:20:05  
Rudney: Yes. I got discharged in 1954.

03-00:20:12  
Meeker: OK. So that would have been the completion of your five years?

03-00:20:15  
Rudney: Yes.

03-00:20:15  
Meeker: All right. And I assume that was an honorable discharge that you received?

03-00:20:18  
Rudney: It's an honorable discharge. And they asked me to reenlist.

03-00:20:24  
Meeker: Interesting.

03-00:20:27  
Rudney: I don't know — I've got it in another folder. Oh, here. Here. Here's where they want me to go to school and want to promote me.

03-00:20:39  
Meeker: And what were they going to promote you to?

03-00:20:41  
Rudney: Captain.

03-00:20:42  
Meeker: Captain. And again, this was transportation work.

03-00:20:44  
Rudney: See, I'm number two on the — I'm number two on the promotion list.

03-00:20:47  
Meeker: Oh, I see. Interesting. And transportation port work. So what would that — what would that entail? Do you know what that work would have been?

03-00:20:57  
Rudney: No. I'd probably be a company commander.

03-00:21:02  
Meeker: At a port?

- 03-00:21:03  
Rudney: Well, the unit — if the unit goes overseas — but you go overseas as a battalion and a battalion normally has five companies and each company has, oh, about 220 men.
- 03-00:21:17  
Meeker: OK. So you would be a company commander?
- 03-00:21:19  
Rudney: Yes. Or if I stayed in the battalion, I'd probably be major in a short while, because I'd be in charge of all stevedoring operations.
- 03-00:21:35  
Meeker: Now, you had mentioned that at some point along the line, you worked at the Oakland Army Base as a civilian employee?
- 03-00:21:46  
Rudney: Civilian, yes.
- 03-00:21:47  
Meeker: Can you describe that work? I assume you weren't part of a union at this point, right?
- 03-00:21:53  
Rudney: No, no. Because Oakland Army Base wanted experienced people and they used them as — they titled you as a checker. Actually, you were in charge of loading the ship.
- 03-00:22:13  
Meeker: OK. So what does a checker do?
- 03-00:22:16  
Rudney: Well, a checker normally checks the cargo that goes on board. Now, we not only worked at Oakland Army Base, but we worked at Fort Mason, because they were moving troops and supplies. But on troop ships — and you don't put many supplies on a troop ship.
- 03-00:22:35  
Meeker: So you worked as a checker for troop ship, but you really weren't doing that much checking because there weren't — wasn't that much cargo?
- 03-00:22:43  
Rudney: No. And Oakland Army Base, there was a lot of cargo and San Francisco was primarily troop ships.
- 03-00:22:50  
Meeker: What period of time was this that you were working on the base in the civilian capacity?
- 03-00:22:55  
Rudney: 1949.

03-00:22:56  
Meeker: In 1949?

03-00:22:57  
Rudney: '49 to '50 until I got called back in the Army.

03-00:22:59  
Meeker: OK. So this was just really as the Cold War is heating up and Korea is becoming an issue.

03-00:23:07  
Rudney: Well, actually, Korea started in June of 1950.

03-00:23:12  
Meeker: Can you — where were you living at this point? You were living in Oakland at this point?

03-00:23:16  
Rudney: Yes. McKinley Avenue behind Oakland High.

03-00:23:19  
Meeker: Did — so aside from working on the base, did you ever have any social life around the base? Did you ever go shopping there or go to the movie theater or the bowling alley or anything like that?

03-00:23:31  
Rudney: Well, I was a civilian, so I couldn't use the PX.

03-00:23:37  
Meeker: OK. Did you ever use the PX when you were enlisted?

03-00:23:41  
Rudney: You mean when I was at Fort Mason? Yes. They had a great PX at Presidio. Fort Mason was too small. Fort Mason was really a command unit, but Presidio... Oh, I used to use the swimming pool at Presidio and PX and officer's club. Presidio was headquarters for the Fifth army.

03-00:23:59  
Meeker: Did you ever use those facilities at the Oakland Army Base?

03-00:24:04  
Rudney: Yes.

03-00:24:06  
Meeker: Can you describe them?

03-00:24:06  
Rudney: They weren't very good. For meals, we used to go to the Alameda Navy Supply and Alameda Air Base because the Navy had much better conditions than the Army. The food at the Navy Air Base was great.

03-00:24:24

Meeker:

So I've actually heard this story before, that, you know, even people who were stationed at the Oakland Army Base, they would go over to the Presidio for, you know, the officer's club, and then they would go over to Alameda for the better food.

03-00:24:39

Rudney:

You have heard this before.

03-00:24:41

Meeker:

I have, yes. It sounds like you're not the only person who didn't think the facilities at the Oakland Army Base were so good.

03-00:24:48

Rudney:

I used to sleep at the quarters at Oakland Army Base sometimes, but I'd go to the Paramount to get off the base, you know, and eat food and when we were at Fort Mason... You know, those days you used to get your food coupons. So there was an Original Joe's near Fort Mason — at the marina. So we had a deal. We'd give them all our food coupons and we ate a lot at the base in Fort Mason. But when we wanted a good meal, we'd go to Original Joe's and we'd get anything we wanted because we'd give them our food coupons.

03-00:25:34

Meeker:

So what — so you did spend some time, then, sleeping at the Oakland Army Base?

03-00:25:39

Rudney:

Yes.

03-00:25:39

Meeker:

What were the sleeping facilities there like?

03-00:25:41

Rudney:

Not very good.

03-00:25:42

Meeker:

Were they barracks or...?

03-00:25:42

Rudney:

They had a small — yes, they had a small barracks. And at one time, there was a brick building right in the center of Oakland Army Base. The colonel that was in charge had an office there and he could see everything that was going on.

03-00:26:00

Meeker:

So you sort of felt like by being there, you were always being observed by the officer in charge?

03-00:26:05

Rudney:

Well, I didn't care. You know, I'll do my job, do it the best I can and, you know, if I were smart, I probably could have been a colonel if I had stayed.

There was a major at Fort Mason named Emmitt Scott. Emmitt and I sort of hit it off. He had an Oldsmobile and we used to go up to Nevada City in the weekend. Well, he was back here at Eustis. He was a lieutenant colonel and he says, "Stan, I want you to stay in the Army." He says, "The day you sign, I'll make you a first lieutenant." He said, "In six months, you'll be a captain." He said, "We're starting a helicopter corps, and I want you to be a company officer and I want you to learn to fly a helicopter." And my wife said she did not want to be an Army wife, and that ended that.

03-00:27:25  
Meeker:

So that was really the main reason that you decided not to pursue a career?

03-00:27:30  
Rudney:

Yes. Because, you know, be a captain and 34 years old.

03-00:27:36  
Meeker:

And you — she had already had to follow you to all points around the country by that point.

03-00:27:40  
Rudney:

Well — no, the only place she had followed me is Fort Eustis because we didn't get married until after World War II. We got married in '47 and this is May of '48.

03-00:27:53  
Meeker:

Is there anything else you want to tell me about the Oakland Army Base? You know, just sort of like everyday memories of it or any particular people you remember?

03-00:28:00  
Rudney:

It was strictly a supply location. There isn't very much more to say.

03-00:28:17  
Meeker:

Did you ever have any interaction with it later on after you left the service?

03-00:28:22  
Rudney:

No. Except working there at night.

03-00:28:31  
Meeker:

In 1949?

03-00:28:33  
Rudney:

Yes.

03-00:28:33  
Meeker:

Yes. Did you work there after that period of time ever?

03-00:28:35  
Rudney:

No, because I was recalled in the Army in September of '50.

03-00:28:41  
Meeker: And then once you got out with the hardship separation what did you end up doing? What was...?

03-00:28:48  
Rudney: I went back to school at Berkeley. Got a degree in '53.

03-00:28:52  
Meeker: In what?

03-00:28:54  
Rudney: I got a BS in business administration. I'll show you in a little bit.

03-00:29:00  
Meeker: OK. And then you said you got a master's degree, as well?

03-00:29:01  
Rudney: And I got a master's degree. Did most of the work at Berkeley. Then they shut the night school down and I finished up at Golden Gate.

03-00:29:10  
Meeker: And that was in business administration, as well, or...?

03-00:29:13  
Rudney: Yes, yes. An MBA. It was mostly in finance. In those days, everything was administration. They didn't have the various degrees they have today.

03-00:29:27  
Meeker: OK. And they didn't have the Haas School of Business then, right?

03-00:29:32  
Rudney: No, no, no. It started out in the old building called North Hall, the oldest building on the campus and then they built a building, Borough's Hall, next to the administration building. And I don't know when it became Haas.

[End of Interview]