Interview with Maurice Caudill

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Interviewer: Nicholas Stefanski

Stefanski: Hello. I'm Nicholas Stefanski. This is July fifteenth. I am here with Maury Caudill in his home in Peoria, Illinois and we're going to talk about the Korean War for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remembe*, Korean War project. Maury, thank you for being here with me today.

Caudill: You're very welcome.

Stefanski: All right, I'm going to start out by asking you when and where you were born?

Caudill: I was born in a house in a little town in New Jersey called Belvedere that's on the Western edge of the state on the Delaware River, about two or three thousand people. Went to grade school and high school there and, then, after high school came to Peoria, Illinois.

Stefanski: And you grow up in Peoria, then?

Caudill: In Peoria. My grandfather was here in Peoria. That's another long family story about how he got here but after school with no chance of college, why, he suggested I come here for the summer, which I did. Came out here in January and stayed and, shortly after, decided I should get a job as an apprentice. Serve an apprenticeship at Caterpillar Tractor Company which I did. We proceeded to become a wood pattern maker apprentice, which is a four year apprentice course, which was interrupted by the Korean War about half way through.

Stefanski: When did you start your apprenticeship?

Caudill: Started my apprenticeship in January of 1950 at Caterpillar and was drafted into the army in July of 1952. My draft board was in Phillipsburg, New Jersey back home. They didn't change draft boards then and I was called from there and had to return there to be inducted. Rode a bus to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. Was

inducted at Camp Kilmer and then moved to Indiantown Gap Military Reservation over near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to do twelve—I don't know what it was—twelve or fourteen weeks of basic training.

Stefanski: So you didn't have any really early interest in the military. Do you remember much of when you were growing up?

Caudill: Oh, yes. I very much remember. As kids, I was too young for the war obviously, graduating from high school in 1949, but my dad was an Air Raid Warden. We did those things then. They had practice air raid drills; you had to have black-out curtains, and he put on his white helmet and patrolled the street with a flashlight and a whistle. As kids we could identify any aircraft, be it German, Japanese, or American or British –any aircraft that ever flew. Air Raid Wardens had to practice with little plastic models of airplanes; they were silhouette models. You could identify an aircraft by its silhouette. That was their job to stand on top of high buildings and warn you if the Germans were flying over the United States, which wasn't very likely and neither were the Japanese very likely to fly over the United States in spite of them sending balloons over into the northwestern coast, the Japanese did do some things there.

But, anyway, World War II is quite well remembered. I was a Boy Scout; we collected scrap metal, newspapers. In grade school we bought victory stamps. You'd take your quarter to school and you'd get another twenty-five cent stamp to put in your war bond book which, when it filled up, you could turn it in for—I believe it was an eighteen dollar war bond.[later redeemable for $25] I remember rationing. Gasoline was rationed, tires were rationed, synthetic rubber was invented, all food items were rationed. You didn't see a Hershey bar for five years. Sugar was very short. My mother used to can a lot and it was very difficult to get enough sugar to can. Yeah, World War II was really imprinted.

Stefanski: Do you think your father being an Air Raid Warden and having all those metal planes around contributed to your later love of flying?

Caudill: Oh, yes. I had a very early interest in model airplanes. All my life I've been involved with model airplanes and it's only until I got up in age and was a little more affluent and had the time and the money that my wife encouraged me to, "Why don't you go learn to fly. You've always wanted to." Yeah, but all my life I've been interested in aircraft. From the engineering standpoint, from the material standpoint, the experimental aircraft, and develop modern aircraft. Maybe I should have been an engineer all my life.

Stefanski: Let's move back to when you were drafted. So you're living in Peoria working for Caterpillar. Were you married at the time?

Caudill: No. I wasn't married. Had a girlfriend, my wife, and I had to go back East. I can't remember, I think I drove back. I can't remember what kind of a car I had then.

No, not married. Caterpillar, at that time, they gave you a leave of absence. You were guaranteed that you would be hired back into your job when you got back.

Stefanski: Do you remember all your family's reaction to being drafted?

Caudill: No. I don't, really. My grandfather and grandmother were here. My mother and father were in New Jersey. I'm the oldest of three boys and my next to younger brother graduated a year behind me from high school and joined the Navy immediately. He was on the USS Bonhomme Richard, the aircraft carrier, in the Persian Gulf when the initial Korean Conflict started and they were flying north and actually bombing the dams on the Yalu River. I always accused him of starting the war and then I had to go over there and finish it. So he was involved in it before I was.

Stefanski: What do you remember of boot camp?

Caudill: I was twenty years old; I became twenty-one while I was still there in boot camp. Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, is quite a nice place. There's a mountain just north of the barracks area there which it seemed like one of their pet things was that you'd go out there at night and climb that mountain. But I don't know. I had a conflict with the way they trained then—their training then—I don't know whether it's that way now. Their training then was to break you down mentally and physically to get you so tired and so beat that you wouldn't question any kind of an order. You would react as you'd been trained without question and I found that difficult to accept. I was always one that asked questions. If something was not logical to do, and a lot of things in basic training are definitely not logical, then I would question it and, so I never became that robot that they were trying to build back then.

Stefanski: What do you think made you react that way?

Caudill: I don't know. It's just my upbringing, I think. I call it an engineer's mindset where you don't accept anything the way it is: you question it, you try to improve it. I'll just say you don't do things that are stupid. You recognize them right away that that's stupid, you just don't do that. I guess it's my make up.

Stefanski: Do you remember any of your specific instructors?

Caudill: The cadre there were mostly sergeants, sergeant grade and above, and they were Korea veterans who had rotated home to be discharged or reenlist and they had time on their hands. They were back early. Now, I don't know whether they got back on the point system or what, but most of them were veterans. They were reasonable people. You got the impression that they were trying to train you so you could do a good job over there and save your own self as well as others. It was permanent cadre on the post that did most of the marching, training, running, stuff like that. The every day, every morning, every night chicken that you had to go through. Those guys, you gave them a little bit of authority and they would just go crazy.

The veterans were the ones that taught us. We'd see them on the rifle range, wherever you were firing a weapon, rifles, mortars, hand grenades, recoilless rifles, all the machine guns—light and heavy machine guns, BARs.[Browning Automatic Rifle] I can't remember the MOS. [military occupation specialty] Light Weapons Infantry. We could fire or handle any weapon that we could carry, and that included up to ninety millimeter mortars and the 105 recoilless rifle was about the biggest thing we fired. But the guys that taught us how to do that, they were pros. There was no messing around. They were there to teach you to do it and that was it. There was no typical training crap that you had to go through. That was business and we respected that.

Stefanski: Did you get any leave after your training before being shipped off?

Caudill: No leave. We got what was called a delay en route. You were handed your orders. I don't know whether we got any money—I don't remember getting any money at all—but we had to be in San Francisco at a Repo Depot on a certain date and we could get there any way we wanted to. We had, I think, fourteen days and that gave me time to come back to Peoria, spend some time here. There was a troop train. We had tickets or reservations on a troop train. Some of the guys rode it from the East Coast all the way to the West Coast. Myself and a couple of other fellows that were here in the Mid-West, we caught the train in Chicago one night and rode it all the way to San Francisco.

Stefanski: And in San Francisco you're actually sent to Japan first.

Caudill: Yeah, we layed around in a tented facility there, I can't tell you the name of it, but it was a replacement depot and it was back in the bay. I think there's an army transport facility back there where the ships are. We weren't too far away from the docks and I don't know how long we were there. We're there long enough that they finally gave us a weekend pass to go into—I can't remember the name of the town—Sausalito or some town back in there. I can't remember the name of the town in California. We had a weekend pass—the next day or Monday or whatever it was, bingo, we went on a ship.

The ship was a passenger cruise-type ship, passenger vessel, two stacker then. I don't think it was coal fired but it was oil fired, steam type, older vessel. It had a dining room. We had officers and their wives and families were on the upper decks in cabins; all the GIs were down in the hold in racks just like the Navy has: about four high, five high racks. They had a dining room. What I got involved with on the ship was, I had played a musical instrument before that and they wanted to put together a group to entertain these guys that were going to be on the ship ten or eleven days. So I joined that group and we used to practice in the nursery which was—the kids had sandboxes and sliding boards and little chairs and tables on there where the kids went. We were on the ship Christmas and New Years, and that would be '52, because we actually played for the officers and their wives to dance New Year's Eve in the dining room—or the ballroom—they had a dance floor there.

We stopped in Hawaii on the way. That was another surprise; I didn't know we were going there. When we got there we pulled into the dock and they came over the bitchbox and said, "Everyone in a class A uniform will be given a four hour pass." We couldn't believe our ears and there was a mad dash for everybody to get down in the hold, get on your class A uniform, get back up, and then get off that ship as fast as you could. So we spent four hours –six of us polled every dime we had left—we had already lost everything playing poker up to that point—we rented a Chevy convertible there on the dock and we drove to Waikiki Beach and we were in Honolulu. We were going to go over to Pearl Harbor and got about half way there, got up on the mountain, and decided we didn't have enough time; we had to get back. So, anyway, my only visit to Hawaii.

Back on the ship, I think landed in Yokohama, was transported to Camp Drake there, Tokyo. And that's where you, in the infinite wisdom of the army, took the whole bag of clothes that you were issued, all brand new clothes that you were issued in Pennsylvania that you carried all the way to Tokyo, and you turned them in and they gave you another set of clothes which didn't include Class A uniform; it was just fatigues, and some of them were not new because we couldn't get new clothes over there. You were issued weapons; you had to clean your weapons.

I don't know how many days we were there. Not very long, maybe four, five, a week. I, and about twenty-five of us, were called out, went to another barracks where a guy said, "You fellows have been chosen to go to Radio Operator's school in Southern Japan for twelve weeks before you go over to Korea; it's voluntary, you don't have to do it." Well, of course, we all did. I think, in hindsight: you take an aptitude test when you're drafted or when you're inducted. Part of the aptitude test is a Morse code test and it's a very short thing where they send E, I, S, and H, which is all dots—that's one dot, two dots, three dots, four dots—and they send it very slowly and you're supposed to write down whatever you hear. I learned Morse code in the Boy Scouts and I never really operated as a radio operator but it wasn't unfamiliar to me and I think I aced that test and it paid off when I got to Japan.

So we did. Went to Southern Japan on an island near Kure, Japan. The island is out in the bay; it's Eta Jima, E-t-a j-i-m-a. In World War II, it was the Naval Academy of Japan. It's a very beautiful place. US Signal Corp had it, and there we did ten or twelve weeks of radio operator's training. We copied Morse code every day up to ten words a minute. Above ten words a minute you had to be a typist because you couldn't write that fast, and since I didn't know how to type I didn't go any higher than that. You learned all the different types of field radio equipment, how to install and how to operate it and how to maintain it and it was very interesting.

After completing that we went to Sasebo which is the Southern end of that island, seaport, and loaded on another, smaller troop ship and was boated over to Pusan. At Pusan we all were loaded in cattle trucks—big cattle trucks—and they hauled us to the railroad station, put us on a Korean train –steam engine driven, very

crude, hardwood benches –and we rode that train all the way to Seoul, which was an all night ride. I know that must have taken eight or ten hours or more, I can't remember. It was a very uncomfortable ride. In Seoul they trucked us to another repo depot for the Third Division and I don't know where that was. It was further Northeast of Seoul up there somewhere along the river and we were only there for a few days and a group of us were still together from Pennsylvania. Eight or ten of us were still together at that point and there's where they split everybody up and we were assigned to Battalions and Companies in the Third Division and that's when I was assigned to Kitty Able Company of the Tenth Combat Engineers. Of course, when they tell you, "That's where you're going," you have no idea what that means. I didn't know what combat engineers were. Never heard of them before.

I got in the front seat of a deuce-and-a half [2 ½ ton truck] with the driver and it's about nine, ten o'clock at night. It's raining; deuce and a half had—that's the old World War II truck that had the canvas top –but you weren't allowed to have a top on a truck in the combat zone. So we were riding in the rain, got on a poncho and a helmet, and your M1 [rifle] and your bag. The truck drives with what they call cats' eyes that are just very small lights; you aren't allowed to have headlights. And how the guy could see, even knew where he was going, I haven't the faintest idea. I couldn't see the road in front of the truck.

So you're riding, riding, riding, and he finally stops and he says, "Okay, we're here, the CP [Command Post] is right up the hill there about two hundred yards." No flashlight, dark, raining, and, so you slip and slide up the path. The Company was situated in a cut in the side of the mountain. CP was about halfway up the hill, up the cut. The commo [communications] shack was on far past that, on up higher yet, up at the top of the cut, maybe for the antennae, I don't know; that's probably why they're up there. Stumbled in there, stumbled, found the CP, it's a tent with a door, go inside, talking to the guard that was sitting there at the desk and I tell him who I am. I said, "I'm a replacement." "Where you from?" I said, "Peoria, Illinois." He says, "Well I'll be damned. So am I." And his name –I can't tell you what it is now, it's in the papers that I had there—I never met the man after I got back. He was leaving. He was leaving as I got there and I haven't met him since back here, but his name is a name of a company here that built garages and I often wondered if he was one of them. So that's how I got to Kitty Able in Korea.

Stefanski: Did any of your friends from Pennsylvania end up going with you?

Caudill: No. I don't remember were there any in the Tenth Engineers or whether they went to infantry. I think they went to infantry divisions. Third Division was on line at that time and, so, we were just replacements. That would have been in March of '53, I believe, early, probably March of '53. We spent the winter in Southern Japan. Even though there were snows on the mountains over there it was still very nice, so I missed that winter—the winter of '52, '53 in Korea. Of course, I had the next one to go through, but I missed the first one anyway.

Stefanski: Actually, I do want to jump back a bit to Japan. You mentioned in the pre-interview, you were stationed very close to Hiroshima and you visited that city.

Caudill: Eta Jima, the island, is in the bay. I was told where the fleet, the Japanese fleet, sailed from that bay when they attacked Pearl Harbor. That's one of their largest, deepest, deepwater bays and with the Naval Academy there I can understand why they do that. The city of Kure is quite large and there were miniature submarine pens there where they built those mini-subs that a couple of them washed up on the beach at Hawaii, I guess, during that attack. About ten miles up the bay inland is Hiroshima at the head of the bay; we could go up there and visit on a weekend by riding a ferry boat that looked like a Coast Guard cutter, and they'd run us up the bay and drop us off up there for the day.

Hiroshima was an interesting experience, though. There was still damage left unrepaired there that you can see and in fact I have a publication that I bought there in Hiroshima showing pictures and effects of the bomb. But you would have never known it in 1953; it was totally rebuilt. There was no, unless you knew what you were looking at, there was no way of identifying bomb damage..

Stefanski: What were your impressions of the Japanese people in Hiroshima, and I guess during your whole stay in Japan?

Caudill: Hiroshima was using—I think they'd become or established that as the city of peace or something like that. The white dove was the symbol. The Japanese people at that time were the nicest, friendliest, outwardly friendly people you ever want to meet. Very polite. But, again, that's their culture. The man could detest you and you'd never know it. He would never show anything outwardly towards you. It didn't matter how bad the man hated you, that's the way they are. But Japan was a very nice country. I got to go over there on R&R from Korea. I don't remember exactly when that was. It must have been in early '54, I suppose. Went to Tokyo, spent a week there, and I stayed in a Japanese hotel rather than an American hotel. It was quite a nice experience.

Stefanski: Now what were your impressions, going back to Korea, when you first got in there of the Korean country and the people?

Caudill: Korean people are different and we had very little chance or opportunity to talk to Korean people. We were rushed right up to the militarized zone where civilians weren't allowed. There were no farmers, there was no one there and, again, in our Army unit, we had very little contact with Korean ROK [Republic of Korea] soldiers. They stayed on their own. There were a few civilian men who worked for the U.S. Army; they were laborers, and once in a while you'd get a young boy up in there. He'd be a house boy:.he'd do laundry for you, he'd do stuff like that, and they allowed him to stay. But other than that we had no contact with Korean people.

Your only impression you had was when you're riding through Pusan on the way to the railroad station. Of course, Pusan had been whipped over a couple of times by both the United States and the North Koreans, I guess, and it was a lot of poverty. The infrastructure hardly existed, so you didn't have a very good impression of the country when you came in that way. It's kind of like coming into Chicago on a train; you ride through the worst part of the city to get to downtown so what you see coming into Chicago on a train is not going to impress you about Chicago.

Stefanski: All right, tell me about what your job was as part of the Combat Engineers.

Caudill: I was able to work as I was trained, as a radio operator. When I got there the radio equipment was in bad shape. There were three or four of us at that point living in a small tent about half the size of a squad tent. The radio that we operated –I can't give you the nomenclature –was an AM radio with very large vacuum tubes in the transmitter. The receiver was a big multi-channel receiver that ran off the battery. We had a three-quarter-ton truck with a box built on the back of it so that we could mount the radio in the truck and operate as a mobile unit, and it had a twenty-four volt system. When I got there the transmitter was sitting on the floor in the dirt in the tent. When they had to make a radio call or had to receive a radio call from Battalion, they would call them on the telephone and say, "Hey, we're going to send you a radio call. Get ready." And then they'd make a net call and communicate with each other and then they call them on the phone to ask them how it sounded and that was it.

Of course, I was green and new and didn't have anything to do. So I started cleaning equipment and getting the radio in better shape and started operating. Everything was done in Morse code. You had a SOP, Standard Operating Procedure, that we kept in a locked ammo [ammunition] box and we had a code machine –I can't think of the nomenclature of it –it was a little hand operated code machine that had about five or six wheels and every wheel had maybe twenty-five pins in it and you had to push the pin to the right or the left and the wheels had numbers on it so every day you had to change the code machine according to the printed SOP that you had. All our messages were sent in code. The code machine had a little narrow paper tape, was what it produced, and if you take a standard English message, you had to break it in half, you put the last half first—sent the last half first, the first half last—and as you put each letter of a word into the code machine it would output a five letter word group. It would convert standard text into a five letter word group which were just jumbles of letters and numbers—letters and numbers. So that's what you would send.

You'd have to encode the message, contact Battalion Headquarters—usually is where the messages went—send it Morse code, be sure and—when you're sending Morse code you would send a line, say ten groups, and then you'd ask them if they received it okay and they'd reply, Okay, and then you'd send the next ten lines and be sure they were getting it correctly and when they would get it they'd put the five letter code groups back through that same code machine and it

would spit out the standard text message. It was very labor intensive. It took a long time to code a message and send it and decode a message.

Again, we were operating AM radios. The AM radio that we had was World War II equipment. In fact there's a B-17 coming to Peoria here at the end of the month or next month—I think it's next month—that has exactly the same transmitter in the B-17 that I operated in Korea, so that's how old that equipment was; it goes back into the forties. AM radio doesn't work very well at night. We operated off a long wire antenna which is directional. You could only really transmit off the side of the antenna. If it was facing the wrong way you didn't have the strength of signal to get out. Fortunately, the Battalion or the Companies of the Tenth Engineers were reasonably close, there weren't too many mountains between us, and we could work that way. But our job there was to operate the radio and the switchboard.

The switchboard was the telephone switchboard for the Company. We'd have a line to Battalion that we'd pick up somewhere and run in; but whenever we'd move to a new location that was our job to run the commo wire, set up all the telephones in the Company, had to get contact with Battalion and establish radio contact. We'd change frequencies on the radio frequently and that was part of the SOP. We changed frequencies so the Koreans would monitor our transmissions and they would jam our radio transmissions so they'd get on the same frequency in voice and they'd sing in their broken English, Kitty Able, and they'd just sing Kitty Able on for hours. With AM radio, whenever someone is doing that on the same frequency you're blocked, there's no way you can transmit. Usually there'd be a phone call , Change frequency to whatever tomorrow or whatever, and, so, then you'd have to set the whole net up.

Battalion was the net command and in order to set up an AM radio you had a tuner that was called a beat frequency and it would put out a solid tone; as you dial to the center of the frequency, the center of the band, there would be a silent part and, then, you'd hear it go from a high frequency down –dropping pitch sound –down to a low, and then there'd be a null and then it would go back up again. That's how you knew you were at the center of the frequency. And, so, we'd have to set up our receiver up on the frequency, tune the transmitter to the receiver, wait for Battalion to tune up and they'd send out a net call and then you'd answer, "Able, Baker, Charlie, Dog," you'd answer in series and then there'd be a series of v's –dit dit dit da,dit dit dit da, where you'd retune so you could match theirs. It might take an hour or more to get the Battalion set back up again on a frequency.

So that was our life twenty-four seven. Four, five of us. Man the telephone switchboard and make net calls or answer net calls every half hour on the hour. As a result of that we were the only ones in the Company that were allowed to have a gasoline lantern which we kept on at night, because the Company generator was shut off at ten o'clock. There was one light bulb in every tent and that was shut down at ten o'clock and we were, again, the only tent in the

company that was allowed to have heat on at night. All the rest of them had to turn their stoves off. They were just little –I don't know what you call them –tent stoves that ran on diesel fuel. So in the wintertime we only had heat in the front half of our tent and we had a divider in it that we had the radio and switchboard in the front third of the tent, I guess you'd say, and the back third was where everybody lived and slept. We had mummy shaped sleeping bags with a zipper and in the winter you'd wake up in the morning and the zipper would be covered with frost from the moisture from your body, would come out through the zipper and would freeze on there. That was the hardest part, having to get out of that warm bag and put on cold boots and get dressed when the temperature in the tent was the same as it was outside. But that was their job. It kept us close to the tent.

One of us was on duty, always on duty; the rest were kind of free to do other chores which we did. We had to maintain mine detectors, walkie- talkies [radios]. We started to get some FM equipment. Another FM radio was a PRC-10 that a man would wear on his back, and I think pictures of those in war movies. He's the radio operator that always goes along with the officer in combat and carries the radio for him.

So other than that we stuck pretty close to the company area, we didn't get out much. Our platoons were maintaining front line bunkers and trenches and dirt roads; that was part of our job; we had so much road we had to maintain. We had Caterpillar bulldozers, two and a half ton dump trucks, motor graders. A lot of the work that the platoons did was plain old dig and ditch along the road just to keep the road draining properly so they wouldn't wash away. In this case we supported an outpost called Harry, and part of their job up there was to dig the trench deep, build the sleeping bunkers and machine gun bunkers, and install them at night, which was another hairy job. When you a D-6 or a D-7 [Caterpillar bulldozers] up there and run it at night, the North Koreans would shoot mortars at the noise and you'd have to stop until they stopped and then you could work a little while longer and then they'd start shooting mortars again.

Kitty Able's position when I first joined them, we were there for several months into the summer and then there was a big switch where Tenth Engineers—I don't know, maybe Third Division, I think that's what it was—Third Division was pulled off that position. We had to move back, and I think—what was the Indian Head division, was that the second? I can't remember—but they moved up and took our place. That was one of these, supposedly a big secret, Division moves. All of a sudden tear down everything, load it on trucks, and hit the road. The road was jammed with traffic going both ways. We pulled back into a temporary set up temporarily. It was raining that night. That was the night when we had a perimeter defense around the company. Our Company was, I think, separated from the Battalion at that point and about midnight all hell broke loose. Thirty caliber and fifty caliber machine guns were firing in all directions. All the deuce-and-a-half trucks had machine gun rings mounted up over the cab. There was at least a thirty caliber on the truck. It seems like somebody set off a trip flare somewhere in the perimeter; we thought we were being attacked and everybody was shooting at

anything, everything, and nothing. Like I said, it was pouring rain and that was—I don't remember—I think that turned out to be just an accidental deal that I don't think there was anything real.

From there we kept on moving to another position where we set up a—I think I've got pictures of that—we had to bulldoze down some old hootches [Koreans' houses] that were there and set up, and there we came under mortar fire as we were setting up the company tents and stuff. I remember crawling under a bulldozer as a place to go. We hadn't dug any foxholes yet but we could see the mortar fire—it was ladder fire coming down the hillside toward us—and ladder fire is pow, pow, pow, pow, zigzagged. Mortars are fired by looking through a little aperture at an aiming stake in the ground; once you're zeroed in, you set up a bunch of the aiming stakes so you can move and reposition your mortar, and then you know where it's going to hit. On ladder fire you drop one in the tube, you take a crank to the right, and down a half a turn, drop another one in the tube, crank to the left, go down another half a turn, drop them and the guy firing the mortar just moving the tube back and forth and dropping it and dropping it and dropping and just increasing the range and hope you're going to hit something. Unless you have a forward observer out there watching you had no idea whether you're hitting anything or not but that didn't last long.

Then we move from there –we weren't there very long –moved again, and, like I say, in our position we weren't told why we were moving, who we were supporting, you just do what you're told. The next position we were in we were right next to a MASH hospital [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital] and that's where we came under artillery fire. There was a ROK battalion of artillery across the road behind us and I think we were getting counter-battery fire on them and we were taking all the short rounds. That's where our Company Clerk was killed that night by artillery round and that's the only time that the Company really came under fire as a Company. The rest of the time when the guys were working up on the line, some of them were on outpost Harry. I don't know which Company it was, but they were trapped up there on the outpost at night and had to actually join the infantry defending Harry. You're in tents.

We had dug foxholes which they call firing—you can lay prone in the foxhole and your butts just barely below ground level –so you can fire a rifle from laying in a foxhole but when you're taking artillery rounds they aren't deep enough, believe me. You're scared skinny. You get religion real quick under those conditions because that's all you have to hang on to at that point.

After that we moved, again—I think, then, after the armistice, we moved from that position into the Chorwon Valley where we were on a hillside up there where you could see. Chorwon Valley is an enormous, big, wide, open area and that's where we were when I rotated. Next question.

Stefanski: Well other than being fired upon then, did you experience combats personally?

Caudill: No. No I didn't. The five guys I was with they were in that commo section; none of us either did other than the artillery fire. We didn't get that far away from our job. We were support people and that's all we did.

Stefanski: Did you get to meet with any of the soldiers who are ongoing very much? Do you see them much or were you pretty much stayed back?

Caudill: No, you didn't travel in Korea. You didn't move around unless you had a reason. It wasn't like you could just jump in a jeep and drive down the road five miles and see what's going on. For one thing, you didn't have any transportation. There weren't any vehicles available to do that unless you had a purpose to go there and then they'd make a vehicle available. But, no. I was thinking about that and my war, my Korean war, was a very small, isolated area of a couple of miles. Outside of that I didn't know what was going on. I'd never been anywhere else. There was no radio, no television, no newspapers. There was no information handed down to troops. Your war was what was right in front of you, nowhere else.

Stefanski: What do you think was the toughest part of your service in Korea?

Caudill: Oh, that's hard to say. After all these years you only remember the good things. Living conditions were kind of crude, food was not the best, clothing was unavailable—we wore patched and mended clothes. I don't remember much else other than—stand out any more than that.

Vaguely, this is another case where the United States went to Korea totally unprepared. They didn't have any equipment, they didn't have any airplanes, they were still flying P-51s [propeller driven fighter planes] in Korea when they first went there against Russian Migs.[jet fighters] We'd see the Air Force returning from our point on the mountain; they'd fly down the valley on the way back from the north and we could see them going back to Seoul where the Air Force was. The equipment we had was either left over from World War II, the food, the K-Rations, the C-Rations that were left over from World War II, the weapons were M-1s, strictly M-1 Carbine, M-1 Rifle: World War II. I got a hold of the 45-caliber grease gun. Grease guns were just a fabricated automatic weapon that usually jeep drivers carried because they were smaller and easier to carry; you just sling them over your shoulder. That's what I carried all the time I was there just because it was convenient. I don't remember where I got the weapon and I don't remember what happened to it when I left. Handed it to somebody else, I guess.

Stefanski: Do you remember if you ever used it?

Caudill: Not in anger; only in practice.

Stefanski: How did you feel about the fact that the war was ended in armistice rather than total victory?

Caudill: I think at that time –I probably felt different than I do now –but at that time when all that negotiation was going on, outpost Harry was being hit by the Chinese

harder than it had been in the year before. They were obviously trying to be an impression; they were trying to gain negotiable things for the table where they were negotiating. At that time we, all of us, had the feeling that we did not want to be the last guy killed in Korea. I mean, negotiation would come and go. They'd go to the table, they'd argue over the shape of it, they'd argue over the size of it, they'd argue over where it was located, and all the time guys are dying.

That makes you feel really used, really stupid. Here you are, you're out here, you may not live another day, and those idiots are arguing over the shape of a table and they seemingly there for a long time, had no intention of reaching an agreement. I know that was complicated because there were a lot of prisoners of war in North Korea that had to be freed.

There was an excellent book by John Tolan that's called, *In Mortal Combat*, that's an excellent book that deals with mostly the whole war but they get right to the end and he writes very little—here's the—October '52 to April '53 is all about: There it is, that's negotiating and the armistice and the end of the war, it's a chapter and that's most of the time that I was there and involved in that thing and they talk a lot about negotiations and they say very little about the people that were dying at the same time. All we cared about then was that it stopped.

He points out there the day that it stopped, the night that it stopped –I think it was like they had a time, ten o'clock –and the United States, all the guys on line, were not allowed to return fire even before ten o'clock. At ten o'clock the rockets and the flares started going off and it was one big celebration and the north [Korea] celebrated just like we did. Everybody was glad it was over and I don't think anybody cared whether you called it a truce, a peace, an armistice, or whatever; it wasn't a war in the first place, it was Truman's police action, and it's not over yet. We're still over there defending that line and who knows.

Stefanski: What was life like then after the armistice was signed. You're in Korea for about another year. What was life like during that time?

Caudill: Well, during that time the Army becomes more like the Army that you met when you went through training. Things had to be cleaned and painted and more orderly, more Army-like equipment. We had equipment that trucks and bulldozers had to be repaired. And, then, along with that comes the inspections and every –I can remember there at the end –every Company, every motor pool has a list of equipment.. I don't know what they call it; it's an equipment list which you're responsible for. They gave the Company Commander a one time deal where anything that was missing off his equipment list could be written off and they wouldn't have to pay for it. Once that was done, then every jeep, every weapon, every knife, fork, and spoon had to be accounted for and the guys that worked in the supply room, they had to account for every shirt, every pair of pants, every shoe, everything they had, endless list of stuff that they were supposed to have and if you didn't have it you could order it and write it off and they'd just write it off as a war loss.

I remember one funny thing: the Battalion motor pool called our sergeant in our company and said, "We've got an extra jeep down here we got to get rid of it and we got to," –what do you call, the IG [Inspector General] inspection—"the IG inspector's coming and if he catches us with this jeep and we've got to explain where it came from and I don't know whether somebody stole it or how they got it. So, anyway, our sergeant, his name was Alfreed, Sergeant Alfreed, bought that jeep for a case of booze and a couple cases of beer and brought it up to Kitty Able. We were still separated from Battalion and he had his own personal jeep for about a month, I guess. He used to drive up to our tent and we'd get in and then he'd drive around to the mess hall and we'd go eat and the officers were walking and we were riding.

But then at the end they caught up with him. They traced that jeep to us and when I rotated they held him back. He had to explain where that jeep came from and what he did with it and the story that I heard was that he sold it to the Belgians and when they finally found the jeep there was nothing left but the frame. The parts had all been stolen off of it. But they did hold Sergeant Alfreed back. I don't know whether he ever bought that jeep or not. I never heard from him again.

Stefanski: So what was your relationship? What did you think of all the NCOs and the other officers above you?

Caudill: In a war like that or in a conflict like that our Company officer or Commander was a Captain; that was a field commission that he got. He wasn't a product of West Point or he wasn't, forty-nine years old had been in the Army for twenty-five years; he got it the hard way and has a Combat Engineer Company in support of an Infantry Regiment; we had work to do. It's physical work, not just laying around or whatever, so he told us that, You give me eight hours and the rest of the time is yours. No saluting in the Company area, no reveille, no retreat, no inspections. Keep your place clean, you do everything right and I won't bother you. That's your time.

And that's the way that worked. Rank of course has its place: you still called him sir and the lieutenant sir. But, like I say, it was more casual. Sergeants were like superintendents. Corporals were foreman. Squad leaders: you'd have a work detail and you'd say, Okay, you guys, grab your D-handle shovels, we're going to dig a ditch today. How can you give orders and act like a man in command when you're all out there digging ditches, you know? And it was quite nice to be able to work that way instead of having to be spit and polish type things under those conditions.

Stefanski: Do you think some of that informality was because you were in the Combat Engineers rather than a front line soldier?

Caudill: I don't know. I don't know if I can answer that, but I think the guys that were close to the front were the same way. A Squad Leader, he's trained to lead his squad of people. Platoon Leaders trained to manage a platoon and you're not

telling him to stand up and salute; you're telling him to go down in that hole and stay there as long as you can. So I think, under those conditions, it's quite casual. You're looking to a leader and he has a leadership role, but he's not expecting to be called sir and be saluted. He's just expecting that you do your job and he'll do his job.

Stefanski: Did that sort of informality last after the armistice?

Caudill: No, I think it changed. It kind of got back into the spit and polish. There may be a reason for that too. When idle hands can get in trouble, people had to do things every day even if it was marching or calisthenics. You had to do something: you just couldn't let people lay around do nothing and get in trouble so I suppose that's their thought. Obviously when the activity stopped there was a lot of things that you didn't have to do anymore.

Stefanski: What did you think of your fellow soldiers?

Caudill: They were all good. There was no problems there. It's like anywhere else, in basic training, in Korea, you've got some misfits that shouldn't be there. You've got some guys that just can't get along. You've got guys that fight each other. You've got gamblers, you've got alcoholics, fortunately there were no drugs, so it's a mix of people and you have to get along. You can't go anywhere else.

Stefanski: What did you think of the other UN [United Nations] soldiers there? Did you encounter other international troops?

Caudill: The only other UN soldier that I knew personally was a Belgian sergeant and he was one of the nicest, funniest guys you'd ever want to meet –like I said, I didn't know him under combat conditions –that he'd come down to the Company and drink beer with us when we had it and he was one nice guy.

The only other stories, we hear stories about the Greeks. We have stories that guys that ran into troops that spoke French. The Sergeant borrowed some—it was wintertime, the ground was frozen hard and he had to dig a latrine in his company area –and they came down and he wanted to borrow some C-3 [explosive] so he could blow a hole. We have an ammo dump full of C-3, that's what we use to clear rocks off of roads and stuff, so they gave him some. When he came back the next week he said that they set that charge next to the officers' BOQ [quarters] and when they set it off the frozen ground was like shrapnel; it just shredded the officers' tent. He thought that was the funniest thing he'd ever seen. That was the only contact I had with other troops.

Stefanski: You didn't have any Korean soldiers or KATUSAs? [Korean Augmentees to the U. S. Army]

Caudill: No. We'd see them. They'd come around occasionally for equipment or something. The Korean soldiers, the only thing I ever really saw about them was when they'd fight each other they'd fight dirty. They'd get a guy down on the

ground, they'd kick him in the head. I mean, they use their feet. There's no holds barred, it's a fight to the finish. You know, that leaves you an impression that these people are pretty different.

Stefanski: Did you serve with any blacks? What was your impression of the military's policy?

Caudill: You know, it's hard to remember. I know there were blacks in the Company. The one I remember the most was in the Second Platoon. In the night we were shelled with artillery, it must have been around eleven o'clock, midnight, and, of course, there's no light, it's dark. We were still up in a commo tent when the air burst over our tent and the shrapnel fell on the tent. We got a warning that way before they started hitting the ground and tried to wake everybody up. This one black guy ran out of his platoon tent –they said he was naked, I don't know, he might have had his shorts on –and he ran about a mile down the road until he was stopped by an MP at a checkpoint and they brought him back. They said he ran right through a barbwire fence and never hurt himself, so I don't know. That was a scary night.

Stefanski: What were your opinions of your enemies?

Caudill: Well, only what I heard. We had no contact. From what I read I can't imagine an enemy with a philosophy like that where they attack in swarm: the ones in the front have weapons, the ones in the back don't have weapons, they're supposed to pick up weapons from the guys that died ahead of them and they just keep coming and coming and coming and coming and coming just trying to overwhelm with numbers, period. That's a mentality that you just can't accept, you can't understand.

Stefanski: Did you feel anger or resentment or did you think they were just doing their job too?

Caudill: No, in a war, they're doing their job and we're doing our job. Ours is not to reason why. Obviously, when it's over, everybody's happy. It was the same, I've read, where World War II, World War I, it was the same: that the Germans and the Americans celebrated together when the war was over. There are numerous stories I've read about the air war, World War II, where German pilots and American pilots would wave at each other when they'd run out of ammunition, they'd just laugh, wave. They'd both go home and come back tomorrow and shoot again and that's amazing.

Stefanski: Were you awarded any medals or citations while you were there?

Caudill: No. That's the thing about—I'm standing on that wire—that's the thing about the story of outpost Harry. Every infantry regiment that was involved in the defense of Harry got a unit citation and the Tenth Engineers that were involved in that same, didn't get anything out of that, and it was the same with the other awards. I mean, after fifty years I got this Korean Service Medal, I guess it is, and a letter

from the President of Korea. And, then, other than that the combat ribbon we were allowed to wear. I think the blue stripes is the Third Division. I'm not sure what that with the star, maybe that's some kind of award, but I don't know. And, then, this is the Korean conflict ribbon. And this is the combat infantryman's badge which we, again, were not allowed to wear because we were not located on line even though we worked there every day. So that's a Korean wahn [paper currency] and all the guys in the group signed it, put their names and addressed on there.

Stefanski: So while you were over there did you keep in touch with people back home?

Caudill: Yeah. Oh, yeah. You wrote letters. Mail was very important and the mail came quite well. I don't remember how long it took but mail was not a problem.

Stefanski: You already mentioned that your rations were sort of World War II era. Do you have a favorite C- or K-ration?

Caudill: No. I can't say I had a favorite. You had one which you thought was better than another one but they were nothing to brag about. I remember after the war we got meat, which seemed to be easier to get than anything else. I remember they got a big ration of meat somewhere and they actually dug a pit, built a fire in it, and we had a barbecue of fresh meat, but there was no refrigeration so you didn't have milk or eggs. Everything was powdered and you didn't have fresh meat unless it was trucked in that same day from somewhere else where they had a refrigerator. There was no ice. You learned to drink your coffee black.

Stefanski: What did you do when you weren't working? When you weren't on the job, when you had freetime to yourself?

Caudill: Well, you did laundry. If you could get a ride on a truck you would ride somewhere to a shower point so you could take a shower. Usually at the shower points you'd turn in the clothes you had on; they'd issue you clean used clothing if they had anything that would fit. Cleaned weapons, wrote letters. That was about it. There were five of us so we would work a four hour shift. You know, you would be on four and then off sixteen and then back off four so it's just a rotating. So, you know, you didn't have a heck of a lot of time to do stuff.

Stefanski: Were you on leave during your time there?

Caudill: Got an R&R in Tokyo for seven days. That was enjoyable. Tokyo is very modern, even then, a very modern city. Lots of things to see, see the palace. Tokyo had a big PX where I bought a camera. We didn't have anything like that in Korea. You didn't have a PX. They'd get beer in there; they'd get maybe 3.2 beer. There seemed to be a problem trucking that stuff in, but you didn't have any other PX facilities where you get candy or coke or anything to drink. It just wasn't available.

Stefanski: Any other really memorable event while you were in Korea?

Caudill: I don't know. After the armistice our primary job—you say memorable—our primary job after the armistice was clearing minefields. All the rice paddies had to be cleared so the civilians could come back. Eight hours a day, the commo shack had to maintain the minesweepers, the mine detectors, which meant you had to be sure there were fresh batteries in them and go with the guys because the batteries didn't last that long. They'd be there eight hours a day sweeping mine fields with—and these detectors were World War II vintage detectors –they would detect anything metallic in the ground like it was a mine. It didn't matter it was a button or a shell casing or a mine, and after they'd detect something they would have to probe with a bayonet to see what it was and find it and dig it out. The guys got very—after you dig up two buttons and four or five shell casings and you don't find any mines you begin to think, Well, why am I wasting my time?

And what they would do was, when they would find mines, most of the mines were about this big around and they would have—yeah, they would be, the ones we were finding –I don't know whether an anti-tank or what they are. They're not a personnel mine, they're bigger than that. They'd have a D-ring in the top of them and you would just expose the D-ring and tie a rope in it and—long length of rope. Then they would find the second mine, and the third, and the fourth with the detector, and then they'd see the pattern: how they were laid and so many feet apart. Then they'd just walk to where the next one should be and find that one.

In doing that we had one field that we cleared where they wanted to build a big maintenance motor pool. What they had run into was one mine field had overlapped another one and there were mines in there that they didn't find because they weren't looking for them. They just walked past them, you know, and dug up the ones where they thought they were going to be, and they didn't know that other field was in there. The first truck that drove in there for that motor pool killed the driver. He hit one of those mines and then we had to go back and sweep the entire field, you know, inch by inch. Yeah. That's a memorable event.

They would find those mines, tie ropes in them, tie six or seven of them all together in one string ropes and bring a bulldozer in. Our bulldozers had armored cabs on them; they were steel boxes with just little slits in the side for the driver to see out of. Then they'd tie it to the dozer and he'd just drag all the mines out of the ground at one time. If they go off, they go off. If they don't, they don't. They'd drag them into a hole that they bulldozed and just pile up in a hole and set a charge on them and blow them all up at one time. But I had never saw any anti-personnel mines, what they called the bouncing betties, or the smaller mines, the little shoebox mines.

We did have a tank event one night where they wanted to run tanks out into the MLR. [main line of resistance] Our guys cleared a path out, cleared mines at night out in front of a line so the tanks could go out there. They were going to hit something and then come back. The Chinese had wooden box mines that weren't detectable and they'd bury them deep enough that one or two tanks could run over

them without setting them off and then the third one would compact it enough and set them off. That exercise, I think they ran—I don't know, they were going to run three or four tanks –single file: the first one got out in front, second one set the mine off, blew the track, trapped the first one out in front. They had to get the tank retriever in, which is a big wrecker, and get down in that area and drag that bad tank out. They just got him out in time for the other one to get out before dawn, you know, before the sun came up. Tanks were used more as artillery than they were offensive weapons like they were in flatter areas.

These books, this one *In Mortal Combat*, by John Toland details over and over what a fiasco it was when they went up into North Korea with tanks and tried to attack that way. There's another book I just finished; it was called *The Coldest Winter*, by David [Halberstam]—I forgot his name over there—which was another excellent publication about the political side of the Korean War, about McArthur's part in it. It's an excellent parallel to another book that I read, and I can't tell you the name of it, which documented the World War II in North Africa about the mismanagement of their war both politically and by inexperienced and inept officers. And what happened in Korea initially was, in a large way, caused by politics and officers that had never been to war before, had no experience, and it just gives me a bad feeling about the way wars are managed by the United States.

Stefanski: You think it was still being handled ineptly by the time you got there in '52, '53?

Caudill: By the time I got there it was a stalemate. The MLR was established; everybody was dug in. There were skirmishes back and forth trying to change that location, drive them off of that line, but it was no longer a running war like the Marines had when they first went in there where they went all the way to the Yalu then driven all the way back out again and then we went back all the way to the thirty-ninth parallel. It was trench warfare and that's totally different.

Stefanski: Well, tell me about your rotation home, finally, in 1954.

Caudill: Time comes about a week before my two years were up. Maybe two weeks. Yeah it must have been about two weeks before my two years were up. You get orders to rotate, you go to another repo [replacement] depot where they check you out and you get a medical. They drive you to Seoul. In Seoul I think we were put on a troop ship there, went around to Yokahama, picked up some more guys. This was an old victory ship, World War II victory ship. We set sail to Seattle to one of the worst North Pacific storms I think anybody had ever been in. It was really, really bad, everybody was sick. You couldn't go on deck.

When we finally got to Seattle—is it Fort Hood that's in Seattle?—anyway they ran us up to the fort there. The first thing they try to treat you to is a big meal and they run you into a mess hall where they had steak and all the trimmings and all the guys wanted was milk. You know, they kept wanting to go back for seconds and thirds on milk and they ran out of milk. Then we were just there a few days

and they put us on an airplane that was a super connie—super constellation—a four-engine, very beautiful airplane that flew passengers back in those days. It was managed by Flying Tiger airlines. I think they were contracted to the army to haul troops. They flew us from Seattle to Newark, New Jersey and I remember we landed somewhere around Salt Lake City, I think, and changed crews, and, then, we landed again in Chicago and changed crews and, then, we left Seattle about four or five in the afternoon and by daylight we were landing in Newark, New Jersey and back to camp Kilmer where I started and was issued out there.

I got two years of back pay for—well, you get sixty days of vacation—and walked out the gate with the clothes on my back. That was it. I didn't take anything with us.

Stefanski: Do you remember your reunion with your family and what you were feeling then?

Caudill: No. I don't remember that much. But it was good to be home. It was nice to be back in New Jersey. I bought a '49 Ford Convertible, used, nice car. Started looking up people I had gone to high school with. It's a real nice area of the state: small town, Delaware River valley. It's dairy country over there. And stayed there a week or so, and then, drove back here to Peoria, went back to work, saw my girlfriend again. I'd say that was in July '54, and it was a year later we got married.

Stefanski: Do you keep in touch with guys you met in the military?

Caudill: No. No, I don't. We just scattered and haven't had a single contact except with this Richard Graham who you have the papers on there who I discovered on the web, and we e-mail each other. I think there's two other people that were involved in either our company or the same outpost Harry. I In fact, there's an organization, Survivors of Outpost Harry that they meet—well, several years ago they were meeting annually—but, no, I haven't. In fact, I had started being curious about where I was in Korea and that's the thing you never asked. I never wondered, you know, where am I? I'd like to see a map, I want to see where our location is. They just aren't available to non-coms. You don't just walk into CP and say, Hey I want a map, I want to see where we are. You just don't do that.

So it was only two or three years ago that I really started to wonder and I started digging on the internet onto all the information that's available for the Korean War on the internet which there isn't a heck of a lot there. My brother, he's in Baltimore and DC, and he tried to dig out some stuff for me in the—what is it, the Library of Congress or what's the big where all the military records are out there?—and he couldn't dig anything up either. He either didn't know how or whatever and maps are hard to come by.

In fact I just stumbled onto a thing last night and it's the Third Division report –I don't know what else to call it –in June of 1953. It's a Division report to somebody in Washington DC and somebody has photographed it and they

photographed each page of the report. It's all there on the internet to read except it's almost unreadable, it's not magnified enough to really read it, but it's from general whoever who was running Third Division then to someone in Washington DC. I saw one page there was on intelligence –this was right before the armistice –they had intelligence on what the Chinese were doing and what they weren't doing and on and on and on. It's that kind of a report; there's no details on Divisions or units.

Stefanski: So we're going to ask some reflective questions here. Do you think your sacrifice during the war was justified?

Caudill: At the time I didn't think so. I was a draftee, not a volunteer. The initial troops that went to Korea were National Guard MC Division from Illinois and they were beat up real bad. They were totally unprepared for war, both in equipment—physically, they weren't fit, they were rushed into Korea and stuck into it and it was a bad situation for them. I was a draftee; I didn't appreciate having to leave in the middle of my apprenticeship here and the beginning of my career. What the heck, I was twenty years old, didn't know any better. Today, yes, I think it was justified. I think it was mismanaged in the beginning but still justified.

Stefanski: How did your experiences over in Korea change your outlook in life, change you?

Caudill: You grow up, you mature, real fast when you're in those situations. It's a higher value on everything in life. You don't realize how much you take for granted until you're plucked out of here and stuck into a country that has no infrastructure and you're in a military world where nothing is the same and you know it won't be for two years. The guys in Iraq are going through the same thing. And when you come back you're grateful, you're appreciative, you got an outlook on life where you're going to live everyday to the fullest extent. I'm not going to waste time anymore. I don't know how long that lasted, but eventually that goes away and you fall right back into your old routine.

Stefanski: Did you have any flashbacks, any nightmares, any sort of these experiences?

Caudill: No. I can say that I've dreamed about being there and things like that but it wasn't a flashback or nightmare. I've dreamed about other things, too, other experiences; that's all it was.

Stefanski: I remember in the pre-interview you told me one story about sort of your combat reflexes when you heard a light bulb smashing, could you just repeat that?

Caudill: I don't know how to explain that but when you hear gunfire… First of all, when you're over there, you're kind of stupid when you go there. Sure you've heard gunfire before, you heard it in training and everything, but over there when you hear gunfire you don't just stand there and say, "I wonder what that is?" That's a stupid question. Over there when you hear gunfire you get down on your belly and you drop and then you ask the question, Where's that coming from or is that friendly or not friendly? And it becomes an ingrained reflex that when you hear a

loud noise you drop and you carry that with you when you get back here and loud noises will cause you to drop on the floor. That happened to me once at Caterpillar when a light bulb exploded.

I've seen it, also, in a friend of ours in New Jersey who was in the Merchant Marines in World War II and was in England when the buzz bombs were dropping. He was at our house in New Jersey painting the side of the barn when a Piper Cub flew over and cut his engine to do stalls, which is typical air training. When the Piper Cub killed his engine, this guy dropped the paint bucket and ran for the house because buzz bombs did that; they ran out of fuel, when the engine stopped, the bomb dropped, so that was ingrained in him. At that time I thought it was kind of funny but it's just a natural reflex.

Stefanski: Did your military experience influence your thinking about, say, our current situation, the War in Iraq, or even back in the day, the War in Vietnam?

Caudill: Yeah, it has to. When you're in a conflict called a police action it's not a war. Not condoned by Congress. They called it Truman's police action. After World War II where we actually declared war on both Japan and Germany, that became an effort of the whole country. Patriotism was very high. Everyone in the United States contributed to that war in one way or another. The Korean War was under the table. All the people didn't even know what was happening. There were forty thousand men killed in Korea. Of course, the communications weren't as good then, either. You didn't have on-the-spot TV reporters there with a camera showing everything that was happening that's like you have today. I suppose they publish that in the newspaper as the casualties mounted and the count went up but what the heck? That's expected more. What's another two or three thousand.

Vietnam, same way. That wasn't a war. In fact, the United States kind of turned on those guys. At least we came home from Korea and nobody knew we were home. I mean, nobody cared. That war was forgotten. The peace movement, those poor guys went over there and got tore up and then came back and were spit on, I mean, that was even worse.

So, sure it does. It changes your whole outlook on conflict in the world and how governments managed that and is Iraq? You ask the same questions about a guy in Iraq I'm sure he'd say, Sure it was worthwhile. We're helping kids, we're helping families, but, then, again, why are we there? We didn't go there to help kids and families. You form an opinion of why we're there and it's not the same.

Stefanski: What do you think people today should know about what you went through or what lessons could we learn today from your experience?

Caudill: That's hard to say. Today is fifty-six years from my experience? It's hard to remember things that happened fifty-six years ago. You know, when you're twenty years old and you have to give up two years of your life and you think that's a million dollars. That's a big chunk. When you're seventy-seven years and

you gave up two years of your life that's nothing. Two years is a drop in the bucket. So, I don't know of anything I experienced back then has any affect on what I'm doing today.

Stefanski: What do we need to remember about the war and America's involvement?

Caudill: The Korea War and America's involvement or any war?

Stefanski: Yes. With the Korean War.

Caudill: Being in a war and knowing what happened over there is two different things. After reading two extensive books about what happened over there and how it happened and who made it happen and who didn't make it happen there's value there that everyone should have. Everyone should read those books. I think that'll influence your thinking more about any war. Why you're going and how it's fought and how many mistakes were made and who cares and who doesn't care. I can't say that America learned a damn thing from the Korean War. Young people today don't even know what happened. Don't know what happened, don't know what it means.

Stefanski: What advice or wisdom would you pass on to future generations?

Caudill: Make peace not war. (laughs) I don't know. Things have to be pretty extreme before it's worth going to war and that's, I guess, not only extreme but you have to have an awfully good reason. I think in today's world you have to have a reason that's acceptable by Americans, by the United States. You can't go off and fight your own little war anymore just because you feel like it as a President. There are certainly a lot of alternatives to war. That's the old adages. Sometimes it's the best thing you can do is do nothing.

Stefanski: Well, any closing thoughts?

Caudill: No. I hope I haven't rambled on too long.

Stefanski: Oh, no, you've been great.

Caudill: I see my contribution in the Korean War was a very small one as in a support type position and I've corresponded and read with other fellows here that've done a lot more, but that's the nature of the beast. You're picked, drafted, however you're stuck into that situation you do what you're taught to do and that's your contribution. The movies make it a little bit different. You don't volunteer and rush to the front with a rifle and kill the enemy; that doesn't happen very often. So all in all, memory is a fantastic thing. You tend to forget the bad things and only remember the good things and that's very helpful.

Stefanski: All right. Well thank you very much.

Caudill: You're very welcome. (end of interview)