

Interview with Walter Ade

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Interviewer: Mark DePue

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DePue: My name is Mark DePue. I'm Director of Oral History at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today is Monday, May 21st, and I'm here with Walter Ade, a veteran of the Korean War who was with the 5th Regimental Combat Team at the end of the Korean War. Walter, just from what you and I have spoken about before, I know you have a lot of fascinating and important stories to tell. We are here at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. That's where we're conducting the interview. And this is part of the library's Veterans Remember oral history project. So Walter, what I would like to do is to start with a little bit about your background, where you were born and when you were born. Let's start with that.

Ade: I was born on the 3rd of October, 1931 in Bruchsal. Bruchsal is a town in the state of Wurttemberg-Baden between Heidelberg and Karlsruhe on State Route B3.

DePue: Okay. Where is that?

Ade: Heidelberg? It's basically on the east side of the Rhine Valley.

DePue: Okay. Not too far from Switzerland then?

Ade: No. You drive down another—

DePue: Okay. I'm sorry.

Ade: The first hour and you're in Basel.

DePue: So you were pretty close to the Rhine River then.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: Okay. And you lived there for your first few years?

Ade: My first three years. My father gained employment and as a result moved to a town of Mosbach. Mosbach is right off the Neckar River up the Odenwald area or the

east of Heidelberg. And we lived there until the period of the invasion of Poland, I suppose 1940. At that time my father was transferred, typical like here, federal employment, you want to be promoted, you have to move.

DePue: What was his job?

Ade: He worked in what you would call here the labor department/unemployment. The system over there is, if you apply for unemployment, the search to give you a job is interlocked. If you are legitimately unemployable, then you receive aid. But so he was moved to the Sudetenland area.

DePue: That would have been in February of 1940?

Ade: Yes. Sudetenland, of course, now reverted back to the Czech Republic. At that time Czechoslovakia. The town was called Graslitz. It's now the Czech term Kraslice, K-r-s-l-i-c-with-a-hook-on-top-e.

DePue: Well, don't worry about the spelling, sir, we'll get that straightened out later. So he was in something of the labor department. Did the government decide to move him there? Or did he have some part in that?

Ade: Yes, well, it was a promotion opportunity. He moved.

DePue: I'm curious. Was he a World War I veteran by chance?

Ade: No. My father in 1938 when it became quite obvious the war was about to start, he went to reserve officers candidate school and became a lieutenant in administrative branch. And he got activated in 1942 as a first lieutenant, *Oberleutnant oberleitment* they called it. And sent immediately to what at that time was called Weissrussland. It's now called Byelorussia.

DePue: Okay, Belarus?

Ade: Belarus. Primarily the city of Minsk.

DePue: Okay. So he was way too young for the First World War but not so young that he was....

Ade: Well, he was born in 1931. So he was already....

DePue: Well, you were born in 1931.

Ade: I mean he was born in '01. I'm sorry.

DePue: Yeah. So he would have been much too young for the First World War.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: Okay. Was the family living together in the Sudeten area for a couple of years before he was drafted or enlisted?

Ade: He was activated, what you would call here, immediately sent to Byelorussia - Belarus.

DePue: Okay. Tell me a little bit about what it was like to grow up in those formative years. You were growing up during the Second World War in Czechoslovakia. What was life like there?

Ade: Well, that area was for 200 years dual German and Czech. And so the culture was primarily German. And Graslitz was famous for music industry. When I grew up there, let's face it, in the morning we walked to school, in the afternoon we walked to music school. The opportunity to learn instruments was simple. For a mark per year or less than a dollar a year you could have access to any instrument you wanted and learn music to any extent you had interest in it. And I, of course, followed the footsteps of my brother who was two years older. He learned the violin and I learned violin. He started flute and I played flute. And we both got into the youth orchestra. He played first violin and I played second violin. And, he got into the school band. He played the flute and all of a sudden they needed an oboeist. Well, Walter, here's an oboe, so-and-so. He taught me how to play the oboe. And I had fun playing the oboe.

DePue: You got quite a bit, because you were there for four years.

Ade: Yeah. It was an intensive training thing. Well, we lived music. Interesting thing, the day of German music, it's in the fall, a festival thing, where my brother and I played a duet. Of course everybody knew who's the composer and whose music was written by—we played a duet introduced as written by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It was quite obvious to them that it was one of Mendelssohn's pieces. They all snickered but nothing was done about it. It was a verboten thing to even think about playing music of Jewish composers, but we did it anyhow.

DePue: Did you feel much of the effects of the war when you were growing up there?

Ade: Closer toward the end every day you could see a funeral procession to the cemetery. And the shooting of the salvo. That became quite a dramatic experience.

DePue: Where was Graslitz? Can you point it out on the map here?

Ade: Graslitz is an hour walk across from Klingental. Yeah...

DePue: Well, it'd have to be in here.

Ade: Yeah. The border here is—by the way I never could understand why this was going into here, Hof up here.

DePue: That little hook that....

Ade: Yeah, Hof, Eger, to the east right about here is where Graslitz is.

DePue: Were you very close to the modern-day border then too.

Ade: Yes, close to Klingental. Klingental now has the musical instrument manufacturing of—you know when the Czechs kicked everybody out, they all of a sudden realized they kicked out all the tradesmen as well: the glass industry and the music industry. And of course the state of Sachsen gained by that. So all your fancy—for example accordion industry now is in Klingental.

DePue: So that music industry didn't move very far. They still have a rich tradition there.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: I notice that you were in the Jungvolk.

Ade: The Jungvolk is the predecessor of Hitler Youth. Jungvolk from age ten on, you didn't become a Hitler Youth member until age sixteen—or was it fifteen, I believe. My brother ended up there. But it's like a para – like boy scouting.

DePue: Yeah, paramilitary.

Ade: Yeah. I participated in the fife and drum corps, of course, being a musical thing. And then I got into the bugle thing, and we marched up and down. I'll never forget going up the main street in Graslitz in the northern part of town. There was a World War I memorial. And when we got there we heard the drums that marched by the ceremonial. And this respect to—you see them all over still even in Austria –I notice the World War I memorial things are kept up.

DePue: Was Graslitz a fairly small community?

Ade: Yes. Strangely it was Obergraslitz, Graslitz and Unter. They had railroad stations, three railroad stations. We even among us young boys had the boys from the suburb north. And us in the main school system, we were sort of like a band of opposition. In fact one time I got hit by a rock and got knocked out. One of the boys there threw a rock and hit me on the side of the head. And those are things that happen among—I don't know, here, the same thing I guess. You call them gangs if you want to call it that.

DePue: I would expect not too terribly well organized though. Just a bunch of kids who get together and decide that they're going to....

Ade: Yeah. That's right.

DePue: Okay. Were there a lot of privations growing up? Towards the end of the war did you notice that you were having less and less to eat, prices going up?

Ade: The food was controlled through a coupon.

DePue: Ration cards?

Ade: Ration cards. And for example meat and so forth was very close controlled. Strangely you could always tell the well-fed people were people that did things on the black market. You know, you were always under suspicion that if you were well fed you had some outside access. Well, I went out one time, in fact the second time I ever rode in a car. A school friend of mine, his dad was a doctor. He did house calls out in the country in exchange for chicken and eggs.

DePue: Well, Walter, you don't necessarily have to answer all of my questions if you don't want to. But was your father a member of the Nazi Party?

Ade: That was an obvious event. No different than—people here work at the state, they punch their card whatever the party is in power. And that's....

DePue: So you do it as a matter of employment.

Ade: That's right. Whether he was indoctrinated what you would call Nazi, I wouldn't—he never discussed that sort of thing with us. But we fell in line because it would have been detrimental to your health, quote/unquote, not to.

DePue: I would imagine going to these youth gatherings was fun anyway, wasn't it?

Ade: Obviously. We did camping. We did hiking. And we even sang, "It's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to...."(sings)

DePue: Was your family religious growing up?

Ade: We didn't attend regular church services. In Germany if you were declared with a church affiliation the churches are supported through tax. And my father didn't believe in being taxed to support a church. We declared when the question—well, Graslitz, for example, was predominantly Catholic, and a small Lutheran Evangelisch church there. And we called ourselves Gottglaebig, believing in God in other words. Gottglaebig, G-o-t-t-g-l-glaubig-for-your-purposes-a-e-b-i-g, Gottgläebi.

DePue: Okay. So you get to the end of the war now and things start to change. Before you actually were forced to move or be evicted, you knew that there were armies coming from both directions. You were about what age at this time?

Ade: Being born in October, I was thirteen at the end or thirteen and a half. The Soviet troops were within one kilometer to the east of us. In fact they were so ill equipped they had horse and buggy and stolen cow wagons and American trucks.

DePue: American trucks that they'd probably gotten through lend-lease. Were you guys, the people in your area, more concerned about the Soviet advance? Or was there a different view about the Americans and the Brits than about the Soviets?

Ade: There was an obvious influx of refugees, people getting away from the Russians. So the town was stuffed full, in fact. We had a Silesian family living with us. Their dad died that period. Let's face it, the old folks and the young ones are the casualties, especially the young ones where mother couldn't breastfeed. That's the end, that's it. And the Americans, when they arrived, there was a motorcyclist came in with our dialect. He left Graslitz in 1938 to immigrate to America. And he came to the Burgermeister office and said, "I'm so-and-so, we have the tanks up here on top of the mountain." And it was simple, you know, it's just they had no military strategic purpose. And that same day the tanks start rolling in and the....

DePue: The American tanks.

Ade: Yes. The party began. The GI's looking for girls.

DePue: Was the local population thrilled to have the Americans there?

Ade: Obviously yes, yeah.

DePue: Because it wasn't the Soviets?

Ade: That's right. I saw one Soviet officer on a horse, fell off, broke his leg. He was totally skunked out of his gourd.

DePue: Well, you must have been very close to the area that divided Soviet-occupied territory from American-occupied territory.

Ade: Actually, the American troops pulled back to the border soon after we were evacuated and put into this interning camp in Eger. And Czechoslovakia became a Communist-controlled country.

DePue: Okay, tell me about the internment then, about being evicted basically. What exactly was that? And what transpired?

Ade: Well, I was away from home, came to the back door of the house, and I found my mother on her hands and knees filling a suitcase with things from the cupboard. And I said, "What's going on here?" There was a man that I knew with a revolver and a stars thing and an armband. It was obvious during World War II, an underground Communist. We had two hours to get out. The rule is—well, I gave you that book that declared that formal thing. You were allowed to only take X kilo of things, and your bed had to be made just so-so and the rules were lined out. And if you didn't comply you were arrested and put into a camp. And the following summer they put you to work as farm labor. Let's call it slave labor if you wish. And those people didn't get out until the year after, I found out.

DePue: Where was your father at this time?

Ade: My father was captured, as we discovered years later, in February 1945 south of Danzig, now called Gdansk. And through long walking ended up by train then in

Siberia. And they were put into a virgin area of raw material. For example, at one time they found uranium up there. Being a virgin country up there they had to do a lot of forestry work. They had to lay railroad lines. They had to develop—well, from what I read some of those gulags they call them now are still in existence. And Russian civilians still live under those conditions, what they built in those days.

DePue: So your father obviously wasn't with you. Did your mother have any idea where he was.

Ade: My mother literally had no idea whether my brother was still alive or my father was still alive until, in the early fifties through international pressure, the Soviets were forced into again allowing German military prisoners to write postcards through the International Red Cross, fifty words per month. Postcard where they could just say things. And through that communication my father found out that I went far away living with two of his uncles. He knew he had two uncles in America. That's how he knew I was in America.

DePue: Well, we're getting a little bit ahead of the story. I know this is difficult to talk about. But your mother is evicted. Are you the only child with her at the time?

Ade: I am literally the only survivor in the family, yes.

DePue: How about your brother? He apparently had been in the military as well?

Ade: In early February '45 the entire class my brother was in were mobilized or activated. I came home one day he's gone away. She didn't really tell that he was literally sent away into the military. And he became what's called a Panzerfaust Grenadier armed with the one-shot antitank weapon, which if it miss....

DePue: Yeah. I've seen scores of pictures of the Panzerfaust.

Ade: Your survival is very limited. But he survived that and became a prisoner and not until later in the fifties my mother was visited by somebody that witnessed my brother being murdered by a prison guard, and he died three days later. And my mother never told me that. I found that out the day at her funeral in November '84. Her brother told me the story. She didn't want me to find that out.

DePue: He was captured by the Soviets?

Ade: That he was murdered.

DePue: By the Soviets?

Ade: Yeah. So on the other side they never found out where he was buried. I discovered that in 1950 through a visit in East Germany. I had an opportunity to go with a group of shooting sport club from Chillicothe, Illinois to go to a sister club in what's called Treuenbrietzen. It's a good fifteen minutes south of Berlin. And there

we toured and I saw a sign near the highway of Kriegsgraeber, meaning soldier graves, kriegs, k-r-i-e-g-s.

DePue: Spell it again.

Ade: K-r-i-e-g-s-g-r-e-b-e-r. In other words warrior cemetery. And I mentioned that in the bus and a lady—her name is Engel, which in English is "angel"—I am claiming literally an angel found my brother's grave. And those people became extremely good friends of mine that have been over here in this country being hosted by a fellow club member, a retired member of Caterpillar. And they're coming again this August by the way and coming down here. So they're going to be my guests. I'll tour them around Springfield.

DePue: You need to make sure you bring them to the Museum here.

Ade: I certainly will.

DePue: What was the name of this community where you found your brother's grave?

Ade: Halbe, H-a-l-b-e. A Lutheran minister somehow had got the German Communist hierarchy to consent to establish a reburial cemetery because they found a mass grave nearby of bodies. And obviously finding dog tags—we call them identification tags—they're shaped different than our dog tags, like a half egg, and my brother happened to have still his ID with him. But that cemetery when I went through it had 14,000 graves, about 75 percent of them were marked unknown. And when I went back this last September there were 24,000. They still find more and more remains in the east, especially since '89 when the wall came down. The organization that tends to this now has opportunity to go into Soviet territory and they cooperate now. One of the main things now is Stalingrad, that great big battle there. They have now a communal cemetery of Soviet and German soldiers.

DePue: Buried together?

Ade: Yes. And the Russians control religious activities. The Russian Orthodox Church cooperates extremely well with them.

DePue: Well, it's hard to even comprehend from our cushy lives today the scale of those atrocities and the pain that was involved with that.

Ade: Yes and there's still healing going on. There are organizations now that have bus tours going into those places and have ceremonies. Obviously wives long gone. But children, they're grown up now, and grandchildren. Let's face it, it's no different than here. During this convention I've just been the third time now. I met an officer that works at the Pentagon. Strangely one this time is a Korean immigrant that became a lieutenant colonel in the US Army. Lieutenant Colonel Pak, P-a-k, that works for an organization out of Pentagon that still interviews veterans for MIA purposes trying to identify names of people that—he asked me for example of two people out of King Company that were still known as MIA in January. And he

found out through one of my fellow members that one of them was obviously—well, he was listed as MIA, but he was obviously killed. A lot of direct hits disappear. You only know there was a body when the flies start flying around; it's that severe.

DePue: Well, let's go back to being evicted from Graslitz, from your home there. Where did you and your mother go after that?

Ade: We joined a group of former Silesian refugees and we were trucked by American trucks to the city of Eger near the Czech-German border.

DePue: Still in Czechoslovakia.

Ade: Yeah. Eger now is called Cheb, C-h-e-b.

DePue: C-h-e-b.

Ade: And we were put into a former German center, a high-rise army thing unheated. Minimum plumbing. And we were literally fed water soup. And I claim they were trying to starve us to death just like the other side did the other.

DePue: Who was in control of this area?

Ade: The Czech.

DePue: The Czechs?

Ade: Yeah, it was horrible.

DePue: And your mother has absolutely no way of making money, I would assume.

Ade: No. We were living on—well, I'll tell you one time us boys, we were asked if we would volunteer to unload a railroad car with coal. We didn't even have a shovel we had to do it by hand., in exchange for food. We were trucked back to the camp. We were given stale rancid end pieces of rye bread. I ate it because you can literally live on water and bread if you eat the German *Kommisbrot*, that's rye bread with substance in it. And I never did that again. Come home dirty. I'm home. Come back dirty. No hot water. Communal wash things. I picked up somehow diphtheria, ended up in the hospital, and came back. By that time I was just skin and bones.

DePue: How did you manage then to make your way? Your mother and you, I take it, make your way to Heidelberg.

Ade: Well, interesting enough, my mother found another couple that were desperate enough to bribe a guard at the gate to look the other way and we walked out the front gate. And I don't know how they did it but they had hired a farmer with a cow wagon to take us to the border. And we walked in knee-high snow to bypass the control things across the border and ended up—oh my-- I gave you a little bio thing,

I think I mentioned that town. We slept there in that little town's gymnasium on straw. Again all they had is potato soup. In those days, Germany didn't have much food.

DePue: Go ahead. I'll find that name while you're talking here.

Ade: We went by train to Heidelberg where my mother's sister lived. And that became a week-long trek because the trains didn't run continuously, they ran from one area to another, blown-up bridge, walked across the river or whatever terrain, waited for another train to get on, and on and on. And we ended up at Wurzburg one day when the American armed forces had—well, at nine o'clock at night all us people had to be off the street or get shot. And so we were at the railroad station crowded full of people. And my mother had to go to the bathroom. And she climbed across—oh, what you want to call a picnic table. And she got rather loud trying to get somebody to yield for her to get across. And lo and behold who was there that heard my mother was her brother with a rucksack full of food that was supposed to go to Eger to get us back.

DePue: This was in Wurzburg?

Ade: In Wurzburg.

DePue: Which is how far away from Heidelberg then?

Ade: Wurzburg is on the Oder River.

DePue: So that's still quite a ways away.

Ade: Oh yeah, yeah.

DePue: But that's something close to a miracle then that she should discover him there.

Ade: That was American-occupied territory, yes. Of course Wurzburg was one I call the word *Trummerhaufen*. That means "bombed out." The railroad building was still in existence. And the streets were just wide enough for a jeep to drive through. The rest was all rubble. It was demoralizing mess.

DePue: Was there much more damage there than you had seen while you were in Czechoslovakia.

Ade: Yes. Yes it was awful. Czechoslovakia, the bombing damage in Eger I found, that was [mostly] around the main railroad station. But the city itself was not—there's no strategic site. I don't think the American government had any intention to bomb out what then was somebody else's country in the future. So then my uncle, my mother and I traveled the rest of the distance to Heidelberg and I immediately ended up in the hospital in an undernourished condition and I was given extra ration stamps. The American—our calorie allowance was I think 1,400 calories a day. I had extra butter rations and so forth. And my mother ended up, she picked up lice

somewhere. Like —no place to clean up. She was under care for three days to get rid of that. But her sister had a ladies' tailor shop and even in—let's see, we got there in December '45. By the way, the 9th of December is a significant day of my life. 9 December '49 is when we left Graslitz. 9 December—I mean '45. 9 December '49 is when I left Heidelberg to come to the United States. 9 December '51 when I married my wife.

DePue: Well, you picked the marriage date I'm sure very deliberately, did you not?

Ade: I don't recall. But it just happened. I guess it had subconsciously I guess something to do with it. But back to Heidelberg. What to do with Walter? Oh, by the way, we lived upstairs in that building, where used to in the good days the hired help lived. And it was under the roof.

DePue: This was with your mother's sister?

Ade: My aunt, yeah. And even by January '50 she had already an enormous amount of American customers. Mainly—I hate to use this term—field grade officers with so-called quote, unquote wives--if I may say it that way.

DePue: Well, I'm jumping to conclusions here. I guess that's where you're leading me.

Ade: American dependents weren't really coming into view except at high grade level, high rank level. We catered to a lot of general officer and colonels with lots of money. And they brought German parachute silk, raw bolts to make blouses and gowns out of. They brought rolls of officers—you know, the Army green uniform, the old Army green and pink.

DePue: The pinks and greens, yeah.

Ade: As a byline, the master tailor that I learned the trade from was a refugee from Dresden. Dresden, East Germany. He had a shop downtown. The night of the bombing of Dresden, February 1945, he happened to be with a daughter at a suburb to do a custom fitting to a customer. And he saw the town burn up that night. You know, the British did the napalm bombing, the American the next day with HE [high explosives]. And when he came back he couldn't even find his shop. He couldn't find his wife. So his daughter and he with the clothes they had on their back walked to Heidelberg.

DePue: Oh my God, yeah. So the family trade was seamstress/tailor?

Ade: Tailoring, ladies' tailoring. Well, Mr. Koschizki being a skilled master tailor—by the way he spoke French and English, British. So he was a valuable person as a master tailor.

DePue: What was his name again?

Ade: Koschizki, K-o-s-c-h-i-z-k-i, Koschizki. He saved pieces of this American uniform material, reversed, made himself a suit, reversed the material so you could tell it wasn't the Army uniform, and made himself a fine suit of clothes. And I learned from him how to make patterns. I finished my apprenticeship in two and a half years. I already knew how to make from designs, patterns and make suits.

DePue: So you didn't really attend high school. You were in an apprenticeship.

Ade: I decided I didn't want to put my feet under my mother's table to eat and go to school. I wanted to work and have an opportunity to be an apprentice at my aunt's shop. I learned a trade. So by the time I was interviewed for immigration I had a trade. I was a journeyman tailor. I got interviewed in Stuttgart by the American consulate.

DePue: How much grade school were you able to get while you were growing up in Czechoslovakia with all that turmoil going on.

Ade: Halfway through. Well, I was thirteen and a half. The school closed. Let me say it this way, from age ten we learned English. From age twelve you had to either take on French or Latin. That area being Catholic territory, they taught Latin, which was very helpful for me, because I can still now decipher basic spellings from Latin. But my education, I don't consider myself deprived because I always studied, I always read. Even in the military I read Army manuals when other people made fun of me reading manuals. How else do you learn something?

DePue: Because you didn't have much of a formal education growing up. You had to teach yourself?

Ade: My college is hard knocks and the Fort Leavenworth Command and General Staff [School], of course. So I do have a college degree in making war.

DePue: Okay. So you're apprenticed. You mentioned that you even began to learn some English when you were in grade school.

Ade: Oh yes, at age ten everybody learned British-English.

DePue: Why?

Ade: It was a norm. In Europe if you're not a bilinguist you ain't nothing. And if you want to amount to something you are a trilinguist.

DePue: So in the area of Germany you were in, the second language was English?

Ade: Throughout Germany at age ten you learned English.

DePue: Okay, and you must have had a good ear for the language, because you seem to have picked it up pretty quickly.

Ade: Well, I came over here with a British accent.

DePue: Okay. How many years did you spend as an apprentice tailor in Heidelberg?

Ade: I worked at my aunt's shop, then as a journeyman, till December '49 when I left Germany.

DePue: Let's talk a little bit about the decision to come to the United States and how that worked out.

Ade: At that time a German citizen could only come over here as an immigrant if he had blood relatives or if he was a von Braun of essential value to the government. Am I saying that right?

DePue: Wernher von Braun who happened to be the designer of the V-2 and the V-1 systems, yeah.

Ade: There were a lot of scientists came over here.

DePue: That was hardly what Walter Ade was at the time, though, was it?

Ade: They were prime beef. So I came after World War II, sponsorship from an aunt at New Berlin, farmers, a descendant of my father's uncles, Frederick and Bill Ade. Out there they pronounce them Addy. One married another German and they had one daughter Mary who married a German immigrant who came over here before World War I named John Wolf. And they co-signed the sponsorship for me.

DePue: Did your mother stay in Germany?

Ade: Oh yes. She literally sent me to America.

DePue: It was her idea more than yours?

Ade: Oh yes. Get out of this place. Make something of yourself. But the final thing she said, "Walter, never forget your mother tongue." That's why I still speak good German.

DePue: Why did she not come to the United States?

Ade: Well, it would have been awful for my father to come home and find his wife in America.

DePue: So she was still hoping.

Ade: Matter of fact, my mother was [here] in 1955 visiting for several weeks. And we took her by car by way of Washington [to New York]. We toured the Washington sites, to New York to the harbor to take a ship back home. She came home in early October - four days before my dad arrived in Heidelberg. Unbeknownst to each

other they were traveling. Can you imagine how awful it would have—my father arrive in Heidelberg and his wife not there?

DePue: Wow. That had to be an amazing reunion.

Ade: And I found out my dad's homecoming on page one of the Chicago Tribune. There was a reporter, truck reporter at the border, and they interviewed my dad, that I have a son in Illinois, and that's how I found out my dad came home.

DePue: How did he manage to get released? Were the Soviets finally releasing thousands of Germans at that time? This would have been after Stalin died.

Ade: Yes. In July, 1955 Konrad Adenauer went to Moscow. He knew he had about 22,000 German officers still over there. And one of them was one of the sons of the Krupp family, the metal industry....

DePue: The armament manufacturer.

Ade: Yes. And the political pressure, political interest to get the man back. I still believe that's the only reason my dad came back. The 18,000 came back. Konrad Adenauer thought he'd get 22,000. 18,000 stayed alive that long and come back. All skin and bones.

DePue: What happened to the other 4,000? He just got the numbers wrong?

Ade: Well, at that age, after all my father was —let's see. He was born in '01. '55, is fifty-four years old. He looked like an eighty-five-year-old man. The death rate had to be enormous. Later on I discovered through a book that was recommended to me by—by the way. at the funeral of my father I managed to get there with my daughter. They recommended a book which I brought home. Unfortunately, it's only in German. In August '47 the Soviets, they were master propaganda people. When they went about making the claim, "You Americans are bad people, you still have slave labor in Texas," meaning prisoner of war working on the farms. "We don't have any more prisoners. All we have is war criminals." What they did is they lined up thousands, thousands, count one, two, three, if you drew number one you were immediately released. That was the cutoff at the two-year period of mandatory Geneva Convention release of prisoner of war, understand? If you drew number two you were convicted twenty years' hard labor. My dad drew number three, you're convicted for life. According to that book, there were thousands of them committed suicide.

DePue: From our cushy life I can't begin to comprehend that. I'm sure you have a different perspective growing up in Germany at that time and seeing the privations firsthand, experiencing them.

Ade: Well, you say—I listen every year to the prisoner of war people when we have the ex-POW ceremony at the governor's mansion. Most of them are pilots. They came

home skin and bone. So were we. Not much food left. You had food rations here because logistical support went to the armed forces.

DePue: I know that 1946, '47 in Germany was the starving time. There just wasn't any food to be had.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: How would you compare your life in that short time that you were in Soviet-controlled Czechoslovakia versus Heidelberg?

Ade: When I came to Heidelberg under American troops, of course there was a lot for time was still curfew time. I didn't have much experience of that, in fact. But, the American occupation people decided what to do with young people on the street. They formed what's called a GYA, German Youth Activity, and that's how I got acquainted with baseball. And they had in Heidelberg detailed a corporal, Dominico Licastro from Boston, to be their trainer or caretaker for us, to teach us baseball with used American baseball bats, baseball. I played catcher, left-wing thrower.

DePue: Left-hander.

Ade: Southpaw. And had a good time. We played against American high school team. Got beat to death. But we learned. And that was fun. Dominico Licastro, of course had a German girlfriend and sometimes he let us have an ice cream cone, which was fun. He in fact managed to get us by GI truck to Stuttgart one time for a baseball game, sightseeing one time to a castle. So it was fun. But on the other side of the coin, when you walked down the main street in Heidelberg and you saw these cowboy-type GIs with the belt hanging down the side like John Wayne. Let me preface it this way, the GI during the war was kind to us young people. They were kind to us. But the after-effect, occupation, they never were shot at in anger, a lot of them were hateful people. They made us get off the sidewalk when they came along. Literally like they used to do the black folks in the south.

DePue: So you say these are the American soldiers who had never seen combat, who were coming in after the war?

Ade: That was the nasty side of the coin. In fact I heard—I didn't witness this myself. But one time a couple of GIs followed a man on the sidewalk like a close order march making fun of the guy. He turned around and punched that guy. The guy fell down, hit his side of the head on the curbing and died. There were no charges against that civilian because there were enough citizens around to say that man was agitating, feeling out of this person. It was an accidental death. Another case, where in Heidelberg all the bridges were destroyed. There was immediately a wooden bridge built. And a couple of drunk GIs crashed into this wooden site and went over into the Neckar River and drowned. Those things just happened.

DePue: But still your mother saw your future as being in the United States.

Ade: Yes. And then she came to visit – 1955. After my dad died she came to visit several times.

DePue: Exactly what did it take for you to get to the United States? You said you had a trade and you had relatives.

Ade: Not having a history of tuberculosis was mandatory. The consulate interviewed, gave a physical, interviewed to see if you had the ability to read, write and speak English. And you had a trade, or as a student you had under sponsorship opportunity to go into higher education. In my case, I went out to my uncle and my aunt that were living on a farm and in January my aunt introduced me to Myers Brothers and they took me on as a tailor in the alteration department.

DePue: Myers Brothers right downtown here in Springfield?

Ade: When Mr. Stanley Myers discovered I wasn't just a kid, like here when you're eighteen-year-old you're a kid, well I considered myself a grownup person, because you grew up awful fast when you see things happen. Your maturity level is accelerated. And I made clothes for friends of theirs. I made a suit of clothes one time for a couple that was out of New York selling perfume and so forth wholesale. And that gentleman had a striped Koopman suit on. Koopman Manufacturing.

DePue: Koopman?

Ade: Are you familiar with that? I don't know if they still have that product. Well, she wanted one just like it. Well, Mr. Stanley of course, "Let's get that material. Walter, you make her a suit." She was a tiny lady. The double-breasted tall man, how much material. "Well, get the same it takes for him." So I had enough material to make a double-breasted lady's suit costume with two skirts fully lined. I didn't get a nickel more for it for doing this but I got a nice letter from that lady one time from New York, how well impressed her clientele is with the fine suit, his and hers Koopman, which made me feel good. I made myself a white double-breasted outfit that I finally donated to—we then had at that time a theater here in town, where they collected costumes and things. To make another quickly, I got acquainted with my wife through the symphony orchestra. I brought in one of my suitcases a viola.

DePue: You brought that from Germany, from Heidelberg?

Ade: Yeah. I didn't want to carry a viola case because that counted as a second suitcase. And when I discovered Springfield has an amateur symphony orchestra and I found out they had on the third floor here on Fifth and Monroe above now the investment firm they had a rehearsal hall. Long steps went up there and reported in. And it happened that day two other foreigners were, one violinist from Poland and a cellist from some other place. Well, we were accepted like celebrities. And I was seated in the viola section by a lady who introduced herself, "I'm Eunice Holt. How are you?"

DePue: Eunice Holt?

Ade: Holt, H-o-l-t. A year later we got married.

DePue: She was an American?

Ade: I married my first date.

DePue: Growing up in Germany and Czechoslovakia didn't leave much opportunity for dating or anything like that, did it?

Ade: It was of little interest to horse around. It was a survival training course.

DePue: When you left Germany did you ship out on a steamer or what?

Ade: The SS Washington out of Bremen. SS Washington was a captured German passenger ship slash turned into a troopship slash into a passenger ship again. In fact, I was on the first 100 percent German immigrants. We stopped in Ireland to pick up seventy students that went to Boston University. That was fun.

DePue: Boston, huh.

Ade: Fun watching them. They had hand-knitted stockings, hose sewn. They have nylon hose I guess up there, it's cold. It was interesting.

DePue: Now these were American citizens?

Ade: No, those were Boston students, I mean those were Irish people.

DePue: Okay. That were going to Boston.

Ade: Going to Boston University.

DePue: Where did you debark then?

Ade: New York City.

DePue: New York City. It wasn't Ellis Island, was it?

Ade: No, no.

DePue: That was not operational anymore, was it?

Ade: No. I didn't get to see the liberty thing. It was foggy that day.

DePue: The Statue of Liberty.

Ade: The statue.

DePue: And then you got a train to the Midwest?

Ade: Yes. Through a friend, again through GYA, a young friend, his sister married at a young age an American, young German-American. And she picked me up at the harbor. And at that time you could still take a nickel subway. We went to Boston. I stayed overnight in the hallway sleeping on a couch. And when people asked there where I was going, going to Springfield, Illinois, "Illinoys, go hunting buffaloes?" Can you imagine that?

DePue: Well, I'm sure they had a very parochial view of what life in Illinois was like. They obviously did.

Ade: I can still point out the place over here in the Wabash Station where I put my foot on the ground.

DePue: Oh wow. Did your uncle meet you there?

Ade: My cousin and my aunt. My cousin was six-foot-four. They had a 1949 four-door with suicide doors. And that was the first time I rode in an American car.

DePue: I assume you'd driven cars in Germany.

Ade: No. I'll tell you a short story how I learned to drive. I commuted back and forth from Old Berlin actually, with a car full of people that were state workers. And I assumed—I'm an independent person; I don't want to be obliged to people. By that time I already had enough money saved to buy a Harley-Davidson 125 single-cylinder rubber band front suspension motorcycle; commuted with it. On Monroe (and railroad track) and Adams – Crawford motorcycle place. That's where I parked it every day and then walked a block to Myers. And one day riding home on the old 36 a semi-trailer passed me and the man pulled over. I saw the rear wheels come after me. In other words he didn't pass his whole rig.

DePue: Yeah, he hadn't cleared you yet.

Ade: I pulled over in the ditch. The next day I took that motorcycle back to the dealer and he gave me the same money back, 125 dollars that I paid a year before, after I told him I almost got killed. So I bought a— Oh, then I found a room at –what's that street, the railroad track –by an English family. Upstairs. Room and board with breakfast twenty-five dollars a month. And I found a 1939 Studebaker coupe that was owned by a shoe store down here where the federal—past the post office – that new building is. There used to be a shoe store.. Now the Ford dealer used to be by the Baptist church, that restored building there, used to be the Ford dealer. Now the man sold me that car and now I didn't have a license. What to do? He lent me his car. He showed me how to operate his car. He took me to the driver's license thing. He sat in the back seat while I took the test. I got my license. He sold me the car. I drove out to New Berlin with my....(laughs)

DePue: This was a 1939 you said.

Ade: 1939 Studebaker coupe.

DePue: When you came to the United States, let's say you were here for just a few weeks. What struck you most about being in America now versus your life back in Germany?

Ade: Unbelievable. It's just like—well, you hear the term the new world. It's the new world to me. My granduncle still spoke German to me. And my aunt spoke a little German to me. But I knew English of course. And I enjoyed downtown. Kresge on the corner where Myers building is on Fifth and Adams used to be Kresge. I heard hot dog and root beer. Well, the word beer I thought was beer. Well, over in Germany at age eighteen you drink beer. I went in there, the counter, and I ordered a root beer and a hot dog. And it was root beer; the first time I experienced root beer, was tasty, nice.

DePue: But not what you expected.

Ade: No. I couldn't drink beer. My folks out there in New Berlin, they didn't drink any beer. My uncle drank whiskey. But I didn't partake. My cousin drank beer. His sister who had married and became a motorcycle dealer in Indiana—I forgot the town—but when they came to town to visit people they always got a pitcher of beer and got together. I never got the hang of drinking American beer because it didn't taste good to me. It was watered down beer. (laughs)

DePue: It wasn't stout enough for you.

Ade: Yes. So I never, still don't.

DePue: But I'm guessing that your experience here is that it's just....

Ade: Fantastic.

DePue: That there was so much of everything. There was enough to eat.

Ade: Everything. It's just absolutely unbelievable. I'm now at the point since I can afford it, I hosted two young Germans. I had the fun to watch them experience America. And it's a joy.

DePue: You talked a little bit about how you met your wife. You had been here for a couple, three years by that time and gotten yourself established at Myers Brothers and gotten yourself a reputation for doing good work I'm sure. What made you decide that it was time to get married?

Ade: She was the finest lady that I ever laid eyes on. Blonde like I, blue-eyed like I, of not German extraction. Her dad was British Scottish, mom had credentials to be back to the Civil War era, grandfather was a judge in Marion County. They were not necessarily poor folks. They lived on 419 South College, which is now the visitor center on College Street. Her father was a medical retired state employee interested in investments. That's how I got the hang of the original attitude of investing money. I didn't really start till I became a captain in the National Guard

and started making extra money through what's called SRF force, the Selected Reserve, where we all of a sudden had double training, double, every other weekend, weekend training, made money like crazy. What to do with it? Invest it. And that's how I got started. But anyway my desire to get married was natural. I felt comfortable in the United States, met the finest lady I ever wanted to meet, of good moral stock. Started attending church together, Christian church. Ernie Laughlin was a real fine person that got me acquainted. I mean, he could talk to you like a brother (emphatically). And I became a Christian.

DePue: You were baptized in the Christian church?

Ade: Yes. That church building became an elementary school, West Side Christian Church moved out west and became a multimillion establishment. But now, after I came back from Korea we started going to a little church that West Side sponsored at Bond Park and that turned sour for some reason. We started going to South Side Christian Church, which is on South MacArthur, and we've been going there ever since.

DePue: Okay. When did you become a citizen of the United States?

Ade: Two months after I was discharged in March 1954, my aunt, my wife and another witness, who happens to be the wife of a Polish immigrant who claimed to be French, but he was obviously Polish, an oboe player—that's how I got acquainted with them—made an appointment with a federal judge above the post office. It used to be the main post office building. Reported in at ten in the morning. The judge, "I want to thank you for the service to our country. Raise your right hand." He swore me in.

DePue: So what's interesting to me is you were drafted in January '52. You had married what month in '51? December?

Ade: December.

DePue: Did you know that you were going to be drafted just a month after you got married?

Ade: I think I got my draft notice already. But it wasn't really—it just happened that way. We didn't have the motive to get married from getting drafted. That sort of scheme didn't exist in my mind. Or go into higher education to avoid military. That thing didn't exist. To me it was part of my —become a citizen. After all I felt obliged to serve and do my duty to demonstrate my worthiness to become a citizen.

DePue: I'm sure that some will be surprised that they're drafting people who aren't even citizens of the United States.

Ade: I called myself at that time—we were prime beef. During the process at Battle Creek, Michigan at Camp—forgot the name.

DePue: Grayling?

Ade: No. It'll come to me pretty soon. Anyway, it was interesting. We took a test of course, AFQT test.

DePue: AFQT?

Ade: AFQT, armed forces qualification test. There were four of us remained. What did we do? We had to spend the afternoon, take a test. After that I discovered we were smart enough to take a test for OCS. The next day going through this interview—I showed you the card, punch around the edge. All of a sudden that sergeant discovered, “You were born in Germany. Holy—you’re nothing but a goddamn German. Get out of here (emphatically).”

DePue: You weren't going to be able to go to Officer Candidates School.

Ade: It would have been impossible because you couldn't go to OCS as a noncitizen because of getting a secret classification.

DePue: That was well into the time you had been enlisted. So your basic training was in....

Ade: Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

DePue: Okay. Fort Leonard Wood. And it's at this time I typically ask people about their experiences in basic training. But after what you had survived growing up in Germany this was probably almost a cakewalk.

Ade: I had so much fun it wasn't funny. I learned in the Jungvolk small-bore shooting.

DePue: Small-bore shooting, yeah.

Ade: Rifle shooting. I had my first badge at age twelve. I'll never forget on the rifle range I said, “Don't tell me how to shoot. I had my first badge when I was twelve years old. My badge had a swastika in the middle. And you.... (laughs)”

DePue: I'm not sure they took to that comment well.

Ade: No, no. But at that time the qualification was one, two, three, 500 yards. And I had one of the highest scores. And I understood later on those people were selected to Fort Benning for potential marksmanship training. But I was a non-citizen. There was no mentioning about it. But I had the satisfaction I could shoot. Because when I came to Korea and Sergeant Knudsen from Wisconsin, there were three of us, asked, “Which one of you knows something about machine gun?” I raised my right hand, because I knew the Soviet tactic of mass attack; Chinese and Korean the same way. The more firepower, the more the survival opportunities. And I wanted to be a machine gunner.

DePue: How did you end up in the infantry? Were you drafted right in the beginning into the infantry?

Ade: Interesting again. Basic training we had a first lieutenant that was still a first lieutenant out of World War II with five rows of ribbons, an outspoken guy who never got to be a captain. In those days you could be a lieutenant forever.

DePue: He was too outspoken to be a captain.

Ade: There was no such thing as the ROPA Act. [Reserve Officers Personnel Act] And he took a liking to me. After coming back from—after finishing the combat engineer training, he requisitioned me back as a cadre. Well, I had brought back a pair of boots with the old iron heels, where you could hear my step. I didn't have to call cadence. And he just loved that. And the first sergeant was a fellow that just ate that up. So I was a private E2 acting training sergeant for two and a half training cycles, glad that I got to spend all this hiking and all this training and all the range fire. Because the hills in Korea, even that was tough after having all this strength training. But it was good experience and I'm glad I survived it.

DePue: We're at the point where we can finally start talking about the Korean War. But we're already an hour and twenty minutes into this.

Ade: Go ahead.

DePue: And I think we might want to take a break and pick it up, in part because of technological reasons here, and maybe pick this up at some other time or later on today. But let's go ahead and close this for now. We'll pick this up and we'll hear about the Korean War in detail.

(end of interview)

Interview with Walter Ade

VRK-A-L-2007-004.02

Interview # 2: May 25, 2007

Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Friday, the 25th of May, 2007. This is Mark DePue. I'm the Director of Oral History here at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today I'm finishing up my session with Walter Ade, who is a Korean War veteran. On Monday I guess it was, Walter, I spent the entire session talking about your early life growing up in Germany and how you ended up coming to the United States. I think we pretty much left when you had just joined the military. So there might be just a little bit of overlap, because that's basically where I wanted to start today, Walter, if you would. Tell us a little bit about living in the United States, actually living in Springfield, and how you came at that point in time to join the United States Army.

Ade: Well, (laughs) I was drafted. I wasn't really complete with my English. The word draft to me didn't ring a bell other than the wind between two windows in an open room (laughs). And when I got the notice, "Your friends and neighbors have selected you," I didn't have no friends and neighbors. I was a stranger in town (laughs).

DePue: But you did have a wife at that time, did you not?

Ade: Yes. I married quickly.

DePue: Tell us again when you got married and when you got drafted.

Ade: I married Eunice Holt on 9 December, 1951. And I got drafted in January '52.

DePue: Okay. What was your impression of the war in Korea at that time? Or were you not paying much attention to it?

Ade: I had no idea that the United States was in a war in Korea. Of course in those days they called it a police action, which didn't sound like war. To me war, when people get shot at and killed, that's a war.

DePue: Obviously you had some very direct and painful experiences about what war actually meant.

Ade: Yes. Lucky to come out through the World War II experience alive without any bombings. And of course I was only thirteen years old. There was not much shooting going on where we lived. And in fact the town of Graslitz, when I call it surrendered, when a motorcycle soldier came in speaking the dialect of the Graslizer, because he had immigrated in 1938, and....

DePue: And this was the American soldier who came.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: Okay. So it was a surprise to you when you were drafted in January of '52 you say.

Ade: Yes. I remember a busload of us, six o'clock in the morning at the bus station went down to Saint Louis, Eleventh and Spruce was the induction center. It was a high-rise. I'll never forget the eleventh floor – where we were picked out in a room, counted out, one, two, three, one, two, three. And every third soldier was requested to step forward. A Marine captain came in from another room and asked them to come to the next room. They were sworn into the Marine Corps before we were sworn in the Army. I was lucky I was a number two (laughs).

DePue: You didn't have any interest in being in the Marines?

Ade: I didn't know anything about Marine Corps except later on I discovered their mortality rate was much higher than Army soldiers.

DePue: Yeah. So you were in the Army. Now you had already had a physical by that time?

Ade: Oh yes. The physical was done in Saint Louis.

DePue: During that same time period?

Ade: Yes. And then from there we were strangely enough by train shipped up to Battle Creek, Michigan. I still don't remember the camp's name. It's now a National Guard training center. I forgot. At any rate....

DePue: Is it Camp Grayling?

Ade: No. Camp Grayling is way up north. But another nasty experience I had there is I learned not to correct people's names. My name was pronounced Addy. And I soon went along with them pronouncing it Ade because as a private recruit you don't want to correct a sergeant constantly. Let me tell you, those people that were up there pushing us around were people who came back from Korea. And I soon noticed some of them had former master sergeant stripes and you could tell ripped off corporal stripes. There were people evidently constantly in trouble, getting reduced.

DePue: Yeah. I imagine perhaps a couple of them at least had some World War II experience as well.

Ade: Yes. But I wasn't very impressed with those so-called non-commissioned officers. At any rate one time they made us sit on the second floor of an old Army barracks like squatting. And two days later ninety-two of us ended up in the hospital with pneumonia. I was one of them.

DePue: So not the best of experiences in basic. Did you think you got good military training there?

Ade: Oh yes (emphatically). Well, we were shipped after being outfitted with uniforms and then of course tested. I've already talked about. And sent down to Fort Leonard Wood by train again. And that wasn't really—the experience there, we had a tough field first that I found out later was a [former] Missouri state policeman. Why he ended up in the Army I don't have any idea. But somehow the company commander, who was a first lieutenant from World War II, took a liking to me because I was military-oriented. I had no problem with drills and physical fitness and shooting on the range and my military appearance. Being a tailor I was always groomed and dressed properly.

DePue: That sounds about right.

Ade: So after completing the infantry basic, Fort Leonard Wood of course being the engineer training center, I went through combat engineer training and reverted immediately back to the basic training company. That company commander requested me be sent back as an acting drill sergeant. So here I worked then through

two and a half training cycles as a private E2 acting drill sergeant, which benefited me greatly in physical fitness having to go through all this basic training again and PT and the whole enchilada, including what I enjoyed the most, shooting on the range. I always participated in that.

DePue: Once you became an instructor, you refined the skills you had already picked up. And that explains why it took quite a while before you finally were posted to Korea then. You were working at the basic training center.

Ade: In December a levy came down Fort Leonard Wood for certain MOS's, because 11B, eleven bravo, I reverted back to infantry. I was prime beef for Korea.

DePue: For the listeners, 11B is the military occupational specialty, MOS, that infantrymen have. Your standard grunt.

Ade: That's right. So after a brief leave back home I flew to Camp Stoneman, California, San Francisco, and then bused to Camp Stoneman. And there we had a quick weekend pass to go to San Francisco. When I came back there was nobody in that barracks. My duffel bag was there and I was told they're in another barracks for ready shipment.

DePue: Now can I back up a little bit? If I recall, you had a daughter who was born while you were in Korea.

Ade: That's right.

DePue: Was your wife pregnant before you were inducted?

Ade: No, no, wait a minute. Well, go back, 3 April when my daughter was born, '53.

DePue: Was your wife living with you at Fort Leonard Wood?

Ade: We stayed in Waynesville, Missouri in a converted garage. Didn't have any plumbing. We had to go to the owner's house for bathroom. For heat we had a Coleman cooking arrangement.

DePue: A Coleman stove.

Ade: Also served for heat. Rather primitive.

DePue: Well, your wife by that time is saying, "What in the world did I get myself into?"

Ade: Well, she was brought up, grew up in rather primitive circumstances down by Iuka, Illinois, south of Salem, on a farm. And she never complained. For transportation I had a Harley-Davidson that belonged to her brother that he bought out of the box for 125 dollars. A World War II Harley-Davidson. And he owned it while I used it down there. When I came back from Korea—while I was there I guess he borrowed 100 dollars from my wife and we called it even. On advice from my father-in-law,

in Illinois you don't obtain property except exchanging one dollar. So the title transfer showed one dollar and I became the owner of a World War II flathead Harley-Davidson.

DePue: I can't imagine that she used that for her own transportation after you left. Or did she?

Ade: She moved back to her parents' house on 419 South Spring Street. And back and forth to Fort Leonard Wood we were able to obtain a ride from a fellow soldier that lived in Springfield. His dad had a doughnut shop on South Grand Avenue, no longer in existence. In fact he died at an early age. He never got shipped overseas. He managed somehow to have an emergency leave to his dad when we were processed out. I never want to make the accusation that was done artificially. But I have the suspicion.

DePue: It was awfully convenient if nothing else.

Ade: Dad went to the hospital with a heart problem. The went home on emergency leave. And he stayed down at Fort Leonard Wood, went to cooks master—what do they call it? Cook and master baker school and had all these nice little things while I was being shot at in Korea. I never resented it much but I never forgot it either.

DePue: Obviously not. Okay. Let's get you to Korea finally, because I've been flirting around with that for quite a while here. You were shipped out.

Ade: There were three enlisted people, were flown from Travis Air Force Base over to Japan. And within a week after being again outfitted there with M1 rifle and so forth by ship over to—we landed in Inchon, that famous place where you can only go by a certain time of the day.

DePue: The tides are so high.

Ade: Yes. And then again we were sorted out by that—I forgot what division that was. Oh, you're assigned to the 5th RCT [Regimental Combat Team]. Step aside over here. Already we were like stepdaughters.

DePue: All three of you were assigned to the 5th?

Ade: Yes. We ended up in the same company.

DePue: That was nice, at least having somebody there you knew.

Ade: Yes. In fact we came back on the same boat.

DePue: Afterwards?

Ade: Afterwards.

DePue: Okay. So this would have been January of 1953?

Ade: When we came back? I mean '53? Oh yes.

DePue: When you got to Korea. When you got to Inchon.

Ade: The end of January '53. Actually I ended up in King Company. I believe it was the first week of February. Exact date I can't tell you.

DePue: We don't organize our regiments and the battalions anything like we did at that time. King Company was in the 3rd Battalion?

Ade: 3rd Battalion.

DePue: A company at that time would have how many people?

Ade: I would guess 150, less than 200.

DePue: Okay. At least the number of troops on the ground was less than 200.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: Okay. How many companies were in a regiment? Do you recall? Was it nine?

Ade: We had three battalions. We had three rifle companies and a weapons company in each battalion if I recall right. And then of course being a regimental combat team we also had a medical company and artillery. The 5th, the triple nickel it's called, artillery battalion, 555.

DePue: And they had 105s?

Ade: 105 howitzers. They were a good shooting outfit, good support. And then we had—I said the medical company. And a small little detachment with a Piper Cub flying FO.[forward observer] Whenever that thing came around something was going to happen. Like jet fighter attacks. Or one time announcement the battleship shooting in front of us on what they call Million Dollar Hill. Declared that the Million Dollar Hill because....

DePue: That's how much ordnance was on the hill.

Ade: Yes. And there wasn't a piece of vegetation on that thing. It was a naked bald head.

DePue: Was the Piper Cub you were talking about part of the regiment?

Ade: Yes, attached to the 5th RCT.

DePue: Okay. And that was most of the forward observation for the 555th then.

Ade: That's right.

DePue: Tell me a little bit about then when you went from Inchon. I take it you were trucked over to....

Ade: No. By train. I noticed here the town. Chunchon is the end of the railroad. From there we were trucked over to the Punch Bowl.

DePue: And that's where your regiment was at the time. Were they already in the line?

Ade: That's correct. I spent the first night in a tent. Had my first nasty experience of somebody doing careless pouring gasoline on the little belly stove. And of course we had a fire. We had to all evacuate. And another negative impression there, one sergeant trying to get out of that tent with his folded cot sideways. Said, "I hope I don't end up in your platoon." I said quickly. Because anybody that dumb trying to get sideways out. Just like, get out of my way (laugh).

DePue: Did you end up in his platoon?

Ade: No.

DePue: You were lucky in that respect. Now you were what rank at this time?

Ade: I was still an E2.

DePue: A PV2 (Private, 2nd Class). But you had quite a bit of experience under your belt by that time. I would take it you're a little bit older than most of the recruits.

Ade: Yes. In fact, the platoon sergeant was Master Sergeant Knudsen from Wisconsin who was only nineteen years old.

DePue: Wow. A platoon sergeant already.

Ade: Yes. His second tour in Korea already.

DePue: Holy cow.

Ade: I found out later every month he had to report to the company commander and write in front of him a postcard to Mom because Mom every month inquired through the Red Cross the whereabouts of her son. He never wrote home.

DePue: Nineteen-year-olds aren't noted for doing that too well.

Ade: But he was a gutsy fellow. He never got hurt. But he went out on daylight patrols and everything else. He had no fear.

DePue: What was your specific assignment then?

Ade: Well, Sergeant Knudsen asked, "Which one of you knows something about machine gun?" And my right hand went up because first of all I did quite a bit of machine gun shooting during the training.

DePue: .30-caliber machine gun?

Ade: .30-caliber light machine gun. And also—excuse me. I knew the method of the Soviet army /Chinese and Korean of mass attacks. And firepower was of my interest. With the machine gun you can certainly have more firepower than an M1 rifle.

DePue: Were you assigned to the weapons platoon then?

Ade: No. Each platoon had a machine gun. We had two machine guns in the fourth squad and a recoilless rifle. And so I managed to be in that squad.

DePue: What platoon?

Ade: The fourth platoon. I mean the third platoon, the fourth squad in the third platoon.

DePue: Okay. Were there three platoons in the company? I think that was the case.

Ade: I think so.

DePue: And the company also had a weapons platoon, but that's where the mortars were, I would take it.

Ade: That's right.

DePue: Sixty-millimeter mortars.

Ade: That's right.

DePue: Did they have some heavy machine guns in that platoon as well?

Ade: No.

DePue: Heavier recoilless rifles perhaps?

Ade: Each platoon had a recoilless rifle. We never used it.

DePue: It was basically an antitank weapon?

Ade: Yes. But the weapons company, they had—oh, I forgot the early stage of the....

DePue: Did they have four-deuce mortars? [4.2 inch]

Ade: Four-deuce. Oh yes, very accurate. And recoilless rifle.

DePue: 106 maybe?

Ade: No. That was an earlier, a smaller one. I don't remember the size. But I remember one time, we used to have at twelve o'clock certain weapons were shot to be

exercising them, and to use up old ammunition. I never participated in that because being a survivor I don't believe in showing the enemy where your automatic weapons are located.

DePue: How long after you actually got to the company location there near the Punch Bowl did you get to see some direct action, did your platoon, your company, get moved up?

Ade: Well, after that night of burning up the tent, the next day the three of us were sent up to King Company, which was located up on top of the Punch Bowl. The Punch Bowl, actually the ridgeline was separated. The top was a rock. And there was no trench of course. King Company was to the left and L Company to the right of that.

DePue: The Punch Bowl is a huge piece of terrain, so were you one of several companies that were posted there at the time?

Ade: That's right. L Company was to the right, King Company to the left. And I don't recall who, I think the 2nd Battalion was on the lower side on the left, if I recall. But they were not all on the line at the same time.

DePue: So practically your second night in the front in Korea you're actually on the front lines?

Ade: Yes. That was quite an interesting experience. I was introduced to several interesting things, a corporal that presented me a broom, said, "You know, we sweep the trench every day because if we don't it'll be like New York downtown without..." And honestly people threw stuff around. So sweeping the trench in Korea was my first duty. The next thing he came along with a steel helmet of water in it, says, "You know, our regimental commander requires shaving every day." And that wasn't fresh water I had to shave in, that was....

DePue: Several people had already done their....

Ade: Several.

DePue: Oh, man.

Ade: But I did whatever I was told. And then I was introduced in the machine gun position, which had a tin roof with holes in it. And that same corporal also said, "You are replacing a man that was shot in this position. He was a smoker and got shot through the head." I told him, "Don't worry, I don't smoke." Snipers shot that man through the head, killed him.

DePue: If you did smoke, that would have been a great reason to stop smoking.

Ade: Obviously I had better sense.

DePue: Did you take fire most days? Did they have mortar fire? Or did snipers take pot shots at you almost every day, at your positions?

Ade: I didn't experience any sniper fire. Sometimes incoming rounds. Most of them, being at the peak of that ridgeline, went over the top. But my first experience of being shot at quote, unquote or earning my Combat Infantry Badge was about two weeks later. I had to be out on what we call an OPLP. There were several what we call fingers going down to the valley. And about 100 yards out there was a trench going down like a doughnut kind of a position.

DePue: OPLP, observation post/listening post.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: So you're stuck way out in front of the frontlines itself.

Ade: That's right. And it was a twenty below temperature. And with only one machine gun; I had just an M1 rifle and hand grenades and some other crew had the machine gun. But early in the morning when a patrol came back—another thing I observed—I'm not a smoker, but when you see a GI that's still out there light up a cigarette because he thinks he's safe now, I would have never allowed that if I would have been a squad leader or an officer.

DePue: Was that somebody who was returning from a patrol?

Ade: That's right. And as soon as they came in burp gun and all sorts of noise came. In other words they were trawling a Chinese patrol and once they were in our area then went up to the position, we were being fired upon, and our machine gun fired one burst of six, and then had headspace problems, fooling around with trying to adjust the headspace and all this shooting going on with other people shooting M1 rifles.

DePue: Now headspace is probably another thing that some people might not be familiar with. That's the timing mechanism on machine guns so that the timing is right.

Ade: That's right. It's easy adjustable if you know how. But the easiest way to do it with the tip of a round, to turn the barrel. But I learned to appreciate quickly our mortar support. They were firing. They were dropping rounds very close around us.

DePue: This would have been the company mortar.

Ade: Our own yes.

DePue: Were those sixties?

Ade: The sixty.

DePue: My impression of this kind of combat that you found yourself in is, it's akin to the First World War. You've got two armies that are dug in. Now the difference

between what you had and the First World War maybe was this was very rugged mountainous terrain. But there were still two lines. And then there would be outposts that both armies were pushing out into no-man's-land and then both armies patrolled aggressively in no-man's-land. Was that a good characterization?

Ade: There were nightly patrols going out. Another thing that I want to mention: the week that I arrived, Colonel Fisher, the regimental commander, put out an order that machine gunners shall not be sent on patrols. And I never had to go out on a patrol. The only out in front was at that OPLP. So I consider myself extremely fortunate.

DePue: Why did he put that command out?

Ade: Machine gunners are hard to come by.

DePue: It's not just anybody who can sit behind the machine gun and know what they're doing.

Ade: The mortality rate of machine guns has been proven in World War II to be three minutes in a real fighting war. Being a survivor by nature, I obeyed to fire rounds bursts of six, not only to keep your barrel from burning up but also for the opposition not to discover where the automatic fire comes from.

DePue: As soon as the machine gun opens up, you become the automatic target of the enemy.

Ade: That's a standard procedure among us to knock out the automatic fire.

DePue: Hand grenades? You guys were equipped with hand grenades as well?

Ade: Yes. Another nasty experience I had. That night I threw a grenade out and it never did explode. And I looked at the box. It was World War II junk.

DePue: Oh boy.

Ade: At twenty below zero, it didn't go off.

DePue: What were the enemy equipped with?

Ade: They used burp guns. Burp guns is a short rifle capable of shooting an automatic with a very short cartridge. And the Chinese troops, they wore quilted jackets, and they had their small rifles stuck in it. So when they pulled that out, that thing wasn't susceptible to freezing like our equipment.

DePue: The burp gun I guess would not be great for accuracy, but it sure could put out a volume.

Ade: Yes. And they were worthless at distance shooting too.

DePue: Yeah. The enemy wasn't much of a good shot?

Ade: Let me put it this way. We had an SFC one time after coming back from patrol and getting shot at. When he took his uniform off, he had a round stuck between his long johns and his skin. So this thing didn't really have from a distance much penetration.

DePue: That's interesting. From what I've read about the Punch Bowl in the regimental history, these were probably North Koreans you were facing over there.

Ade: We had North Koreans.

DePue: At the Punch Bowl.

Ade: From the intelligence reports and the after action reports. Or I gave you some command action reports. I think they identified through prisoners. We had sometimes mission patrols to go out trying to capture North Koreans and of course interrogate them.

DePue: So I would take it that your company was in the line in the Punch Bowl for quite a while. Several weeks?

Ade: We were relieved by a Korean outfit. That was an interesting experience too. That poor soldier that relieved me spent the first night with me and tried to beg a cigarette. Of course I had no cigarettes. He had tennis shoes on in that nasty cold. Poorly equipped. I mean, those kids were suffering. When we went back to the Punch Bowl, of course then we were housed in squad tents in muddy area. Don't forget, that used to be rice fields and muddy. And we had part of our company command people, they stayed behind as from what I heard the first night there was a round came in at a CP bunker and I had suspicion even while I was out there that one of our ROK soldiers attached people were actually communicating with the North. I saw one one time using a flasher. I didn't turn him in because there were too many ROK soldiers attached to us. They may have—being a survivor and a new guy on the block so to speak, to say, "This guy here, I saw him blinking his flashlight with a red—" We had the filters. And he was in direct line with across over the rock where that bunker was, that perhaps that was the result of it.

DePue: During the time that your company was in line, were there patrols sent out by the company every night?

Ade: Every night. Another experience I had after we were for a while down in the Punch Bowl, when we moved to the west ridgeline, I think that tells you there.

DePue: Okay. We're looking at a map of the Punch Bowl area.

Ade: The Heartbreak Ridge area to the west.

DePue: Okay. Yeah that's right here on this map.

Ade: To where I saw a self-propelled howitzer shoot directly into the side of the mountain because I think those were Chinese. They had dug tunnels through the mountain and shot artillery and this self-propelled shooting directly into it. And he got—that was an interesting thing. You could hear the (puffing sound effect) coming back. And they soon put that thing in reverse and took off. That self-propelled only stayed there one day to shoot effective fire into the side of the mountain and drew fire back, and then they I guess completed their mission. I suppose that was the reason for it. But it was an interesting experience. But in that area at night one time I saw—there was moonlight and recollecting back to Germany, moonlight was always our fear of aircraft seeing, bombers coming. And the same in Korea at night. You could be seen. But when a patrol came back one early morning I saw a stretcher with one, his knees up, that had a vivid impression on me. And I heard later on that that man didn't obey staying in the path. He stepped off and stepped into a mine, one of our own mines.

DePue: So no-man's-land was heavily mined as well.

Ade: Mined. And if you didn't stay within—well, another one of the what I would call bad habits of American troops, they always left the comms [communication] wire. And eventually there was a stream of comms wire. You could tell where the patrol would come back. To me that was a dumb thing because....

DePue: Would they come back on the same route they went out?

Ade: Yes. To me that was a dumb thing because the opposition could also use that for ambush.

DePue: I thought that was pretty much tactical procedure not to do that. I'm sure it was, but they got lazy.

Ade: I would hate to criticize publicly leadership. But obviously there was some. Later on, talking about ambush, maybe I'm jumping the gun. In July just before the ceasefire we were in the Christmas Hill area. I haven't really figured out on your map where.

DePue: Would that have been close to....

Ade: That was to the west.

DePue: ... would that have been close to OP Harry? Because you guys were around OP Harry in July, June at least, and late May.

Ade: In June. But after that activity we were moved again. But which direction, Christmas Hill, I never did locate that. At any rate, L Company was next to us and they lost a patrol without a shot fired. They were ambushed. The last man rolled into a bush and he saw that they were all bayoneted. They were ambushed. The Chinese knew. That was Chinese. Those were Chinese troops. They knew our bad

habits of continuously going the same route. And I'm grateful that I never had the miserable opportunity to....

DePue: Go out on patrol.

Ade: With an American patrol. Because they had some awful bad habits.

DePue: Were these patrols always conducted at night?

Ade: Yes.

DePue: My impression then, listening to you—what was the distance between the American lines and the Korean or the Chinese lines?

Ade: In the July situation on Christmas Hill, we were only 200 yards apart.

DePue: Holy cow. It was a little bit farther than that over in the Punch Bowl area?

Ade: Oh yes. Yes I would say that was going down and then back up, that was at least a kilometer distance.

DePue: But an awfully dangerous kilometer of territory. So both armies were spreading around mines and putting out LP/OPs [listening post/observation post] and conducting aggressive patrols in that kilometer of terrain.

Ade: Yes. We also had—this is hearsay—sniper teams sometimes. Not from our company. But that would go out and they always went as a two-man team. One with the scope, the other one with the....

DePue: The spotter.

Ade: Sniper rifle. And I would have considered that extremely hazardous duty because our snipers had M1 rifles with a scope on, which later on in my later military life, the snipers always had Model 70 match rifles.

DePue: The M1 wasn't nearly as accurate, was it?

Ade: No.

DePue: Was it the nighttime that everybody dreaded? That's when all the action was going on?

Ade: Yes.

DePue: Were you generally awake at night and sleeping in the daytime?

Ade: I never had much sleep. Let me tell you another nasty thing, I was supposed to be relieved at four o'clock in the morning in my machine gun position. One morning where is he? And you're not supposed to leave your post. Well, the bunker was

about twenty paces from me. And I finally went over there and I smelled something. We had a burlap thing for a door. And as I opened that up a Coleman lantern with glass was broken. The bunker was beginning to burn inside the burlap. It was filling with smoke. If I wouldn't have gone in there I'm sure they would have all suffocated. That's only because my relief didn't come and I had to go in and look for him.

DePue: Were they all sound asleep?

Ade: They would have been dead, yes.

DePue: So it sounds like your position was basically a series of these bunkers; that was primarily for sleeping and for protection. And then trench lines to machine gun positions and things like that.

Ade: That's right. And the bunkers: there were six places to sleep in stacked on three high. And obviously there were more than six people in the squad. So being the junior with that foreign accent I wasn't privileged to have much space to sleep. I really didn't have much sleep.

DePue: Well, that's the nature of the GIs on the frontline anyway.

Ade: The junior guy had to....

DePue: Was chow you had up there C rations?

Ade: We had one hot meal at noon. We had a bunker kitchen on the back side. That was another interesting experience I have to tell you. Coming out of that bunker with my food and immediately cold, I heard a tech sergeant yell at two KATUSAs. KATUSA is the abbreviation for Korean....

DePue: Korean soldier....

Ade: They were there to do the manual lifting and things.

DePue: Korean Augmentee to the US Army.

Ade: That's right. They were going through our garbage barrel and that man yelled at them, had his rifle on his shoulder, going to shoot them. Well, I laid my tray down and I raised my rifle. And I said, "You pull the trigger, you're dead!" Because I recall when I was a youngster after World War II I was living out of garbage cans to survive. And I appreciated it. Once you dump something in the garbage can you have no more rights to it. And that man soon became a friend of mine after I explained to him how I had to live after the end of the war. When you're hungry you do a lot of things. You don't shoot somebody that wants to eat.

DePue: Yeah, that's an amazing story. That's the kind of perspective that Americans can't have because we haven't experienced that.

Ade: Well, at the end of a trigger he appreciated quickly not to do that.

DePue: How long were companies normally left in the frontlines before they were rotated out? What was the standard?

Ade: I really don't know of any routine period.

DePue: It strikes me you can't do that day after day, week after week, without really being just worn out.

Ade: Well, most of the guys were eighteen-, nineteen-year-olds. I was already twenty-three, lean and mean. It didn't bother me much. I was physically fit. I was, let me say it, hell-bent on coming back alive, especially after 3 April when I got the news my daughter was born.

DePue: What was that like? Tell us a little bit more about that.

Ade: That was interesting. I got a letter with a picture. My father-in-law was an amateur photographer and he took a picture of the newborn baby with my wife holding it, and I got that in the mail before I got a phone call on a field telephone from an American Red Cross man. I had to run up over to a field phone quite a distance. And when he identified himself as "I'm So-and-So, American Red Cross, congratulations," "I already know about it," I hung up. It was a displeasure to have to leave my position and go to the platoon field telephone and then be told by somebody that after the US Postal Service (laughs)... At any rate, I wasn't very kind to that person.

DePue: But you had to be elated about the news.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: Did it change your perspective on how you did your soldiering after that?

Ade: I never stuck my nose out unnecessarily. I did my duty and never—don't believe in hiding. But unnecessarily look around and see what's going on was never my cup of tea.

DePue: The other thing I wanted to ask your impressions about: you got to the trenches January or early February timeframe.

Ade: Early February, yes.

DePue: It's cold where you were out there.

Ade: Well, I always said, "You nasty guys over there, you get the sunshine, you're looking down south. When we look in the north, we get the nasty Siberian wind." It was twenty below with a wind chill factor of who knows what. It was miserable.

DePue: Lots of snow?

Ade: We actually got snow after we came off the line down in the Punch Bowl. I have a picture where all the tents were broken down except where Walter Ade was in because I had the good sense to have another pole, a ridgepole hold it up. We relieved each other to hold that thing up to keep it from breaking in. I was always fortunate enough to be around other survivors that cooperated in how to....

DePue: Yeah, they appreciated that you had figured out long before how to survive and keep at least relatively comfortable.

Ade: We got along well because survival makes you.

DePue: But I can't imagine being on a machine gun at two o'clock in the morning when you're facing that brisk wind coming at you, it's well below zero, you might be a little bit wet and you must be miserable in those positions.

Ade: I'm amazed, I don't recall ever having cold feet. We got the early models of the Mickey Mouse boots soon after I got there. But we had leather boots when I first got there. But I was fortunate that in that platoon we had a medic that every day came around, made us take off our boots, checked them for blisters, gave us clean socks—he washed them. He was a conscientious objector I found out later. That every night he went out on patrol he never carried a firearm. And the platoon sergeant one day told him, "You stay in today, you've been out every night." And you know the next night that poor soldier burned up in the bunker. After that we never had another medic come do that, check our—wash our socks. And that man was exceptional. But from what I hear or heard he suffocated. These bunkers, when they burn, they implode. No more oxygen.

DePue: Yeah, because you're trying to keep the cold out, so you seal them up as much as you can.

Ade: Yeah. So evidently he got too close to that—we had these little makeshift charcoal things that evidently his sleeping bag got close to it, and smoldered, and suffocated and burned up. But we knew that that was happening when all of a sudden you heard a boom and then behind you the fire.

DePue: So even without taking enemy fire every day it could still be a very dangerous place. Tell us a little bit about what Mickey Mouse boots are. I've worn them. But I think perhaps sometimes people listening might be saying, "What is that?"

Ade: They're called Mickey Mouse because I guess Mickey Mouse had big shoes, big feet. They're well insulated. The early issues, they were black rubber. I guess the normal winter shoes with the white, because in the winter warfare, they're supposed to wear white over-garments. But your feet literally sweat because there's no ventilation.

DePue: There's nowhere for it to evaporate.

Ade: So there was then a danger of trench foot. So you had to really watch. Let me say it this way, leadership was extremely critical. If you didn't have a squad leader that made you take your boots off, do things to preserve your health, you were in trouble.

DePue: That was the classic role of what an American sergeant is supposed to do: look out for the welfare of the troops.

Ade: That's right.

DePue: Did you think you had some good NCOs that you were working with?

Ade: I really can't complain. In my squad we had a corporal that was like a housemother to me coming with that helmet and the broom and all these little basic essentials. We had an SFC [Sergeant First Class] that came out of the 44th Infantry Division, in other words from Fort Lewis as a guardsman. The Illinois Guard got activated and then got sent overseas as replacements. And he being an SFC became of course then immediately the squad leader. And my impression was he took things very lightly until that morning after coming back from a patrol he found a burp gun slug in his leg. After that he became a very serious thinking soldier.

DePue: Nothing like that to catch your attention.

Ade: Yeah, he finally grew up militarily. I would want to say it that way.

DePue: During the times when you did come out of the line and you were posted to the rear, I imagine you didn't go too far back to the rear. What was life like back in the rear?

Ade: Interesting enough, we reverted back to crew served weapons training. Can you imagine here I'm down there in the Punch Bowl shooting on a basic training target where you shoot fire bursts of six, traverse, and up two clicks. If you do that enough you can do it blindly and hit the target. And we had a contest. The man with the high score, I forgot what the reward. Well, I had two where the rounds went in sideways. That's an indication that barrel was burned up. And it didn't count. I didn't get credit for it. And I consider myself a good shooter and knew how to shoot and don't let a machine gun flop. You twist the trigger handle and press down to steady the machine gun. Which disappointed me I didn't get credit for those two rounds. That lieutenant—let me put it this way. By serial number you were identifiable whether you were US or where you were an NG or were an ER or an RA. The RA in another contest got credit for something that I had shot. He got the seven-day R&R reward and I got the look.

DePue: So the letters that you ran through. NG for National Guard. US for...

Ade: Preface the serial number.

DePue: US for United States Army Reserve?

Ade: A draftee was US. My serial number was 5—5 meaning 5th Army area. 55253556. And NG would have been the block that the National Guard in each state area had. I think Illinois was two-two something.

DePue: And the RA stood for Regular Army?

Ade: Regular Army.

DePue: Which is strictly for the officers?

Ade: No, volunteers, regular Army.

DePue: Okay. And I guess your point is “Hey, how come they’re getting special treatment?”

Ade: That’s a natural thing among—it’s no different than among officers. If you’re a reserve officer or a [West] Pointer, you know that. My friend Joy McDonald, full bull, served World War II, Korea and Vietnam staff officer under Westmoreland. He never got beyond that.

DePue: That’s deeply entrenched in any institution, most certainly it is in the Army. Let’s go back to some of the specific actions you had. We’ve talked quite a bit about the Punch Bowl. Then in the middle of April, I think I saw 18 April, your unit, the 5th RCT, was transferred from the Punch Bowl area over to the 9th Corps area well west of there and over towards OP Harry.

Ade: Outpost Harry.

DePue: Outpost Harry in the Chorwon Valley area.

Ade: That was a critical area for the Chinese. They wanted to have that area because beyond that is an open valley approach toward Seoul.

DePue: So a straight shot to Seoul once they get beyond that.

Ade: Yes. And Outpost Harry as I later found, every night a different company occupied. Our battalion was a ready reserve behind the 1st Battalion. One time where I recall, A Company lost over seventy soldiers where the Chinese just attacked that place, and it was from reports I hear from people it was just a mess.

DePue: I’m showing Walter a map of the frontline area. This map does a good job of showing the frontlines. Showing about a kilometer in front of the frontlines here’s OP Harry stuck out there like a sore thumb, not too far from what looks like an observation post the Chinese were manning every day as well.

Ade: Actually Outpost Harry was a desolate area. The Chinese had the higher up. And we were – I can see now that ridgeline here and the valley here. I was about here. I could see the valley. Our battalion was up here. We got sometimes overlap artillery

rounds from the Chinese. And I remember one time an American jet came down this valley. One of our jet fighters. And he almost bombed the heck out of our three-quarter-ton laundry truck. When he saw that was American he did this. You could tell. I stood there and watched it. But he dropped the bomb about 100 yards to the right of that. That truck driver, he ran. He saw this happening. Got out and ran. He survived.

DePue: I'm sure that you didn't appreciate being on the receiving end. But it's an easy mistake to make when you're flying a jet at that speed.

Ade: That's right. So anyway I got to see an awful lot of things. Another example, a new soldier came into the neighboring company. And you're supposed to get buddy-buddy and team up with people when they're new, like this corporal I'm referring to that introduced me to the broom. I appreciate that to this day because you have somebody that you know. But this young man, the first night an artillery round came in, he panicked, he jumped up and ran. Another artillery round came in and ripped him apart. I still remember the screaming. There was nobody there to advise him on what to do, stay down. He panicked, got up, and it blew him apart – one night.

DePue: That's the classic experience of so many new guys, the FNGs [f-ing new guys] who got to a unit. Did they refer to them as FNGs in your war? That was a Vietnam thing.

Ade: No.

DePue: But they were definitely fresh meat to a certain extent, weren't they?

Ade: Yes. But I soon learned quickly to want to get acquainted with a new guy out of my own survival and out of my experience from this corporal with the broom. Get him to feel comfortable and....

DePue: Because his doing his job has a lot to do with your safety.

Ade: That's right. So I...was being older than a lot of people who were over me in rank. That I pushed ahead, what do you call it, exerted leadership, that I probably in my position shouldn't have, a corporal.

DePue: But I'm sure people appreciated you when you do it.

Ade: We got along.

DePue: Somebody has to take charge and make the important decisions.

Ade: I even was fresh enough to tell a new second lieutenant—again back to July, there – he stood up, exposed himself with a carbine, shot over that hill 200 yards away. “Say, Lieutenant, you're going to draw fire and get us killed. Why in the heck can't

you—don't you get down there?" And he looked at me and got down. He never resented that.

DePue: I've always thought that the smart second lieutenant—second lieutenant, you're as green as green can be – the smart ones are the ones who listen to the NCOs telling them how to actually do their job. That's my opinion at least.

Ade: He retired a brigadier general, lives in Wisconsin now.

DePue: Does he remember you then? Sounds like he does.

Ade: Burkhold is his name.

DePue: That's a good German name.

Ade: Well, he didn't make much of an impression when he first came in.

DePue: Not on you at least. So while they had companies going out every night or they were posted out at OP Harry, stuck out there middle of no-man's-land, was the rest of the regiment manning the trench line to the rear?

Ade: Up here. In this area here I noticed every day there was a chemical outfit that laid smoke constantly so the Chinese couldn't see the traffic.

DePue: So your company never was posted on OP Harry, but you were in the frontlines otherwise.

Ade: We were in the ready reserve within our regimental ready reserve. And I'm grateful I never had the opportunity to go up there and get shot at, because that was brutal.

DePue: Did you say Company A of the 5th RCT had....

Ade: Heavy, heavy losses.

DePue: Seventy?

Ade: One night they made out there were seventy-nine. I remember later on I saw a magazine, the *Times* magazine, with seventy-nine body bags displayed.

DePue: From that one company in your regiment?

Ade: Yes.

DePue: During the short time, the very short time, there in OP Harry.

Ade: One night.

DePue: Now here's the amazing thing about all of this. You got to Korea when the war was theoretically winding down. But by listening to you and reading about that time

period, it was anything but a quiet front. It seems like the Chinese and the North Koreans were pushing just as hard as they ever had.

Ade: They were trying to, from what you can read now, trying to adjust the line to their advantage, because they knew in the Panmunjom sessions, there what the idea was, to establish the thirty-eighth parallel basically as—which it didn't turn out that way if you look where the DMZ [de-militarized zone] is now. It's not exactly at the thirty-eighth parallel.

DePue: No, it's well north of that in most of the country. So part of it was for the Chinese to adjust the lines to their advantage. Do you think there was also something going on with their pushing hard to affect the negotiations?

Ade: Oh, I'm sure it had political reasons behind it. But I can't believe their disregard of human lives, because they pushed masses of people. And if it wouldn't have been for our effective artillery in Korea, they would have been successful.

DePue: This was very much an artillery war, wasn't it?

Ade: Mainly the 155 Artillery. And then our air defense. We have a general in this town that....

DePue: General [Richard] Mills?

Ade: Oh no. Used to be the air base commander.

DePue: Not [General Harold] Holsinger [the former Adjutant General for the Illinois National Guard].

Ade: Holsinger flew jets over there. He can tell you stories about....

DePue: I need to interview him then.

Ade: Oh yes.

DePue: Well, the 555th Field Artillery, which you said before, had the 105-millimeter howitzer that today would be considered a light howitzer. Back then I'm sure that was still considered a medium howitzer. From reading some of the accounts, they put out an incredible volume of fire, especially at the Outpost Harry engagements, but also over in the Chorwon area.

Ade: Strangely enough, toward the end of the war, we didn't have our own artillery and support. They were in support of a South Korean division and eventually got overrun for the third time. They got overrun. And the stories that I hear again during these....

DePue: They, being the triple nickel.

Ade: Yes. They actually were shooting point-blank and then had to explode their own breech blocks. They had this thing to blow the breech block. But we have a soldier, an ex-POW in Illinois that was in that last thing. And his story was interesting, that he used his helmet to dig a hole when a Chinese threw him his entrenchment tool. They knew where the PX of that battalion was. Imagine this. They had no interest in killing....

DePue: The Americans?

Ade: The Americans. The guy was digging a hole and the Chinese threw him his entrenchment tool.

DePue: Wow. But that's not supposed to happen to field artillery units where they get overrun. And they got overrun three times during the war?

Ade: They were surprised when the ROK outfit took off, essentially. They got overrun. The mass attacks of the Chinese, they had that capability.

DePue: I also read that on July 18th there was a pretty heavy attack on your own company in K Company. And this would have been about a week before the armistice was signed.

Ade: Yeah. This is when I experienced right in front of me to the right there was a huge tree. The next morning that thing was gone.

DePue: Were you in the frontlines just south of Outpost Harry? That time?

Ade: No, that was the Christmas Hill area.

DePue: Christmas Hill, okay.

Ade: I don't even know where that tree fell. That thing disappeared. It was a huge tree. And I wasn't more than fifteen yards away from it.

DePue: So you had plenty of opportunity to engage the enemy, to fire your weapon that night?

Ade: I had no opportunity, no direction, no nothing or where to shoot what. Nothing. Artillery coming in. I had a little bunker kind of a shelter there to the right of me that I went into. I didn't have an assistant gunner. I was by myself. And I survived.

DePue: Obviously the drill is, when you're taking artillery fire you've got to head to the bunker.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: And there was no infantry assault on your position that night?

Ade: No.

DePue: Okay. But the unit got pretty well torn up from enemy artillery fire?

Ade: The casualties in our company actually I don't really recall. Can we take a break a minute? [Short pause]

Ade: I got to look up a picture here. That night is vague to me, because....

DePue: Okay. Try to figure out how to do this.

Ade: We were talking about that L Company patrol getting ambushed. And in our position we had a 4.2 forward observer bunker that I found out from somebody that sergeant had a whole bunch of pictures from the *Playboy* magazine. Well, I went in there one day curious, and he had a set of field glasses. It was close to five o'clock in the evening. And I looked over there at the ridgeline and at five o'clock sharp I saw a bunch of heads popping. And I told that sergeant to look over there. He looked. "Well, you come back tomorrow night. If they're doing that again we're zeroed in for fire for effect." And I had personal interest in that. That had to be the patrol that gutted our troops down there. They were creatures of habit too. Five o'clock at night expose themselves; lo and behold the next evening at five o'clock here they are. And he gave fire for effect. You should have seen that spectacle. I looked through the scope. He was killing people. And the next night no more.

DePue: This would have been the fire for effect with four-deuce mortar?

Ade: 4.2. Very accurate piece of weapons. So that stopped that Mickey Mouse.

DePue: Would that have been on the 19th of July, somewhere around that timeframe?

Ade: That week.

DePue: The 18th was the night that you were talking about earlier when the tree next to you disappeared.

Ade: Yeah. That had to be the week before the 20th to the 27th.

DePue: The 27th is the actual time.

Ade: The actual ceasefire, yeah. That had to be that week. Another experience, and the reason I go to these 5th RCT reunions, is Sergeant Turner that literally I credit him, saved my life. He was the assistant platoon sergeant, the only black man we had in the company—we had in the platoon. We had a little something in common. Me, an immigrant getting picked on, him being—in those days black folks weren't exactly treated nice either. He reminded me of marching two Puerto Ricans. Let me go back a minute. We had two Puerto Rican medics sent to us. Now what they were doing in our squad I never figured out. But when I first got acquainted, "Me no speak English." I loaded my rifle. "Like hell you don't speak English." They spoke very well English to me. The next thing, a mortar round hit a bunker and I heard, "Medic, medic." "Too many points." "Like hell you don't. (emphatically)" I loaded

my rifle. I marched them over to do their job. That Sergeant Turner reminded me of that. "You're the guy that marched these fellows over." And --I would have shot them if they wouldn't have gone. Imagine that duty assigned and not doing it. That's the conditions I had to live under. But that Sergeant Turner, he retired after thirty-one years. He's still erect physically, good shape. He went into the US Army Ranger program. A tough guy.

DePue: Oh wow. So he would have been in the Army during the Vietnam War as well.

Ade: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: Well, how did he manage to save your life?

Ade: On the 27th he said, "Corporal Ade, you go to the company rear today. You've been out there now every night by yourself. No assistant gunner, nobody." And I was sent back to the company rear to quote "guard the duffel bags."

DePue: And both of you understood what that assignment meant.

Ade: And when I came back the next morning, the first platoon of the bunker-destroyed. And Sergeant Harold Cross from Detroit ten minutes before the ceasefire bled to death in that thing. He got hit over here and concussion from artillery round.

DePue: In his left shoulder?

Ade: Yes. And he died. That could have been me.

DePue: The fate of war sometimes is so peculiar.

Ade: When he and I go out his money is worthless – literally.

DePue: You guys have the opportunities to get together once a year or so in the 5th Regimental reunions.

Ade: We're friends forever.

DePue: Yeah. Well, that's an amazing story. Do you recall when—I don't know the specific date—but the negotiations at Panmunjom were going on, it must have seemed like forever. It didn't seem like it was going anywhere. Syngman Rhee got tired of all the negotiations and then just arbitrarily released a lot of North Korean and Chinese. Do you recall that?

Ade: I experienced that. We were in the Punch Bowl. We literally had details guarding the rear, worrying about combatants or whatever you want to call them, enemy soldiers coming up there. But there was nothing. No such thing happened. What became of them I have no idea.

DePue: I think most of them were taken in by friendly South Koreans. At least those are the accounts I've read. Your impression of when he did that: did you think this guy must be crazy?

Ade: Yeah, to me they were enemies. Prisoners of war were enemies. But as it turned out, I think Syngman Rhee politically did a good thing because....

DePue: Yes, these were people who had absolutely no intention of ever going back to North Korea or China. How about the actual end of the war? What was your sense at the end of the war when the armistice was signed on the 27th?

Ade: Another interesting experience I had. That night here I'm drinking hot toddy, little can of chocolate liquid drink. And listening to a radio that I bought on R&R in Japan, battery-operated, listened to it. All of a sudden dead silence at ten o'clock at night. And the next day the platoon sergeant said, "Corporal Ade, you and ..." three other of us, we were—I was in charge of staying back and cleaning up the area. "...destroy all the bunkers, and don't want any commo wire longer than six inches stay behind." What he didn't know, being a combat engineer trained fellow I had stashed away some of this plastic explosive stuff that I used to heat my C rations with—you light that.

DePue: Yeah. If you burn it, it just burns at a nice hot rate.

Ade: We picked up the commo wire and junk. And while we did that some other outfit came along and put up a fence, the triangle, mined area (laughs). Declared area mined. And I told the guys, "When I holler, 'Fire in the hole,' you know what that means? Get away from here." I blew the bunker up, the one main bunker, the great big....

DePue: Was this on the line itself or in the rear area?

Ade: No, no, that's up there.

DePue: Right on the frontlines again. Do you recall your impression of the actual terms of the armistice at that time?

Ade: I had no idea what. We were really not being informed. I never experienced anything like command orientation or anything like that.

DePue: So you were just happy that the war was over as far as you were concerned.

Ade: Yeah. We were moved back to an area that of all places our company put up our squad tents in a cemetery area. These hills that they use.

DePue: Yeah, I know Koreans put their cemeteries on the hills.

Ade: And then we got paid. We got two months' back pay. Gambling went on, dice-playing and all that stuff. Of course I didn't gamble, I didn't drink, kept my nose

clean, mind my own business. But after that then we were moved to the Kumwa Valley into squad tents and eventually wooden floors. Eventually oil heaters. Eventually we were able to collect money and have a houseboy. We were fortunate. We had a young man that was ambitious. He says, "I'm going to go to college." He was a clean-cut kid. He did our laundry, went down the river and pounded our—typical, washed our clothes. And a quiet fellow, nice talking. And at that time then we played maneuvers. 5th RCT became aggressor forces to the 3rd Division moving about. That's the one time I ever rode on a tank.

DePue: It sounds like most of the American units came out of the line and the ROK units took over the lines.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: And now that the war was over they can afford to stretch it out a little bit more thinly.

Ade: Yeah. At that time I got transferred; I got to be a mortar section chief. Another contest got involved. The winner gets an R&R. Well, here I am, the section chief. Fortunate, had an intelligent crew. We dry-fired, you know, we dry-drilled. I forgot how many seconds it takes to set this thing up and all the commands and what have you. But I was fortunate; we had two lieutenants as raters. And I'm given a command. I'm on the ridgeline with the tube. Lo and behold, that first round hit a little hut down there. Well, that's not the Fort Benning solution. Fort Benning solution is one over one under. And I said to the lieutenant, "You mean me, a trained Yankee soldier, announce we are coming? I aimed to hit. They're dead." I didn't get an ounce of credit. Who got credit? SFC RA serial number so-and-so got to go.

DePue: RA number again.

Ade: That's right.

DePue: Do you recall at the end—your unit was obviously still in Korea at the time—that the big switch occurred? Big switch of exchanging....

Ade: August.

DePue: Exchanging Korean and Chinese POWs for American and South Korean POWs. Did you have any reaction to that?

Ade: Had no idea that occurred.

DePue: So again you were kept in the dark in that respect.

Ade: I later on after I got commissioned and became a company commander felt that it was extremely important to keep troops informed. We never had such a thing. A troop information thing I only recall one time. I was detailed to be the

representative for King Company to go down by Seoul for the opening ceremony of the orphanage that the 5th RCT constructed and organized, with the idea to come back and give a briefing to the company for fundraising purposes. That's the only time that I recall ever an assembly with an orientation of the troops of any sort.

DePue: Of what was actually going on.

Ade: And my purpose was to tell them what the 225 young orphans that had no parents, organized to have their own democratic mayor elected. They were being taught American constitutional behavior, and they started to raise their own fruit and vegetables, and it was amazing. And the idea was to get us to collect money.

DePue: Now where was this orphanage?

Ade: That was on the Yalu River. The name of the island I forgot.

DePue: The Yalu River?

Ade: Not the Yalu, I'm sorry.

DePue: Imjin River maybe?

Ade: No, the one that goes by Seoul, what do you call it?

DePue: Let me look here real quick. I should know that too. The Han River?

Ade: The Han River. But they soon had to move because the city decided to make a garbage heap out of that island. It's now a huge mountain and by the time our regiment left [in 1954], the Korean YMCA took over the orphanage and they moved them into a former motel/hotel kind of thing on the side of a hill. And when in '72 Korea obtained the soccer World Cup responsibility they built a huge arena in the area where that orphanage is, and they lost their playground and so forth. So they had to move again. They moved this within this year into a fantastic three-story looks like a hotel.

DePue: But the orphanage still exists? And the 5th RCT still supports it?

Ade: That's right. But I discovered from—we have a point of contact over there—a retired Air Force member that married a Korean lady that lives over there. He sent us a bunch of pictures and said the Korean UPS recently gave them 36,900 and some dollars, the orphanage. And our chapter here, we sent them for this last December \$1,200, the year before \$1,000. This year we've already had one fundraiser thing and we're going to have another one July. We intend to double that. But I also found out through our—Curly Knepp is his name—that most of the money we send goes for bicycles, for clothes. And the picture that he sent of the bicycles, they're all spick and span. Those kids value what they get and they take care of it. They don't do like here, throw it in front of the Walgreen's entrance like I see here kids do. I just saw that the other day and I yelled at them, "Put them in the

rack.” They have no—it’s unreal. You walk out there and stumble over bicycles. Walgreen’s gets a lawsuit, just unreal.

DePue: Let’s go back to the end of the war then. Couple quick questions for you. Did you receive any medals, citations while you were there?

Ade: After getting the Combat Infantry Badge I got the standard three medals, the Korean Service Medal, the National Defense, and the UN.

DePue: The UN Medal.

Ade: Medal. Since then there are enormous amount of commemorative that you can purchase that you’re only eligible within that period that you can wear. And I bought every one of them, I very rarely put on, because the DD [Department of Defense] 214 doesn’t show that.

DePue: The one I would assume means the most to you is the CIB.

Ade: I value the Combat Infantry Badge because even during this convention we had in the—the speaker by the way was a third generation warrior, West Pointer, three, grandpa, dad.

DePue: Your convention, the one you just came back from for the 5th RCT?

Ade: Yeah. And he asked to identify “How many of you are Combat Infantry Badge?” There were maybe ten. That’s about it. The rest of them are all—I use the term rear echelon.

DePue: Again I’ve known other soldiers and CIB means an awful lot to them. You earn that the hard way.

Ade: That’s right. We’re a brotherhood of our own.

DePue: What did you think about the South Korean soldiers, the ROKs, that you worked with?

Ade: I got acquainted with several of them. One, we kidded him, we called him Debbie because he was there when Debbie Reynolds gave her USO show. By the way, she gave us a show at Las Vegas three years ago – when she found out we’re there.

DePue: And she remembered going over to Korea?

Ade: To the 5th RCT.

DePue: That’s neat.

Ade: Anyway, they had their own first sergeant, but except that one that I saw blinking lights, most of them were trustworthy, old soldiers.

DePue: Now you always had KATUSAs assigned to your company?

Ade: Yes. They carried—they did hard labor.

DePue: I don't want to draw any conclusions here, but I would suspect, other than being exposed to all the danger, that was a pretty good place to be, because they had three square meals a day and they had some of the creature comforts. It had to be a very tough time to be a Korean at that time.

Ade: Yeah. I don't know, the KATUSA, our Korean soldiers, they were with us, they lived with us. But the other, the labor people, I don't have the slightest idea. I did see one time a Korean outfit, how they had to live, on straw on the ground. Oh, an awful thing that I'll never forget. One time an American soldier that was in the advisory group, that his M2 carbine disappeared, and he was very upset. And finally somebody found it. And they brought the troop, the Korean in that stole it. And he did a stupid thing. "What should we do with him?" "Oh, shoot him." And he just shot him right in front of him. That man has to live with that for the rest of his life.

DePue: Did some ROK—some ROK soldiers shot this Korean?

Ade: Yeah. But that American, he should know better. He has to live with that the rest of his life, to cause somebody to get shot because he was angry.

DePue: Well, it emphasizes that the Koreans were serious and brutal in how they conducted business.

Ade: Yes.

DePue: By the time you got there did you think the ROK units that you had experience with were good solid units?

Ade: From what I hear, they did their thing. Except in that one case where they were overrun and our triple nickel suffered from it. That happened to American units as well. When mass attacks and circumstances happen, that happens.

DePue: What's your impression of the North Koreans and the Chinese that you faced?

Ade: Again, from the reports from ex-POWs, they were brutal people. No respect for their own. The one report that really got to me, as having my own brother as prisoner of war in the German events, when that sergeant with two others were taken prisoner by Chinese, they [walked] behind a mountain and then they had to walk miles and miles. They were going past a whole group of moaning and groaning Chinese, they were Chinese wounded, they just let them die. They had no medical support. And that had to be cruel. The Russians did the same thing. The Russians used bulldozers to bury their own, mass grave [during WWII]

DePue: This person you're talking about was the one who was captured when the 555th was overrun?

Ade: No, that was one of our ex-presidents of the Korean War Veterans Association. He was thirty-two months a prisoner of war in Korea.

DePue: Do you think the Chinese and the North Koreans were dedicated to their task or were they just forced to do these mass assaults?

Ade: Again going back to July, that Chinese outfit across from us, at the next day after I came back, I heard a lot of complaining going on. Our company commander found out that some of our troops went over to the Chinese and there was a commissar that spoke Chicago dialect, University of—Circle Campus.

DePue: University of Illinois Circle Campus?

Ade: Yes, American-educated commissar in the Chinese troops.

DePue: But these were Americans who went over to check out the Chinese lines?

Ade: That's correct.

DePue: Would this have been after the armistice was signed?

Ade: The next day.

DePue: For curiosity reasons?

Ade: Stupid. Yes. The company commander was so mad he started making them pick up bones and stuff on the way back.

DePue: Wow. That is surprising. I can't imagine myself doing that.

Ade: Some of the stupidity of a GI in those days was incredible.

DePue: We're going to talk about the rest of your life during our next session. Since we're talking about the Korean War, I want your reflections on it fifty years later; what do you think about the armistice now?

Ade: Well, I had an opportunity to go back to Korea on a revisit program in 1990. When you go to Seoul, Korea now it's like better than downtown Chicago, because the people there are friendly. When they see you're an ex-GI, when you see people stop you and shake your hand, the people that speak English, say, "I want to thank you for making my country free," or the older folks that are not capable of speaking English stop and bow, you know what they're meaning to do, that makes you feel good. We were treated like royalty over there. Fantastic.

DePue: Do you think maybe the Americans should have continued on and insisted on reuniting the whole country? Or do you think that the armistice was the best political decision we could make at the time?

Ade: I really can't evaluate that other than I'm rather facetious in that respect. Harry Truman was an artillery captain, Adolf Hitler was an artillery corporal. Whether their level of intelligence was any different or not I don't know, but I think it was probably politically at that time wise to not do any more, because the Soviets were still powerful. Not till later on were the Soviets disinterested. They couldn't fight their way out of a duffel bag now if they had to, literally.

DePue: Okay. Maybe that wasn't a fair question to ask, for you, but how about this one? The Korean War, at least in the American memory, very quickly seemed to be forgotten. What are your feelings or emotional response to that?

Ade: Well, I was rather—I don't know, the word offended is correct, but we decreed to make that now instead of Forgotten War-- Forgotten Victory, because if you look back, we succeeded. The Korean War succeeded in putting a stop to the Communist movement. If you look really, analyze it, that's what stopped the progression of Communism.

DePue: When you mentioned we, who specifically are you talking about there?

Ade: The American troops. We, the Americans.

DePue: Okay. I think that's certainly one of the messages that this new Korean War Memorial Museum that you're working on wants to send. And I was wondering if that was the "we". You think just American veterans, period, of the Korean War want to see it that way?

Ade: I'm disappointed to the extent there are a lot of Korean War veterans that want nothing to do with this. They perhaps had bad experiences or maybe they did bad things they don't want to remember. Again this last week, I keep telling people about the revisit program. I get told by one person, "I won't ever see that place again." I'm trying to tell them how they progressed and how well they live now, it doesn't register with them. It's probably their own social environment maybe has something to do with it.

DePue: Well, we all process and deal with these kinds of traumatic experiences differently. It's certainly not my position to judge either way. Let me finish off this particular session by asking you if you have anything else about your Korean War experience that you didn't get onto the record, if you will.

Ade: I'm glad I had an opportunity to serve my adopted country as a soldier and earn my citizenship through that, because two months later after I got discharged, a federal judge asked me, "You served in Korea? I want to thank you for serving for our country. Raise your right hand." And he swore me in.

DePue: And where was that?

Ade: Right here at the federal court building, the former post office downtown here.

DePue: Obviously your wife and your brand-new baby were there?

Ade: Yes.

DePue: What was it like coming back home then?

Ade: You mean that day?

DePue: No. When you came back from Korea and first met your wife, first got back to Springfield.

Ade: She came up to Fort Sheridan and we came back together. And when we went into the house there was my little daughter on the lap of a babysitter. And my wife said, "This is your daddy." And her eyes got big. And that little thing was, well, 3 April, here's February.

DePue: Of 1954, then.

Ade: A lot of people say, "It took him a long time to get the baby to"—I talked to another one that had the same experience this last week. "Took a long time to get that baby to get used to him." But not in my case. It was some experience. Wonderful.

DePue: Did you have the sense coming back that the American public – that it registered with them – that you're a Korean War veteran coming back?

Ade: Well, I was a stranger in town, but New Berlin, some people knew me. I never forget this one ill vocabulary of, "Where was you?" That's what I was asked. "Well, I was in Korea." "What that?" That's awful. So I laid that aside myself for a while. It took quite a while for me to talk about Korea.

DePue: Concentrate on the good things like....

Ade: Making a living, take care of my family.

DePue: A beautiful baby daughter.

Ade: Trying to get a job that was worthwhile. Went to night school under the GI Bill down here, Brown's Business College, which doesn't exist anymore. Took on all sorts of [office] machinery that I wanted to learn, took bookkeeping. And one evening my wife and I went to someone's house that happened to be three of them working for the National Guard. "Oh, you can type?" By Friday afternoon two o'clock I had an appointment for an interview. By Monday morning I went to work.

DePue: Okay. I think that's probably a good place to end, because we still have quite a bit more of your life to talk about. And I think that'll be a good place to pick up the conversation next time we meet.

Ade: Okay.

DePue: Thank you very much, Walter. Do you have any final words for us for this session?

Ade: Well, I enjoy doing this. I participate in Tell America where we're trying to tell high school people about the Korean War. Don't have many opportunities to do that because we only do it on invitation, and you only have fifty minutes during the classroom to talk about it. And we try. We, I mean this handful of us Korean War veterans in Springfield that participate in that.

DePue: Okay. Thank you very much.

(end of interview)

Interview with Walter Ade

VRK-A-L-2007-004.03

Interview # 3: May 29, 2007

Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Tuesday, May 29, 2007. My name is Mark DePue. I'm the Director of Oral History at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. I'm here for our third session with Walter Ade, who is a Korean War veteran. We talked about the Korean War experiences in the second session. So, in today's third session we'll be talking about the remainder of his life. There's a lot, Walter, that you did. But before we begin I just also want to mention that we're here doing the interview at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. So Walter, where we left off last time, I recall, you had come back from Korea. You had seen your brand-new baby daughter. And very shortly after that you managed to get a job with the Illinois National Guard. But I think it would be good if we can rehash that, how you ended up coming to work at the Illinois National Guard.

Ade: Well, I had a menial job of delivery at what's called Illinois Wholesale Company. They basically did wholesale delivery to various businesses, including liquor, which I wasn't fond of, because I'm not a drinker. But I went to night school under the GI Bill at Brown's Business College and took accounting courses and business machines, anything I could get my hands on, including the beginning of IBM keypunch and humdrum of a machine even at that time, which is unheard of now. But later on I took shorthand. When I found out there was one vacancy in the state headquarters, namely the adjutant general's stenographer, nobody wanted it, nobody qualified for it. So I took on Gregg shorthand, passed a test and a little typing, and soon at that time, I think it was Colonel Legner, a state employee working for the adjutant general office, approved my getting the only vacant job to an E5 as stenographer.

DePue: Okay. Now what's curious to me, you are a trained professional tailor.

Ade: Ladies' tailor, yes.

DePue: But apparently you had no intention when you came back of pursuing that as a career.

Ade: Well, I found out if I wanted to pursue that I would have to go to either Saint Louis or Chicago. And I had no desire to move my family to the big city environment. Besides, I knew from experience back in Heidelberg, tailors don't quit at 4:30. They quit when the job is done. And you may, before holidays, be working all night, which has happened to me as a young tailor back in Heidelberg.

DePue: When somebody needed that dress completed then there was no question you were going to complete that dress before you go home.

Ade: That's right. Well, I might work more on ladies' costumes rather than dresses, which was very detailed, similar to men's tailoring.

DePue: What does "ladies' costumes" mean?

Ade: A costume is a jaquette, jacket, with skirt, one or more, similar to a man's suit.

DePue: Okay. But again, when you were in Korea you had no intention of coming back to that. You wanted to move on to something else.

Ade: That's right. I found out so many people bragging about their fancy jobs they had back home that I wanted to see what that's like (laughs).

DePue: So they weren't necessarily impressed by your being a ladies' tailor?

Ade: No, but I'll tell you quickly how I got promoted to an E4. A new lieutenant that came out of Fort Benning named Kelly—not the Kelly that's famous from the Vietnam era—but he was always dressed well, had a blue scarf when we were in the rear. He asked me one day, said, "Private Ade, how come your uniform is always so pressed?" So I showed him. At that time we were for two weeks in the rear area. We had tents and slept on cots. I showed him how to fold his uniform and put a layer of blanket on top of that, and you lie on top of that, and your body heat presses it flat at night. He was so impressed by it, a week later I was a corporal. (laughs)

DePue: So it does pay to be a good tailor. It pays to be good at whatever you do, doesn't it?

Ade: That's right. Apply yourself, and you get promoted.

DePue: You bet. So was it 1954 that you got a job with the Illinois National Guard?

Ade: No. I got a job in May '56.

DePue: Okay. Had you been back for a while?

Ade: Yes. Actually, I got that job through references from three people that my wife knew from our church activities. And one Wednesday evening we went to someone's home and I talked about that the night before I just passed fifteen minutes of typing error free on a brand-new German Adler manual typewriter. "Oh, you can type? Oh, we'll see about that. We're always looking for clerk typists." By Friday afternoon at two o'clock I had an appointment at then what's called the National Guard Depot, which used to be down south of Springfield, the USP&FO [US Property & Fiscal Office] office. At two o'clock I reported in and a Colonel Welsh interviewed me. I was supposed to have been a Colonel Pucha, but he had the misfortune that Wednesday to be with two other people in an airplane crash up in Wisconsin. He was severely burned. He was laid up quite a bit of time. But Charlie Welch, being music-oriented, when he found out I played the viola, he told me about his experiences in college playing saxophone in a jazz band. So all we did was talk music. We didn't talk about work. Monday morning I went to work for a lady that had been there since Camp Ellis, a high school girl, what was her name? Odie Barton. She had me type 3,000 cards. They had ambition to publish a catalog of the inventory. And then at that time we were converting old military stock numbers to new federal stock numbers. And that was interesting. I learned the whole enchilada of what is what. That was good basic training for me.

DePue: And the military has a very specific way for nomenclature for everything they've got. Oftentimes you're thinking, "Whoa, that works backwards."

Ade: So I typed out 3,000 three-by-five cards, and when I got done, Odie Barton dumped them in the wastebasket.

DePue: Well, you learned about military bureaucracy that way.

Ade: Well, I showed them my ability to quickly type and type correctly and error free. It demonstrated my ability to do my job.

DePue: So stenographer, typist, that's what you did initially with the Guard.

Ade: Actually, the stenographer job, there wasn't much demand for it. Again this Colonel Welch, my first summer camp at Camp Ripley, he dictated a letter to me. The adjutant general never, General Boyle in those days, he didn't do any such things. I hate to say this, but eleven o'clock, it was time to go to the golf course (laughs).

DePue: General Boyle was an interesting guy. He'd been with the National Guard as the adjutant general since like 1939 or 1940, and he didn't retire until, I think, '68. He passed away.

Ade: He practically died on the job, yes. Interesting enough, he's buried out at Camp Butler next to a PFC, which demonstrated to us no matter what rank you're next in line, and I don't care what rank that is.

DePue: Well, it probably doesn't matter once you get up to the pearly gates either, does it?

Ade: That's right.

DePue: What was your initial job then primarily with the Guard for a couple years?

Ade: As a technician, I was a clerk typist. And being in the supply field, I was then assigned to a person named Howard Homer in the ordnance field and again there I learned the conversion of the old ordnance numbers to the federal numbers. And I still remember A being small arms, B being machine guns and so forth. Interesting, 1005 being the small arm federal stock number series and on and on.

DePue: What time did you become commissioned?

Ade: After two years summer camping I finally decided, well, being at state headquarters with numerous amount of field grade officers, I discovered which side of the bread was more butter spread on it. I decided after I observed class one of the Illinois National Guard OCS at Camp Ripley, which then was started by Captain Thomas Bishop from Litchfield, a veteran from the Korean War, a very sincere military infantry-oriented person, after seeing the class one, I decided that's for me. So I signed up. I became a member of class two.

DePue: Was that 1959?

Ade: No, it was '57, I believe. I think they started in '56. So, right after that I reverted back to the duty assignment as tactical officer for Captain Bishop, which gave me again another hefty training of military discipline. And of course there you had to be spit-polish, which was normal for me anyhow. And the learning of the rules and the game of war was to me natural because of my experience in Korea.

DePue: But they certainly had lots of Korean War veterans who were going through that at the time?

Ade: Not really. I believe I was the only one.

DePue: Oh, really.

Ade: In fact, in the state headquarters I was the only enlisted man with the Combat Infantry Badge. I discovered later on there were several field grade officers that served in the 5th Regimental Combat Team while I was in Korea. One was at that time Colonel Glass, who was our battalion S1. [Personnel Officer] Another one was the S4.[Logistics Officer] Name escape me right now. And then a warrant officer, who is still alive; that was our company administrative officer. In those days each company had a warrant officer. And that man ended up later on in my career working for me, which was interesting.

DePue: In what branch were you commissioned?

Ade: Ordnance. There were two branches available. One was the tank company at Camp Lincoln. And I very vividly remembered the ugliness of the inside of a destroyed

tank when a panzerfaust punctured a hole. Nothing but splattered blood inside, and I didn't want to be part of that sort of an experience. I've seen it. And on the first floor was an ordnance company, the 3637th Ordnance Company, and the 32nd Ordnance Battalion Headquarters. So I signed up with the ordnance company. Of course, received the commission as an ordnance officer.

DePue: So was the 3637th [Company] a maintenance unit at the time? Or were they more supply?

Ade: No. DAS, direct automotive support. TOE [Table of Organization & Equipment] number 9-127. In fact, I had an opportunity at Aberdeen Proving Ground to participate in a writing of FM [Field Manual] 9-127. Interesting enough, there were two retired ordnance captains out of World War II working there as technicians and they interviewed me there one time while I was taking the ordnance officer course. And somehow they found out I was in the 9-127 Ordnance Company. So I had quite a bit of influence in—well, for example the overlay, or field layout in the field environment.

DePue: So you're one who, when opportunity presents itself, takes advantage of it.

Ade: I step forward, yes, because I believe in doing my study. I never was afraid reading field manuals and military information. And I take advantage of it.

DePue: When you were commissioned into the Illinois National Guard, you went to the state OCS program, Officer Candidate School. Did you also receive a federal commission?

Ade: Yes. You become a dual Reserve /National Guard officer, sworn in and you had to of course get a secret clearance, which was no difficulty for me, because as an immigrant you get punched and researched and fingerprinted from the day of entry. And so no problem. I didn't really learn the experience of being dual reserve until my retirement papers reverted me then into a ready reserve hip pocket orders, what is it, age sixty-five, I believe, in case of a war. I thought that was interesting too. I kept my interest in military environment active, just in case.

DePue: But on the civilian side, and this is something that a lot of people don't understand about the National Guard, you weren't considered full-time military when you were going to work during the week.

Ade: No, I was a civil service technician. And on weekends I would revert to a Guard status.

DePue: Did you wear a uniform during the week though?

Ade: At the beginning, no. It became a rule, I forgot when, to wear a uniform. And later on as I find out, now the people in my former department, the auditors—or now they call them examiners—they wear civilian clothes.

DePue: So, it's not the same retirement or personnel management system that you were working under either as far as somebody who was on active duty versus what your working conditions were.

Ade: No, but it was related. Under the AG office, you're dealing with civilian state employees. You also deal with military National Guard officers/technicians. And to separate the two was never clear. You had to maintain your military bearing, your military discipline and behavior, whether you were during the day working as a technician or during the weekend working in your military assignment. In my case later, on our TDA, table of distribution and allowance, was designed to include the audit department or internal review department. But we actually had the MOS assignment compatible with our civil service job.

DePue: Was your military skill compatible with your civilian?

Ade: Exactly, yes.

DePue: Okay. And under the civil service were you a technician then?

Ade: Yes.

DePue: And so your military retirement occurred at age sixty?

Ade: My military pay clicked in at age sixty, yes.

DePue: If somebody's on active duty, they retire after twenty years, their retirement pay begins immediately. For somebody who's a technician in the Illinois Guard at the time, their retirement doesn't kick in until age sixty.

Ade: His pay does not kick in till age sixty, correct. So there's a trick to it, having to live to age sixty. I knew of several instances, one of my fellow workers, he died a month before his retirement, so he had no....

DePue: Well, you have excelled extremely well in that respect though. You're well beyond sixty now.

Ade: Yes, I'm enjoying the benefits now immensely.

DePue: We're jumping ahead, but so you're drawing in military retirement, and that's basically from your time on active duty and the time when you were going to annual training and drill weekends.

Ade: That's right. That's based on points by the way, it's not based on rank alone.

DePue: Okay. And then you also are drawing a....

Ade: Civil service retirement, which is actually my main income. And now Social Security of course, which is very minimum, because I'm paying income tax on my Social Security, which doesn't sound very fair, but that's the way it is.

DePue: But it doesn't hurt that you have three sources of income now.

Ade: The eagle flies across my bank three times a month (laughs).

DePue: Okay. Let's talk about your wife and your family during the time you were with the Guard, especially in the fifties and sixties.

Ade: Well, my wife, daughter of a veteran of World War I that never had to go overseas. He was a bugler. She was a very disciplined lady that I want to put it this way, put up with my military activities, because I was not only gone once a month on weekends, I also joined the National Guard Marksmanship Training Program, which took me away on weekends to shooting activities in various states, in addition to in August the Camp Perry National Rifle Championships. In addition to that, later on the National Guard started an all-National-Guard rifle and pistol championship at Camp Robinson by Little Rock, Arkansas.

DePue: That would have been about what time?

Ade: That was in the seventies. I had the good fortune at the all-Guard championships to receive number 49 governor's—not governor's—the Chief of National Guard Badge, which was sort of copied after the Presidential Badge at the National Rifle Championships, where the 10 percent of the aggregate score shooters get that award. It's tough to come by for new people as long as the oldsters are still shooting well, because they're hogging up the top 10 percent.

DePue: Well, by that time weren't you one of the older shooters in there?

Ade: Yes, but I didn't peak out until age thirty-four. What I mean by that, my eyes were still good and I again fortunate enough to receive the gold distinguished rifle badge, which is tough to come by.

DePue: What was the weapon you were using?

Ade: We shot M14 National Match rifles. They were very accurate. We were fortunate to have a professional small arms armorer that worked at the field maintenance shop, Master Sergeant Charles Blevens. He's still alive. He maintained our rifles. He maintained the pistols. As a result he became what I call a premium grade pay as a marksmanship weapons armorer. So that was an increased pay for him.

DePue: Was your wife working at this time, since you're traveling all over the country, not just within Illinois, but sometimes all over the country?

Ade: My wife only worked until 1960 when our company got activated during the Berlin Crisis. She had a nervous breakdown while I was at Fort Knox and she stopped

working then. It wasn't really necessary. I had enough income to where we didn't see any need for her to be working. She was a good mom, took good care of our two daughters, and we were happy about that. She was besides that musically inclined and an artist, did a lot of paintings. And so she kept herself occupied in that way.

DePue: Can I ask what the cause? Was one of the triggers of her breakdown because you had gone off for the Berlin Crisis?

Ade: My being gone, yes. And never knew when I was coming home. Week-ends way late at night. And one day we were at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky. The Army made us do our summer camp weekend—I mean our summer camp two weeks even though we were on active duty. We had to go from Fort Knox to Camp Breckinridge and play field environment soldiering. And I got a phone call, "Your wife is in the hospital, had a nervous breakdown." So I quickly was taken to Fort Knox, took my car, and drove to Springfield. And that was a very exciting experience. Fortunately, her mom took care of the children. And she had a hard time coming out of it.

DePue: You said she was working before that time. Where was she working?

Ade: She worked as a music teacher in the Christian elementary school, a private school.

DePue: Here in Springfield?

Ade: Yes.

DePue: Okay. You have two daughters?

Ade: Yes.

DePue: I know one was born while you were in Korea.

Ade: Yeah. And she now lives in Brownwood, Texas.

DePue: What's her name?

Ade: Mary Stanley. She married a gentleman that went to University of Illinois when she did. And, she didn't finish the university, the four years, until after—well, she got married and they had the baby and she discovered while being in Chicago area, she got involved in designing clothing. And somehow she got acquainted with three furriers. They were Jewish immigrants from Russia. And they made a deal with her, you design a mink coat, and we'll make it for you. And she as a graduation program, she was involved in a style show at the Art Institute. I didn't realize that in the back below that there is an enormous art institute and a theater. But she was supposed to show two dresses and that fur coat. And I remember one time I had to go up there and rescue my daughter's project. She made a silk dress out of pure silk that her husband bought a 100-yard roll of pure silk from China. And she made a

dress out of obviously only a few yards. But time was pressing and I had to go up there and finish it for her. (laughs)

DePue: The skills come back pretty quickly then.

Ade: Yes, well, I enjoyed it. My wife [and I] went up there one day for the style show. Mary was disappointed she didn't have a chance to show the dress. But my point that I'm trying to make here is, she learned that people in the know with connections and a sheepskin had a better opportunity to show. And she drew second card. In other words her coat got shown. And it made press by the way, which was interesting. But she decided, "I'm going back to Champaign and finish my degree." And while her husband went to Circle Campus and commuted down by train on the weekends, she stayed down there in family housing under minimum conditions, just a mattress in the bedroom with the baby. And of course the university has care for children. while she took courses. Interesting enough, she finished in sculpturing. I'll never forget down in Brownwood she had that big—what do you call that? That one-horn imaginary animal. What do you call those?

DePue: The unicorn?

Ade: She had made a huge—whittled out of wood—as her final examination thing. And so it's behind the house down in Brownwood until the weather (laughs)—it was there for—had to be for fifteen years. I don't know what became of it. But anyway she got her sheepskin, satisfaction that she finished, graduated from the university. I call it sheepskin facetiously.

DePue: And that was the firstborn daughter. How about the second daughter?

Ade: The second one, she was born four years later. Gloria is her name. She took after her mom playing piano. And now she likes to play piano—I mean guitar. And writes guitar music and sings and performs at her church in Lincoln. And she....

DePue: Lincoln, Illinois?

Ade: Lincoln, Illinois. Like I said, she's musically inclined. Her music is more of spiritual nature and she plays in senior homes and so forth. She enjoys doing that.

DePue: She's married as well?

Ade: Yes. She's married to Ben, Benjamin Read. It's an English name, R-e-a-d. His dad was a factory worker, and he himself likewise went to work in a factory up there. He was actually a line mechanic. He's very, to me, an extremely intelligent person but seems to be satisfied working in a factory environment, never wanted to go do other work. But he came this weekend for example up to rescue my computer back to where my printer now prints again the full size, and I was too dumb to figure out how to do it.

DePue: So you're thankful that he came to rescue you.

Ade: Oh, he has talent.

DePue: You talked a little bit about your marksmanship competition. It sounds like that was very important to you.

Ade: I always believed in the Guard at range time, it was only a weekend dedicated for qualification. And I detect a lot of pencil pushing, I call it, where people were really not legitimately qualifying. In fact I hate to say this, one colonel that always showed ahead of me on the qualification thing [roster], and I know for a fact he never showed up on the pistol range. To me that's cheating. Now to me I take it that serious that if you cheat on the range, you're a dead soldier in a fight, okay! (emphatically)?

DePue: Yeah. Well, the Army has gotten a little bit better, because they have these automated ranges now where all of the scoring happens in the control tower and the target either went down or it didn't go down. So it's tougher to do that.

Ade: Yeah. I had an experience at Fort McCoy, where one year General Phipps gave me the task to assemble a twenty-four-man marksmanship unit to take for extra summer camp training points, take to Camp McCoy and test the 33rd Brigade. He gave me the full responsibility and three ranges, which the way I arranged this, the first range we got the twenty-five-meter basic M16 rifle where they shot three shots that were not allowed to exceed the size of a quarter. And if you didn't do that you were recycled back to—we had SFC Travis Cox, he's still alive—that taught the World War II method with a box and a pencil and a paper and a rifle on the block to where you learn the sight alignment. And that impressed a lot of regular Army evaluators that were post-World War II, never experienced this. They thought that was an invention when it was nothing but a recycled World War II technique. And then after that we sent them back to do this again. And I actually only had the opportunity to certify three guardsmen as unqualified. One was blind in the right eye. How he managed to be in the Guard beats me. And the other two were just incapable. In fact, I caught one trying to punch a hole in the paper. And from there on we touched the paper. They were not allowed to touch the paper. Well, once accomplished that task, they were required to then move in a tactical movement to the next range where they were required to shoot with a mask, prone position.

DePue: A mask. You mean a gas mask?

Ade: With a mask. Yes, protective mask we call them now, don't call them gas. And at that place I discovered a lot of people had claustrophobia. Literally panicked with a mask on. Now I don't understand how they ever survived basic training because there you had to go through the gas chamber. But that was quite an experience to them. And most of them had to then the next day report back. I was fortunate; I was able to recruit two Marine Reserve marksmanship training people and get them into the Guard. And within a week we had them assigned to the OCS at Fort Benning. They came back as new lieutenants, excellent shooters. One of them became quickly a distinguished rifleman. And I had—and he was a young major then—put

him in charge of the unknown distance, pop-up target. Where they had to shoot out of a foxhole on a pop-up target not knowing which distance until it popped up. And again there I had the good fortune to have an ROTC student do his summer camp with us that punched manually the scores onto the IBM—I call them IBM, actually EA, electronic automated cards. I had the entire payroll of the Illinois Guard on cards with me where we could then, by machine, draw out the people that shot that day. And I had an arrangement with the Wisconsin Guard, my counterpart, which was twenty miles away from Fort McCoy, to stay overtime and sort out and print out the scores. And by suppertime I actually was able to display on the unit's bulletin board the results. It was amazing. Most of them were called unqualified. Why? Because they didn't show up on the range. But their payroll number showed up on printout. And it was amazing, some of them, I'm revealing something now that may not be very popular – ghost members. People that were not at camp, never showed up for drill, but they were registered as members of their unit.

DePue: That has long been a problem with the National Guard, not just Illinois but across the country.

Ade: I never got any flak for that. I revealed something there that was embarrassing.

DePue: Well, sometimes being embarrassed is a good thing.

Ade: But I had the protection of the adjutant general because he—by the way, a month later as a result of this, which I call it, a tremendous task and an accomplishment, to prove that we had real marksmen. We had some people that really shouldn't have been in the military. And I got the Meritorious Service Medal for that.

DePue: What year would that have been?

Ade: I'm grabbing that out of the air now. Around 1976.

DePue: Okay. So that would have been towards the end of your career.

Ade: Well, it was in the early seventies, yes.

DePue: Okay. I heard that you're also a cross-country skier. Are you a competitive cross-country skier?

Ade: I found out through the Guard activities that the National Guard had a biathlon program, which they inherited from the Army when the Congress in their ultimate wisdom decided to withdraw federal funds from the Army biathlon program. So we, the National Guard, inherited the entire Alaska ski program including the major that was then involved up there. They put him on active duty with the National Guard to become the National Guard biathlon coordinator. It was an outstanding program. It happened to be the 33rd Brigade had a winter mobilization mission that gave us justification to include Illinois in a biathlon program with the intent that the biathletes become then cadre in case of mobilization.

DePue: So that would imply—I don't think this is anything that's secret anymore – the 33rd Brigade's alignment, or their mission, was then to Northern Europe perhaps.

Ade: At that time it was Alaska. And so to shoot and scoot was a justifiable purpose in our being. And it took a long time to get the TDA again included in the allowance for a six-man ski team, to get the cross-country skis, to get uniforms, to get the appropriate rifles. We started with World War II bolt Mossberg Model—not Mossberg. Yeah Mossberg Model 57 rifles. Where now they shoot with expensive Anschutz biathlon rifles which cost 2,000 dollars.

DePue: You participated at what level of biathlon competition?

Ade: We managed to get up to the national level, which rotated, by the way, with Vermont, Essex Junction, which has a biathlon range, and Fort Ripley, which has a biathlon range.

DePue: Fort Ripley, Minnesota.

Ade: Yes. And there's another one out west. I think it's in Colorado. But the northern states were only allowed or approved to participate in that. And we had moderate success in participating. I enjoyed it because it gave me an excuse or a reason to be more active in winter sport and physical fitness. As a result when I retired at age fifty-three I went into the marathon cross-country ski venture, which included the what's called Worldloppet.

DePue: Worldloppet?

Ade: Worldloppet, that's a Swedish term, loppet, loop.

DePue: How would you spell that?

Ade: L-o-p-p-e-t, loppet. So which required of course then not only to go to what's called the American Birkebein ski race in Wisconsin. *Birkebein* is Swedish. *Birke* is "birch tree." *Birkebein*, "birch leggings." It's a historical thing back from when the Swedes invaded Norway. They rescued a six-year-old future king of Norway, and that became then the justification to call it the Birkebein race. So I raced that ski event up there [in Wisconsin] ten times and then seven Korteloppet, which is—korte is kurz, korte, short, in other words half marathon. And went to ten different countries to get credit for the Worldloppet events. You have to buy a regular Worldloppet passport with your picture in it. And you have to pass a timing. It's a timed race.

DePue: Was this with a National Guard team? Or was this a national team at this time?

Ade: No, no, no, that's at a national level for any civilian, including military. Interesting enough, in those days the Soviets under cover of being professional military people with phony titles of professional, they did that in Olympics likewise. They were in the forefront in those days.

DePue: So they said they weren't professional but they absolutely were.

Ade: They were military people. In the Soviet system if you were a loser you disappeared off the front page. You ended up back in Siberia someplace (laughs).

DePue: Well, that's one way to motivate, isn't it?

Ade: That's a motivator. But in that vein, most of the top racers were Scandinavians. Interesting enough, lately the last four years, the Italians took the forefront at the American Birkebein [race]. The Italian government supports the winter sport, whereas the American thing is strictly amateur. So we don't have full-time sport lists. We have people that are dedicated and get financial support perhaps to do this. And maybe a handful that are qualified enough to be in Olympic vein can go to Colorado Springs. And then out of members, Americans who pay into the Olympic fund, in other words out of my pocket they get to do their thing, and hopefully they outshine and become Olympic champions.

DePue: It's a little bit tougher to do it that way though, isn't it?

Ade: Yes, but it shows that you either motivate yourself to do it or you're out.

DePue: I know at this time also—or at least I think – that you stayed involved with different veterans organizations. One of the things I'm leading to here is your involvement with this Korean orphanage that the unit started to help while you were still in Korea.

Ade: I was fortunate. In 1953 I was selected to be the delegate out of King Company to go to the dedication ceremony near Seoul on an island on the river –Han River I believe it's called –where our company, our engineer company, built a Korean village, sort of an unofficial thing that I don't think the Department of the Army ever knew about that till afterwards.

DePue: They don't have to know everything, do they?

Ade: But it was done, let's face it. History now shows there were 400 orphanages, and most of them supported by military units in Korea. And the intent was to report back to the company for fundraising purposes. That was my first opportunity ever speak in front of a military unit in the Army other than basic training, which I participated as an acting drill sergeant. But anyway to get people to fork over money. And we donated 18,000 dollars that year in support of that orphanage. I discovered this last week, by the way, being at our convention in Washington, that the Korean UPS parcel service paid 39,654 dollars this last year in support of that orphanage.

DePue: What's the name of the orphanage?

Ade: Sam Dong Boys Town.

DePue: That's what Sam Dong stands for?

Ade: No, it's just a name. I don't know what it means. Perhaps your wife can translate that for you. But now, they were moved off that island by the city of Seoul because Seoul made literally a garbage heap out of that island. And they were moved to a former sort of a motel on a side of a hill, which then in 1972 became prime real estate to build the World Cup soccer arena, which then again made that orphanage to be moved. But now they're in a three-story-high—it looks like a hotel. It's fantastic. Next to high-rise apartments. It's amazing how Seoul is pushing toward the north of the city of Seoul, how modernized that is now.

DePue: Now you stayed in contact with this orphanage because you also stayed in contact with the regimental organization as well?

Ade: Yes. I attended all but one national convention of 5th Regimental Combat Team [reunions].

DePue: And you say just this last week you had....

Ade: Last weekend we had it in the state of Virginia, Hyatt Regency Reston, which is near Dulles International Airport. And I got involved through—there are several members of the 5th Regimental Combat Team living in Springfield, one of them being a former command sergeant major, George Pempeck, who retired out of Springfield. His last tour of duty was working for the Senior Army Advisor at Camp Lincoln. And another gentleman, Bob Wolf, who now of course obviously retired, he continuously works for the burial detail at Camp Butler. Another one who came out of L Company, was a company clerk, kept himself out of a shooting environment punching a typewriter diligently, is willing to admit that, kept him out of trenches.

DePue: But somebody has got to do that job.

Ade: Somebody has got to do that, that's right. And he must have done a good job, because if you didn't do a good job you ended up there in the trench.

DePue: There's a different kind of motivation.

Ade: That's right. And another one is Sam Crocher, who I mentioned a while ago was our unit administrator. He still lives here. He has a son, a lieutenant colonel in the Guard. Two of his sons, when they were youngsters I taught them how to shoot small-bore rifle.

DePue: Are you involved with any veterans organizations here in town?

Ade: I joined the Korean War Veterans Association and I go to some of their national conventions. I intend to go to the one this year in October in Reno because I've never been to Reno, Nevada. The last year I missed because I didn't want to go. The year before was during that storm thing in Louisiana. I went there, had some bad

experiences there, so I didn't want to go the last one. But we have a chapter here in Springfield, Chapter 27. We attend every other Thursday of the month a conversation session or you want to call it counsel session. There are some people that still even World War II veterans that go to the veterans office here on South Ninth Street. And primarily now they tend to counsel Vietnam returnees and of course the recent—there are some people that really need some—not only financial but mental support to get them out of their—guidance through veterans hospital and facilities. It's an interesting program. I support it because they do good work.

DePue: Yes. When did you finally retire from working full-time with the National Guard?

Ade: I had to retire at age fifty-three at the end of October 1984 because under the ROPA, Reserve Officer Personnel Act, which is up or out, I became lieutenant colonel and maximum time in grade, and age fifty-three, you had to be promoted to O6 or out. Well, the higher up you go the fewer positions there are.

DePue: Yeah. It gets very competitive.

Ade: It's extremely competitive. And I found it to my advantage to—I had the privilege then to age fifty-five, but I found it to my advantage to request release at age fifty-three and enjoy retirement. I saved my money and did some hefty investment and I enjoy retirement tremendously.

DePue: So you didn't need to have any other job after you retired at fifty-three.

Ade: I can't afford to go to work (laughs).

DePue: Okay. That's a blessing. I know your wife has passed away. When did that happen?

Ade: My wife had the misfortune to [pass away] on the 2nd of February, '02, she had—looking forward to get her heart operated on, and it turned sour. Ten percent of heart operations just don't make it and she didn't recover. It was a shock to me. I still—I miss her a lot. Especially now that I had my house renovated and have a nice home. I can't enjoy it with my wife. It's sad.

DePue: But recently you've become very involved with working on this project to build this Korean War Memorial and now this Korean War Museum, both here in Springfield.

Ade: Yes. I'm a charter member. We started about almost ten years ago trying to get funds to start it in Tuscola, Illinois. And that turned sour. We finally ended up in Rantoul at the former air base, which is now a temporary museum there. But we discovered that being out – not in the mainstream of traffic of visitors. Even the air museum there is having difficulty maintaining a stream of attendance. So we ended up buying premium land here within a block and a half from the Abraham Lincoln Museum and Library on Fifth and Madison. All you see right now there is a parking lot and a heap of dirt because EPA required –now after this discovered to be lead in the ground because of 100 years ago there was a foundry –that lead has to be removed; that dirt has to be hauled to Michigan. There goes another 200,000 dollars

to accomplish that task. In addition to that, Shell Oil Company had a gas station there, which requires having to remove the gas tanks there. There goes another bunch of money. It's on and on. But our target date has been slipped past this July '07 to now it just keeps slipping. But we're working on fundraising. We have literally 65,000 donators throughout the country.

DePue: That reflects a desire by the Korean War veterans to do something to commemorate that war and the war that –I think we've mentioned before in this interview –that oftentimes is overlooked by the American public. So in the last interview I asked you, at the time back in 1953, what you thought about the decision to end the war with an armistice and draw the lines, leave the lines where they were. Fifty some years beyond that point, what do you think about the way the Korean War ended?

Ade: Well, I'm disappointed that we're still technically at war with North Korea. But I am an optimist. When in '89 the wall came down [in Germany] and Communism collapsed so suddenly overnight, literally overnight, that may happen again with North Korea. But with this nut that we have there right now, the son of....

DePue: Son of Kim Il-Sung I think is Kim Jong-Il, is that his name?

Ade: Kim Jong-Il. He accumulated an enormous military force. And from what I read and find out through, I guess you can call it intelligence, they have three levels of conditions up in North Korea, which must be awful. The military living high on the hog, I'll use that term. The party people live well. The people that have relatives in South Korea or people that, let's face it, there are people starving to death in North Korea now. And that has to be awful to be treating people like that. And how the general population puts up with that is beyond me.

DePue: What do you think about how the American public has dealt with the Korean War veterans and dealt with the Korean War in particular?

Ade: Well, my experience has been we've been shoved in the back shelf for years. But now I'm amazed. I see people—let me say it this way. The first time that I ever had a young man approach me and shake my hand and say, "I want to thank you for your service to our country" was at Branson, Missouri when we were at a convention there waiting for a showboat, boarding a showboat. That's the first time a young man ever approached me to thank me. It happens to me almost every day now. I wear a cap that depicts that I'm a veteran of—my favorite one is the 5th Regimental Combat Team. I happen to be today carrying the one I went to the twelfth reunion in Hawaii, which we—Hawaii has significance to the 5th RCT because they went to Korea from Hawaii, Schofield Barracks. And literally, 1950 to bail out an Army unit that was pushed all the way down to Pusan perimeter. And the 5th Regimental Combat Team participated all the way up to the Yalu River and then back of course. Their record is 94 percent of their time in Korea was up front.

DePue: That's an astounding percentage.

Ade: More than any other, because we were a regimental combat team, separate unit always attached to other divisions. In particular one time, where one battalion, I think it was the 24th Division, was annihilated, and the 5th RCT became—was attached to the 24th.

DePue: That would have been during the Pusan perimeter. The 24th was the first or the second division thrown in there and they just got....

Ade: Banged up.

DePue: Well, I think this is a good opportunity to ask you a couple more general questions and to close up. How do you think your experiences in Korea—and maybe we can say this as well about your horrendous experiences growing up in Germany during and at the end of the Second World War,—but in particular how your experiences in Korea have affected the way you look at life ever after?

Ade: Well, I learned to take life serious at an early age because I saw too much misery, I guess I want to call it. I didn't get involved in the bombing directly in Germany. I saw a lot of—heard a lot of boom, bang, and the sky light, like the city of Hof nearby. And another experience in February '45 when I saw hundreds of American bombers fly over toward the city of Dresden. And you could hear the rumble of when that city got bombed during the day. That night before they were torched by the British—and that was many—the Frauenkirche collapsed, burned up, and many other tremendous historical art buildings. I participated in funding for the restoration of that church. It cost 174 million dollars to restore that. I had an opportunity to finally see it this last September. Sat in there for an hour, just admired the gilded paintings in there.

DePue: What was the name of that church again?

Ade: The Frauenkirche.

DePue: It strikes me that you're something of a survivor and you took opportunities whenever you had the chance that was presented to you.

Ade: That's right. I appreciate the fact that I came out of Korea without any frostbite, without any—I didn't draw any blood whatsoever. In fact to really drive the point home, I met a former lieutenant from the 5th RCT at Aberdeen Proving Ground one day at the officers club. I again went back to the Aberdeen Proving Ground being an ordnance officer for all my career training courses. And I went to the officers club one day. It happened to be I had dress blues. Very few occasions to wear, so I wore the dress blues. And I sat next to a gentleman, a major with a 5th RCT patch. We shook hands, and lo and behold, he was the lieutenant that the week before I—well, I met him—he was in a firefight with a patrol and they all took their right glove mittens off and they all got frostbite. And that man was an ordnance officer then. He had to revert to—he lost his infantry MOS because of his—he never—half his nails were gone. He showed me his fingers. He could never grow nail any

further than one half. But he managed to finish his career in the Army as an ordnance officer. It was interesting.

DePue: Our nation finds herself at war again. And with your own experiences of growing up in Germany and in Korea and spending a life in the military, I suspect that you have views about what's going on in Iraq right now and Afghanistan.

Ade: Well, I keep track of—now that I have a computer—I also take advantage of the fact that I have access to fifty international newspapers on the Internet. And I like to read Reuter.

DePue: Reuters?

Ade: They also have the television program that you see on the Internet. They give you the news always a half-day ahead of what you see in the *Tribune* here today is what yesterday was broadcast over there. And tomorrow you see it in the *Springfield Journal*. It's a fact of life. But I find a lot of things. Also the German news program "Die Zeit", "The Times," which by the way was started by American troops after the war. It's now a world-known broadcasting system. But those people, they get to go to other places, like where Americans are not welcome, like Iran for example. So you see some of the newscasts on the other side, which is interesting to me. I take it not as propaganda like some people might suspect, because I have the mental capability to sort out.

DePue: I wouldn't have the advantage of watching any German broadcasts, because I wouldn't understand a word of it.

Ade: You can punch twenty languages on that program, including English. So you're welcome to just punch English. You get it.

DePue: So what is your opinion about this war?

Ade: I admire the soldiers, for example after attending your book session, and the book you wrote about our troops, our MP company. When you talk to individual soldiers and you read about—well, here again just recently people that go for the third time over to Iraq, their person-to-person contact versus what we hear on the newscast are different. The soldier, from the human element, there is a need. They feel needed. They serve a purpose. I don't quite understand the international events and it probably got out of hand. I like to say it's probably called a religious war now, which has gone on since the biblical times, and whether we ever come to resolution I don't know.

DePue: Let me finish with this question then. What advice or wisdom would you pass on to the next generation, now that you have this opportunity?

Ade: I live in the greatest country. This country, this government, this democracy is the longest government that's ever been in existence without any overthrow. And our Constitution, I'm also very much in support of the Second Amendment, defense of

our country, the individual capability of defense against government, heaven forbid if it would ever happen, but it could, if we would allow it. I can tell you the demonstration of it, and I have given speeches on this, in fact at a meeting with Sarah Brady. I don't know whether you want to hear this or not, but when I was in grade school in Germany in [September] 1938, at nine o'clock in the morning the school was closed, and we were literally marched up to the town square in Mosbach where they burned the synagogue library, the books. And they burned the synagogue. My point to Sarah Brady when she gave a speech at Southern Illinois University was that, had every German Jew refrained from—in 1934 when Hitler required gun registration—had he refrained from volunteering the serial number of his favorite shotgun, and when in '38 they came at six o'clock in the morning to his door and knocked down the door, he would have used his favorite shotgun and blown those two SA people away. There wouldn't have been enough around to finish the job (emphatically). In other words, self-defense to me is essential. If you disarm this country you'll have the capability to overthrow. And heaven forbid that we ever—it'll never happen as long as I'm alive, because I believe in self-defense.

DePue: What would you like to say at the conclusion? We've probably been at this for close to four hours now altogether. It's been a fascinating experience for me to hear some of your stories and your reflections on things. So how would you like to finish this off?

Ade: God bless America.

DePue: Thanks very much, Walter. Any other comments?

Ade: I love it here.

DePue: We'll end with that. Thank you again, Walter.

Ade: Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

(end of interview)