Interview with A. Robert Abboud

VRK-A-L-2007-021

Interview # 1: September 26, 2007

Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Wednesday, September 26, 2007. This is Mark DePue. I am the Director of Oral History for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. It is my honor today to interview A. Robert Abboud about his experiences during the Korean War. Mr. Abboud, thank you for being with us today.

Abboud: It's a pleasure.

DePue: What I always do is to start off with some specifics. I should say that I am in Mr. Abboud's gorgeous office in Fox River Grove, northwest of the Chicago area. What I always start with, Mr. Abboud, is when and where you were born.

Abboud: I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, May 29, 1929.

DePue: Just a few months before the beginning of the Great Depression.

Abboud: I don't think I caused it.

DePue: (laughs) Well, my Dad was born about a week before it all crashed. So, he says the same thing. (Laughter). Could you tell us a little bit about your parents, because I think both of them, or at least one of them, was born overseas?

Abboud: Yes. Both of them are Lebanese. My dad was born in Boston.

DePue: He was born in Boston?

Abboud: My dad was born in Boston. My mother's family, her father, worked for Cook's and so forth. My father's family came in and they immigrated in 1899. They were basically farmers from Lebanon and they landed in Boston. And my father was

born and grew up there, went to MIT, graduated 1922. My mother was born in Lebanon. She went to the Beirut College for Women there and she had an interesting experience. She worked for this woman, and became a secretary to her, who later married Ataturk, who became Ataturk Kemal Pasha. So at that time Lebanon was under Turkish domination until World War II.

DePue: At the end of World War I, I know…

Abboud: I mean, until the end of World War I. My grandmother was a teacher when the Turks ran the area there; they made my grandmother in charge of the schools around the Beirut area. There were six children. My grandfather had died in 1912 and she recounts memories of seeing the Allied ships come in to Beirut harbor in 1918. There was great joy and exultation. Then she went to work for a relief organization there, Near East Relief, came to the United States to raise money for the children that were orphans. She raised about $50,000, which was a lot of money at that particular time. She was so successful that they sent her here to the United States permanently as their representative. She completed her education in Social Work at Simmons College and met my father. They got married. She continued to work and was a partner of Amelia Earhart.

DePue: I know we're going to get to that here in a little bit. She met your father while he was going to MIT, or after?

Abboud: No. He had his business. He was living in Boston. He had a heating and ventilating engineering business. Lost it in 1929, well, really in 1931, but the Depression of '29, it really affected him. They got married in 1928 and I was born in 1929.

DePue: You mentioned that your mother and her family were excited, thrilled when the French arrived in port. I think it was the French who occupied Lebanon. Did they view the Turks as occupiers?

Abboud: Oh, yeah. Well, Turkish rule was very harsh. She would tell stories about how, when her younger brothers would go to school, the Turks would take dissidents and hang them from the lamp posts so that the children would see them – you don't contravene any Turkish requirements. My grandmother's pay was basically ten pounds of flour a week. They had to bring up the children and live on that. It was a very harsh operation.

DePue: Were the Turks especially harsh, because they are Christian, or am I reading too much into that? Or, were they Christian?

Abboud: Well. Our family was Christian but the Turks were equal-opportunity harsh. (Chuckle) It was just the way they governed. Their governance procedure which went back, you know, for hundreds of years was basically not to tolerate any kind of dissent.

DePue: Was that one reason why she was probably excited about the opportunity to go to the United States?

Abboud: Yes. Having been brought up in Christian schools and as a Christian family out there and, as you know, there was a large Christian population out there, dating all the way back from the Crusades. When she got the opportunity to come to the United States – but the motivation at that particular time was to work for the children, to work for the orphanages, to work for relief. And that's why, when she came to the United States and began working she worked for Dennison House and Middle East relief; they worked for a settlement house in the south end of Boston where Amelia Earhart was working.

DePue: We're going to get to Amelia Earhart again, because I know that comes up in your childhood. When you talked with your parents then, did they think it was a pretty tough or rugged experience, as recent immigrants to the United States, to be in Boston?

Abboud: Well, at that time my father's family, all of the immigrant families, wanted to be 100 percent American. They wanted to speak English; they wanted to become part of the country. They grew up there, you know, in World War II. Obviously uncles, cousins, everybody went in the service. So, it was a different atmosphere at that time. And the same thing on my mother's family; when they came in, of course, they were all educated – all of them college graduates and so forth. But starting out they were all poor. They didn't have any money. All the children would work and long hours. Whatever money they had, they'd come back, they'd give to their mother. My grandmother was a widow so she was bringing up the family with no husband. But it was typical of America in those days.

DePue: The classic American immigrant story.

Abboud: The classic American immigrant story.

DePue: And your father was able to get to MIT, which I would think was quite …

Abboud: This was an interesting story and I'm glad you asked that. He had done well at English high school and there was a fellow named Joyce, James Joyce, He would take promising students from what was then, we would call it, you know, the slum area, where you had the Lebanese community down the south end of Boston, the poor and so forth, and pay their college education. And so he was the recipient of a college grant from Joyce. He would walk from the south end over to MIT every day and at that time you had to wear a suit coat when you went to class. He only had one which was a tuxedo jacket and all the students would kind of razz him and say, "Are you a waiter?" But he would go, he persevered and he graduated in a class that Jimmy Doolittle attended in 1922.

DePue: Wow, there are lots of famous people woven in this story.

Abboud: Yeah.

DePue: What was your mother's native tongue?

Abboud: Well, she spoke four languages. She spoke Arabic, English, French and Turkish.

DePue: Did she try to teach the kids any of those languages?

Abboud: Yeah. The problem was that our Arabic and our French, we didn't do it all the time and we weren't in an environment in which you could practice it, but we were certainly exposed to it. More Arabic than the French, because she taught French when we lived in Virginia for a while. She was a tutor in French and so we learned a little bit of that. She was a brilliant woman, very educated.

DePue: Your father just knew English or did he know…

Abboud: He knew Arabic and he knew English. And that…

DePue: Did they talk Arabic at home when they thought the kids weren't supposed to listen?

Abboud: Yeah, but the problem with the Arabic that we talked at home was the Arabic of the eighteen-nineties, you know. And so, for a while I opened and ran our branch in Beirut, Lebanon, and when I would speak Arabic everybody would laugh because it was – they called it "Jabali" –which is mountain Arabic, peasant Arabic. (Laughter)

DePue: Well, tell me a little bit more about growing up. I assume most of this is in Boston, but it sounds like you also moved around a bit.

Abboud: We lived in Boston early years. In 1936 my father got a job in Hampton Institute which was a black college in the South. So we moved down there and lived there from 1936 to 1940. As a matter of fact, last Sunday, I went to my baby-sitter's 90th birthday party in Stamford, Connecticut; she was a black student there that lived with us, was our baby-sitter. She went up to Stamford, Connecticut, and became the president of the school board up there. She even got a birthday greeting from President Bush on her 90th birthday.

DePue: Well, that's not the only influential woman who ended up being a baby-sitter for you.

Abboud: Yeah, right, yeah, I had some pretty good women as baby-sitters, including, I say, Amelia Earhart.

DePue: How old was she when she was baby-sitting? What year would that have been?

Abboud: That would have been before 1936. It would be in the early 30's, when my mother was working at the Settlement House in Boston. She was there, too, and they were close friends. As a matter of fact, my mother told her, don't go on the airplane trip. As you may recall, Amelia Earhart's husband was promoting her and pushing

her, but Amelia was a remarkable woman. I don't have very much memory because I was very young at that particular time, other than the fact that a lot of stories being told at home by my mother and so forth about those early years.

DePue: You would have been just a little tyke at the time, obviously.

Abboud: Yeah, well I was born in '29 and so in 1933 and '34 I would have been three or four years old.

DePue: Did you have some other siblings?

Abboud: Yes. I have a sister was born in 1936 and she, just as soon as she was born we moved down to Hampton, Virginia. It was interesting in my experience at that time, because, you know the discrimination against blacks in the South at that particular time, but what I didn't realize was that the discrimination against whites, who were working with blacks and helping blacks at that time, was more intense than the discrimination against blacks. The white community really looked down on us.

DePue: What was your mother doing at the time then?

Abboud: Well, my mother was a housekeeper at that time. My father was teaching at Hampton Institute. He was the head of the Mechanical Engineering Department. We lived on the campus. But we couldn't go to school on the campus because we were white and the schools were segregated so we had to go to Hampton to go to school. But because of the animosity we'd get into fights all the time with the locals there. There were three of us: Alby Moberg, Phillip Jenkins and myself, all of whom their parents were teachers at the school. And Phillip Jenkins had a sailboat. It was about fourteen feet long and we could go right across Hampton Creek over to – this lady let us dock there –we could just walk to the school. So we avoid the fights going all the way around through Hampton by sailing in between the oyster boats who would blow their whistles, you know, the stupid little.. eight-, nine-, ten-year-old kids sailing out there by themselves with their lunch pails. I mean, you couldn't do that today.

DePue: But you also were exposed to some of the dark side of the American society at the same time.

Abboud: Oh, it was awful. It was awful. As I say we had these wonderful students who lived with us who did light housekeeping and baby-sitting for room and board and going to school, which certainly Beatrice Ransom was one of them. I can remember even when I was in the Marine Corps, we were at Little Creek, much later, there was a student at Harvard, I was in our NROTC in the third year. We went to Little Creek to learn amphibious training. I was there with one of my classmates named Thomas; his last name was Thomas. We were on the ferry; we were out there going across from Old Point Comfort and this guy came up and he said to Thomas, "Now you're going to go back to the back of the boat; you can't be up here." We were in uniform and I said, "Wait a minute, if he's going to go,

I'm going to go, too." He said, "No, no you can't go, you're white. You got to stay up here." And we got into a confrontation. Now this is in 1950. He subsequently, I think, rose up in the ranks, became a General. I think he was Ambassador to one of the countries in South America. This whole business of, you know, discrimination and racial segregation, we've got to be very careful about that, particularly now, where our whole society is really a composite of a whole series of different cultures.

DePue: When you were in Hampton, and later on, did you feel like you were singled out because you were of Lebanese descent?

Abboud: No, I can't say singled out. I mean, I never really experienced the kind of discrimination that, you know, blacks or Jews or other people would have done it. There was one interesting incident. When I graduated from business school and I was recruited to the bank, Gale Freeman, who later became Chairman, but who was then Senior Vice President, came out. He said, "We want you to come; you're a Baker Scholar. We want you to come to work at the bank, but," he said, "you'll never be Chairman. I mean, you're short and dark and you're Lebanese and we could never have a Chairman who would be Lebanese." I said, "Okay, I'll take my chances."

DePue: You've obviously done okay.

Abboud: Yeah, yeah. And I succeeded him as Chairman (laughs).

DePue: Yeah, absolutely. Do you remember Pearl Harbor?

Abboud: Oh, very well. I can remember exactly where I was. And we heard the news. We were living in Boston at that time, on Aldridge Street in Roslindale, Massachusetts. I ran over to my cousin's house and they were listening to the radio. They were older. There were three boys there. The two oldest immediately said, "Okay, we're going down to enlist." And they did. We can never forget that day, never forget that day.

DePue: Did you have an appreciation for what that news meant?

Abboud: We had obviously been listening to what was going on in Europe on the radio. At that time there was no television. We all watched the radio. But the march of Germany across Europe and the blitz in England and, in the early 1940s it was necessary that we have to send stuff to England because they were being there. Of course, when this happened in December of '41, and to be attacked like that and then that wonderful speech by President Roosevelt, you know, just marshaled everybody. Everybody turned to…

DePue: His "day of infamy" speech?

Abboud: Yeah, the day of infamy.

DePue: So then in your early teen years you were obviously listening very carefully to all of the war news that was coming across.

Abboud: I was at that time enrolled in a school called Roxbury Latin School, in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, which is the oldest continuously functioning secondary school in the country. It was founded in 1645 in order to teach the Indians to go to Harvard, which had been founded in 1636. And if you lived in a certain area you got to go, I think, for a hundred dollars a year, which was a lot of money at that time, but the regular tuition was substantially higher than that. But because under the charter the locals who were basically Indian in the early years, if you lived in that district you got to go. We didn't have any money and so I got accepted and went there and we studied the war. We learned a lot of geography from the war; we listened every day and every night and every morning and, of course, in the school all athletics were suspended because nobody had any gas so you couldn't go to different schools to play. And so, a lot of intramural stuff until basically 1944, everything was directed toward the war.

DePue: Would you say that you developed a strong interest in the military at that time?

Abboud: Oh, there's no question about the fact that everybody was in the military. I mean, all the able young men. As a matter of fact, in 1944, we would have been what, fifteen? Tommy Connors, one of my classmates and I, went down to enlist in the Navy (chuckles). And we got in there and this Chief Petty Officer looked at us and said, "Hey kid, how old are you?" We said, "Eighteen, sir." He said, "Get the hell out of here and go home." (Laughter)

DePue: You just didn't want to miss out though!

Abboud: Yeah.

DePue: Backtracking here just a little bit, was your family fairly religious? Did you attend church?

Abboud: Well, my father's family were Orthodox Christians, Catholic Orthodox. And my mother's family was Protestant, and so they got married in the Episcopal Church. We've had various, depending on where we were, various iterations belonging to different churches, Methodist, Presbyterian, so forth. Our family happens to be Episcopalian today, but that's just…

DePue: Okay, tell me about how you ended up at Harvard University.

Abboud: Well, as I said, our school, Roxbury Latin School, was kind of preparatory school for Harvard. Out of our class of 30, I think 22 went to Harvard. I remember when Dean Montgomery came into the room and said, "Okay, how many of you want to go to Harvard?" He was the Dean of Admissions at Harvard. (Chuckles) We raised our hand and he handed out the applications. Some of the delinquent members of the class went to Yale. (Both laugh) Another miscreant went to Brown and one went to Bowdoin.

DePue: Just about everybody went some place.

Abboud: Everybody went some place, yeah.

DePue: That says a lot about the nature of your school.

Abboud: Oh, this school is one of the top schools in the country and it was just the luck of the draw that I was able to attend it.

DePue: What did your father do during the war?

Abboud: Well, my father went –the reason we moved back to Boston from Hampton –he went with the Navy as a civilian up to Iceland. They were building a naval base there in '40. So they built the naval base there and he came back on the SS *Wakefield*. We didn't know that at the time we went down to Quonset to pick him up and he came off the boat in jeans and a t-shirt. We were waiting and we said, "Okay" –this was in 1941, or '42 –we said "where's your luggage?" and he said, "Never mind. Come on. We're ready. We go". So we went. Until 1945 he never told us exactly what happened. But apparently the ship had been caught on fire or something, or been hit or whatever and they were in the water and they got picked up by other ships in the convoy and came home. But at that time the whole slogan was "A slip of the lip sinks a ship" and you never –we didn't know anything until 1945 as to what happened.

DePue: Amazing. What did you major in at Harvard?

Abboud: Well, I majored in Latin and Greek History. At Roxbury Latin we'd had six years of Latin and three years of Greek. So I was a classics major, history and classics. And I was in the NROTC [Naval Reserve Officers' Training Course] program which was the only way we could finance my education. This was the Holloway Plan and they paid our tuition and gave us fifty dollars a month for books and things. And then every summer we'd go on cruises or training exercises and then come back to school; the obligation was that you served for three years when you get out. And so we graduated in '51 and obviously I had chosen the Marine Corps and off we went to Korea.

DePue: Okay. The Holloway Plan: was that something that Harvard had?

Abboud: Well, it was Admiral Holloway, no, it was Admiral Holloway. It was a national plan and they had signed up a number of schools that would teach ROTC, or NROTC. We had a four-striper, a captain, who was professor; he became a university professor in military science and you were forced to take one of those courses. You had to take military science every year, just one course. And so we learned about naval warfare and we learned about military history and well, you know what you do with military science.

DePue: Can I assume that Naval ROTC was a bigger thing at Harvard than Army ROTC?

Abboud: Well, subsequent presidents banned the ROTC from Harvard after I was there and there's a big movement among my classmates to try to get them to reinstate ROTC at Harvard. A few years ago they did, but the students had to attend military science class at MIT, down the road. But after what happened in the 1960s it was apparently moved off of campus. I think it's a great mistake. I'm working with the group to try to get the University to bring back ROTC. I just think it's terrific. But, no, a lot of my classmates were in the Army ROTC and I would say there were an equal number of…. Now remember, in ROTC the NROTC and Holloway Plan paid for you. The regular ROTC does not; that's an elective and you go and do that.

DePue: But the trade-off was that you had a three-year commitment when you graduated.

Abboud: You had a three-year commitment when you went out and you got a regular commission.

DePue: Did it pay for regular tuition only, or room and board as well?

Abboud: No. It just paid for tuition. And what we had to do would be work outside in order to earn money to pay the room and board.

DePue: Okay. Why the Marines then?

Abboud: The first summer we went on our cruise and we went on the *USS Macon*, which was a cruiser. And we went to the Mediterranean and they had those shifts, what do you do, eight hours on and four hours off, eight hours on and something. It just seemed that you were detached from the real combat kind of things and I said, "You know, I like land warfare, I like this business of up and down and around and so I chose the Marine Corps. It was, you know, the history and tradition of the Marines is a superb organization, unlike almost anything the world has ever known. I mean, it is an elite organization.

DePue: Well especially coming out of World War II, they had an incredible reputation.

Abboud: Oh, yeah, and the comrade… we still have today, we have reunions of our Company from 1952.

DePue: You graduated in '51?

Abboud: '51.

DePue: A year before you graduated, the Korean War started.

Abboud: Yeah.

DePue: What were you thinking at the moment that happened?

Abboud: Well, I tell you, you really buckled down on your studies at that particular time. I mean, military science was no longer an academic thing at that particular time, because you knew the minute you graduated and put those bars on your shoulder you were ready. So you buckled down, you watched the war very carefully and very closely. And you were ready. When we got out in June of '51 we went down to Quantico for Basic school and some of my classmates like Mick Trainor, who just wrote a book, became a general and he's on TV – you see him every once in a while. After Basic school, I think that was three months –I could be wrong on the time, but it's in that range –then we went out to West coast to Pendleton and then we did cold weather training up in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Pickle Meadows where you learn to live in the snow and the ice. They'd have people with bugles and stuff coming in raiding you in the middle of the night and you'd get ready to go. And then in April of '52 we were on a replacement draft that went to Korea.

DePue: Let me go back to that decision to become a Marine. When did that happen?

Abboud: Well, you have to decide that in your sophomore year.

DePue: Okay. So this would have been before the Korean War started.

Abboud: Before the Korean War started.

DePue: You mentioned that in the last year you were in Harvard and you were in the Naval ROTC, now you're heading to be a Marine, that you guys were paying attention to the war. So are you especially paying attention to the First Marines?

Abboud: Well, we're paying attention to the Marines. We're paying attention to the geography of the area. We're paying attention to the ebb and flow of the battles. We're really paying attention also to our naval studies because Korea, being a peninsula, we knew at some point… Now remember in 1950 before we went, they did the Inchon landing and so forth when MacArthur came out. And, of course, at that time the emphasis in the Marine Corps was really on amphibious landing. We'd all been at Little Creek and done amphibious landing and the Higgins boats and all the other stuff. And so, it was essential that we knew that we were going to lead troops; what was drummed into us over and over again was the fact that your responsibility is the men under your command. And your job is: A) to get the mission accomplished, and B) to bring the people home safely. They can't be brought home safely if they're not adequately trained and they can't be adequately trained unless you know what you're doing.

DePue: I'm especially curious about what you all were thinking: listening to the news, reading the newspapers about the Marines at Chosin Reservoir, the Eighth Army getting their butts kicked, all the way from the Yalu River south to Seoul. I mean, that was your senior year in college.

Abboud: Oh, yeah, but we were all gung ho at that time. I mean, we reveled in "Chesty" Puller telling his troops, "We're surrounded guys, which means there's no way

these guys can get away – we can attack in any direction". (Both laugh) I mean it was all… As a matter-of-fact at that time, there was the big confrontation between Truman and MacArthur and I wrote a letter that was published in the paper and so forth, saying we ought to support General MacArthur and so forth. I mean everybody was gung ho.

DePue: Okay.

Abboud: We were going to beat their butts.

DePue: So like any other kid of that age you're indestructible at that time.

Abboud: Oh, we're indestructible, and we're going to kick butt and take names.

DePue: What did you think of your experience when you went down to Quantico? I assume this is Officer Basic Training?

Abboud: Oh, yeah, it's Officer Basic Training and we –well everybody was paying pretty close attention. (Chuckles.)

DePue: Very tough, I would assume.

Abboud: Oh, yeah, it was good, but we were all athletes in college and you know, we knew we had to lead men and we better get ready for it.

DePue: I know that when you go to Marine Basic everybody learns how to be an Infantryman first.

Abboud: Yeah.

DePue: Was there a point in time where you had some more options other than Infantry for you?

Abboud: Well there were options, but I liked the infantry.

DePue: What was it that you liked about the infantry?

Abboud: Well, you're with the men and you're there and you're in the real fight. I mean, if you're in Tac (Tactical Operations Center), you're back there, if you're in artillery you're back there, if you're in the Air Force you're up there. But if you're in the infantry it's *mano a mano* and that's what it's all about.

DePue: That was your opinion. What was your mother's opinion?

Abboud: Oh, my mother was devastated. My grandmother, when I got my orders to go at graduation, she said, in Arabic, "Asat Drnar – Don't you dare go." (Laughs.)

DePue: It was already too late for that, wasn't it?

Abboud: I laughed and hugged her. (Laughs.)

DePue: How about your dad?

Abboud: Well, my dad was very stoic and, you know, he knew we had to –you know, there was a job to do. Remember, he'd been up in Iceland with the Navy and we'd had a lot of our family in the service. Y

ou're a citizen and this was it; this was what you did.

DePue: So there was never any doubt in their minds, or your mind, obviously, that this is something that needed to be done; that you had to do it?

Abboud: No. I, mean, you were American.

DePue: Let's talk about actually being shipped overseas.

Abboud: Yeah.

DePue: Did you go on boats?

Abboud: Yeah, we went down to San Diego and we got on a troop ship. I think it took about two weeks or so. You were assigned, at that point, a platoon on the ship. These were in a replacement draft; they're for all parts of the Marine Corps: the artillery, this and that, infantry, police force, and so forth. But they group you and then the officers on board are assigned a platoon, or a company if they are higher ranked. And so we'd have drills on shipboard. You'd teach patrolling. You'd teach disassembly of weapons, cleaning weapons; you'd go through –it was a regular drilling thing. Now we stopped in – I think we stopped in Osaka, or Kobe, I forget. We stopped at some port in Japan. Everybody got off the ship for one day R & R. And then we got back on and then we went up to Pusan. And when we got to Pusan, depending upon our orders and I was assigned to the First Marine Division, the Baker Company.

DePue: The Fifth Regiment?

Abboud: Yeah, the Fifth Regiment. We were the First Marine Division, the Fifth Regiment, First Battalion, Baker Company – Baker Company, First Battalion, B-1,5. You went up on a train and you went through regiment and then up the line, up to battalion and from battalion you're assigned down to a company. God, I'll never forget this. I went up to the company – the company was in a fire fight at the time and the captain was there and he had some milk carton or something. He had some stuff and stuff was going all over. I said, "Lt. Abboud reporting for…" He said, "Look, kid, get over there and don't get killed." (Both laugh.) And so, then he said, "Okay, you're assigned the Third Platoon. Corporal will take you out there" – which was out on a ridge line somewhere. And so, I got out there, walked out the ridge line and there was this tall Sgt.Vergopia, who'd been down there through all the battles and grisly, looked down at this short, young shave-tail. He

said, "If I were the Lieutenant, I'd put the machine guns down this draw." I said, "Sounds good to me, Sergeant." He said, "If I were the Lieutenant, I'd put the first squad over there 'round that ridge line." I said, "It sounds good to me, Sergeant." Then all of a sudden he pushed me down in the hole to miss incoming.[incoming fire] He said, "If I were the Lieutenant, I'd stay out of the way of incoming." (Both laugh.)

DePue: So you learned your lesson – pay attention to the sergeant.

Abboud: Oh, yeah, right.

DePue: When you talked about being shipped over across the Pacific, you said you were assigned to a platoon or a platoon was assigned to you…

Abboud: Well, on the ship, they had to, because it was troop ship, and I don't know…

DePue: That was strictly for training purposes?

Abboud: That was strictly for training and administration so they could control, what was it? two thousand people or something.

DePue: So your first day was something of an awakening. Do you know where the unit was on the line at that time?

Abboud: (Coughs) Yeah, at that time we were on the right hand side of the line…

DePue: Okay, you can't go too far there.

Abboud: Yeah.

DePue: Would it have been April of '52 when you actually got to Korea?

Abboud: Yeah. And we were, we must have been over toward Bunker Hill and Vegas and Reno—yeah, we were up here near Reno and Vegas and so forth on the right hand side.

DePue: We're looking at the map here which I will include as part of the record.

Abboud: Yeah.

DePue: And, how long had the unit been in line when you first arrived?

Abboud: Well, I can't remember. But we were up there for –I mean, again, my memory is going to slip –but we were up there in that position for some period of time and then we'd come back in to reserve. And we'd be in reserve for thirty days which would be down in – if the MLR [main line of resistance] is up there on that ridge line right there where that dotted line is, then basically we'd come back across the paddies there into an area where, if there were an attack someday, we could immediately be rushed in. But the reserve was really a training period to refresh

and get re-equipped, get new replacements, integrate them in, because every month people were rotating out.

DePue: When you went in to reserve, were you out of artillery range?

Abboud: No, we weren't out—I don't believe we were out of artillery range.

DePue: So you're still pretty darn close to the front line?

Abboud: Yeah, because as I remember –and again, my memory is a little hazy –but as I remember, even in reserve, we had to run patrols out into intervening areas between us and the people on the MLR because sometimes there were infiltrators and they'd send squads and stuff down in there, and so forth.

DePue: By the time you got there, was the line relatively stabilized?

Abboud: Yeah, we were in the out-post war.

DePue: So tell me, what did your positions look like? What did the front line look like?

Abboud: Well, it looked like on the tops of the hills there were a series of trenches. And our Marines hated to dig, but we have to dig, and then we had to build a series of bunkers. And the bunkers might be, I'm guessing, maybe a hundred yards or a hundred yards from one to the other. But there'd be a trench that would be connecting them. Now those bunkers that were set down in the ground would be – we had lumber, really six by sixes that we'd set up and then we'd put a roof of lumber on top and sand bags on top of that. And then we had firing position on the trenches between the bunkers and you had to walk, you had to maintain, you had to make sure that there was integrity that nobody came in and infiltrated into your area.

DePue: Now this was at the hilltop. Did you have the trench line all the way around the perimeter of the hilltop?

Abboud: No. That was only on the front side.

DePue: But the trenches didn't extend down in to the valley, did they?

Abboud: No, no. Did not extend down the valley. The hot chow and the mess hall was back in a valley on a different ridge line in the rear. So you'd have to go by road, by path, so we didn't have hot chow; you lived on C-rations.

DePue: When you were up in a position, in an outpost position, would there generally be an entire company in one of these hills?

Abboud: Yeah. Well, you have a whole battalion that would occupy part of the front and then there'd be companies; you'd see Able, Charlie, Baker, or Bravo and you'd have a certain sector, and each platoon would have a certain sector. Basically the

three platoons of the company would be up front and there'd be a machine gun platoon would be a little bit back. But we'd usually integrate the machine gun platoon in with the rifle platoons, and then we'd draw from each of the different platoons for patrol duty that would go out. We'd have to run patrols every night up the hills or up the Three Fingers, or over to York or Green or Heddy or in the valley, just to make sure what was going on. Intelligence was always telling us to take prisoners because they wanted information. We never took any prisoners – we were so damn mad. (Chuckles.) So we just didn't take any prisoners. (Chuckles.)

DePue: I can't imagine that's an easy thing to do on dark nights, I would assume.

Abboud: Well, the real heroes, the real heroes, were these young kids; they were out there with bayonets in the front. That as you walked along the tops of the rice paddies you inserted your bayonet into the ground in order to get the mines. And these kids would be right out there in front and usually you'd have the mine prober and right behind the mine prober would be the patrol leader –usually a lieutenant or a senior sergeant – and then the radio man, which at that time you'd have those big radios that you strapped on the back, and then the rest of the platoon and then the platoon sergeant would be the last person in the line.

DePue: Generally single file then?

Abboud: Generally single file until you came under fire, but you had to be careful about spreading out into those paddies because they were mined. So, you wanted to walk along an area, and you probed. And the minute you heard "clink" and you found a mine, then you had to have the mine people come up and disassemble the wires in order to deactivate the mine.

DePue: These mine fields that the Chinese were…

Abboud: Oh, yeah, the Chinese would mine. They'd mine that whole area.

DePue: But weren't the Americans mining as well?

Abboud: I don't remember that we ever mined. I really don't remember that. I can't say whether the Americans did it or didn't do it, but I just can't remember. I mean, I never had any duty to mine.

DePue: How many times did you actually have to lead these patrols out there?

Abboud: Oh, gee, I can't count. I mean all the time you were up they were always doing patrol duty.

DePue: I assume you were doing the active patrolling because there's no solid line of trenches across there. That's the only way you can control infiltration.

Abboud: That's the only way you control the area, yeah. And you'd have to control whether they're building up. And then every once in a while we'd have a major assault where we'd have to go up and we'd have to take Three Fingers, or we'd have to go up –I don't know that when I was there we ever took York –but we certainly took Bunker Hill. We'd go up and we'd clean them out of the –the Chinese were wonderful diggers; they had tunnels they could drive trucks through. We couldn't get them with our air power because they were underground all the time. We hated to dig; we never dug.

DePue: Was part of that because the Americans had air control, air superiority, so you didn't have to dig?

Abboud: Yeah, we had air superiority. As a matter of fact, I never saw a Chinese aircraft.

DePue: Did you do patrols that were basically ambush patrols as well?

Abboud: Yeah. We set out ambush patrols where we'd go out and we'd lay out at night and we'd see them coming, and so forth and we'd ambush them. They'd do the same to us.

DePue: This sounds like fairly large patrols, twenty or thirty people going out on these patrols?

Abboud: Well, there were two types of patrols. One would be where we wanted to go and occupy a hill, like 137 or Bunker Hill or whatever. These would be very large operations and we'd go out, we'd stay overnight or sometimes we'd stay two days. And then there were the regular patrols, the kind of policing patrols, where we'd go down the draw and up the valley over to the other place just to see whether anybody was there or, if they were, we'd engage them. But we'd also look for evidence that they'd been there and what they had left behind, if anything. Plus the fact we wanted them to know we were doing it.

DePue: Did they have concertina wire or barbed wire around your perimeter?

Abboud: Out on the out-posts, we had, in some places – the one that Allen Dulles was on had concertina wire – and we'd have wire out in front of the trenches that we'd have to maintain. The Chinese would come up and probe the line and so forth. We'd find the wire cut and taken away. Yeah.

DePue: What was the vegetation like? Was there any vegetation?

Abboud: Well, in the summer time it was green and hot. In the winter time it was cold and snowy and there wasn't any vegetation. In the spring and fall it was *wet!* I mean the mud, it was awful!

DePue: I guess from so many of the stories and the images I've seen, these are rugged hills that you were fighting in.

Abboud: Oh, oh, they're rugged and they're steep and ...

DePue: There weren't many trees.

Abboud: There weren't many trees and you're carrying a lot of weight because you're carrying ammunition and your weapon and your pack and all the other stuff.

DePue: Were the fields of fire pretty clear?

Abboud: There were pretty clear fields of fire until you get down into the rice paddies. And the thing with the rice paddies is, because the ground is so jagged and some of those draws are pretty narrow that, you know, you were working your way through the trails.

DePue: Were farmers actually going out and planting rice?

Abboud: No, no. We cleared the area. As a matter of fact, when we'd go up and we'd find a village or something we'd clear the village; we'd get the civilians out of there.

DePue: I imagine that just because it's so desperate then they couldn't possibly survive doing that?

Abboud: Well, we were bombing and rocketing and shooting and, my God.

DePue: So was taking incoming a very frequent occurrence for you?

Abboud: Yeah, it was all the time, all the time.

DePue: Remember the first time. That first night you arrived you were taking incoming.

Abboud: Yeah, they were taking incoming and, I mean, you get used to it. It wasn't any…

DePue: I believe you were injured in July of '52, which would have been just a few months after you got there. Prior to that time are there any particular fire fights or incidents that really stick with you?

Abboud: Well, no. I mean, there's a whole series, I mean, I remember as we move up to different hills and so forth, and do patrols, and I get ready for... I was trying to find my daily diary that I used to keep where we'd get instructions from the company commander and so forth. I haven't been able to find them, but it was rather constant. When you were in reserve – and the one thing about reserve that—three things –stand out: Number one, we could never get enough lumber or sandbags; there was always a shortage. Number two, we were rationed on smoke and artillery fire. I remember one time we were –I forget which hill it was –we did a raid and we were supposed to take a hill, which we did. And when we were pulling the troops back –I think I was company exec at the time –down the hill and some lieutenant in the back calls and says, "Lieutenant Abboud, you've used up your thirteen and one-half rounds of smoke for the day," or something and I

used some choice words for him and told him that if he didn't send that smoke out there, I was going to turn my heavy mortars on his position. And we got the smoke! (Both laugh.) Pulled them back. So, you know, it was a regular routine.

DePue: Tell me about the experience, I guess it was at the Hook, where you were injured.

Abboud: Yeah.

DePue: This was July of '52.

Abboud: It was July 5th. I'm trying to think of whether it was Hill 137 or the Hook. I can't remember which. I had a reinforced platoon, which meant that I had some heavy machine guns with me and there was an out-post that was about – where's the Hook? (Looking at the map.)

DePue: Right here.

Abboud: Yeah, I think it was up – I think that's where it was.

DePue: Which on this big map we've got on the wall here, it'd be…

Abboud: To the right.

DePue: To the right, farther to the east.

Abboud: Yeah, yeah, I think it's farther to the east. And it was July 5th over there, which was our July 4th. Now we had celebrated their May Day by mounting a major attack on them, which was their holiday.

DePue: A regimental-sized attack?

Abboud: I assume it was a regimental-sized attack. We were at the company level so we didn't see the bigger picture, but it was a big deal. I mean it was a lot of aircraft and bombs and artillery and we were saying to them, Happy May Day. So they were reciprocating on our July 4th, which was their July 5th. I mean it was July 5th over there, but it was our July 4th. And when I get out there, we had at that time that infrared scope, and we could see them coming. They were coming across the whole regimental front; it was a major attack. So I radioed back to Captain Barrett and said, "Send me out some stretchers and put ammunition on them". And we put the BARs [Browning Automatic Rifles] and heavy machine guns on the front and to the right because they were coming up across and over to our right. And they came in and we were able to have enfilade fire [directed along the entire enemy line] on them. I called in some of those artillery and mortar positions so we could walk them in to us and they would come in. And, of course, we had the main line of resistance which was firing from over there, but we were, being out about three hundred yards out in front of the line, we could fire enfilade fire so we really had them in a cross fire (chuckles).

DePue: Had you taken the entire platoon a few hours before?

Abboud: Yeah, we had gone out at dusk and we had taken the whole platoon reinforced by some members of the machine gun platoon.

DePue: Are these thirty caliber air-cooled machine guns?

Abboud: These are the air-cooled light machine guns, yeah.

DePue: So you knew they were coming? You were expecting them.

Abboud: No, we didn't know that night they were going to come. But we always took these positions out there, whether it was Bunker Hill or the Hook or Heddy or whatever. We fortified these positions because intelligence –I mean I don't know what intelligence was saying; intelligence might have known or suspected. But we were just focused on what we were supposed to do.

DePue: Were you in a position where there were bunkers? Or were you in an exposed position?

Abboud: No. We were in exposed position. We heard from earlier people that had been out there and controlled that, there were some barricades that we could get behind. But it was open; I mean, it wasn't trenches like we had on the MLR, it was just some barricades. But they came up over the hill –this guy came up that shot me – came up over the hill and… Flak jackets ended right here, at the arm pit, and so when the bullet shattered against my flak jacket, pieces of it went in to my shoulder, because the flak jacket didn't cover that. And I was, at the time, carrying one of those Russian burp guns. They had issued Carbines for the officers which were worthless because they had these little tiny bullets. But the Chinese that were coming at us were doped up so you weren't going to stop them. What you wanted was a slug; a .45 slug would knock a guy over and we notched them. That was illegal and it was against the Geneva Convention, but what the hell, they were doped up and we had to stop them. And so I whipped around with the burp gun and I got them. My…

DePue: Was this after you were hit?

Abboud: After I was hit. I looked around. But we lost some people that night and Dody, one of my squad leaders, continues to carry in his trunk his helmet with the hole in it that a bullet went through the thing. And Barrett, on the main line of resistance, the Company Commander, was wounded that night and evacuated. And Captain Walters, who was one who was the prisoner of war in the Philippines, the Exec, took over the company and I think he was wounded that night, too. But we broke it up, you know. We were in the right place at the right time and we busted it up.

DePue: So not only were the Chinese going after the main line of resistance, but they were obviously coming straight at you, as well.

Abboud: Well, they had to come through us to get to the main line.

DePue: Okay.

Abboud: We were in their way.

DePue: So you said before, you're firing enfilading fire. Were you firing enfilading fire in both directions?

Abboud: Well, to the front and to the side. And for some reason, I don't know whether there was a terrain problem, there could have been a terrain thing, but for some reason, on our left flank we just didn't … we had people, I mean, I put people out there that were stationed and so forth, but we didn't feel the brunt of the attack on the left. It was really to the front and to the side.

DePue: How close was this Chinese when you got hit, when you hit him?

Abboud: Well, I mean, our outpost wasn't any bigger than this office. I mean, I don't know, he was like at the front door where we are now.

DePue: So you're talking fifteen, twenty feet away?

Abboud: Yeah, fifteen, twenty feet. I mean, they're coming!

DePue: And he wasn't the only one who was coming?

Abboud: No. They were coming, but we were mowing 'em down. We had grenades and all kinds of stuff.

DePue: Okay. Before that or after that, did you participate in attacks on the reverse sides where you were charging up the hill?

Abboud: Oh, yeah, I told you. We were taking hills and doing things.

DePue: I wonder if you can explain what that was like, when you were on an assault.

Abboud: First of all – I mean, there are three phases to it. One is the preparation for when you get your orders that we're going have the assault. And so, the thing is to get the maps out, understand the terrain, get all the troops out. You get them together so they understand the terrain. And you work out your signals; your squad leaders are very important at that particular time because, you know, with all the din and the noise and so forth, you can't hear. And so, it's kind of like a football team: everybody has to know their assignments and their points and they're given targets, you know, you've got to be here at such and such a time, and you've got to be here at such and such a time and so forth. So, the first phase is the preparation phase. The second phase is the phase of basically making the approach up to the target and then accomplishing the mission. Intelligence tries to give you what they think you're going to find when you get there. They're usually

wrong, but anyway they give you the information. And so on the appointed time you shove off and you go on up and you clear trenches, and people fire back. We used a lot of white phosphorus at that time. I don't know whether it's legal any more or not, but in these grenades that you pull and you'd see people running and you'd shoot and they'd shoot back.

DePue: This is close-in, desperate combat you're explaining.

Abboud: Yeah, you're going up into their trenches. You're going up into their trenches and their trenches are deep. That's how Ray Murphy got his Congressional [Medal] of Honor; he jumped down, picked up two of his comrades and brought 'em back. Now I wasn't there when he did that. I'd left, rotated back before one of the attacks. But my understanding is from the accounts that he went back, because we never leave anybody behind. He'd go back and get people and bring them out. So you've got to go into these deep trenches and clear them out. And there's these little rabbit holes here and there and yonder and you're never know what the hell is in there: what's mined and what isn't mined. So that's the second phase. The third phase is the withdrawal. The third phase is usually more complicated and more difficult. A) because you got people that are wounded, B) you got people that were killed, 3) you got to find them and there's smoke and there's noise and all kinds of things.

DePue: Is this typically at night?

Abboud: This is at night. Sometimes we'd have some daytime raids, but it's also at night. You got to account for everybody. And then you got to bring them back in an orderly way because now you're withdrawing, you're coming down a hillside and you got to go across a paddy, a rice paddy, back to your own position, to what we called "the gate". We had certain gates at certain places where you could come through. You have to remember the password and bring them back. So, you know, there are mechanics in each of those phases.

DePue: Well, here's the part that I'm most intrigued by. What you're being told to do is not what any rational human being would ever want to do. So how do you find the courage; what's going through your mind when you're at the base of the hill about ready to assault?

Abboud: You're worried about your men; you're worried about accomplishing the mission and bringing them home. Paramount, I mean, every person that was in my –when I was both the exec and platoon leader, everybody who was wounded or… I always wrote to the families. I wrote them hand-written notes. Your job is to accomplish the mission and bring your men home safely. And, I got to tell you, you have to be an absolute SOB because it is not natural for these guys, youngsters, teenagers to put themselves through the disciplines necessary to come home safe. And so you have to push them in the training period; you have to push them while you're in combat as they're doing what they're supposed to do and be where they're supposed to be; and get up and fire when they're supposed to get up

and fire, and not cower down and hide. A military officer in combat is a whole different deal.

DePue: I was listening so closely here, I forget what I wanted to ask you. What happened after you were injured?

Abboud: Well, I was patched up at that time. They had those… (trails off).

DePue: Did they take you out on a stretcher?

Abboud: No, no. I came back into the line and I wanted to make sure all our guys got back and I wanted to make sure they all got attended to. I was bleeding, and so forth and we had a doctor there, Doc Robbins, and he patched me up. But remember, we'd lost two or three officers that night in the company, so I had to stay up there in line because we were short. And so they just patch you up as best they can and throw that thing on and stay on and just do your thing.

DePue: So you never came out of the line?

Abboud: No.

DePue: Explain your injury again.

Abboud: Well, every time I have an X-ray, you can see there's little metal fragments in there. The doctor says, "What's that?" I say, "That's my remembrance from Korea." And what it is, is when the bullet hits, it shatters and the shrapnel goes in there, and under the arm in here it tore and so there is a scar there. But the fragments stay in there; there's no point going in there and getting out those little tiny fragments and stuff, but they show up on every X-ray. I've got an X-ray in the back room that shows them.

DePue: Did the slug go all the way through otherwise, except for the fragments?

Abboud: No, it broke. Broke on the flak jacket.

DePue: Okay. So you stayed in line.

Abboud: Yeah.

DePue Were you the executive officer at that time?

Abboud: I don't remember. I think I stayed as platoon commander. It was shortly thereafter that Captain Hoover came in who's in that picture and I became exec because Walters was wounded and rotated out. But my memory is hazy as to exactly what the time period was.

DePue: What was the rotation then? Were you generally in a front line in the main line of resistance for a few weeks and then you come out for a month?

Abboud: No. You were with your company. You were up for sixty days and you came back for thirty. And you just stayed with your company.

DePue: Did you receive mail while you were in the trenches?

Abboud: Oh, yeah. We'd get mail. I mean somebody would walk along the trenches to mail call and you'd get back. In some places where we were, we could set up a field kitchen for chow, for hot chow back of the line. I remember one time I was up on line and I heard this terrific roar "rrrrrr", big engine. And I looked around and, by God, here's one of my squads and they're on a tank. And I said, "Where did you get that?" They said, "We stole it from the Army." (Laughs.) And they were using it to ride back to the mess hall. (Both laugh.)

DePue: Just happened to be there and nobody was on it.

Abboud: (Still laughing) I said, "You're going to give it back!"

DePue: I know what I wanted to ask you from earlier. You talk about going in and attacking sometimes, Three Fingers, or places like that. You'd fight in these positions and you'd take the positions for short period of time. Phase III was withdrawal.

Abboud: Yeah, you'd come back.

DePue: Why?

Abboud: Well, that's what we kept asking. Why are we taking these places and giving them back? You know, that was above our pay grade as to know why. We just did what we were told to do.

DePue: Were the Chinese apparently doing kind of the same thing?

Abboud: And they were doing the same thing.

DePue: So really, you're putting your life on the line to go out in these things, and people were dying to accomplish these missions, and then you're coming right back off the hill again.

Abboud: Well, if we didn't do that we couldn't have held that position. I mean we had to keep them off balance. If we didn't do that they'd attack. I mean they'd just keep moving forward. I mean, we had to maintain that main line of resistance.

DePue: But, by that time in the war, there are peace negotiations, or excuse me, armistice negotiations.

Abboud: Yeah. They start in Panmunjom. I remember when we were on 229 –this must have been later in my tour out there. We were on 229. I was Company Exec at that time and one of our missions was, if you see Vice Admiral Turner Joy

coming out of that tent in Panmunjom fanning his .45, get down and get 'em. (Laughs.) We could see Panmunjom from 229.

DePue: Wow. You were just watching right next door then.

Abboud: Yeah. I mean, there was combat going over here and there was what they called a "peace corridor".

DePue: Was it your assumption then that this main line of resistance was going to be "the border" after the Armistice was signed?

Abboud: Well, we didn't know. We didn't know because we wanted to go. We wanted to take a hill and keep moving. We wanted to go to China. And, here twenty-two, twenty-three years old, you're *gung ho*. When I was an Exec in the company there and so forth, we had four aircraft on station, we had four tanks assigned to us, we had every machine gun, I mean, three hundred and eighty men; we could have blown up the world. We were ready to go! We were Marines!

DePue: Did it make any sense to you: the strategy that was involved with how you were fighting this war at the time?

Abboud: Well, we wanted to go. We wanted to attack. We wanted to take territory. We wanted to clean them out, you know, we're going to kick their butt. But you don't think about that. You're job is basically to get the mission, accomplish the mission, but most of all, take care of your men. That's your job. And I was more concerned about what was happening at home for this sergeant whose wife was having a baby, or something. I mean there were all these individual, young kids. You got a seventeen-year-old kid who's the only son of a family and you're responsible for them out there in a war zone.

DePue: And know that you've got to take that seventeen-year-old up that hill with you.

Abboud: Yeah, and you've got to make him fire. You've got to make him stand out there in front with a bayonet and dig it in the ground into a mine that may blow him up.

DePue: Were you in and out of the line all the way through winter as well?

Abboud: Oh yeah. We went through the winter and then at the end of my tour out there and again, the time period is hazy for me, but I think it was about February or something, I was made Company Commander of Headquarters Company. Colonel Gentleman was the Battalion Commander at the time, whose picture is in there with the Commandant and me. I was one of his favorites, which meant that I pulled every patrol that had to be run. But when we'd come back on reserve we had the inspector, I forgot what it was, come down and you had to go out in the field, the whole battalion, and lay out your ponchos. The colonel had signed for all tent pegs and the helmet covers, and the ammo belts and all the stuff you were supposed to have.

DePue: It's what the Army calls the "T, O, and E", Table of Organization and Equipment.

Abboud: Yeah, well, when you're up in combat and through, particularly the winter, because this was about February and stuff, and you throw all that stuff away because you've got mud and wet and stuff. You've got ammunition and so forth, so we're short. Headquarters Company is supposed to supply that to the Battalion. So we come back in the reserve. I knew inspection was coming up. So I grabbed a squad and two 6-bys, those are those trucks. And we snuck out in the night to go back to Seoul, which was about fifty miles, or whatever it was. But at night you can only go about ten miles an hour, because you can't have lights as you're going down the road. Apparently this new Lieutenant that had come up to the Company and the MP saw us going out and he reported me as AWOL [Absent WithOut Leave] with two trucks. So we went out and we found the Army supply depot there which we raided, and got helmet covers and tent pegs and everything else and we came back. It took us all night. So we're coming up in the morning, he pulls his .45, he says, "Lt. Abboud", he says, "You're under arrest for being AWOL." So we went up to the Captain's tent. We're sitting in the tent there and the Colonel is sitting there and he says, "Bob, what is this?" I said, "Colonel, we got helmet covers." He said, "You've got helmet covers?" I said, "Yes, sir, for the whole battalion." "Whole battalion?" I said, "Yes, sir." I said, "We got tent pegs." He said, "You got tent pegs?" "Yes sir, for the whole battalion, Yes sir." He says, the other Lieutenant, I forget his name, he says, "Lieutenant", he says "you're under house arrest. Lieutenant Abboud was here with me all night long." (Both laugh.)

DePue: Doing what had to get done, huh? (Laughter) Tell me how you guys managed to not freeze in these bunkers and trenches in the winter time.

Abboud: Well, we didn't have the Mickey Mouse boots until later. In the beginning we had those leather boots that were terrible. You did freeze and, of course, the sleeping bags were good, but you had two pair of socks. As your socks got wet you had to keep them up against your chest to dry out. You carried your edewa spoon in your pocket.

DePue: Your edewa spoon?

Abboud: Well that's that brass spoon that I ate your C rations because you had your edewa spoon.

DePue: That was a Korean word, I guess?

Abboud: That was a Korean word. And when you were out on patrol or something, if you saw some wild onions or whatever, you'd pick them and put them in your pocket so when you opened up your hash or your beans you could spice it a little bit with some condiments. You had your little Sterno [gelled alcohol] can that heated up your chow.

DePue: Weren't you able to have stoves or anything to keep yourselves warm in those bunkers.

Abboud: No, no, no.

DePue: Did you have problems with …

Abboud: Now in the back you did, I mean, when you came back, yeah.

DePue: Did you have problems with frostbite or trench foot?

Abboud: Oh yeah. People had … But the real frostbite and stuff was with the Marine expeditionary unit that was there in '51 and had gone up to the Chosin Reservoir and come back and so forth. We really had it a lot easier than they had it because we were in that stationary line and we had bunkers and stuff like that.

DePue: Do you remember action at what the historian's are now calling the Nevada City campaign, which was March 26-29: Reno, Vegas, Carson? I know you've mentioned Carson.

Abboud: Yeah, I think that's when Ray Murphy was involved for that. I don't think I was around. What was the date of that?

DePue: March 26-29 of '53.

Abboud: No, I was, yeah, because I came back in May of '53. I might have been in Headquarters Company at that time in March, because I came back in May. Well, I was for a period also, and this is very hazy to me and I can't remember. For three or four weeks I was Liaison with a company of Korean marines. We had to train the Korean Marine Corps and that may have taken place at a time when I was Liaison officer with the Korean Marine Corps. They were tough; I mean their officers would beat you. Yeah, going up the hill or something, some guy wouldn't go, he'd come up and he'd take his rifle butt and beat on the guy. You know, we wouldn't do that. I mean they were really brutal.

DePue: I know you also mentioned Allen Dulles's son. What was his son's name?

Abboud: Allen Dulles.

DePue: So he was Allen Dulles, Junior?

Abboud: I don't whether he was Junior, but he was Allen Dulles. I talked to him about three or four weeks ago (both talking)….

DePue: Was he seriously injured?

Abboud: Yeah. We had an outpost and I was Company Exec at the time. I'd known Allen because he had gone to Exeter and he was on the debating team. I was on the

debating at Roxbury Latin. Then he went down to Princeton and I think he was first in his class in Princeton. He was in the Marine Corps and he was the machine gun officer; he was in charge of the machine gun platoon. We were short of officers at the time. We rotated the officers out on this. This was a reverse slope outpost where we weren't on the front slope, we were on the reverse slope. We had concertina wire on the front and it was about three hundred yards out in front of the line. He came up and said, "It's my turn to go out there." And I said, "Allen, I can't send you out there. Your father is the head of the CIA. What happens if you get captured?" He said, "I'm a Marine Corps officer and it's my turn to go out there. And, I'm going to go." And I said, "Okay, but for God's sake, don't get hurt!" So he was out there with a squad.

DePue: Out there on the front slope?

Abboud: He's on the reverse slope. We have a bunker on the reverse slope of this outpost out there. And so I'm on the radio and I'm listening and my heart is in my throat. God, don't let anything happen here. So the corporal calls from the outpost and he said, "Lieutenant Dulles has been nicked" and I said, "Look, tell him to stay in the bunker and for God's sake don't –you know, forget it – just don't do anything rash out there." Now this is in daylight and so it must have been an hour or two later, he said, "Lieutenant Dulles has been hit." "How was he hit?" "Well he was out on the front slope repairing the concertina wire and they had incoming coming in and so forth. And I said, "Oh, my God." So I took a fire team, four people and we ran out there. Now we have to go out over open terrain right underneath the Yoke; it was looking right down our throat as we went out there. I forget where this outpost was, but it must have been...

DePue: The Yoke is on the map here; that's the enemy bunker position.

Abboud: Yeah, but they're looking down our throat; they're on high ground and we must have been, at that time, somewhere up in here. We're out here in one of these outposts and we found him out there, a lot of his head in the helmet; we picked him up and brought him back on a stretcher. The colonel, regimental commander, was up there watching us while we were doing it because, I mean, this took about an hour to run out there and get him, get him on a stretcher and come back. And I didn't think he'd live. They put him on a chopper and brought him back.

DePue: What was the nature of his injury?

Abboud: Well, he lost a lot of his brain – went in to his helmet. But they repaired him and, as I say, we talk to him, you can talk to him. We can call him. What we got to call is his brother-in-law, down in New Mexico. He's not … And I gather he's become a little bit bitter about the war, I mean about the –I mean, now his memory is a little bit you know –now he says he wasn't supposed to go out there and so forth. I don't know what it is. He's just not right. What a waste this was. He was very valiant; he was leading his troops out there. He volunteered, but why in the world, because the Chinese had been coming up and probing and throwing

grenades over the ridge line into his position because they had breached the wire and so he was out there repairing the wire so they couldn't do that.

DePue: Do you recall any other especially brutal experiences while you were up there?

Abboud: Well, I mean, you had weather, you had combat, you had night patrols, you had incoming. There were times when we were under constant barrages of incoming. I mean, it's a little hard to pick and choose.

DePue: Did you have soldiers that had problems dealing with the incoming? Shell-shock, is I guess what they would have called it back then?

Abboud: I'm sure we did; I don't recall. As a matter of fact, we had one fellow who had signed up for two tours or something. Webb, his name was Webb; he was a machine gun sergeant and he'd just love it. He'd be down there with his fifty caliber. I can't say enough about these young kids that were out there. It's unbelievable, unbelievable what they did.

DePue: Do you recall the little switch, when they exchanged the prisoners? That would have been late April, early May.

Abboud: No. No.

DePue: Or would you have been coming out of line about that time?

Abboud: I was coming out of the line at that time.

DePue: Did you get any medals or awards while you were there?

Abboud: Yeah, I got Bronze Star plus the Purple Heart. The Bronze Star citation is out there on the wall.

DePue: Bronze Star for Valor.

Abboud: Yeah. Well, this was the night that I got wounded. As a matter of fact, we got the picture in there of my colonel. What happened was, they'd given me the Bronze Star and somehow I'd misplaced it or lost it. So when I came back to Texas, I saw Al Gray at the Marine Military Academy down there and they arranged to give me a replacement for my Bronze Star. This was at a time before the first Gulf War and they flew in Colonel Gentlemen, who was my colonel that sat there, you know, and said that, you know, Lt. Abboud was with me all night. And he was there and you'll see his picture; he's in dress blues and they had the whole cadet corps out there and when he awarded me with the Bronze Star and I said, "Al, what are you doing here? You're supposed to be in Washington going over the plans or something." That night they kicked off, and the deal was they'd sent everybody out of Washington not to tip off the enemy that anything was going to happen. And that was the kick-off for the First Gulf War.

DePue: Wow. Well, then you had to feel pretty special about his making his way all the way over there.

Abboud: Yeah, right.

DePue: That's amazing. You've talked a little about the Marines you served with.

Abboud: Yeah, the Marines.

DePue: How about the leaders, the leadership that you worked with?

Abboud: Well, we always –remember, in those days they were legends. I mean, guys like "Chesty" Puller, and Captain Barrett. We had read all of these things about all the stuff that the Marine officers had done when they'd gone up to Inchon and back, the Chosin Reservoir. There wasn't any question at all; we respected our officers. I mean these were –remember, a lot of them had served, particularly the senior ones, in World War II and some of them had been at Tarawa and Iwo Jima –these were heroes.

DePue: But from the kinds of stories you've told me, the experiences, it was no less tough –in the kind of comments you were saying –when you were there.

Abboud: No, it was tough! I mean, all combat is tough. I mean, anybody that tries to tell you when you go to war that it's easy, it's never easy. Nor is it ever the same. Every situation is different. That's why I always like to see that people who make decisions about going to war have been there and done that, to make that decision.

DePue: Not that many politicians can claim that any more.

Abboud: No, I know. That's the trouble. That's why we get into these situations.

DePue: About some of the NCO's, [non-commissioned officers] I would especially think that the senior NCO's are also World War II vets.

Abboud: Oh, listen, they were great. We had great sergeants; one I'll show you a picture over there, Butch Gowin. He stayed in and became a Major. He sent me his autographed picture in his major suit. I got it in the other room. Butch, I talk to him all the time now. He calls me from Oregon. I mean the NCO's, they're the ones that make it and that's why we can't build an army in Iraq because we don't have any NCO's.

DePue: You mean the Iraqis don't have …

Abboud: The Iraqis don't have any NCO's.

DePue: That doesn't happen overnight, does it?

Abboud: No. We've fired their Army. What a stupid thing to do!

DePue At this point in time in the American military we had just integrated the service. Did you serve with a lot of blacks?

Abboud: Yes, we had blacks, we had American Indians, we had Orientals. I mean that's the wonderful thing about…remember we had the draft at that time. The wonderful thing about the military is, you work together.

DePue: From where you were sitting, did you see that the integrated military service was working fine?

Abboud: It was wonderful; I felt this was America.

DePue: In contrast to what you had experienced growing up in …

Abboud: Yeah, what a change!

DePue: About KATUSA, [Korean Augmentees To the U. S. Army] did you have Koreans working with you as well?

Abboud: Yeah. We used to call them Chiggie Bears. They were wonderful, God bless them. They would carry things, they would be in danger, they'd be unarmed, they didn't have flak jackets. They'd go up and down the hills when we moved the battalion or when we moved the regiment. They would be doing the heavy lifting and so forth. Without them we could not have prevailed.

DePue: But they weren't serving with you as soldiers?

Abboud: No. They had formed the Korean Marine Corps. Remember, my perspective is very narrow. And as I say, we were training them. We would have a period –I don't remember whether it was three weeks or whatever, or two weeks –but all of us went and did duty with a Korean company as a liaison officer to help train them.

DePue: So that was a little different from the Army. I think they incorporated the Koreans right into their ranks.

Abboud: I don't know that. I don't know what they did.

DePue: Did you have any experience working with any other nationals?

Abboud: At one point I, by happenstance, had the right wing platoon; we were the Right Wing Company of the First Marine Division. And we had the Commonwealth Division next door. Tying in with us in the trenches where we had these bunkers and so forth, was the Turkish outfit. They would build this beautiful bunker that you couldn't see or anything else and then they'd take a Turkish flag and they'd stick it right in the middle of that. (Both laugh.) Then we'd go out on patrol; they always wanted combat and they'd throw away their weapons and they'd pull out their scimitars and stuff and wanted hand-to-hand stuff. I mean, they were crazy!

DePue: I can't tell you how many people have told me stories about the Turks.

Abboud: Yeah, they're crazy!

DePue: Did they know of your background?

Abboud: No. No.

DePue: You didn't have any direct dealings with them then?

Abboud: No. No. We had one other funny story and this guy wrote about it. I don't know, I think I've lost the page in the book where he wrote about it, but I was Company Exec at that time, and I think we were on 229 at that time. We had forward Air Controllers that were stationed with us.

DePue: Were these Air Force personnel?

Abboud: Marine Air.

DePue: Okay, an important distinction.

Abboud: Marine Air. Because we did close-in support. You know, they'd call in the F4U's [acronym for type of aircraft] to fifty feet.

DePue: Even from the Army perspective, we've always heard that nobody does close air support better than the Marines.

Abboud: No, no. Because we'd put out the panels and they'd be within fifty yards. But these guys always had these great jackets and the fur, and they always had liquor, they always had all of this stuff and it always used to irritate me. I'm sending out these guys on patrol and these officers and we're short of rations, and short of sand bags and everything else and here the air people have got all this stuff. So I bark down to these guys and I said, "All right fellows, you're leading the patrol tonight." They said, "What? We're not trained to lead patrols." I said, "You're a Marine Corps officer! You're assigned to me! I'm in command! You're taking a patrol out tonight!" (Laughs.) And I walked away. So they called back to headquarters; they said, "This thug came down and said we got to take out a patrol" and so forth. They said, "Forget it, he's pulling your leg!" (Both laugh.) So the guy writes – I could find that chapter or book –he said, "This street fighter came down; it's the Company Executive Officer and told us we were going to go on a patrol." (Both laugh.)

DePue: What did you do, go off someplace else and laugh your butt off probably?

Abboud: Yeah, right. (Still laughter.) They had a bad hair day that day! (Laughter continues.)

DePue: During the time you talked a lot about the Chinese. Did you face any North Koreans on the opposite side?

Abboud: Well, we couldn't tell the difference. But at the time we were there it was the Chinese that were on the other side.

DePue: What was your opinion of your enemy?

Abboud: We had a lot of respect for them. One, we had respect as fighters because they didn't have air support and they would dig and they fought. But we hated them because they had this barbed wire and they would take Marines and put them over the barbed wire and then shine lights on them and blow their bugles. So, you know, that really got to us. It just infuriated us. I can understand these kids in Iraq when they get people coming out and throwing grenades and civilians and so forth. I mean, you just got to understand that in battle your emotions are that guy is trying to hurt you and the guys you're responsible for. When you get them, you don't show any mercy; you're "boom".

DePue: You always read about the bugles. When they made these night assaults, did they use the bugles as well?

Abboud: Yeah, Every time it's an attack and stuff. I don't whether they used them for signals or to try to scare. I don't know what they were for. They were part of the way it worked.

DePue When you hear the bugle, what do you do instinctively?

Abboud: It's just background thing. What you're looking around for: where are they and what are they coming in with. Usually you're looking at your map and you're saying, "Where do I have mortar concentrations and artillery concentrations and where's the field of fire and where can I direct the machine guns?" I mean, it's kind of like a football coach that sits there and things are happening, you're looking at your play book.

DePue: Did you have a lot of dealing with the Korean civilians?

Abboud: No, we didn't have any civilians out there other than the porters, the Korean porters. Remember this is static front, the stationary front. We cleared all the civilians out of there.

DePue: Are there any other stories that you can think of during the time you were there that you haven't already mentioned.

Abboud: I can't think of any.

DePue: What was your opinion then about how the Korean War ended? It's a couple months after you left; July 27th I think it was.

Abboud: I thought it was good. Remember, we had always been in favor of the MacArthur Plan of going on up into China, but by that time, by the time I left, I mean, you know, enough was enough. Let the Koreans build their country. Give them a fortified… What really irritated all of us was we had to pull back from the MLR and the line that exists now, I mean. When I've been over there subsequently and I've gone up to the front, it wasn't where we were. We're back at the Samachan Valley, where the peace line is.

DePue: A couple of miles south of there?

Abboud: I don't know if it's a couple of miles or what, but it's south of there.

DePue: Then so as far as you're concerned, we retreated at the end of the war?

Abboud: Yeah, the argument they gave was they did too and they went back and that there's a peace corridor in the middle of no man's land.

DePue: I think it's supposed to be four miles.

Abboud: Yeah, I don't know.

DePue: When you were coming back, did you hear about the prisoner exchange that happened a few months later?

Abboud: No.

DePue: Didn't pay much attention to that?

Abboud: No.

DePue: You came back in May then as an individual replacement; you'd earned enough points. (Both talking.)

Abboud: Well, I came back and they assigned me down to Pensacola to go through flight training, which I went down. I went through flight training; I mean I went through pre-flight. By that time I'd been accepted to Harvard Law School, so I went in and talked to them and I said, "You know this business of spending all day in the Officers' Club drinking and you go out and fly in the morning for an hour or two and then the rest of the day you're just hanging out at the Officers' Club." And I said. "You know, I have a regular commission. If you send me to Indo-China where the French are fighting, I'll stay in; but if I can't go to Indo-China as liaison with the French, I'm getting out." And they said, "You're not going to go to Indo-China, but, you know your record is good, we want you to stay in. You've done very well in your pre-flight and in your first, your early flights with an instructor; we wish you would stay in." And I said, "I'm not going to spend all day in the Officers' Club" so I got out and went to Harvard Law School.

DePue: Let's go back to your experiences in Korea. You rotated out because you earned enough points, I assume?

Abboud: No. You were just assigned an amount. When you went over with a replacement draft, every draft had a certain period of time in which it came out. Mine happened to be thirteen months and it was just time, and you just rotated out. You didn't have points or anything.

DePue: Did your unit always have people coming and going?

Abboud: Oh, yeah.

DePue: What did you think about that as a policy?

Abboud: Well, that's why I say, when we had the thirty days in reserve, you were integrating all the time, replacements, I mean. Guys were going out and guys were coming in and you had to train them, you had to integrate them in, and that was normal.

DePue: As far as you were concerned, did that work pretty well as a rotation policy?

Abboud: I thought it was great. They were all Marines. I mean, Marines know what they're supposed to do.

DePue: How did you manage to keep in touch with the family?

Abboud: Well, you write when you can. There was a period of time there when I couldn't write. My father was very upset about it. And he, matter of fact, called up headquarters of the Marine Corps and said, "Where's my son?" There was about thirty days when I couldn't, because we were up in combat and stuff. And they told him, "He's all right. He's been wounded, but he's okay." And so, but you just send letters home.

DePue: Was mail call a big thing?

Abboud: Mail call was huge, huge, huge. I mean you talk about morale for the troops – chow and mail call – that's it.

DePue: (chuckling) There wasn't much else to look forward to?

Abboud: No. No. And R&R [rest and relaxation].

DePue Yeah. Did you get an R & R?

Abboud: Oh, yeah. Bill Curran and I –he was the Lieutenant in Charlie Company –we went back to Japan to Osaka and Kyoto and we had a hell of a time. I still got pictures of my girlfriends at that time.

DePue: Your Japanese girl friends?

Abboud: My Japanese girl friends on R&R.

DePue: Well that tells me a little bit about what you did while you were in Japan.

Abboud: You bet your life. You're going to get killed the next day. What the hell. (Both laugh.)

DePue: Here's a different kind of question for you. K-rations or C-Rations?

Abboud: We had C-Rations – those cans, the C-Rations.

DePue: What was your favorite C-Ration?

Abboud: Oh, geez, I don't think there were any fav…we had Spam, we had hot dogs and beans, we had hash, we had – what did we have? I don't know, there were…

DePue: Apparently you found creative ways to …

Abboud: Yeah. And then you find creative ways to put condiments and other things that you find in it.

DePue: Okay. Any other really particularly humorous incidents while you were over there that you recall?

Abboud: No, I think that the whole experience is –at least when I was there –I happened to have commanding officers that were really terrific. Everybody had a sense of humor. As I say at the beginning, Barrett and Walters were all "retreads", we called them, because they'd been in World War II. Colonels like Gentleman, the Captain, Hoover was a good guy. You know, everybody, I mean I was a tough disciplinarian; I mean, they'll all tell you that. But we had some of the toughest fighting and some of the lowest fatal casualties because of it. The first job is the mission. The second job is bring 'em back; don't lose your men.

DePue: During the time you were there, how many do you think Baker Company lost to KIAs? [Killed In Action]

Abboud: I don't know, but it was a lot. It wasn't the same casualty rate that occurred in '51 when they were going up…

DePue: '50, '51.

Abboud: '50, '51. But we were losing them steadily. I mean, everyday we were losing them.

DePue: You came back. At least for a while, you flirted with the idea of going to flight school, but ended up going to law school.

Abboud: Well, I didn't choose to go to flight school. (Laughter.) They assigned me to go to flight school. I mean, I'm an infantry guy and I really wanted –I thought if I was

going to have a career in the Marine Corps, you know, if you know if you're going to have a career and proceed up, you need combat duty - so I wanted to go with the French because I figured that the next war was going to be in Indo-China. As it turned out, it was. And remember, I'd been a student of military history. So since I didn't get that, I got out and went to law school and then to business school and then joined the bank in '58.

DePue: When you came back to the States and, especially when you were in law school, did you find it hard to relate to some of the other students that you were with?

Abboud: Oh, yeah. Fortunately, we had a number of us that were in law school that came out the same time I did. So we had a little cabal there of Marines (chuckles) in our class. But acclimating to studies and so forth, was tough stuff. And I stayed in the Reserves. I was in the Reserves until 1958. The comradeship in the Marine Corps was something that obviously wasn't duplicated in law school where everybody was out for themselves. You know, it was an individual type of thing. And so, there was a period of acclimating. It took about a year, year and a half, and I think that's going to be in spades for these people that are coming back from Iraq.

DePue: What kind of things did you find most difficult to adjust to?

Abboud: It was kind of a lack… Remember we were focused and on a mission and zealous. You come back and everybody's loose and, you know, nobody cares about the war was still going on when I came back. Nobody cares about the war, I mean, they weren't worried about what's happening, you know, that night or at the social engagements and stuff like that. You kind of felt like, what am I doing here?

DePue: That there wasn't that same sense of urgency and immediacy?

Abboud: No, there wasn't the same sense of urgency, teamwork, comradeship, dedication.

DePue: Were you disappointed by the response that Americans gave to the Korean War vets when they came back?

Abboud: I never experienced that. When I came back, you know, everybody respected that you had been over there, but that wasn't the central focus. I mean, you were a student and you were going to school and you were treated like anyone else. But I never experienced –I mean it wasn't like Vietnam, where people were abused when they came back.

DePue: But, it also wasn't like World War II.

Abboud: It wasn't like World War II where you were feted and so forth, no.

DePue: But you weren't necessarily expecting that? Weren't look for that?

Abboud: No. No. No, I just felt that this is where you're buying shares in the country, you're a stockholder. You've gone out and done your bit.

DePue: Well, you've done more than your bit, from what you've told me so far.

Abboud: Well, that was the attitude that we grew up with in the family; that's what you do.

DePue Did you go to law school on the GI bill?

Abboud: Yeah. I went to law school on the GI bill, which was great! I went to law school on the GI bill and actually we got four years of it. So I had my first year in business school on the GI bill as well.

DePue: Tell me very briefly what happened when you came back in terms of your career.

Abboud: Well, I went to law school, graduated in '56; went to the business school, graduated in '58.

DePue: That's Harvard Business School?

Abboud: Harvard Business School. I told my wife that I'd been accepted at medical school. She said, "You go to one more damn school and we're getting divorced." (Chuckles.) And so, I got a job at The First National Bank of Chicago. (Laughs.)

DePue: Chicago. That's a long stretch from Harvard.

Abboud: Well, Freeman came out there recruiting. I was a Baker's Scholar at business school. So he was looking for guys at the top of the class.

DePue: Freeman?

Abboud: Freeman – F-R-E-E-M-A-N... At that time, First Chicago was fifth largest bank in the United States. They had been very prominent in the international business back in the late 1800's and the early part of the century. But they got out of it and I wanted to be in the international side. He said, "All right, you can help build the international department." So I came.

DePue: And kept moving up after that?

Abboud: Yeah. And I went in the international side and moved up and became Chairman in 1975.

DePue: Chairman of the…?

Abboud: Bank. Chairman and CEO.

DePue: You got married when?

Abboud: 1955. Our son was born 1956.

DePue: Where did you meet your wife?

Abboud: Well, I met her in Boston. She had an apartment across from my uncle in Boston. My uncle had a house on Charles Street and she had an apartment. I was a proctor in a dorm at Harvard. I had the GI Bill to pay my tuition and I got my room and board by being a proctor in one of the freshman dorms, and managed the intramural football program for the freshmen. He said, "There's a girl over there, lovely girl over there through that window," and so forth. So I went up and knocked on the door (knocks on the desk) and I said, "My uncle lives over there and he says you're a lovely girl." And a year later we got married.

DePue: So that line worked pretty well for you, huh?

Abboud: Yeah, right.

DePue: What's her name?

Abboud: Joan Grover was her maiden name.

DePue: Just a few questions at the close. Looking back on all of this, especially your experiences in the Korean War, obviously, do you think that your sacrifice and what you did was justified?

Abboud: Yeah. I mean, if you look at South Korea. I mean, that's why we're building this museum, this Korean War Museum. I think we achieved what we were supposed to achieve. And, you know, even though I didn't think so at the time, Harry Truman was right. It would have been a disaster for us to go up into China and stuff. And, look what Korea has done. I think it was great for the world. I think it was great for the Koreans. I think it was great for America. And we did it, you know, even though at the time I railed at the fact that it was a police action and we were part of the United Nations. I mean, we are the Marine Corps; we're the United States of America. But in retrospect, that was right and I wish we'd done the same thing in Iraq.

DePue: What do you think about the way the American public today remembers Korea, or maybe more appropriate, doesn't remember Korea? This is a curious time, because right now this Ken Burns series on World War II has come out and we're all focused again on that. Korea is always a footnote.

Abboud: Well, I think we've got to change that. That's why Larry Sasaroni is working on this museum thing and why I'm interested in helping him. We need to have a place where the Korean War is featured, where its lessons are held out for the rest of the world, where Americans can understand that this was a noble and valiant and successful operation.

DePue: How did being a veteran of the Korean War, being a Marine, change you and change your outlook on life?

Abboud: Oh, it was great for a youngster to be in command of those kinds of men and that situation in your early 20's. I mean, the leadership skills. Remember that, because of the NROTC and the summer cruises and terms, you were learning leadership all the way through. That's why I'm a big believer in universal military training. I think you become a stockholder in the country. I think you throw people together, I think we learn how to become a melting pot.

DePue: So there's another issue that's very hot in the American public right now—about immigration and how we're dealing with that, or maybe not dealing with that.

Abboud: We're an immigrant country. I mean, where did we come from? I mean, we're all immigrants. And it seems to me, the challenge is how you integrate immigrants—not how you lock them out. Do we have to control the borders? Well, of course, I mean we have to abide by the laws. I mean, nobody's questioning that. But what I am questioning is that we kind of classify immigrants as immigrants. Well, who are we? I mean what we ought to do is, if we didn't have the immigration in the 1930's, we would not have won World War II. I mean, these were the scientists; these were the artisans; these were the people that developed the atomic bomb; these were the people that were the machinists who helped us to do the production in the factories and so forth, so that we could out-produce our enemies. Immigrants have always helped us.

DePue: You have a chance now to say something to anybody who listens to this in the future, whether it's next week or twenty or thirty years down the road, any messages, any wisdom you'd want to pass on to your children, your grandchildren, or future generations?

Abboud: What I've learned is that we are blessed and very fortunate to have a country that allows individuals to participate and to achieve whatever level their skill sets and talents and individual disciplines will allow them to do. We can't take that for granted. That's unique. And if we don't preserve it and don't work for it and we don't fight for it, we're not going to have it. At the same time, we've got to be a big umbrella. We've got to embrace immigration; we've got to embrace other ideas; we've got to learn about other cultures; we've got to understand them. I've been fortunate because I've helped build the international bank, the international presence of our bank. When I was President of Occidental Petroleum we worked around the world and so I had the opportunity to learn a lot of things from a lot of people. Everybody in the world wants the same thing: they want security; they want opportunity for their children to grow up safely; they want their children to have better lives than they have. I've never met anybody around the world that didn't want to do a good job. I have never met anybody that didn't want it recognized that they are doing a good job. And I have never met anybody that didn't want acknowledgement that they have done a good job. And if we just understand that we're all the same, I think we can get along.

DePue: Of all of the accomplishments, and you've accomplished quite a bit in your life, Mr. Abboud, what's the one accomplishment you're most proud of?

Abboud: We have a wonderful family. Thank God, I've got two wonderful daughters, I've got a wonderful son, I've got a wonderful wife – we've been married fifty-two years. I've got a great sister and a niece. We've had the privilege of having my mother and father live next door to us and Joan's mother lived next door to us and we've kept our family relationships. And that's what we do.

DePue It's been my privilege to have a chance to interview you today, Mr. Abboud. Thank you very much for that.

Abboud: Well, thank you.

DePue: And with that we'll sign off.

Abboud: All right, thank you.