Helmuth and Nelly Helzer – Life during WWII

By Helmuth and Nelly Helzer

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Box 3 Folder 8

Oral Interview conducted by Sarah Wood

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Brigham Young University – Idaho
SW: My first question is when were you born? When is your birthday?

GH: February 25, 1922.

SW: And how old were you when Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941?

GH: Gee, I think I was 20. Let’s see—’22 to ’42 would be 20 and that was in ’41 so I must have been 19.

SW: 19, so what do you remember about that day?

GH: About Pearl Harbor?

SW: Yeah.

GH: We heard about it over the radio.

NH: Coming home from Salt Lake.

SW: You were coming home from Salt Lake?

NH: Yeah, we were on our way coming to the parade that he had to be in, because he was in the service, in Ogden, right?

GH: No that’s after we got married.

NH: No, we listened and we were driving along and we heard that the…

GH: We could have been driving along anywhere but there wasn’t…

NH: Okay, and while on the radio, on the car radio…

GH: Well if she asked me, we either heard in on the radio in Barrow, or we were in the car.

NH: We were driving to there because you had to be in the parade, on the, what holiday were they celebrating?

GH: The parade was November 11, this happened…

NH: Pearl Harbor was when?

SW: This was December 7, 1941.

NH: Oh.
SW: What do you remember hearing? When you heard Pearl Harbor had been bombed, what do you remember thinking about?

GH: Oh well, we were thinking, I don’t know – the first thing they called us back to base right away.

SW: Oh, so you were already a member of the military?

GH: Oh yeah, I was already in the Air Force.

SW: Oh, the Air Force.

NH: He went right out of High School.

GH: Right out of High School in 1941 – 18 years.

SW: So you had been in the Air Force for a year, and then you went to war.

GH: We didn’t go to war just as soon as they declared war on us. We were in the United States going around different bases.

NH: We moved here and there.

GH: Finally, we left from Lansing, Michigan to our quadrant did – we flew to…

NH: We were married then.

GH: Greenland, then from Greenland we flew to England.

SW: Okay.

NH: See I was just 18 and he was 19.

SW: So you served during the war. What did you do? During the war?

GH: During the war, yeah, okay, when the war was – I was a crew chief on a C-47 and for that I was part of the crew that flew on missions, and we had a crew chief, and a radio operator, and a navigator and of course the pilot and co-pilot, and if it was just a local training mission, or a not going very far, we didn’t take the navigator, but the rest of us always went. But it was a longer trip we had the navigator.

SW: What did you do on the plane?

GH: Well I did, first, the thing I’d have to do is pull the chalk out from under the plane so it could move, bring them in, and close the door. When we hauled supplies to the front, they had to be loaded in the plane, and when we brought wounded back, we would
change the plane hammock. There were little places to set the hammocks in the side of
the plane, three rows on each side.

NH: For the wounded.

GH: They’d be full of the wounded, and there would be two nurses that would go along
with it, to take ‘em back. Take supplies to the front and bring the wounded back. And
there’d be two nurses to go with the wounded to fly back to the hospitals.

SW: Were you on the ground? Or did you go up in the planes with…?

GH: No, I went up in the planes all the time.

SW: Would you…?

NH: You did repair work didn’t you?

GH: Once I was in the air, there really wasn’t – I didn’t have anything to do but, I had to
get the plane ready for the people that were coming on—the wounded so they could lay
in the hammocks.

SW: How did you feel? Did it make you sick or anything – did you just learn to deal with
it?

GH: No, it was a – you just kind of got used to it.

SW: Yeah.

GH: You just kind of got used to it… Of course we’d also haul paratroopers, and they
were good healthy guys that were jumping out of the plane, we also hauled dummy
paratroopers for diversionary – make them think we were attacking someplace else.

SW: Wow.

GH: Then we also towed gliders.

SW: Were did you fly?

GH: Well we was in on the – when we towed the gliders, we towed them for the second
front, when they started the second front in France, Southern France.

SW: In France.

GH: It was from Italy to France we towed them. We were stationed in Italy. I was in a
station in Rome for quite a while too.
SW: What kind of training did you go through? Before you started going in the planes?

GH: Well the first thing I did when I was in the Air Force, I worked in the hydraulic shop, and we rebuilt the landing gear, the hydraulic struts – then I went to – I was with the paratroopers, I had to fold parachutes.

NH: (In a whisper) I didn’t know that.

GH: They had a big building for that and they were stretched out on big tables, and there were inspectors to see if it was done right. Then later on I went to Chanute, a field in Illinois, for mechanical training, to work on the plane. My job was to maintain the plane, set the values, and we’d have to change the oil and things like that, but if the engine was too bad we had to change the engine.

SW: So you had to be really familiar with the plane?

GH: Yeah.

SW: And did you do a lot of mechanical work on the engine?

GH: No, just setting the valves, no rebuilding engines. That was done at a, like the, Hill Field Air Base, but we would change the engine out, just take the bad one out and put in a new one. Sometimes we would have to replace the tail end or something like that, like if it got shot at.

SW: Did you ever get shot at when you were in the plane?

GH: Yeah, we had some holes – shrapnel in the plane.

SW: Did you have to fix them right then? Or did you have to wait till you got back on the ground?

GH: No, no we just waited till we got back on the ground.

SW: Was it… exciting?

GH: (laughs) Well it was kind of scary, really. But it didn’t last, it was just a pass over and we’d keep going.

SW: Were there other planes shooting at you, or were they people from the ground?

GH: They were other planes, but we didn’t encounter too much of that because we weren’t bombers and we weren’t flying over cities and bombing. We were behind the lines and bringing food up to the front, supplies, and food and different things, and taking back the wounded—so ours is a relatively safe job, as long as the airplane was safe, as long as it flew ok.
NH: Did you say we didn’t have any guns on there anyway?

GH: No we didn’t have any guns to return fire because…

SW: You weren’t that kind of plane.

GH: No.

SW: What was your image of Hitler and Mussolini? Did you know about them, then?

GH: Well, we knew that they were dictators, and that they weren’t good for the country, the Italian people didn’t like them. I was in Italy quite a while, and they were glad when he was gone. And we heard a lot of bad things about Hitler, but we didn’t know about the a…

SW: The Concentration Camps?

GH: Not until after the war was over.

SW: Why were you in Italy? Were you stationed there?

GH: Yeah, our squadron was stationed in Italy.

SW: During the whole war? Or just for a small…

GH: Well first we went to North Africa, then we went to Malta, and then Sicily, and Italy – the four major places.

SW: What’s your opinion of the Japanese and the Germans now?

GH: Oh, I think the Japanese are very intelligent and…

SW: You are German!

GH: Yeah, I actually –yeah no problems, I like their cars, they make very good cars.

NH: I was going to say…

SW: That’s funny.

GH: And Germany did okay after the war, I mean they have a democratic government, but I don’t think France of Germany, either one has treated this right here, lately, about going to war, not supporting us.

SW: Did you have a rank?
GH: What?

SW: A rank or title?

GW: Yeah, I was Technical Sergeant.

SW: Technical Sergeant, that’s so cool.

GH: The next one after that was master, that’s – well I was almost up to the top, the Master Sergeant had six stripes and the Technical Sergeant had five stripes.

SW: How long did you stay with the Air Force? How long did you help them out?

GH: In the Air Force? I was in the Air Force for five years.

SW: So did you – when the war ended – is that when you…

GH: After, yeah it had already ended when I got out. After the war was over they started letting people out – you could stay if you wanted to.

SW: So, since you were already in with the army before the war started, when they called you back to base, did you want to go? I know you were probably – maybe scared for war?

GH: No, no I wasn’t scared about going back to base – that was a long ways away from Pearl Harbor. I was a little apprehensive to where I would be shipped to.

SW: So you were prepared to fight the war?

GH: Oh yeah, I was prepared to do whatever I was told to do. I was a soldier.

SW: Wow – what about religious background? Did you identify with any of the men that you worked with? Did you have any of the same beliefs?

GH: Well, I wasn’t LDS at the time and we did have – there was a chapel but we had guys that were good guys and guys that were bad guys.

SW: So who did you hang out with? (laughs)

GH: (laughs) The good guys.

NH: He was married – he had too. (laughs)
GH: But they were – well, I don’t necessarily mean bad guys but we had guys that were drinking – were drinkers – and even get drunk and like to get in fights, and things like that but still they weren’t bad guys I wouldn’t think, just soldiers.

SW: What kind of food did you have? Did you eat in a cafeteria?

GH: Oh, we had those – a lot of the time we had K-rations.

NH: SPAM. (laughs)

SW: K-rations.

GH: SPAM.

NH: He hated it – SPAM.

GH: I can remember one time that they gave us – we got hamburger patties and that was the best hamburger I ever had in my life. It was so good to get that – to eat meat instead of SPAM or K-rations.

SW: What are K-rations?

GH: It just comes in a little box.

SW: Is it like bread?

GH: Cheese and crackers, different things.

SW: Did you get enough to eat?

GH: Oh yeah, we were a lot better off than the natives were – they – I’ve seen kids dig in the trash cans for food, food that was thrown away in trash cans, so someone – no but the army always fed it’s people.

SW: What else did you see when you were in France or Italy, as far as the civilians there?

NH: He got to see some of the castles.

GH: Oh, I got to take a trip to that a – Pompeii, that city that was buried underneath with ashes.

SW: Why were you in the service?

GH: I did get to go on a tour of that when I was stationed in Rome.
SW: But during the war, did the French ever try to talk to the American soldiers? Did people ever try to talk to you? Or were you just on base?

GH: The Italians? Yeah, we were usually just in our areas but they weren’t hostile towards us – no Italians weren’t – in fact they were glad to see Mussolini go.

SW: Did you keep friendships for a while after the war?

GH: You mean with the soldiers?

SW: Yeah, the soldiers.

GH: No not really, I was too far, I don’t know where they went, but my really good buddy died in the war – the one I would have kept track of. But the ones I made good friends with a – were sent different places, you know we were separated.

SW: Kind of like on a mission.

GH: We had one good friend who worked on the plane and he was from Boise, Idaho. Boise is the capital isn’t it?

SW: Yes.

GH: Yeah, that’s where he was from, Boise, Idaho. But I don’t know what happened to him, I really don’t, since I went back to California right after I got out of the war they all scattered different places.

SW: Your really good friend that died – did you know him before the war?

GH: No.

SW: Was he in your same station?

GH: Yes, he was in our quadrant.

SW: Do you mind me asking how he died?

GH: I think – you now I am just trying to think.

NH: He came home to his wife and he died in this country didn’t he? Are you thinking of Marky?

GH: No, I am thinking of Ross Holmes.

NH: Oh, Ross Holmes.
GH: Did ah – it wasn’t a plane accident. We lost a plane.

SW: Oh you did?

GH: Yeah we did.

SW: I’m glad you weren’t on that plane.

NH: (laughs)

GH: He was on another crew, I really don’t know how he – I’m not so sure he was with us at that time.

SW: But you weren’t there.

GH: No, I wasn’t there when he was killed.

SW: How did the war affect the community at home?

GH: How did the war what?

SW: Affect the community, in the United States?

GH: Well I wouldn’t know about that being overseas. She might know more about that.

SW: Do you know about that Grandma?

GH: Like tell her you had to have food stamps.

NH: Yeah, you had to have food stamps and stamps to buy shoes and had to wait to get diapers for your baby. Because anything white you couldn’t buy, no white shirts.

SW: You couldn’t buy white?

NH: You couldn’t buy white shirts.

SW: Why not?

NH: Well they used whatever they made them white with everything went overseas and you signed up for diapers, material to make diapers for Gerry. He was a baby while he was gone.

SW: Do you want to tell the story about how you met Grandpa?

NH: He was stationed in Hill Field, he had the first plane that arrived there, very small, and there was how many soldiers?
GH: Six of us.

NH: So since they didn’t have barracks or anything they lived off the base and I was working at an A&W Root Beer Barrel and that’s where they came down to eat – the soldiers – and I was working there and we met and started dating.

GH: Her cousin introduced us.

NH: Hmm.

GH: Janet introduced us.

NH: Oh yeah, I was back in Cube, Illinois going to school – high school – and she kept writing me about these soldiers who’d come into town but there’s one special, he dates different girls, but most of them stick with one, so maybe you’ll get a date with him when you come back. Or something like that. So she did, so we just met there and they ate. And we got married in two or three months.

GH: Yeah just about three months we knew each other.

NH: Yeah, then the war broke out, so then, from then on why we’d just travel together to where he was sent. To a – because he was sent and he’d have to drive and take his supplies and go where the field was, that he was stationed to.

SW: When he went over seas did you stay?

NH: I came back and lived with my dad in…

GH: Vallejo.

NH: Vallejo. I stayed with my mother in Salt Lake awhile but my other two sisters were with her so I went back to Vallejo but I did go stay with my grandmother until Gerry was born.

GH: Gerry was born in Malad.

SW: Oh he was?

NH: Up in Malad, yeah and when he was old enough I took a train and went back to meet the parents I’d never met them.

SW: You never met Grandpa’s parents?

NH: And show the baby – we hadn’t met each other so I stayed with her a while, so I just kind of stayed here and there.
GH: And then she went on up from there, she went on up to Vallejo to stay with her dad until I came home from the war.

NH: Well California.

SW: And then Grandpa saw Gerry for the first time?

GH: Yeah.

SW: And he was – how old was he?

GH: Eighteen months.

SW: Exciting!

GH and NH: Yeah.

GH: He was walking and he was very attached to his Grandpa.

NH: I had a picture – I had a big picture like that of Gerry (points to an 8 and ½ by 11 picture of Gerry Senior) And of course my dad was really fond of him and was daddy to him – and whatever – and when he came home that night, he came home at night we didn’t expect him and I said, “That’s your daddy,” he (little Gerry) said, “No that’s my daddy.”

GH: He pointed to the picture.

SW: He pointed to the picture of him? (Gerry Senior)

GH: He pointed to the picture of me and said, “No that’s not my daddy.”

NH: I had a picture of the dresser of him (her husband) and I told him that was daddy but when he came home at night he didn’t accept him very well but – after he paddled him a couple of times I’m sure he knew how daddy was.

GH: (laughs)

NH: I’m kidding.

SW: (laughs) I know, that’s so funny.

NH: Yeah it was quite a thing -- we just get on the Grey hound bus – we’d pull up with our baby buggy and go here and there and visit people and stay a while.

SW: Did you work?
NH: I did work at Mere Island after a while. My sisters came down and lived with Dad, then they helped take care of Gerry and I worked at – what is the name of the place Gerry? I worked at Mere Island.

SW: Mere Island.

NH: It was there they had a – ships.

GH: Rebuilt ships.

NH: Ships -- they rebuilt ships and that…

SW: And you rebuilt ships?

NH: No, no, no, that’s where the ships anchored, to be repaired to go back and they weren’t ships up, they were ones that went under ground.

SW: Submarines?

NH: Submarines.

GH: Submarine.

NH: So I got to see some of those, but I didn’t really – I worked in the kit. We took, my dad was a chef and he cooked these big meals and they took them out to all the big buildings where the people were building parts out there for the war there – and they didn’t, it was around the clock, you don’t have to waste that on this, it was around the clock work, you know they worked around the clock. So they had these cars, you’ve probably seen these trucks, that would go out and come in line and pick up food. Sometimes they’re like an ice-cream truck. So we would go out with the food, and they would come down the sides and get their meals, what they wanted, then they’d come through and I’d just check off how much they owed for it.

SW: Okay.

NH: And then we’d go back to the restaurant, or whatever the building was called, it wasn’t a restaurant, but it was a building. And we’d roll those up in, the money, count it and roll it and have those ready to take to the back the next day, they whoever collected them – so that’s the kind of work it was, just that kind of stuff. So I was just living there – I knew he was coming home in a day or two, he just surprised us.

GH: All the news you heard was over the radio of course. Or the news they would hear, they wouldn’t see it on television.

SW: Oh that’s right.
GH: And all, they wouldn’t see the wounded or nothing like that, the way we heard it was – they just printed out bulletins. There’d be a printed sheet out on what happened on this front, the Russian front, this front, or whatever, and we’d read it on the bulletin board. We didn’t have radios in the war.

NH: Yeah, you see there wasn’t radios but have you seen the e-mail letters what they look like in the war? When they’d send letters they would check ’em, you know they had to be looked through, and they would make ’em about this size (about 3 by 4 inches) they would print ’em down small.

SW: Oh yeah, I think you showed me some.

NH: So I showed you some of those, they called e-mail.

SW: Yeah.

NH: So they’re little letters and sometimes you’d get two or three at a time, they didn’t come in regular form, sent them, you’d – for some reason.

SW: They’d get out of order, or they would be held.

NH: Yes, so I kept writing him telling him about Gerry being born, that he had a boy, and I guess it, he must have been born 10 or 12 days old before he heard. I’d keep getting these little letters, well you should have had the baby, you should have had the baby. What is it?

SW: (laughs)

NH: (laughs)

GH: (laughs)

NH: So I named him Gerry, if I’d have had a girl it would have been Geraldine, cause I was going to have a Gerry, if it was a boy it was going to be Gerald. (laughs)

SW: After Grandpa?

NH: After – I wanted his dad’s name.

SW: Yeah.

NH: Yeah, (laughs) someone said, I’m glad it wasn’t a girl, because Geraldine’s a terrible name. (laugh)
SW: (laughs) What was it like coming home? Did they have a big celebration? Was there a parade?

GH: You mean when the war was over?

SW: Yeah.

NH: He came home before the war was over.

GH: I came home before the war was over.

SW: Oh you did?

GH: I was still in the Air Force – different bases. We went from base to base – wherever they sent us. Finally you had the chance to be discharged.

SW: Was that like a “vacation”? Did you just get a certain amount of time?

GH: Pardon?

NH: No he got the flying hours that he needed.

GH: Oh in order to come home from overseas you had to have so many flying hours.

SW: Oh okay.

GH: Yeah, and so I was overseas about two and a half years. Then I had enough flying hours, just like the combat, the guys on bombers and the fighter pilots, they make so many missions then they get to come home. We had to – we weren’t bombing anybody or being shot at as a rule, like they were, in so much danger all the time. So we had to have a certain amount of flying hours before we came home.

SW: I have one more question. What were some of the most memorable memories – the most vivid memories? Do you have any stories or – about flying, or landing?

NH: How old did you say Gerry was? This is a picture…

GH: About eighteen months.

NH: Well I think he’s over eighteen months there. Now that’s the picture when you came home, we went down to see your family, and they took the picture of you and Gerry, and I.

SW: Well if you were pregnant for nine months, and you add a year and a half to that.

GH: Well that’s a year and a half so…
SW: Eighteen’s a year and a half, plus nine months, so that’s almost two and a half years, and you said you were over seas for about two and a half years.

GH: Yes.

SW: So he might have been a little bit older but that sounds right.

NH: Well I thought he was a little bit older.

GH: Well but I was.

NH: He was walking and running all over the place. I’ve got lots of pictures of him – pictures of him running in little shorts, playing on a tricycle.

GH: Yeah, I was overseas before he was born, so you can’t count the whole two and a half years, and I said roughly two and a half years.

SW: Yeah, no I think that’s right. I think you’re right.

NH: Two and a half?

GH: No not two and a half.

SW: No he was over seas for two and a half.

GH: I was overseas for that long, he wasn’t born. I was overseas when he was born. I was over seas awhile before he was born.

NH: Okay, let’s see if I wrote on the back, I wish people would write on the back of their letters, this is mine and I didn’t.

SW: Do you mind if I read this article?

GH: Let’s see – let’s see when he was born.

NH: Yeah go ahead and read it – that’s just receiving that award.

SW: This is an article?

GH: The Ventura Paper.

SW: The Ventura Paper, “Veteran’s Awarded Cluster.” Mr. and Mrs. O.G. Helzer 275 N Ventura Avenue have been informed that their son Tech. Sergeant, Helmuth G. Helzer, of Vallejo, has been awarded the first Oak Leaf Cluster of his air medal for his participation in the Southern France invasion, an army Air Force’s Crew Chief. Sergeant Helzer
helped drop paratroopers behind enemy forces on D-day, overseas for more than two years. He is affiliated with a veteran troop career squadron in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations. He also has flown missions over Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Dropping troops, food, and supplies” – that’s what you said.

GH: And it was over two years, it said, and that’s probably more accurate than the two and a half I said, and still he wasn’t born, and yet I was overseas awhile before he was born, so it must have been around eighteen months.

NH: Whatever you say.

GH: But there should be a way to figure it out, because we knew when he was born, he was born in March.

NH: Fifth of March.

GH: Huh?

NH: The fifth of March.

GH: The fifth of March in 1943.

SW: Okay, how soon did you go out after Pearl Harbor?

GH: I don’t know, that’s the problem. We were in the States for awhile.

SW: Was it a few months? I’m just wondering.

GH: Yeah it was.

SW: It wasn’t right away?

GH: No, no we went to several different locations.

NH: Where did you fly out of?

GH: And finally, we went to Lansing – we left out of Lansing, Michigan.

NH: Yeah, I went with him all the time. Then I had to drive the car back home.

GH: In fact, you went home once and we stayed there longer than we thought and you had to come out.

NH: On the bus, oh I was sick, the bus had to stop about three or four times to let me get out and I could throw up.
GH: So I’m sure it was around eighteen months, at least that’s what I’ve always thought.

SW: Yeah that’s right. That sounds right. So Sergeant Helzer, you helped drop paratroopers behind enemy forces on D-day?

GH: Yup.

NH: Did you want to take that? Do you have that read on here now?

SW: Yeah, I read it. Then this (other article) is a background.

GH: Oh I didn’t know if you were going to read that or not.

SW: Yeah, I’m going to read that – I’ll just read it real quick. This (article) is a background that their Relief Society from…

NH: When we moved here everyone wanted your life story.

GH: And your picture so they could get to know you.

SW: So there is a picture of Grandpa, and it says, “For thirty years Gerry Helzer was employed by the Schlumberger Co.”

GH: Schlumberger, it’s French.

SW: “A major provider of services world wide to the oil exploration and drilling industry. Born 1922 in Crook, a small town near the south Platte River in northeastern Colorado. Gerry joined the Air Force immediately after graduating high school in Sterling, Colorado, in 1940. He became a crew chief on a C-47 cargo plane ferrying supplies to the front, and wounded soldiers back to hospitals. The operation also carried paratroopers and towed gliders, loaders with supplies and soldiers to drop zones. Gerry served in England, North Africa, Sicily, and Italy in 1941 while at hill air force base Gerry met and married Nelly May Williams, an LDS girl, in 1950 he was baptized in Ventura, California, in 1951, he, Nelly, and their three children were sealed in the St. George Temple. The fourth child was born in 1958. Gerry served as a guide patrol leader, membership clerk, high priest group leader, counselor in the bishopric, and stake missionary. He and Nelly have also served as ordinance workers in the Oakland Temple as missionaries in Nauvoo, Illinois and as family history missionaries in Salt Lake City. The Helzers came to Canyon Road Towers from west Sacramento, California in 1994. They enjoy being reasonably close to a daughter and her family in West Jordan. Gerry also enjoys playing ping pong with the family history missionaries a couple of times a week.” Do you still play ping pong?

GH: Not since my heart’s been acting up.

SW: Did you play that at the…
GH: In the army? Yeah a lot of ping pong. Especially before we went overseas at Hill Field Air Base I played a lot of ping pong.

SW: What else did you do for fun?

GH: We went to a show -- we’d get off the show. I’d spend all my time with her once I got to know her. I never got any sleep.

NH: (laughing) No, we both just worked.

SW: Well, is there anything else that…

GH: You mean while I was in the army?

SW: Yeah.

GH: What we did in the army, there was card playing, gambling. Especially before the war started in the regular army on payday – most of the – they didn’t do anything but gamble all day.

NH: Did you gamble?

GH: Yeah the soldiers.

SW: Were you good?

GH: No, I didn’t because I was just a PFC and I was only making 21 dollars a month and I was sending some of that to my folks. And finally when I got married I had to quit sending money to them.

SW: So you didn’t gamble because you didn’t want to lose any money?

GH: No, I didn’t have any money to gamble with. With 21 dollars, although a lot of the guys that did that just made that much. They’d lose it and then borrow and pay interest on money they borrowed till the next payday. It was a terrible life.

NH: An interesting thing too – another thing they did when they gave them all the cigarettes they wanted, and so he would sell his and get a little cash because he didn’t smoke.

SW: So you didn’t smoke?

GH: In fact, overseas I could even trade cigarettes for food.

SW: Oh really?
GH: Yup.

SW: You didn’t drink either? You were a good boy?

GH: I was just a good LDS boy and didn’t know it. (laughing)

NH: I trained him before he left. Those two months we were together.

GH: No, no well I didn’t drink or smoke before I knew her.

NH: It was his mother, he came from a good Christian home.

GH: We all went to church me and my brothers. Although I have two brothers that smoke but I never did. And they went to church just like I did. So, I just didn’t do it.

SW: So how do you think – how do you feel World War II changed you life?

GH: Well…

SW: Did you feel secure? Or no?

GH: I don’t know that it…

NH: It gave him a job.

GH: It gave me a job. It gave me a start in life I’d say. I was made sergeant – it gave me money and I saved some money. I was able to send money to Nel.

NH: And I saved it for our home.

GH: So when I came home I had, I guess three or four thousand dollars which was quite a bit of money in that day and age. We had enough for a down payment on our house, it – as long as I didn’t get killed. In fact, it sort of gave me a start out in life.

SW: Yeah.

GH: I had a job, and during that time in 1940 jobs were – before the war came – jobs were hard to get. They were just getting over the depression and so the army gave me food and you know a chance to learn something.

SW: What did you do when you were done?

GH: When I got out of the army? I went to work for Slumberger Well Services.

SW: That’s where you did the oil.
GH: It gave me profit sharing, a pension plan and of course you have to move around wherever the oil work was. We moved many, many times, Nelly and I did – it didn’t have any adverse affect on me, my health is good, at that time. (laughs)

SW: I have a quote I want to read to you.

NH: You retired with your job didn’t you?

GH: I went to work for Slumberger, and then I worked for Terry (son in law) for 10 years.

SW: This is from Spencer W. Kimball. This is a quote my professor gave me: “We are connected with our past and we fashion a better future if we draw upon the inspiration of the past and the lessons of history, both as a people and individually…. When there is proper regard for the past and its people, we enrich the present as well as the future.”

So it’s saying that you are the inspiration what you have done had inspired our nation and has inspired…everyone. You know what I’m trying to say? You inspire me and I love history and I think it’s so amazing that you served the country and that you – you experienced this and you’ve experienced everything. You lived through the Korean War, you’ve lived through Desert Storm, you’ve lived through so much and I never appreciated history until I went to, BYU, Ricks, and I wish that everyone had a proper regard, that everyone had a respect. I want you to know that I respect you and I appreciate you and grandma. You have to live -- you have to raise your child without him.

GH: Yes she did, bless her heart.

SW: I love you both and I really appreciate the time, and for letting me do this because a lot of it I didn’t know – because a lot of it I did know and a lot of it no one knows and people need to know. Even if you don’t feel it as that significant, it was. I mean if it wasn’t for you, then those boys wouldn’t have eaten anything, they wouldn’t have had supplies and I don’t know. It’s just amazing.

GH: Yeah there’s a lot of different jobs in the army that just happened to be mine.

SW: Yeah I never knew that. I thought you were either a solder or an officer.

NH: He never had to shoot a gun or shoot anybody.

GH: Yup.

SW: So thank you.

GH: I’m glad you could come by dear.