

Eric Walz History 300 Collection

# Lawrence Bull– Life During WWII

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## Box 1 Folder 4

Oral Interview conducted by Tyrell J. Robertson

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LB: This is a report or sketchy history of some of my experiences prior to and during my U.S. Army experiences during the Korean War. I arrived at the “Eastern States Mission” mission home on December 16, 1950, in New York City. I served in the Washington D.C. District my whole mission. Had I waited about one more month, I would have been drafted into the U.S. Army. Upon arriving home, I was drafted into the Army . . . I was released from the Washington, DC District and the Eastern States Mission on December 16, 1952. After serving nearly two years I was mustered out of the army on December 16, 1952. My four month boot camp was at Fort Lewis Washington. In my company of four platoons, and consequently 14 squads of nine men each, were only six LDS men. Five were in my squad, and all five of us, we returned missionaries. What a joy! What a blessing. Following boot camp, a few of us went to schools, while most were shipped directly to Korea. I eventually also arrived in Pusan, Korea. We traveled by train north to Seoul. This was just before Christmas in mid-December. The ride up to Seoul was during the night. A few of us sang Christmas in mid-December. The ride up to Seoul was during the night. A few of us sang Christmas songs in harmony. It sounded pretty good. I could remember words to many songs in those days. We were interrupted by some “boos and shut-ups.” Then, a huge soldier on our car stood up and said something like, “I like this music, and if you aren’t quiet, I will personally take care of you.” We sang for a long time—there was not a sound. I was stationed in Seoul at the Eighth Army Headquarters. The Japanese had occupied Korea earlier and forced the Koreans to build a huge two or three story brick building, and smaller buildings to house troops. Now we occupied all of it. The “DMZ” was just 35 miles north the front lines. Several good things happened to me in Seoul: One, I found the young people spoke “good English.” Mormon GI’s had taught them. Two, WE helped unload gifts off a U.S. Army truck and give the gifts to orphans. Three, My first night in Seoul was the last night the air-raid sirens sounded. Four, LDS meetings were soon organized—Sunday school, Mutual, and even Home teaching. Five, Three Korean teenagers asked us, William Michelson from Washington, Utah near St. George and I, to teach them English. We agreed to teach them English half the lesson time and religion the other half. They agreed; so, three nights a week for three hours a night we held class. We were allowed to use a room in the huge Eighth Army Headquarters building. We spent one and a half hours teaching English and one and a half hours teaching Mormon doctrine each night for about six months. Six, Harold B. Lee visited us in Seoul along with President Hilton Robertson of the Mission. They held a conference in Seoul as well as one on the front lines. I was able to attend both of them. While at Seoul the brethren witnessed a baptismal in a swimming pool. Several people were baptized.