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		-	ORAL	HISTORY	INTERV	/IEW	OF	ROY	CONKLIN
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1	Rov	Conklin	 8-27-2004

- 2 MR. RUSSERT: This is an
- interview of New York State Military Museum, 3
- 4 Saratoga Springs, New York. 27th of August, 2004.
- one p.m. 5
- 6 The interviewers are Wayne Clark
- 7 and Mike Russert.
- 8 MR. RUSSERT: Could you give me
- 9 your full name, date of birth, and place of birth,
- 10 please?
- 11 Α. Yes. My name is Roy Conklin. I
- was born on January 16th, 1930 in Monsey, New York 12
- which is in Rockland County. 13
- 14 Q. Okay. What was your educational
- 15 background prior to entering the service?
- 16 Α. I was a graduate of State
- 17 University of New York at Cortland with a Bachelor
- 18 of Science degree in education. I graduated in
- 19 1951.
- 20 Q. Okay. Did you enlist or were you
- drafted? 21
- 22 Α. I enlisted in my senior year
- 23 which was 1950/51, the Korean War had already
- 24 begun, June of '50. I wanted to be a part of the

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- war and I knew eventually I'd be in it so I
- 3 volunteered for an OCS program, Officer Candidate
- 4 School.
- 5 So, while I was at Cortland, I
- 6 applied for OCS and was accepted. So upon
- 7 graduation, June of 1951, I went to Fort Dix for
- 8 basic training.
- 9 Q. Okay. Why did you select the
- 10 army?
- 11 A. That's a good question. I -- I
- just thought the army was where it would be. I'm
- 13 not -- I'm not a sailor. I don't particularly like
- 14 to be on ships. And I wasn't -- never had a big
- for flying so I guess I wanted to be a ground
- pounder.
- 17 Q. Okay. All right. Could you tell
- 18 us about going into the OCS program? And --?
- 19 A. Yes. Being that I was accepted
- into OCS, we went through sixteen weeks of basic
- 21 training at Fort Dix. Most of us in that basic
- training company were college graduates with OCS in
- 23 the future.
- 24 After sixteen weeks of basic

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 training at Fort Dix, we were given eight weeks of
- 3 leadership school at Fort Dix. And then we each
- 4 went to the flanks of our choice. And I chose
- 5 infantry.
- 6 Not -- my father wasn't too happy
- 7 about infantry. He said you know, there's a lot of
- 8 flanks, why did you choose infantry? Well, if I'm
- 9 going to be in the army I might as well be in the
- 10 infantry.
- So I went to Fort Benning,
- 12 Georgia. And we had six months of OCS training at
- 13 Fort Benning. I graduated in May of '52, 1952 as a
- 14 second Lieutenant.
- Upon graduation, my assignment lo
- and behold was Fort Dix leading basic trainees
- through their program. So as a second Lieutenant,
- 18 I really went back and took sixteen more weeks of
- 19 basic training, because the second Lieutenant at a
- 20 basic training program, pretty much was with the
- 21 troops all day long.
- 22 So, come about November of 1952,
- 23 I volunteered for Far East Command. And I did get
- 24 assignment to go to the Far East. On my journey to

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 the Far East I was at Fort Lewis in Washington and
- 3 they froze all infantry officers for training
- 4 purposes.
- I wasn't too happy with that.
- 6 And another Lieutenant and I went to the Inspector
- 7 General which probably was a big mistake as far as
- 8 career design. And then we went and shipped
- 9 overseas.
- 10 So, within a matter of hours I
- 11 was on a plane. And the plane took us to Canada,
- 12 Alaska, Aleutian Islands, and landed in Tokyo.
- 13 So within a matter of hours. I
- 14 was in far east and command. At Tokyo, we went to
- 15 Camp Drake, which was kind of a reception center in
- 16 Far East Command. I was in Camp Drake for a week
- when I received orders to move to Korea.
- 18 And as infantry officer, I
- 19 boarded a ship at Yokohama and sailed around the
- 20 Red Sea and China's Yellow Sea into Incheon. And I
- 21 came into Incheon in December of '52. I wasn't
- 22 there when Incheon was taken by the marines
- 23 probably back in '50.
- When I arrived at Incheon, as an

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- officer, second General Officer, I was made a
- 3 trained commander. And that meant I was on the
- 4 docks greeting the troops as they came off, and
- 5 putting them upon the train that I was assigned to.
- 6 And that train went up into Yeongcheon and
- 7 eventually Chuncheon. Chuncheon was a repo depot,
- 8 replacement depot.
- 9 And being a replacement officer,
- 10 I had no idea where I'd end up or where I would be
- 11 so at the repo depot, they assigned each of us a
- 12 Division to report to.
- Some went to the second, some
- 14 went to the seventh. Some went to the third. I
- 15 went to the fortieth Division with the California
- 16 National Guard. The Guard had already rotated home
- at that time so it was really a regular army
- 18 division at that time.
- So, my first assignment in Korea
- 20 was the second Lieutenant tuned ear at a 1st
- 21 Battalion, 223rd infantry regiment, 40th infantry
- 22 Division. And my arrival at Korea was at a repo
- depot to get in the back of a two and a half-ton
- 24 truck and go to the Division assignment.

1	Roy Conklin - 8-27-2004
2	It was forty degrees below zero
3	at that time. I remember that very vividly.
4	Sitting in the back of a two and a half ton truck
5	climbing the mountains of Korea to go to the
6	Division I was assigned to. And upon arrival to
7	the Division headquarters and then being processed,
8	I ended up with my company. My company was A
9	company, A Company at the time.
10	And the first thing, with the
11	matter of days that I was there, the regiment
12	commander came down to greet the new officers. And
13	I was one. There was another officer who followed
14	me about two weeks later. And he was outside of
15	the bunker and a mortar shell hit and killed him.
16	So two days in combat, I lost my regimental
17	commander.
18	It got a little scary. And I
19	said, you know, here I'm up in the mountains in
20	Korea and I didn't know what to expect at all.
21	Well, that winter of '52, and
22	into the spring of '53, we were in trenches. At
23	that time in Korea, 1952 and most of '53 was the
24	trenches and bunker war. And maybe this is why

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 they called it forgotten war. It was all the
- 3 activity that happened previously where the troops
- 4 went to Daegu and back to Seoul and back to
- 5 Anseong, back to Seoul again. All that was over
- 6 when I was there. We were static, very static. So
- 7 I put --.
- Q. Can I go back a second?
- 9 A. Sure.
- Q. How -- what was your equipment
- 11 like? How would you rate your winter equipment?
- 12 A. Well, the winter before and the
- winter before that, they had leather boots and a
- 14 lot of people got frostbite in Korea. When I got
- 15 there, they issued what they called Mickey Mouse
- Boots. Big rubber insulated boots, which were
- 17 excellent because you could get water in them and
- 18 you could still stay okay.
- MR. CLARK: Were those, those
- 20 white rubber boots?
- MR. CONKLIN: No, they were
- 22 black.
- MR. CLARK: Black. Okay.
- 24 MR. CONKLIN: And of course we

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 had long underwear. We had -- which at that time
- 3 was wool. And then we had a parka, Korea, if you
- 4 know Korea, they did wear parkas, the marines did
- 5 too. And pow caps. That's unique to Korea the pow
- 6 cap. We all put on a pow cap. And we were pretty
- 7 much bundled up. You had a trigger finger in your
- 8 glove and you practically stood there you know,
- 9 saying okay, now keep warm. Going to the bathroom
- 10 was quite difficult, as you might imagine
- 11 without -- with trainees and things of that sort.
- So yeah the dress and the
- 13 equipment was much different I think in Korea than
- if you continued on to the Vietnam and so forth.
- So my -- my platoon and my
- 16 company and my division was on Heart Break Ridge
- 17 when I got there. But as soon as I got there, my
- division was pulled off of Heart Break and we moved
- 19 over to Punch Bowl. The Punch Bowl was like the
- 20 name it sounds. Like a big punch bowl, a huge
- 21 river around it. And the punch bowl was taken
- 22 about a year before that by the second division.
- 23 And we went into trenches. We relieved a South
- 24 Korean Division and went into their trenches and

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 took up a defensive position in the punch bowl.
- We were in the punch bowl for
- 4 about three months. And then we were pulled off
- 5 and moved to a replacement -- to a rest area which
- 6 really wasn't a rest area. It was just a place
- 7 behind the lines. And then back up to the punch
- 8 bowl again.
- 9 And in late June, early July and
- 10 now I'm leading up towards the end of the war, a
- 11 lot of talk about Monteleon. A lot of talk about
- 12 prisoner exchange. And everybody was saying well,
- 13 the war is coming to an end.
- 14 The last three or four months of
- 15 the Korean War in my experience was, there was an
- 16 awful lot of activity because the Chinese and the
- 17 North Koreans were trying to take the higher ground
- 18 so that when the cease-fire went into affect, they
- 19 had a very good defensive position along the
- 20 so-called DMZ.
- 21 A lot of activity. My job as a
- 22 platoon leader, not only placed my platoon in a
- 23 defensive position but we had to take out patrols
- 24 every night. And every officer rotated so every

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 third night you had a patrol that you had to take
- 3 out into the so-called no mans land. Our trenches
- 4 and the Chinese trenches and North Korean trenches
- 5 were visible. They were that close.
- In mileage, it might have been a
- 7 mile but on that strict line you could see trench
- 8 to trench. You had three patrols. We had a recon
- 9 patrol, where you went out and did recons and tried
- 10 to find out any activity, anything in the area that
- 11 might be of interest to the Intelligence people.
- 12 You had a -- an ambush patrol where you tried to
- 13 catch an enemy prisoner. And then you had a
- 14 contact patrol, where you had contact with the
- 15 enemy.
- So, those three patrols were
- 17 assigned to 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Lieutenant platoon.
- 18 And I -- I can't tell you how many patrols would go
- on but there were quite -- quite a few. And it was
- 20 very interesting in the beginning because when you
- 21 take a patrol of six, eight, nine men you really
- 22 don't know in the middle of the night if we were to
- 23 patrol out at about nine o'clock at night came back
- 24 about four or five in the morning, you really

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 didn't know the terrain that well, you know.
- 3 So, in the beginning, all of the
- 4 patrols used to run out camo wire with W-8
- 5 telephone. So, when I was there it was just one
- 6 big black group of wires which I followed out and
- 7 followed back. There's nothing exciting about
- 8 that.
- 9 But then I started using the
- 10 compass and I would take azimuth before I left the
- 11 trench then take a back azimuth so I knew I was
- 12 coming back in the right direction.
- Well, it wasn't that easy but it
- 14 was so steep, the mountain was very steep so when
- 15 you took patrol into the valley you lost all
- 16 perspective of you know, where did the other
- 17 trenches were.
- 18 And if you were on a contact
- 19 patrol you actually started up the hills on the
- 20 other side where the North Koreans and the Chinese
- 21 were. And if you drew fire, that's about what you
- 22 wanted to do, and then you would mark position and
- 23 come back.
- 24 If you were on ambush control,

- Roy Conklin 8-27-2004 1
- you would lay an ambush, oh maybe four five 2
- 3 hundred, six hundred yards out in no man's land and
- then hope that a Chinese or a North Korean patrol 4
- 5 would make your area and then try to throw a
- 6 grenade a concussion grenade into that group of
- people and try to get yourself a prisoner. 7
- 8 And on recon patrol obviously it
- 9 was defined. And I had experience in all three.
- 10 MR. RUSSERT: Now, did the same
- 11 number of men go out in each one of these or?
- 12 Let's say, it averaged about an
- 13 officer, a sergeant, and about six or seven
- 14 infantryman. And we took out patrols at night
- 15 therein.
- 16 However, in June when the winter
- 17 got a little better, I asked the battalion
- 18 commander, Colonel Spellman if I could take out a
- 19 daylight patrol and he said there's no way we're
- 20 going to send anyone out in the daylight you know,
- 21 and I said we -- we don't know the terrain and
- 22 we're really groping around at night trying to find
- 23 trails and paths and so forth, and they were mined,
- 24 a lot of them mined.

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- 2 So, Major McDonough who was the
- 3 S-3, both of them West Point graduates, talked to
- 4 They said I'll tell you what, I'd like to have
- 5 you go out there and I'm going to put a cap over
- 6 your head, which is Combat Air Patrol. Whatever
- 7 the cap was I don't know.
- 8 And he says I want you to take a
- 9 PAC ten, which is the backpack radio. Keep in
- touch with the plane. And in the daylight, he 10
- 11 can -- you can spot him and he can spot you. And
- 12 we did. We went out in the daylight. It was after
- 13 five o'clock in the morning and worked our way to
- 14 get to our barb wire because we had barb wire in
- 15 front of our trenches and mountains.
- 16 We had a patrol gate, we worked
- 17 our way through it. Daylight was a heck of a lot
- 18 better because I could see you know, where I was
- 19 going and I had a good eye sight and a line of
- 20 sight on the Chinese and North Korean trenches.
- 21 So after about two or three hours of -- of working
- 22 our way down into the valley, very carefully you
- 23 can cover concealment, I saw a bunch of enemy
- 24 activity up ahead.

in a

1	Roy Conklin - 8-27-2004
2	Patrols generally laid out a
3	prefixed artillery fire, by number. You call in
4	number and you say fire number six, fire number
5	seven, based on the adjustment. So, I decided to
6	call in a mission.

- 7 And talked to the plane upstairs 8 and said I have a fire mission. I said I'm going 9 to give you the coordinates but it's basically 10 artillery position number six but the coordinates 11 are right off the coordinates of the map.
- 12 And he said okay, wait one. 13 about two or three minutes I heard this tremendous 14 noise and it sounded like a railroad car, boom. 15 And the mountain disintegrated. And another one 16 came back, boom and I called up, what are we doing? 17 He says you're firing at the big mo. Sixteen inches. 18
- 19 Now, I'm a little lieutenant with 20 a backpack radio calling for a fire mission with 21 the Missouri sitting twelve miles off the coast. 22 That was quite an experience and I'll tell you 23 later on the business with the Missouri.
- 24 So that patrol was really -- that

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- 2 was interesting. Then we came back with the
- 3 intelligence we found. I found a bridge, I found a
- 4 footpath. I found that the Chinese were coming
- 5 over at night for their patrols. And that all went
- 6 back and reported.
- 7 Another patrol, and I don't want
- 8 to get into every patrol. But I think these are
- 9 the interesting ones. It was a long patrol.
- 10 Vietnam they had what they called works, long range
- 11 patrol. We didn't have anything like that in Korea
- 12 but we had donut rolls which were roughly a half a
- 13 mile or quarter of a mile as you went out. And I
- 14 had a Fort donut roll mission.
- 15 So, what he did -- McDonough S-3,
- 16 he sent out two patrols ahead to set up bunking
- 17 positions for fire expeditions. And one patrol
- 18 went out and set the fire base for me. Another
- 19 patrol went through and set up another fire base
- 20 but way out. And my patrol went through the first,
- 21 went through the second, and went through the
- 22 third.
- 23 It's now about one -- two o'clock
- 24 in the morning. I'm pretty well -- way out there.

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 And like a John Wayne movie I hear, G.I., G.I. and
- 3 I turned around and I pulled the pin out of the
- 4 grenade and three Chinese came out of the bushes
- 5 with their hands up, with their Burp Guns and
- 6 everything else. And I've got a live grenade in my
- 7 hand.
- And I got three prisoners. It's
- 9 pitch black. And we always took a ROK with us, a
- 10 Republic of Korean soldier who could speak the
- 11 language. And we were in -- in an indigenous
- 12 company because north and south Koreans looked
- 13 alike and spoke alike too.
- 14 So, he's talking to them. In the
- meantime, we've got a grenade and I don't want to
- 16 release this spoon you know, so I took a piece of
- the camo wire, we cut that off and I tried to
- 18 thread it through as best I could. And then I took
- 19 it and I laid it down with the spoon down on the
- 20 ground and then dropped -- walked away and thank
- 21 God it was enough weight to keep the spoon down.
- So, now I've got the three
- 23 Chinamen and waited awhile and I called back and I
- 24 said I just picked up three prisoners, I want to

- 2 come back and you know, complete the mission, take
- 3 them with you.
- 4 So, I -- I suspected something
- 5 was wrong, the fact that they gave themselves up.
- 6 And as I move forward, I heard an awful lot of
- 7 activity. I heard foreign voices, -- voices. I
- 8 heard a lot of crack. And I said, you know what?
- 9 I think I'm being ambushed. I think that's what
- 10 they're doing.
- So, I stopped my patrol, set up a
- 12 defense. Called back in again and I said I want
- you to fire some more artillery or we aren't
- 14 getting out of here. So, as soon as we started
- firing our artillery, all hell broke loose.
- 16 There's a bunch of Chinese -- either Chinese or
- 17 North Korean, I don't remember at that particular
- 18 time came after us. But we managed to pull out.
- Now, by pulling out that second
- line gave me a basic fire. So, we had some fire
- 21 coverage and they were firing artillery and mortars
- 22 too. And then I got the first line of defense and
- 23 they're gone. Lieutenant Sheron, I'll never forget
- 24 his name, I don't know if he was one of the names

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- on television and I had no base of fire. So we
- 3 managed to scramble back to the trenches after --.
- 4 MR. CLARK: So he just left his
- 5 position?
- A. Yeah. So we stopped at the
- 7 intelligence bunker to get debriefed and I saw him
- 8 sitting there with a cup of coffee and I almost
- 9 went crazy. I said, you know, you left me out
- 10 there with my patrol. He said, you know, I heard
- all that fire, all that shooting I figured you guys
- 12 had had it so I booked out.
- MR. CLARK: So, he was replaced
- 14 the next day.
- 15 Q. But did you take the three
- 16 Chinese with you?
- 17 A. Yeah, I brought them back. Yeah.
- 18 They had a thing in Korea if you picked up a
- 19 prisoner you got a day -- you got an R and R, rest
- and recreation. Well, when I asked for my R and R,
- 21 no, they gave themselves up, it doesn't count.
- I never got an R and R and I was
- 23 in combat for eight months. Never got an R and R.
- 24 That's another story too. So that's -- that's one

- 1 Roy Conklin - 8-27-2004
- 2 of the night patrols, Geek patrol. And we had -- I
- 3 have had a lot of experience with patrols.
- 4 One time -- am I rambling on too
- 5 much?
- 6 Q. No, no, not at all.
- 7 We got sniped at every day, just
- 8 because we were so close and our trenches were
- 9 about six foot deep. We had fire in positions in
- 10 them. And during the day if you walked in
- 11 trenches, because I did check in my positions, you
- 12 would hear a crack, and you know that a bullet over
- 13 your head was a crack. Then you heard bump. Oh we
- 14 were taught in OCS between the crack and the bump
- 15 it's how far out they were you know. And that
- 16 never really worked that form.
- 17 But my radio man, a young man, I
- 18 think it was Sullivan he said I thought I saw a
- 19 muzzle flash. So, -- well show me where you saw it
- 20 so -- the fire positions with sand were only about
- 21 that wide. And he's here, and I'm here, we're
- 22 chest to chest looking in this little hole.
- 23 now I heard, not a crack, I heard a splash.
- 24 oh, the sand blew, he went down, I went down and

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- oh, I'm hit. And I looked over and he got it right
- 3 through the shoulder, so we're chest to chest and
- 4 it hit him here, a 51 caliber.
- 5 What they do is they used to take
- 6 their 51's and strap them to a tree and zero in on
- 7 an aperture. And when they saw somebody looking
- 8 out and just squeeze the trigger. So that fifth
- one hit him in the arm. He -- he got knocked down,
- 10 I got knocked down, and the bullet over our head
- 11 but he was hit.
- So I gave him a shot of morphine
- and called in for helicopter and he got in the
- 14 helicopter first, in Korea as evacuation mostly.
- 15 You know, or either a MASH hospital. And they took
- 16 him away and two or three or four weeks later I got
- 17 a letter from him and he was in Japan and he was
- 18 okay. It didn't hit any major organs so he went
- 19 home.
- 20 So now the battalion commander
- 21 says okay, since you spotted his position what I
- 22 want you to do now is I want you to take patrol
- 23 route tonight. Get in that position and wait for
- 24 them to come back in tomorrow.

1	Roy Conklin - 8-27-2004
2	So, I took patrol out. We found
3	the spider holes. There was three or four spider
4	holes because we couldn't find their direction.
5	And I put my I put my patrol in position at
6	night. It was pouring rain, all night long. It
7	rained like hell. And in Korea, we really just
8	wore ponchos. And I never wore a poncho on patrol
9	and I'll tell you another story about the memorial
10	down in Washington.
11	So come morning, we're in this
12	in this position all night long, wet, cold, hungry.
13	We heard some people and we looked down and there
14	were two Chinese they were Chinese come into
15	position. Well one of my guys squeezed off a round
16	and they spooked them.
17	So I called in and I said the
18	snipers spotted us and they took off. It's okay,

21 Patrol came out, again, we had to wait for night time. Brand new 2nd Lieutenant just 22 got assigned to the company and I said to him, look 23 24 you're going to be in position, but you're going to

stay there. We're going to send another patrol out

to relieve you.

19

20

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 be here in the daylight. Don't move, just dig in,
- 3 stay here until night time. And then when he comes
- 4 tomorrow.
- 5 Went back to the bunker, went
- 6 back to the trenches with my patrol and oh I would
- 7 say about seven or eight hours later I got a call
- 8 from the company commander who said the Lieutenant
- 9 that replaced you just got shot in the leg by our
- guys with a 50 caliber because they saw people
- 11 moving around in day time. They didn't know where
- 12 out there we were.
- So, that guy lasted three or two
- days, but he had a good wound. So that was another
- kind of patrol. And but anyhow, this all leads up
- 16 to -- for instance one time we took a recon patrol
- and I saw an awful lot of things that weren't there
- 18 before. There were caves dug in front of our
- trenches with food in it, ammunition in it,
- 20 blankets in it. And I said you know, I think
- they're building up through. Big push here.
- So, intelligence said that you
- 23 know, the Chinese Division that was approaching our
- 24 position, this is getting toward the end now. This

- 1 Roy Conklin - 8-27-2004
- 2 is like early July. We may be under attack and
- 3 we're very careful about what was happening. So we
- kept watching -- watching and sure enough one night 4
- 5 like soon after I saw --. They came, and they
- 6 came, and they came -- you know, you heard the
- whole story about the bugles and everything else. 7
- 8 And I jumped into the booth in my platoon and I
- 9 said to them, fire some rounds. So he started
- 10 firing and firing and firing.
- 11 I said, drop two hundred, drop
- 12 two hundred and they kept coming at us.
- 13 Well we had we had to go, when
- 14 you're in the trenches, you have they you have to
- 15 go outposts. Where you had dug in a post and then
- 16 out -- had a listening post. Those guys out there
- 17 were just struck by those. The Chinese ran right
- to them and they couldn't get back to the MLR. 18
- 19 And we fired all night long.
- 20 That's the time we fired eight thousand rounds, we
- 21 fired everything we had. And -- and they actually
- came into our trenches but we were in bunkers so 22
- 23 they would run over the top of bunkers and shoot
- 24 down at us.

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- So, the next morning we had dug
- 3 up ammo because they continued to attack. And they
- 4 were laying all over the place. So, they started
- 5 cleaning up the bodies, both the Chinese and ours.
- 6 And the battalion commander came up, Spellman, and
- 7 said, you look at how funny they're positioned. I
- 8 would have waited, I see a bunch of bodies. And it
- 9 looks like a command group because they were
- 10 together. They kind of opened up like a flower you
- 11 know?
- 12 Except I'd like to go down and
- 13 bring back a couple of those bodies. So I got two
- or three -- I think I took six with me. Daylight,
- 15 now. And we went out over the trenches, worked our
- way down to the barb wire. And when we got to the
- bodies, I said to the men, don't go near them
- because they might be booby-trapped. They always
- 19 booby-trap dead bodies. And I went over and I
- 20 pulled a couple of them and he rolled over. And I
- 21 noticed they were Officers The had FM on their
- 22 shoulder.
- So, after we checked two or three
- 24 bodies, I called the men forward, we carried the

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 bodies back to the trenches. And we were under
- 3 fire now because they could see us out there.
- 4 There were mortar fire and
- 5 everything else coming in. But we managed to get
- 6 back with three bodies. And through intelligence,
- 7 it turns out they were Manchurian. And Manchurians
- 8 had trained for months on a hill that was similar
- 9 to ours.
- 10 So late at night they had
- 11 torpedoes and they had borrowed food, and borrowed
- 12 ammunition they had fired up ammunition. So there
- were quite a few of them that really hit us. And
- 14 that was probably the biggest attack we were under
- 15 at that time.
- So anyhow, all of this happened
- and just enrolled in the lieutenant infantry
- 18 platoon leader. I became executive officer of the
- 19 company after that. And I still took patrols out
- 20 because we only had three officer's for the
- 21 company. We were very shorthanded.
- So, we get orders early July,
- 23 middle of July that we're going to move to the
- Heartbreak Ridge and lead the 45th Division.

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- 2 And Heartbreak Ridge was to our
- 3 west. And Heart Break are pretty close you've
- 4 probably heard of Pork Chop they were all in that
- 5 vicinity. And if you saw the movie Pork Chop Hill
- 6 with Gregory Penn that was probably the closest
- 7 thing I've ever seen. It was most realistic to our
- 8 experience anyhow.
- 9 So, the big move was to be made
- and under secrecy we took up all of Zyndia
- 11 (phonetic spelling). We painted over the bumpers
- 12 of all vehicles. There was no indication that the
- 13 40th Division was moved.
- 14 So, at night we moved up man to
- man, platoon to platoon, company to company,
- 16 equipment by equipment. What we did, we left the
- 17 equipment in place, machine in their places, so if
- we pulled back we took theirs.
- Well, after this night move, and
- I was the first one up there, I was Executive
- Officer and -- and worked with a company, we were
- going to replace Heartbreak Ridge. And we moved
- our people, took over their positions. He gave me
- 24 a briefing so the next morning there was a big sign

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- on the Chinese trenches, now we're close. It says,
- 3 welcome 40th Division.
- 4 Now, all the secrecy and all that
- 5 goes on. And then they read off our names or a
- 6 roster. Lieutenant Conklin, Sergeant Warwick and
- you know that gets pretty scary when you heard them
- 8 calling your name.
- 9 So, now we're on Heartbreak Ridge
- and went on for maybe two or three weeks and the --
- and the truce was now getting closer and closer.
- 12 And -- oh, I now I became a Company Commander. I
- was Company Commander of A company. And the
- 14 battalion commander, Carl Stoneblicka called all
- his Company commander's back to where he was on
- 16 Bloody ridge, we were on Heart Break, he was on
- 17 Bloody behind us.
- 18 And he wanted to tell us where we
- were going to go on -- on the cease-fire and where
- 20 to pull off. So, from my bunker to his field was
- 21 exposed. And my Jeep driver, Abernathy was his
- 22 name, and I would go back to the chief and he would
- go as fast as he could and the motor would go boom,
- 24 boom, boom because they could rev the motor on the

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- 2 road.
- And we get up to battalion
- 4 headquarters and Colonel Spellman says, Troops, it
- 5 looks like it's going to be signed. And it's going
- to be ten o'clock on July 27th, the next night. So
- 7 he said, I want you to go back and brief all your
- people. This is not the end of the war, it's not
- 9 an end it's a cease-fire. So no fraternizing with
- 10 the enemy, none of this stuff, no.
- So, I go back. And then he
- 12 calls, the company commanders again, and he says I
- want to show you the position you're going to go
- 14 into after we pull off the MLR. And that ride was
- not a pleasant ride.
- And then we got up to the
- 17 battalion and he took us down into the valley
- behind us, and he said okay, your company's going
- 19 to go here, you're company's going to go there. So
- 20 I'm out with him and Major McDonough -- and I
- looked down and I see three prongs, which are
- 22 Mountain Bay lines. The whole view was mine and
- 23 we're right in the middle of a mine field. I said
- 24 to him, you better stay where you are. And I kind

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- of worked my way back in.
- And the engineers came in. Then
- 4 we started getting artillery in the valley and
- 5 there were two tanks out there. So we ran and
- 6 jumped under the tanks and you hear tink, tink,
- 7 tink, the shrapnel and I felt that my feet were
- 8 sticking out.
- 9 And of course the fire stopped.
- 10 Went back to the Company, and now Abernathy turns
- 11 the Jeep around. Heartbreak Ridge was a razor type
- 12 bridge. And he goes over the side and he jumps out
- and the Jeep goes boom, boom, boom down into the
- 14 valley.
- And everyone's sitting there.
- And the next day, July 27th, after briefing all the
- squad majors and everybody else we're going to have
- 18 a cease-fire at ten o'clock at night. So, if you
- 19 sat that last day, and the Chinese fired every day,
- they weren't going to take any off the hill with
- them, no. We were told you couldn't fire. You
- 22 could only fire anti -- anti debaucher fire. And
- we fired a little 60's, we fire you know, 80's.
- 24 They were your 4.5 mortars and so forth.

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 And it was a long -- long day.
- 3 And guys stayed in their bunkers. They didn't want
- 4 to move, you know, if you read my little story
- 5 you'll see where they're trying to get inside your
- 6 helmet, you know.
- 7 And at about a quarter to ten we
- got the word, have a checks. No, infantry company
- 9 or platoon is basically you know, M-1 rifles,
- 10 machine guns, we had a couple of heavies.
- MR. RUSSERT: What did you carry?
- 12 A. I carried a carbine and a
- 13 forty-five. I'll tell you about the carbines soon.
- 14 So guarter to ten we had a put -- the Chinese let
- 15 the Turkish shoot too, and it was like -- in a way
- it was bizarre, it was beautiful. It was just one
- solid band of tracers going back and forth.
- 18 Really.
- 19 And then at ten o'clock
- cease-fire. Prior to that though, I had a patrol.
- 21 And in order to take patrol from Heartbreak Ridge,
- 22 there -- you couldn't go very far because the
- 23 Chinese trenches were so close. We would lower
- 24 ourselves on a rope from the ridge line and work

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 our way out into a little position that we had dug
- 3 in.
- And I said to them, you know,
- 5 this is going to be a tough night. I drew contact
- 6 that night. You know, of all nights to get contact
- 7 patrol. And a new second lieutenant just joined.
- 8 His name was Tom -- Thomas Cunningham West Point.
- 9 And he came to me about a week before and he said
- 10 look, I'm a regular army officer. I am just back
- and I want to take that patrol.
- 12 I said Tom, I don't want to make
- 13 contact. I want the guys to go out there and throw
- 14 a couple of grenades and that's it. And you know,
- 15 he said no, I really want to take patrol. This was
- 16 the night before the truce.
- 17 And I called Colonel Spellman who
- is a West Point graduate too and he came up to the
- 19 trenches and I said look, I'm going to give him an
- 20 order that I don't want to make contact but to
- 21 throw a couple of grenades and come back. And he
- 22 said, well, I don't think we should make contacts.
- We're getting too close the end.
- 24 So anyhow, he went out. And I

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- 2 said stay on the double eight, which is the
- 3 telephone. And he met patrol base, the outpost
- 4 base, and he called in and he said I'm going to
- 5 move forward. And I said, don't move from where
- 6 you are. And the next thing I know I don't hear
- 7 them again. And then he tried to pick up on a the
- 8 walkie talkie and that was the Chinese voices and
- 9 everything got in, and that made me really
- 10 scramble.
- And then about a half an hour
- 12 later, I heard burp guns. And no Thomas Cunningham
- 13 and no patrol. He never came back. So the next
- day in the cease-fire business, it's now leading up
- to ten o'clock at night, one of the guys out on
- patrol on the fire base went berserk. And he said
- so forth and so on. And I just gripped my helmet
- and my rifle and I jumped out and I grabbed the
- other guy with me and we worked our way down the
- 20 route.
- We got out there and he was
- really in bad shape. So, we carried him back to
- the trenches. As soon as I got back to the
- trenches at ten o'clock at night, no -- cease-fire.

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- 2 And they got on the loud speakers and they
- 3 played --. Then they called us again by name, go
- 4 home, you don't go home Korea, we don't belong in
- 5 Korea. The Chinese wanted out of there just as
- 6 much as we did, you know?
- 7 And that was it. Ten o'clock at
- 8 night, July 27th 1953 cease-fire.
- 9 We pulled back two thousand yards
- 10 the next day and dug in defensive position. And
- after eight months I finally got an R and R. We're
- now in a squat position. And I didn't get rest and
- 13 recreation. They sent me to air ground operation
- school which is with the air controllers and so
- 15 forth.
- So, at least I had, you know, a
- 17 little break. I was back in Japan, actually in
- 18 Yokohama.
- Q. Did you ever find that patrol?
- A. No. No, he's listed missing in
- 21 action. But as I read in the West Point yearbook
- they've got them killed in action.
- Q. So all the men in the patrol?
- A. All the men in patrol two, every

- 2 one of them. I had a little problem about that and
- 3 I don't know where this is going to go but I got a
- hold of Colonel Spellman afterwards. 4
- 5 But another thing, when I came
- 6 back from my one week the CIC unit, Combat
- 7 Intelligence Corp interviewed me why -- why did I
- 8 speak to the Chinese Officer? Well, what happened
- 9 is when they came over that next morning after
- 10 cease-fire, they came into our trenches. They
- 11 tried to get into our trenches.
- 12 So I got out of my trench and I
- 13 met them at the barb wire. And it was all ready
- 14 defined with bodies and that Heartbreak Ridge was
- 15 there for two or three years. It was messy. And
- 16 we tired to communicate and I said patrol night
- 17 before. And he went hmm. And I said, patrol and
- 18 he went pop-pop-pop- which meant burp gun, you
- 19 know.
- 20 So anyhow, when I came back -- oh
- 21 I took pictures of this guy too. So I came back,
- 22 they took my camera, they confiscated my camera and
- 23 they said you're not supposed to talk to these
- 24 people. You know, you're not supposed to

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 fraternize -- I wasn't fraternizing, I was trying
- 3 to find our patrol, you know?
- 4 So, Spellman never backed me
- 5 about my order about not going out. And this is
- one of the reasons I didn't stay in. I was a -- I
- 7 was in the regular army. They appointed me regular
- 8 army officer.
- 9 And I had that experience and I
- 10 said you know what? If you're not a West Pointer
- 11 you're in a different ball game you know? You're a
- 12 reserve officer. Which most of the reserves and
- 13 the guard did the fighting in Korea you know. As
- 14 far as men on a line.
- So anyhow, they -- they didn't
- give me a reprimand because I had just gotten the
- 17 silver star from the action, I'll tell you about
- 18 it. And I had the bronze star and all -- so they
- 19 didn't -- they didn't give me a hard time.
- 20 And they said, you still want to
- 21 go to regular army? I said no. I just assumed
- 22 stay on reserve for awhile and go home.
- MR. RUSSERT: I want to go back
- 24 to the thing about ponchos.

1	Roy Conklin - 8-27-2004
2	A. Yeah.
3	Q. You said something about?
4	A. Okay. I guess it's 1995 they had
5	a dedication at the Korean War Memorial. And they
6	got a hold of my memoirs and they took chapter
7	thirteen, which was the last day of the war and
8	nothing written about the last day of the war
9	today, what was like being there? It's like you
10	know, in the arms of November 11th you know, the
11	first world war and so forth.
12	So they took my article and they
13	put it in my magazine and I gave you the copy of
14	the magazine. The Korean War magazine opened up,
15	it had Heartbreak Ridge on the cover, which I took
16	the picture of you know?
17	And I couldn't get there for the
18	dedication and my division wanted me to come and
19	say a few words and I thought I would now. So,
20	Labor Day my wife and I went down right after that
21	and best time to go to Washington. Because
22	Washington's closed Labor Day. And you could ride
23	around and go to all the Memorials.
24	So I went to the Korean War

- 2 Memorial and I was quite impressed. I think
- 3 there's seventeen seven foot figures and a V and
- 4 they introduced it as -- or they said it was a
- 5 contact patrol in Korea.
- 6 So, the Korean War veterans asked
- 7 me to write my impressions of the memorial. I said
- 8 very moving. I -- I really love the eyes and
- 9 everything but I said, I want to tell you
- 10 something, we would never wear ponchos and steel
- 11 helmets out on patrol. They're too cumbersome,
- 12 they're too noisy. And I said that really doesn't
- 13 depict me a infantry patrol.
- 14 And they wanted to know about
- 15 what was it like and so forth. So I said I'm going
- 16 to tell you if I wanted to call it anything I would
- 17 call it a Forward -- forward patrol ahead of
- 18 Division and moving out you know, not a combat
- 19 patrol.
- 20 Ο. And what did you wear if you
- didn't wear your helmet? 21
- 22 We wore fatigue caps. Α.
- 23 0. It was a cap.
- 24 A. We wore our fatigues. You took

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 camo wiring and you tied -- and you tied your pant
- 3 legs in tight. And you tied your sleeves in tight.
- 4 You blackened your face. And you didn't wear a
- 5 flack jacket either because too cumbersome. And
- 6 Korea was so steep in those mountains you know.
- 7 So, we went on patrol, we were
- 8 pretty much stripped down and that memorial doesn't
- 9 depict that. So it's been changed. It's -- if you
- read anything about it now, it's not called a
- 11 patrol it's called a forward moving element,
- 12 something like that.
- He asked for a report on my
- 14 carbine. The carbine is a good weapon you can put
- it on an automatic too. But being new to Korea and
- being a new combat position and I was platoon
- 17 leader, you had -- they had a thirty round banana
- 18 clip. Well gung ho is a binocular point -- this is
- 19 two clips, a paper going down.
- 20 And that looked real -- you know
- 21 tough stuff. And I had a flashlight around it and
- well anyhow, going out on patrol. We were coming
- back one morning, it was just about four, five
- o'clock. And a Chinese patrol was coming the other

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- way because they had already made their recon.
- 3 And I run right into the Chinese
- 4 patrol. I took the safe off on the carbine and the
- 5 magazine fell out. Too much weight on there you
- 6 know? And my sergeant behind me pushed me down and
- 7 fired off my head. And he hit the Chinese officer.
- 8 The Chinese officer landed up on top of me.
- 9 So, I'm scrambling around looking
- 10 for my weapon and my magazine and then the other
- patrol scattered. So at least I didn't get the
- 12 time.
- 13 So I took his hat and I took his
- Burp Gun and they're at West Point Library right
- now. I donated them to the library. And when I
- came back, I felt like whoa, threw that carbine
- away, I took an M-1 and that's my rifle from now
- 18 on.
- Anyhow, that -- so what happened
- is I did not stay in the army. I did not make a
- 21 career of it. And I -- I was in pretty good shape
- because I had my combat experience. I got my
- 23 declarations and I had a good write up in all my --
- 24 my Reginald commanders recommended me and it's

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- just -- I didn't like the good old boys society. I
- 3 was trained to be an educator. So I began
- 4 teaching.
- Q. Can I talk to you a little
- 6 about -- how did you feel about the ROK soldiers?
- 7 A. They were very good. Like the
- 8 barrier obviously but they were very -- they were
- 9 very trainable. Obviously you couldn't teach them
- 10 how to shoot an M-1 but they let them use the
- 11 mortars. They were very good on patrolling with us
- 12 because they were very stuffy also the language and
- so forth. They were pretty good soldiers.
- 14 And Republic of Korea you know
- they called them KATWUSA, Korean army training with
- the United States Army. The idea was they were
- 17 training with us and then go back to a Korean Unit.
- And that happened but not too often. Most of the
- 19 time they stayed.
- I had a platoon, believe it or
- 21 not, of about forty-five men. I must have had
- 22 fourteen Katwusa's. I had about twenty-four Puerto
- 23 Ricans. I had some Mexicans and I had some regular
- 24 GI's you know? And I say regular GI's because

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- these were so different, you know? And it was
- guite a platoon to have. Because --.
- 4 MR. RUSSERT: Did you have any
- 5 blacks in your unit or was it --?
- 6 A. Yeah. Yeah. Abernathy, my chief
- 7 sergeant was black. What happened though in the
- 8 third division, they had a Puerto Rican regiment.
- 9 And it was a Puerto Rican regiment training, Puerto
- 10 Rico but it was a part of the third division. When
- 11 they went to Korea they took that regiment with
- 12 them.
- They were in a defensive position
- 14 on the MLR and they were overrun by a big Chinese
- 15 unit. And we had artillery called 555 triple
- 16 nickels, set in the valley. And this Puerto Rican
- 17 Regiment was defending the way it bugged out and
- 18 the 555 was overrun. All of the equipment was
- 19 gone. First time we ever lost our colors in
- 20 battle. And they took the Regiment. And they
- 21 court marshaled the officers and they broke up the
- regiment, so that's how I ended up with fifteen
- 23 Puerto Rican, all with stripes because they had --
- 24 I didn't care about stripes.

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2	If I liked you, you were my
3	platoon leader. If I liked you, you were my squad
4	leader, you know? And that was a pretty bad name
5	because they gave you that language, no comprende,
6	no comprende, you know, and all that kind of stuff.
7	But it was it was quite a mix for a platoon.
8	Q. And you were there after the
9	relief of MacArthur?
.0	A. Yeah.
.1	MR. RUSSERT: How did you have
.2	any feelings about that at all?
_3	A. Well, this was before I went
_4	there.
-5	Q. Yeah, right right.
6	A. And
.7	Q. Oh, you were in the army at the
8	time?
L9	A. Yeah. And they were pushing to
20	the Yallow and I guess MacArthur felt that if you
21	crossed Yallow and and took care of the
22	so-called Chinese communists that would be a end of
23	the war and for a long period of time.

24

And MacArthur released him and I

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 guess in terms of his position as commander and
- 3 chief, he felt that he didn't have the right to do
- 4 certain things. And MacArthur was a very strong
- 5 man.
- Q. Yes.
- 7 A. They used to call him Empire from
- 8 Japan when I got there, you know? This is what he
- 9 was. So, anyhow, Riffley came in then. And
- 10 Eisenhower came over as president to visit. And
- what upset me personally and I know about a lot of
- guys, we're in the trenches now. This is getting
- 13 towards the end.
- 14 And one of our regiments was
- assigned to Koje-do which was a prisoner of war
- 16 island. And Sigman Rhee saw the war coming to an
- 17 end and he wanted to extend the war so he let the
- 18 prisoners go. He repatriated all the prisoners.
- So, now behind me I've got
- thousands and thousands of North Koreans, Chinese,
- 21 being repatriated and in front of me I've got
- 22 thousands and thousands trying to take our
- 23 position. And it's a very demoralizing feeling.
- 24 said, what am I doing here? We're defending the

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 man's country and he's letting all these people go
- 3 because he wants to extend the war, for many
- 4 reasons. We were building roads, we were building
- 5 schools and so forth and so on.
- And then of course we didn't mind
- 7 the cease-fire.
- 8 I mentioned to you that I went
- 9 back two years ago. In 2001 the Korean Government
- 10 was celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the
- 11 Korean War. Started in '50, ended in '53. And
- 12 they invited Veterans back as their guests for five
- 13 **days.**
- 14 And it was in kind of a lottery
- system and I was picked as one of the guys to go in
- 16 October of 2001.
- Well, after 9/11, they cancelled
- everything. Nobody was going to go on that trip.
- 19 But I -- I wanted to go so I went on my own with my
- 20 wife, who's now my wife. And we went to Korea. I
- 21 had already contacted the mayor because I was the
- 22 guest speaker of New York State Korean War Veterans
- here in Saratoga and he was a guest, Mayor of
- 24 Seoul.

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- 2 And he get in his car and he was
- 3 going to come over. So, now I'm going back after
- 4 fifty years and I flew in Incheon. Before I came
- 5 in, in a landing craft, now I'm flying in, big
- 6 airport. And Seoul is magnificent. I mean they
- 7 really built this city up. When I left it was
- 8 nothing. Just main gates you know the north,
- 9 south, east.
- 10 So, my first experience was you
- 11 know, well I can't believe that they really did
- 12 this in fifty years. That's a very -- very modern
- 13 city and they've done so much with it, you know.
- So, while I was in Seoul, we stayed in an army
- base in Incheon and we stayed in what they call an
- 16 army recreation center. It's a beautiful hotel.
- 17 And from there I took tours.
- We went back to Ganande but you
- 19 couldn't obviously go into the Theve Peta because
- 20 they had observation towers. South Korean pretty
- 21 much had the observation towers. And the first
- thing in the observation tower you looked across
- there, the North Korean flag flying with the gold
- 24 star and the red flag. And you're looking across

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- and you know, fifty years later it's still two
- 3 thousand yards each way, you know. With tanks,
- 4 artillery pieces and soldiers on both sides, a
- 5 hundred and sixty miles long, a fence.
- 6 So -- so that was quite an
- 7 experience to go. And then I went to Ochan and
- 8 It's still there. And the -- they still meet to
- 9 talk about the infractions of the cease-fire.
- 10 So you you could of been a JON
- now and this side of the room where they had the
- 12 negotiations is two South Korean soldiers standing
- 13 there. On the other side was two North Korean
- 14 soldiers. I'm looking at the North Korean
- 15 soldiers, you know.
- Now you look over on their side
- and they've got a tower and all of North Korean's
- 18 steps. And it was just a weird feeling to be
- 19 looking at North Korean's again.
- 20 Then there was what's called a
- 21 frigid feeling that we went down to visit. When
- they repatriated the prisoners in 1953, you would
- cross that bridge, north or south, if you were a
- 24 prisoner of the United States or United Nations you

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 could come into South Korea. Or if you were an
- 3 American you could come into South Korea. But once
- 4 you crossed that bridge, there's no return.
- 5 So, it was a very interesting
- 6 thing, that bridge is still there. And they still
- 7 have people who are being patriated by crossing
- 8 that bridge.
- 9 So, seeing that and seeing Korea
- 10 was quite an experience for me. And then they had
- 11 the Korean War Museum which just opened up about
- 12 seven or eight years ago. Beautiful. Right --
- 13 right there where I was staying in Yeongcheon.
- 14 And I toured the museum and it was beautiful. It
- was a Korean War Museum and they had a Korean War
- section, when you walked in there and you could
- 17 see -- very little on the United States. And I
- said to the curator I said, you know, I don't see
- 19 too much about the United States. He says, this is
- 20 the Korean War Museum, it's not the United States
- 21 War museum you know, but it's good.
- So he took me in the back he gave
- 23 me a beautiful color catalog of the whole museum.
- He says, I want you to take this and I want to

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 thank you for saving our country. Actually it's
- 3 his country you know. But I heard that over and
- 4 over again from the old Koreans. Thank you, thank
- 5 you, thank you. The little ones don't know
- 6 anything about it because it was too many years
- 7 ago.
- 8 So, just going back and seeing
- 9 the South Korean Government being reconstructed
- that way, and the people being prosperous, made me
- 11 feel that yes, it was worthwhile. That what I did
- and so many hundreds of thousands did was
- 13 worthwhile and I think saved the Korean Government.
- 14 And even today where it is, it's very -- very
- 15 rewarding.
- North Korea is in bad shape.
- 17 What we heard about the North Koreans because I did
- 18 talk with a couple of Bosses who had talked with
- some defectors they said they had no radios, no
- 20 telephone. They can't correspond with anybody
- 21 outside of North Korea. They don't know what's
- 22 going on in South Korea. They don't realize what's
- going on in their own country.
- When I looked across at North

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- 2 Korea, it was all these buildings. But through
- 3 binoculars they were fake. It was just a facade.
- 4 And they played loud speakers all day long, music.
- 5 So what they told us, being told to the people they
- 6 play this music all day long and at night they turn
- on the lights and until ten o'clock they turn them
- 8 off but there's nothing there.
- 9 They're trying to show South
- 10 Koreans that they're very prosperous. So you know,
- 11 that kind of play was something very interesting to
- 12 find out what happened to the inside of the
- 13 country. And hopefully you know, that they will be
- 14 someday reunification. And they do -- South Korean
- government built a roadway right to the Korean
- border, a major highway. And the North Koreans
- 17 never finished it. And it had been constant talk
- about reunification back and forth. And it hasn't
- 19 happened yet. But there are some cracks. They are
- 20 letting some people visit, relatives in North Korea
- 21 under their control in a -- in a village that's set
- 22 up specifically for that.
- 23 And there were some Korean units
- 24 in not this one but the last couple visits. And

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- then when I was there they were hosting the World
- 3 Cup Soccer, South Korea and -- and Japan. And
- 4 North Korea was participating. There's a lot of
- 5 cooperation there.
- So, maybe someday they will.
- 7 There is a -- it's like the
- 8 Korean War Memorial in Washington, they'll raise
- 9 the flag of Iwo Jima. They have a huge glow in
- 10 their museum outside. And it's got a big crack in
- it. And the top of the crack there's two soldiers
- 12 hugging each other. One is a North Korean, one is
- a South Korean, brothers, fourth brothers. And
- it's a very symbolic monument to people.
- 15 And so I went to a land I never
- heard of and people I never met. I was residing in
- 17 Korea, forgotten war. And I had -- I enjoyed my
- 18 experience because that's what I wanted to do. And
- 19 I became a teacher and an administrator -- I was an
- 20 administrator for thirty years.
- 21 And what I learned -- in my
- training being a platoon leader and an officer and
- 23 so forth, his good organization skills, good
- 24 management skills, good people skills, and that

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- 2 really helped me in my civilian life.
- So, I stayed with reserve
- 4 program. I tried to set the seventh Division out
- 5 of New York chapter and when they were disbanded I
- 6 went to the Civil Affairs Unit in the Bronx. And I
- 7 spent thirty-one years all together between my
- 8 active and my reserve time. And I retired as a
- 9 full colonel in the -- in the reserves.
- 10 Q. In what year did you retire?
- 11 A. 1981. You get thirty-one years
- of service. Thirty years and I got thirty-one.
- But my unit in -- in New York City, the Civil
- 14 Affairs Unit has been recalled now seven times
- since we started in Afghanistan and Iraq and
- 16 Somalia. Because Civil Affairs -- you really deal
- with populace after the Battle, you know
- reconstruct a school, reconstruct a hospital,
- 19 reconstruct the banking system. And that's what we
- 20 were doing. And I was an educational officer, you
- 21 would be a legal consultant, you would be a
- 22 financial consultant. So they get called up quite
- 23 **a bit.**
- 24 And my unit's been over there

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- 2 many, many times. In 1990, I guess it was, yeah
- 3 '90, a good friend of mine was served with -- given
- 4 instruction in Washington and became Chief of the
- 5 Army Reserve, Officer Chief of Army Reserve, OCOR,
- 6 Major General William Ward
- 7 (phonetic spelling). And we got very friendly.
- 8 And I said to Bill, I called him at the Pentagon, I
- 9 said Bill, recall me. Because I had -- I had a
- 10 general slot for recall. And he said how old are
- 11 you? I said just turned fifty. He said no, called
- 12 me the day before I would have taken you. So I
- 13 never got back in again.
- So, most of my time has been
- 15 reserve. But a good experience in reserve because
- we worked with major headquarters. Being at Civil
- 17 Affairs, I worked with ForceCom and that was a
- great experience, a great learning experience.
- 19 Learned what the whole military is all about.
- 20 Because in trade off which is down in Fort Monroe
- is called the training of Doctrine Command. And
- 22 these were Four Star General slots. And their job
- 23 was to predict the training and the Doctrine for
- 24 the next ten years. And they put it all through

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- 2 computers and they went through everything,
- 3 threat -- threat plans which they checked the
- 4 threat around the world every day. And they
- 5 developed a training program to fight a war ten
- 6 years down the line.
- 7 Then you go to FORCECOM which I
- 8 went to and that's the forces command which now
- 9 takes the forces, the instructor, the training to
- 10 fight that war. Then you go to REDCOM they take
- 11 the forces -- they take the training they put in
- the field and that's when they go to Fort Irving
- out in California. And they put it into live
- 14 action.
- So, I said you know, the military
- is not that dumb. Everybody says you know,
- 17 military intelligence is dumb. And Oxymoron. And
- I said no, they're pretty smart, they know what
- 19 they're doing. We make a lot of mistakes,
- obviously. I had a lot of faith in the military
- 21 after being in the reserves that many years, you
- 22 know.
- So I spent my years as an
- 24 educator and ended up in Rutland County, principal

- 1 Roy Conklin 8-27-2004
- of a middle school and a high school. And I went
- 3 to Connecticut and was principle, high school
- 4 superintendent and then I retired.
- 5 So, I had two careers. I retired
- 6 from the military and I retired in education. And
- 7 very happy I did.
- 8 MR. RUSSERT: Okay. Well, thank
- 9 you very much.
- 10 A. Thank you for having me. I --
- 11 I'm American Legion, I am a life member.
- MR. RUSSERT: Okay.
- A. Korean War I'm a life member.
- 14 which used to be called the Retired Officer
- 15 Association life member. It's now called MOAA and
- 16 VFW I belong to. I was very active. I was
- 17 commander of the American Legion in Litchfield
- about five years. And also represented an officer
- in the Korean War Veteran's Association.
- But I'm -- I'm off now, right?
- MR. RUSSERT: No.
- A. Oh. I think so.
- The one print out you have on
- 24 paper was done by the American Legion. They took

1				Roy	Conklin - 8-27-2004
2	that	chapt	er t	chirt	teen. They reproduced it and they
3	sent	that	out	you	know.
4					MR. RUSSERT: Okay. All right.
5				Q.	Okay. Thank you.
6					MR. RUSSERT: Thank you.
7					(The interview ended.)
8	pwss				
9					
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1	Roy Conklin - 8-27-2004
2	This is a transcription of the audio
3	provided to us. It is completed to the best of our
4	skill and ability. The transcript consists of
5	pages 1 through 56 inclusive.
6	
7	ndil smyg
8	Judith Spriggs
9	Associated Reporters Int'l., Inc.
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24

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