

**Ronald\_J\_Coulston\_September 12, 2006**

Shannon Berndt: Today we are at the Nevada State Veteran's Home in Boulder City, Nevada. The date is May 11, 2006. We are interviewing Ronald J. Coulston. My name is Shannon Berndt and our cameraman is Ed Selsman [SP] 00:24. Thank you so much for helping us do this project, your willingness to be interviewed. Let us go back a little bit and tell us a little bit about what you were doing before you enlisted into the army.

Ronald J. Coulston: Driving a truck.

Shannon Berndt: Driving truck. What did you haul?

Ronald J. Coulston: \_\_\_\_\_ (00:49)

Shannon Berndt: [Laughter] How old were you?

Ronald J. Coulston: Sixty-eight.

Shannon Berndt: You were 68?

Ronald J. Coulston: No. You mean when I went into the army?

Shannon Berndt: Yeah. How old were you when you were driving truck?

Ronald J. Coulston: Hm. Sixteen.

Shannon Berndt: Sixteen. You were pretty young to be driving truck.

Ronald J. Coulston: Well, my dad owned the trucks so I got to drive them.

Shannon Berndt: So you got to do it. You learned early to drive trucks.

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah.

Shannon Berndt: So that was---your family business was a trucking business?

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah.

Shannon Berndt: What made you decide to enlist into the army?

Ronald J. Coulston: Oh, I did not have a reason. I just enlisted.

Shannon Berndt: You and your friends did not get together and say, hey...

Ronald J. Coulston: No.

Shannon Berndt: No. What did your parents think?

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Ronald J. Coulston: They was for it. They had a time for me. I went in while I was 17.

Shannon Berndt: When you were 17. Boy, that is young. Where were you living when you joined the service?

Ronald J. Coulston: In Watsonville, California.

Shannon Berndt: Oh, Watsonville \_\_\_\_\_ (02:11). How come you chose the army?

Ronald J. Coulston: Mm, well, they had an enlistment place so it is where I enlisted.

Shannon Berndt: Oh.

Ronald J. Coulston: So I---there---that was the only that I had [overlapping voices] to enlist.

Shannon Berndt: That was your only choice, huh. Well, tell me about your first days of the service. Did you think you had made a mistake?

Ronald J. Coulston: No.

Shannon Berndt: Did you like it? Boot camp?

Ronald J. Coulston: No.

Shannon Berndt: [Laughter] Was it pretty rough?

Ronald J. Coulston: It was not rough for me. I \_\_\_\_\_ (03:15). Well, I do not know what to say.

Shannon Berndt: Sometimes, you know, maybe I think in earlier times men were a little tougher than they are now, so you just took it with a grain of salt and did what you were told, huh?

Ronald J. Coulston: Yep.

Shannon Berndt: So what did you do in the army? What was your job?

Ronald J. Coulston: Artillery.

Shannon Berndt: Artillery—what does that include?

Ronald J. Coulston: The artillery handles the guns.

Shannon Berndt: Big guns...

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Ronald J. Coulston: Well, I was on 40 millimeter and machine guns.

Shannon Berndt: Oh. Forty millimeter and machine guns. Wow. Did you see combat?

Ronald J. Coulston: Not the way that you think.

Shannon Berndt: Oh.

Ronald J. Coulston: I was in Korea and on the DMZ. When you was there they just shot at you.

Shannon Berndt: Oh, they did.

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah, but we could not---we did not shoot back.

Shannon Berndt: Because this was after---this was after the official war was over and you were...

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah.

Shannon Berndt: ...in the demilitarized...

Ronald J. Coulston: Right.

Shannon Berndt: ...zone. So you were actually in Korea during your time in the army?

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah.

Shannon Berndt: How long were you over there?

Ronald J. Coulston: Sixteen months.

Shannon Berndt: Sixteen months. Were you ever fearful for your life?

Ronald J. Coulston: No.

Shannon Berndt: No.

Ronald J. Coulston: Well, bullets were going over my head. When they shoot at you, you hear the bullets, but it did not hit me. They did not hit you.

Shannon Berndt: Well, you are lucky. Did you have any casualties in your unit when you were over there?

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Ronald J. Coulston: No.

Shannon Berndt: No.

Ronald J. Coulston: Not that I know of.

Shannon Berndt: Pretty peaceful then. How about the food and provisions. Did you have good food while you were over there?

Ronald J. Coulston: Right. Most everybody that is in the service complained about the food, but I did not eat \_\_\_\_\_ (05:57).

Shannon Berndt: (Chuckling) Shows you were staunch again. You just---how did you pass the time when you had free time?

Ronald J. Coulston: Free time?

Shannon Berndt: Yeah, like did you work on the weekends? Did you---were you able to have passes to go into town, or...

Ronald J. Coulston: Oh, yeah. We had passes. You would go into this town and order wine.

Shannon Berndt: And what did you do for recreation? Did you ever do anything?

Ronald J. Coulston: I did not have any one thing that I wanted---that I could do...

Shannon Berndt: You did not.

Ronald J. Coulston: ...in the service because I---most everybody that I knew they had something to do. Well, I did not have anything to do.

Shannon Berndt: You did not go along with them and do it?

Ronald J. Coulston: No.

Shannon Berndt: Did you make lots of friends?

Ronald J. Coulston: Oh, yeah.

Shannon Berndt: Do you still keep in contact with them?

Ronald J. Coulston: No. I met a few here in town.

Shannon Berndt: That you knew from...

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Ronald J. Coulston: Oh, yeah.

Shannon Berndt: Oh. That was nice.

Ronald J. Coulston: But I did not keep in touch with them because I did not like them to begin with. So I talked to them a little bit and then after that I forgot them.

Shannon Berndt: How did you celebrate the holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving over there?

Ronald J. Coulston: Well, they fed us good on the holidays. But I did not celebrate on any of them. All it was, was away from home and it did not seem right for us to celebrate or for anybody to celebrate with.

Shannon Berndt: Did your family and friends send you letters and packages?

Ronald J. Coulston: Oh, yeah. My mother sent goods and packages, but I do not even remember what she sent.

Shannon Berndt: It was probably some baked goods or something.

Ronald J. Coulston: Oh, yeah.

Shannon Berndt: Something that you needed, too. What skills or lessons did you learn?

Ronald J. Coulston: Skills. I learned how to shoot guns. That is---what it---something they do, and who did not?

Shannon Berndt: Tell me about your most memorable moment.

Ronald J. Coulston: Most memorable moment.

Shannon Berndt: Or most memorable experience.

Ronald J. Coulston: Hm. Well, they sent me from Portland up to Yakima. You know where Yakima is?

Shannon Berndt: In Washington.

Ronald J. Coulston: In Washington and to shoot the guns. It was the only place where you could shoot them. That was my greatest memory, shooting the guns.

Shannon Berndt: Did you like shooting the 40 millimeters and the machine guns? Did you learn on other guns also?

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Ronald J. Coulston: Carbine is the gun, the long gun, to carry around on your shoulder. You asked me a question and I do not remember. I am thinking I got---I have memories of it.

Shannon Berndt: Fort Lewis is where you were in boot camp?

Ronald J. Coulston: No, boot camp was in Fort Ord and Fort Bliss. For eight weeks, each one of them.

Shannon Berndt: And then Fort Lewis was just where you were stationed for a time?

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah.

Shannon Berndt: And then you went to Yakima, Washington, to learn, to train, on the guns.

Ronald J. Coulston: No, when I came back from Korea I went to Fort Lewis.

Shannon Berndt: Oh, when you came back from Korea, okay. Okay, let us see. Do you recall the day you left the service?

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah, it was---I remember when I left. Ain't that something?

Shannon Berndt: Did you go directly home, do you remember?

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah.

Shannon Berndt: Were your mom and dad happy to see you?

Ronald J. Coulston: Well, as happy as they could be.

Shannon Berndt: [Laughter] Well, what did you do to get your life going again after the service? What did...

Ronald J. Coulston: I went to work for my dad driving truck and I worked there for a while. And I worked in a---I worked at the---I worked on the mushroom factory. All I did was a good job. And I worked---they pay---they shovel \_\_\_\_\_ (13:45) they were good to us. So I did.

Shannon Berndt: And how long did you work there?

Ronald J. Coulston: Oh, just a few months. I did not like shoveling so I quit.

Shannon Berndt: And what did you do for your lifelong work?

Ronald J. Coulston: I found work---I always worked at the Sahara.

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Shannon Berndt: At the Sahara?

Ronald J. Coulston: I worked there for 20 years.

Shannon Berndt: What did you do there?

Ronald J. Coulston: Parked cars.

Shannon Berndt: Oh! How did you end up here in the Las Vegas valley?

Ronald J. Coulston: My brother was---went to work here at the Fremont \_\_\_\_\_ (14:40) at keno and he asked me if I would be interested in working there. I said yeah, it was better than what I am doing.

Shannon Berndt: So you were still living in California then?

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah. So I drove here and---44 years ago.

Shannon Berndt: Forty-four years ago.

Ronald J. Coulston: Well, I am sixty-two. I guess that was 44 years.

Shannon Berndt: And you have lived in Las Vegas that whole time, or did you live in Henderson or Boulder City?

Ronald J. Coulston: Las Vegas.

Shannon Berndt: So you worked at the Sahara for 20 years. Did you work any place else?

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah. I marked tickets at the Fremont when I first started here, and the Las Vegas Club, and I drove cab for a while. What else did I do. I guess that is it.

Shannon Berndt: And you have family here?

Ronald J. Coulston: Oh yeah. All the family is here.

Shannon Berndt: I noticed the picture. A very nice looking family. Is that picture—in the uniform—is that picture of you?

Ronald J. Coulston: Yeah. That is the only one I kept.

Shannon Berndt: The only one you kept. It is very nice looking. Are you a member of any veterans' organizations?

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Ronald J. Coulston: No.

Shannon Berndt: No. All right, well, unless there are any other memories you would like to share with us, that is all the questions I have for you.

Ronald J. Coulston: Well, I thank you.

Shannon Berndt: Well, thank you for helping us with this. We really appreciate it. It was very nice meeting you.