

Sandy Hook, Gateway NRA, National Park Service
An Oral History Interview with Richard Busch
51st Artillery, Battery C, IFC Area, Fort Hancock
1965-1969

Interviewed by Tom Hoffman, NPS
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Transcribed by Mary Rasa, 2011



The Fort Hancock IFC where Mr. Busch worked. C-2 is in the foreground, barracks are to the right and C-1 is in the background.

Editor's notes in parenthesis ()

TH: Hello, this is Park Ranger-Historian, Tom Hoffman. I am going to conduct an oral history interview with Mr. Richard Busch. Today is Sunday, March 28, 2004. Okay, our first question today is when and where were you born?

RB: I was born in Bronx County, New York on December 27, 1946.

TH: Where did you graduate from?

RB: I graduated from (inaudible) High School in the Bronx and the New York Institute of Technology which is also in New York State.

TH: When abouts was that?

RB: I graduated just before I came in the Army.

TH: And that was, and you came into the Army....

RB: On June 1965.

TH: Okay. Was your father or grandfather in the military?

RB: Both. My father was in, he was in the Army prior to World War II. It was in the Depression. He couldn't find a job. He was stationed at Fort Simms in Texas in the 13th Texas Infantry and he was there and they went overseas, of course, to Europe and whatever and he got out when the War was over. And my grandfather was in the New York National Guard, the 69th Infantry, the Rainbow Division when War was declared and I don't know if it was called federalized back then or whatever but they were called up and he also served overseas in France and then he was released from military service when he came back from overseas. They were both infantrymen.

TH: So your father was down in Texas just prior to World War II?

RB: Yeah. He was at Fort Simms. That's where he was stationed. I remember hearing him saying, you know, he heard on the radio that Pearl Harbor had been attacked and whatever.

TH: What's your father's name?

RB: My father's name was Nelson Busch.

TH: Nelson Busch.

RB: Right.

TH: And he, I guess was in maybe like the 1930s or ...

RB: He went in, yeah, I don't know when he enlisted but he said he couldn't get a job. He was married to my mother at that time. They had one child, my oldest brother. He needed to work. He couldn't find work anywhere. So you joined the Army.

TH: Yeah. It was tough times but I could understand that.

RB: And they sent him down there to Texas. (laughter)

TH: Was also your dad from up here?

RB: He was from Brooklyn, New York.

TH: Okay.

RB: My mother was not born in this country.

TH: And you grandfather's name who served in the Rainbow Division?

RB: Morris Busch.

TH: Because that was one of the famous divisions I think.

RB: Yeah. The "Fighting 69th." They were New York National Guard mostly from New York City.

TH: Was that his unit?

RB: Yeah.

TH: The "Fighting 69th."

RB: I don't know the company or anything.

TH: But it's a famous regiment.

RB: Yeah, he was in the Armory I think on 23rd Street. I think that is Lexington Avenue in front of the Armory. I am not sure. It's a big Armory down there.

TH: Because that is the big division commanded by Douglas McArthur.

RB: Oh really?

TH: Yeah.

RB: I knew he was a brigadier (general) in World War I but I didn't know...

TH: Yeah. I am pretty sure he commanded the famous Rainbow Division that was made up of a lot of units. Okay, well let's swing into how did you become involved at Fort Hancock?

RB: Well, I was sent here by the Army. (laughter)

TH: Well you enlisted, right?

RB: I enlisted. I enlisted because I never won anything, but at that time the Vietnam War was going on and they were doing draft call up by birthdays, I think. They put in, they picked the numbers out, you know. They picked them out and every single time my number was in the first ten numbers. As a matter of fact, while I was in the Army I was

drafted as well. I got a draft notice while I was in the Army sent directly to my military address with my military rank and service number on it and it said that I had to report for the induction physical. I said, "Look at this," and I took it into the first sergeant. The first sergeant was Carlos O'Neill at the time. I said, "Will you look at this. Is this a joke?" He said, "If it's a joke it looks darn good because it looks just like." And we called the number on there and I tried to explain to the person that I was already in the Army and they started to tell me that if I didn't report for the induction physical I would be arrested and sent to jail for three or four or five years or whatever it was. I don't know. And I put my first sergeant on the phone and finally I heard, he got mad and he said, "I don't think you understand. I am First Sergeant O'Neill and Specialist 5th Class Busch will not appear for induction physical because he will be working here at Fort Hancock." And it finally got through to the woman on the other end of the phone that we, I was in the Army already. So, I never won anything, but they sure as heck wanted me. But when I saw my number keep coming up like that I said, "I might as well join." (laughter)

TH: And that was when? What year?

RB: That was what May, I guess I went down. The end of May, after I graduated college I went down to the recruiting station on Gun Hill Road and White Plains Road. There was an Army Recruiting Station there. And I went in and originally I signed up for combat engineers because I had graduated engineering school. And then my father said, "You are not going to be doing what you think you are going to be doing. You are blowing things up. You are going to be planting land mine fields and clearing them and whatever else and booby traps. That's what Combat Engineers do, you know." So, I went back and I said, "What else you got?" You know, so they said there is something called ARADCOM. (I said) "What's that?" "It's the Army Air Defense Command. You can get home town enlistment, you know, if you sign up for three years." I said, "Okay, we'll take that." So, they, since I hadn't been inducted yet they changed the paperwork. The sergeant changed the paperwork and I reported, I think the beginning of June. I am not sure, to induction at Whitehall Street, Manhattan. It's not there no more and I was shipped to Fort Dix and started basic training at Fort Dix. I was sent home on leave for a couple of weeks and then came here, reported here to Fort Hancock. See, I would have been I guess the beginning of August maybe. The end of July, the beginning of August, or middle of August that I came here.

TH: Wow, that's a pretty quick period of time there. You know, just enlisting and going right over here to Fort Dix.

RB: Yeah. The Army when I came in at that time the Vietnam War was on. Okay, but they really weren't, they really weren't, you know, 500,000 guys over there yet. The build up was small. The Marines had just started to come over there. I think the First Division had just gotten there and that was about it and Special Forces was there about the time. There weren't, when I joined there wasn't that big buildup. I remember the Parade Ground behind my barracks building which was National Oceanographic whatever...

TH: The NOAA Building.

RB: The NOAA Building, yeah.

TH: Barracks 74.

RB: 74 Okay. That was my barracks, alright. That was company headquarters, battery headquarters, everything was there. The mess hall was there. Everything in one building and behind that the big field between that and the officers houses I don't know if there was a name on that field but we used to do a monthly retreat or whatever, you know. (inaudible) Do the whole nine yards except when it was in wintertime and it was way too cold to go out there. And I remember the Army flag is white with the insignia on it but when they go to war the flag is changed to blue so you don't think it's the surrender flag or something. I remember a ceremony when they actually changed to flag to blue. So, we are now at war, back here. You know, fold up the white flag. The whole rest of the time I was in the Army there was no white flag.

TH: That is interesting. Now where do they fly the flag?

RB: When we paraded. You had the United States Army flag and you had the American flag.

TH: Oh, out on the parade field.

RB: Yeah. The parade field.

TH: That's interesting.

RB: The Army's normal flag is white with its insignia on it and when it goes into battle or whatever then that flag is changed to blue flag with the insignia on it.

TH: So, that's the color guard?

RB: Yeah. That's the color guard. That's the battle flag would be on that. They change it to blue.

TH: Okay. So, what were your start and ending dates at Fort Hancock? You have already mentioned....

RB: I arrived here, it was funny...I arrived here on a weekend, on a holiday weekend so that must have been the end of July beginning of August. No. I arrived here Labor Day weekend. That's right. I arrived here Labor Day weekend and my folks had left and I didn't own a car. And the first thing the clerk said was, "Do you have anyplace that you can go around here for like leave or pass?" I said, "Yeah, I live up in the city." (He said) "Good. Give me the address." He typed it right up, handed it to me. "Come back

Monday morning.” (laughter) He handed me my pass and I said, “How do I get out of here now?” My folks left. He didn’t want to know me. Yeah. Come back Monday morning or Tuesday morning, Tuesday morning. That’s right, it was Labor Day Weekend. That would have been ’65. Labor Day of ’65 I arrived here. Labor Day weekend actually and to 1969, April of ’69 I left here, no March because I was on leave for a while. March of ’69.

TH: So, you are arriving here then in the...

RB: ’65.

TH: And that was the Labor Day Weekend.

RB: And I remember that and the clerk said, “Come back Monday, I mean Tuesday. See you Tuesday. I won’t be able to deal with you right now.” Took the pass up. Somebody signed it. Some officer signed it. “Yeah, tell him to come back Tuesday.” (laughter)

TH: But what did you do?

RB: I went home on the bus. At that time, you go straight out past the Gate. There was a federal park on the other side or a state park

TH: State park, yeah Sandy Hook State Park.

RB: I went up there to where (Route) 36 comes down.

TH: The bridge.

RB: There were some buildings there on the other side of the bridge and there was a bus stop there.

TH: Still is.

RB: And said here, “take this to Port Authority.” It was an Academy bus and, “Take this to the Port Authority,” and I got on the train and went home. My folks were sitting there and the door opens up and here I am. “What the hell are you doing here?” “They told me to come back Tuesday.” (laughter) They took my bag and locked it up, my duffle bag and locked it up and that was it.

TH: Okay. Did you know anything about this place, about Fort Hancock?

RB: Didn’t even know it existed.

TH: Really, so this is like...

RB: I just knew I was going to Fort Hancock, New Jersey while I was in basic training. I already had the orders. Everything was set. I had no idea where Fort Hancock, New Jersey was. They told me that when I signed the contract. That was where I would be assigned, Fort Hancock, New Jersey.

TH: Did you know about the type of job you would be performing before you came?

RB: Originally it said I was going to be a launcher crewman, working in the launching area and when I reported to the battery commander and he interviewed me, spoke with me for a while. I don't remember his name. Nice fella I remember that. He was a captain. He says, "If it is okay with you I am going to change you from the Launching Area to the Fire Control Area. I think you will like it better there." Alright. I am a private. You know, a captain was like being presented to the commander in chief when you were just out of basic training. So and he changed my orders which he had the authority to do and I got another set of orders which said I was being changed to and I was sent to C-2 which is the site closest to the water. That is C-1 by the gate (near Horseshoe Cove).

TH: This is down at the Launcher Area?

RB: No. No. No. The Fire Control. The radar site.

TH: Oh, you were at the radar site. Okay.

RB: The launch controls were where the missiles were. That old Ajax missile and you have the Launch Control Trailer outside now. It used to be way inside.

TH: Right.

RB: By road. I was changed from Launch Control to IFC, Integrated Fire Control, where the radars were and I was sent, assigned to the rear site, C-2.

TH: Right, so C-2 is not the ocean side.

RB: That's the ocean side. C-1 is the front side, the one closest to the road.

TH: Okay, we are talking about the radar site at Horseshoe Cove.

RB: Okay. I stopped there before I came up here and was looking around. The radio antenna for the AN/TRC-47 radios is facing the wrong way. It is supposed to face 180 degrees the other way.

TH: Down there. Which one is this?

RB: It's on a telephone pole, two square like, it looks like grill(s) that go in an oven. They are vertical you know.

TH: Right.

RB: But they are supposed to be facing the other way. They are like when you actually look at them it's like a launch triangle also. It's on a telephone pole next to or by the interconnecting building for the two radar vans. Alright. That is facing the wrong way. It's supposed to face towards the Launching Area. That was our backup system. If something was to happen to our telephone wires that connected us to the Launch Control Area for communications, alright, then we would go to this radio system, the AN/TRC-47. It was a two radio set. One on top of each other. Big monstrous things in the Interconnecting building. The corridor (Inter-connecting Corridor, or ICC) it was called. It sat there and it's facing the wrong way. And the LOPAR acquisition radar is not painted white. It's painted either very faded OD (Olive Drab) or a color we used to call dog shit brown. Mostly dog shit brown all the ones that I saw were painted that color. It's not painted white. I couldn't see too much more other than I could see two of the tracking radar antennas. The ladders are gone, on one its still there. Those ladders were heated for the wintertime so they wouldn't ice up. We could come out and without gloves you could come out on the ladder and get up on top of the radar antenna.

TH: Heated metal ladders?

RB: Yeah. They were heated. They were on all the time from whenever it got cold out here where it would start freezing to whenever we didn't need it. They stayed on all the time. As a matter of fact the switch is still there on one of them. I noticed it. That little blue thing that comes up.

TH: Blue switch box.

RB: I don't remember what color it was painted then. I think it was just aluminum, you know, dark aluminum. Now, since it was painted blue. All I could see this from the roadway there from the gate where I could get close to it. That's where the switches were and you always made sure they were on. You could take your gloves off and climb right up on both sides. It was the only site that I knew that had heated ladders because they would freeze in the wintertime. You would slide right off.

TH: Sure. It could be dangerous with that ice on it.

RB: Even as low as they are here. That's at least twelve feet off the ground I guess.

TH: How did they manage to heat the ladders?

RB: Electrically. There were just cables on the ground.

TH: Really? Ran cables to them with electricity. They heated the ladder, wow, for safety.

RB: And there was also you notice a big ring around the antenna on the platform.

TH: Up on each platform there was like a big ring, right.

RB: There was a blower motor, huge one that sat inside that and then there was a canvas like clamshell cover that went over that and the blower motor kept it inflated. And if you were going to battle stations for real, if in other words you were going to be under attack you would have to run outside, go up on the antenna and the big zippers you would have to pull and yank that and pull the zippers down and the clamshell would fall back so incase there was a nuclear explosion or whatever it wouldn't foul the antenna if the bubble was carried away. We dropped the bubbles right away.

TH: Yeah, that bubble, was that called the radome? Was that the inflatable?

RB: That's the inflatable one. It's just to protect. It was very heavy. It took the whole crew to get out there and move one, to put it in place because we took it down a couple of times while I was here because they did major work on the antennas. One time they changed one antenna. We wanted to see what it was like so yanked the thing and FOOM, the thing came right down (laughter) You know, just the way it was designed to. Hey, that is pretty cool.

TH: You had also earlier mentioned that there was the compass rose.

RB: Oh, yeah. When I got here there was the compass rose. I was shocked to see that was still right out at the front gate. That had nothing to do with the orientation of the site. Some of us were very directionally challenged. (laughter)

TH: Which way is which, right.

RB: When we had exercises out here sometimes, you know, you would have to give a direction of which way you saw something and the directions would come back wrong or whatever so finally they painted that out there (laughter) so we knew which way north and south and east and west. They didn't issue us compasses or anything like that.

TH: Was that painted while you were here?

RB: Yes.

TH: So during the years you were here...

RB: I was here in '65. It was put on in about '65.

TH: Really?

RB: That I remember. It was unbelievable.

TH: And also what you were saying the building were painted like you know the...

RB: The colors of the buildings, the outside of the buildings and this was in the radar control area and the launch control area, all the buildings were white with black trim.

TH: White?

RB: I think I saw you have like an off green down there.

TH: Yeah.

RB: The inter-connecting, well that's the wrong color. It's white. I used to have pictures but I moved around so many times that I lost all my pictures and everything and it would show them. Well, they were black and white but it would show the LOPAR radar was not white. It looks like a very dark color. You can't tell its brown but you can see the buildings were all white. That was to reflect heat. As a matter of fact, I think it was standard throughout the Army missile sites because D Battery was in Holmdel. It had the exact same color scheme, the exact same barracks. Well, they had tin barracks that they slept in. They were on top of Telegraph Hill. A Battery was in Old Bridge, New Jersey. They were right by the highway. Its unbelievable, the Launch Area is right by the highway and colors of the buildings, everything was exactly the same as we had. All the buildings were white. Even down in the Launch Control Area, the Missile Assembly Building everything was white. No. It wasn't black trim it was dark green, dark green, almost like your uniform pants or that tie, you uniform tie.

TH: Like a forest green.

RB: Kelly green. No forest green they told us was the color of our fatigues. This was a very bright dark green like your tie.

TH: Like the tie. So green trim.

RB: Green trim but all the buildings were white.

TH: Because the buildings we have down there are a combination of cinderblock, some are cinderblock, like the (Inter)-connecting Corridor building is like a cement block.

RB: The (Inter)-connecting Corridor building and then they laid a pad down and the two vans came up to it and cables ran up to the antennas and same on my site. Now the front site has another building there. I think that was the one that I saw that was, had some stuff laying in front of it or whatever. They had what they call a LOPAR acquisition, not a LOPAR, high power.

TH: HIPAR.

RB: High Power Acquisition Radar. Huge early warning radar and it had a solid fiberglass dome over it on the towers. Also it didn't go up very high since it was flat here. That could to about, range on it was something like 500,000 yards. We thought it was the greatest thing going because it could see a metal desk out there at 500,000 yards. It would show up. Where I was in the back site we had the older early warning radar which was an ABAR. It had no dome over it, nothing and it sat in a very small little building. It was amazing.

TH: That was that big screen. Was it that big screen that went around?

RB: Yeah.

TH: The ABAR.

RB: The high power looked just like it although five times bigger than it. It was huge. It was huge. D Battery had one in Holmdel. There's was way up. I am glad I didn't have to climb that sucker. And A Battery had an ABAR also I guess.

TH: Back where you were in the back there?

RB: We had what they called an ABAR radar which is the first early warning radar.

TH: Did you have like that antenna, like the antenna that is facing the wrong way?

RB: No it was curved. It was curved and rotated.

TH: No. I am talking about the antenna that you spotted.

RB: Oh yeah, all sites, yeah. All of them

TH: But your site had that too, all of them?

RB: Every site has them. That is your backup communication to the Launching Area. That is just a cables go out and always on telephone poles. Everywhere I went they were always on telephone poles, even Fort Bliss, the training center they were up on the telephone poles.

TH: I ask that because back where you served in the back there I don't think its there.

RB: I don't think anything is there anymore.

TH: Well, the Army...

RB: I couldn't see anything from the road.

TH: We are going to have to get down there. We are going to have to go in the back but I don't think the telephone, I think the Army took that telephone pole down on your side.

RB: They would have rotted away after thirty years. They weren't treated with anything. They were just regular telephone poles stuck in the ground.

TH: Yeah, back then and here we have got one that is still standing with the...

RB: Thirty years later.

TH: Thirty years later that's how it has been left. That's how it has been left.

RB: But the antenna on top is facing the wrong way.

TH: Well, just getting back to the buildings, the Army had left them in 1974 when they cleaned out the site. The buildings at the radar site were painted like this buff color, this light yellow color as the paint chipped and cracked.

RB: At the Radar Site?

TH: Well, after you left, because as left by the Army where the cinder block buildings down there were painted this like a yellow or buff color as that wore off over the years you could see that greenish color which is an earlier paint scheme and they...

RB: When I got here everything was white, everything was white, both areas.

TH: Okay, let's see, so your type of job you ended up with is...

RB: I was, when I left I was a crew chief. The MOS's (military occupational specialty) don't exist anymore. I was a 16C10 was what I was trained which was Nike Hercules fire control technician. I think was the title. You know, technician and I went from that to I think that was 10 and 20 and I think a 30 or something like that which is senior fire control technician and then I moved up to 10C40 which is crew chief.

TH: So, that's what you were designated when you were here?

RB: When I was here, yeah. The head crew chief on C-2.

TH: And C-2 is the...

RB: The back site. C-1 was the front site by the road.

TH: What unit or department did you work for?

RB: It was Battery C, 3rd Battalion 51st Artillery. Battalion Headquarters was here also on Fort Hancock but Gate Headquarters was up in Atlantic Highlands. I think it was the 52nd Artillery up there.

TH: Oh, up on the hill.

RB: Up on the hill. There was an Air Force unit up there also.

TH: What did they do?

RB: That was the fire direction center for this area. Actually the way the network functioned, I am trying to remember the name of this thing. Region Headquarters was at Stewart Air Force Base. The building is still there. I don't know what they are using it for now. I don't remember what its name was at the time but they directed the whole defense for New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, whatever up there. The AADCP here at Atlantic Highlands, the information there was a computer at McGuire Air Force Base, alright supposedly several stories high. Yeah, you got to remember back then computers used tubes and it had all the known flight plans it in for that day, commercial, private, whatever. It was in there. If a plane was picked up by radar in the early warning system it checked it for flight plan there. If there was no flight plan then, of course, that information would be sent up to Stewart Air Force Base which is First Region Headquarters, alright. And if it was say in our area here, alright, then it would be flashed to the AADCP at Atlantic Highlands. The AADCP then would call. Let's say we were on A status alright which means we had 15 minutes warning notice to fire, alright. They would then call C-2. What did you call the guy who answered the phone? OC line, alright.

TH: OC?

RB: OC. It's the Officers' Command line, alright. He would answer the phone, site whatever it was and say, "Okay, this is," they had codenames. I don't remember them anymore. They changed them. "Bring your site to five minute status." And just swing over, you would be in the Fire Control Van when you got the call. You would need a switchboard and flip over and hit the siren, alright. That would alert everybody whether they were above the antennas, out cutting grass, shoveling the sand off the road which we would have two inch grass down there but we had to shovel the sand back all the time. And you would drop what you were doing and run. And just report present and your position and you go into your drill. Get the equipment ready. Launch Control would bring the missiles above ground and then you would report to AADCP. They had something called the FUIF, Fire Unit Integration Unit. I learned to repair that unit. It was the worst thing I had done in my life. They pulled you out in the middle of the night to go fix it. It would put a symbol over the aircraft target that they wanted you, because it came up on your radar. You would have everything that is flying. Which one was it? Behind you was the plotting board. They would start giving you the plot, unknown and you would plot that in yellow and then they would designate the target and a symbol would come up over it. Half moon for unknown or friendly and a full circle which was

actually opened at the bottom. A computer couldn't make a circle at that time. It would come right up over the target. That's the target. Okay, the battery control officer would tell the acquisition radar the target and he would, you know, bring the thing out there and we would start tracking it. If it was within range of 200,000 yards or less of tracking radar designate it. The tracking radars would come on over and log onto it. Just follow it until they would tell us what was going on. Then I don't know how they would identify it. They would scramble fighters. Sometimes we had fighters coming out of...

TH: McGuire?

RB: McGuire Air Force Base, yeah, Phantoms at that time or sometimes they just said, "Stand down." I don't know, by radio, I don't know. They never told us exactly. Eyeballed it.

TH: So, I would like to know in your, in C Battery was this like a radar? Would they call it? You worked at the IFC or Radar Site. Are you called a radar section within the battery and then is there a launcher section?

RB: No, we were the Fire Control Platoon. That was what it was called. Each battery C-1 and C-2, there were two platoons. The Fire Control Platoon and the same thing, the Launch Control Platoon or launcher, yeah they were platoons but they were called sections down in the Launching Area.

TH: Alright, so there were sections in the Launching Area but your platoons in the IFC Area.

RB: Yeah.

TH: Okay.

RB: And you had two crews, two IFC crews assigned to each Fire Control Battery. We were responsible for the site 24 hours. Alright and then we would go off and then the next crew, the other crew would come on and switch back and forth and on the weekends we would take one weekend so they would have the whole weekend off. And they would take it the next weekend and that's how we would do it.

TH: So what were the shifts like?

RB: If we were on a maintenance shift, maintenance status, which means that two and half hours to bring ourselves back up to hopefully to bring us back up to a firing, where we could fire a missile. It was straight, you know, straight shifts. You pulled just a day shift. Go down, check some adjustments or whatever the maintenance was that needed to be done there.

TH: Was this something like eight to five?

RB: Yeah, it was on the clock. It was something like seven to three or four, nine to five or something like that. Except for the OC line had to be manned and the fire line had to be kept even if the site was down and there was no power on the equipment the lines still functioned. It was a separate power function. It had nothing to do with the vans but they sat in the Inter-connecting Corridor with the phones so you were there like as a fire watching the equipment even if it was off. The vans were down if they were doing major work on them. I remember they came out at one time to paint the vans, the insides of the vans. And re-letter so it would shine in the dark, phosphorescent paint. The power was off for like a week in the system while they painted the vans and did maintenance updates, you know, on the electric equipment put in at the same time while everything was shut off. So, that's at night. That you worked through the line operator if you designated a line operator that they would toot. You went up at six in the morning. You stayed until lunch time about 12. You got relieved by the other operator, alright and then you came back on after you ate. You stayed 'til 6, oh no, he came back up after your lunch. You were off for the afternoon then. He stayed on until 6 o'clock. That's when you did your lunch shift again and you stayed on again until midnight. He relieved you at midnight. And he stayed on until 6 o'clock the next morning.

TH: Around the clock.

RB: Yeah, that line was manned around the clock if you were on maintenance status or not. If you were on A status it was definitely around the clock and the power was on. The crews slept in the tin barracks.

TH: There was the four metal barracks buildings out at the far end.

RB: Yeah. Way down, you slept down there. We didn't come up here to sleep. You slept down there. You could bring blankets and whatever you needed, you know. We slept down there and, of course, the OC line operators who were up with the equipment and one person was also on duty all the time in the ABAR Building and their crew. It was a separate crew. They were part of the IFC Platoon. You had designated men who worked with you who were your ABAR operators, alright. So, one man sat there at night all the time in the ABAR Building. He was like a fire watch. And also bring the equipment up in an emergency if you had to. And then you sat on the OC line. Now, he could go to sleep in his building if he wanted to. You could nod off but you couldn't in the OC line. If that phone ever rang twice you had better pick it up or the battery commander would ask why you didn't pick it up on the second ring.

TH: And that's rough. That's rough in the graveyard shift and trying to stay awake.

RB: No. Well, you could have a television on. You could have a commercial radio on. You could be sitting there. I used to take courses, you know. The Army had a special school, like a correspondence school. You had courses, also military subject type courses from Fort Bliss and other forts. As long as you were awake they didn't care what you were doing. You could take your boots off. Walk around in your stocking feet. Walk around in just regular shoes, low quarters just regular military shoes. Your shirt could be

off, you know. They didn't care. You had to be awake. You had to answer that phone. Sometimes it was just to see if you were awake they would call. They would always send a wind message down at some point. It was a long coded thing. That was for CDR, wind speed and direction and all that nonsense to compute. Sometimes they would send messages down, you know, meeting at battalion headquarters or brigade headquarters that the captains, the battery commanders would have to attend or something like that or some announcement that was going out Army wide, you know. You had to take it down. You had a log book. You had to log it, you know, and the officer in charge would look at the log book coming on and off, you know, and get the message. If it was important, you know, the battery commander would have to know right away he would call to the barracks right here, Battery Headquarters.

TH: At Barracks 74.

RB: 74. You had a commercial phone. You just called him. You just dialed the two digits the three digits whatever it was. I got a message for the battery commander and it was in charge of quarters the night watch for the first sergeant. It was in the daytime. I gave him the message and that was it. Log it in your book that you passed the message to him at what time.

TH: Something comes to my mind. Like during the day how many men would be at that radar site?

RB: Oh well, you had 12 fire control operators minimum. There could be more men on the crew than 12 but 12 trained men. You could have guys that weren't trained also assigned. At some point, I think we had as high as 20, 20 guys on being trained and whatever. You know, the crew were being trained and whatever. You had at least three in the ABAR building, the two operators and the ABAR crew chief. You had a generator operator that was assigned to you. He was there for the generators, at minimum one. The regular status they might all be down there two or three working down there at the Generator Building a platoon sergeant was definitely always there on the crew. Then you would have two warrant officers. They were in charge of the maintenance section and as many as four or five radar mechanics and a parts clerk and then the officer might be in the battery platoon leader.

TH: And how about sentries?

RB: We didn't pull guard on the gate. That was C-1's job. We didn't have to pull guard on the gate. That was C-1's job.

TH: And C-1 is who?

RB: The front site. We don't have the gate. We don't have guard. They had to guard the gate. (laughter) Once in a while we would help out if they started to get low on personnel or something we would send a man over, you know, to stand guard at the gate, but I never had to do it.

TH: So getting back to like at the Radar Site with both C-1 and C-2, the total of men what do you think with the...

RB: Oh you probably have anywhere from 40 to 60 in there a day during the day.

TH: During the day, and of course at night it's...

RB: Depends on the status of the site. Alright if you are on release status, there is A status, normal status is A status 15 minutes and ready to fire. Release status you have two and a half hours to come up to A status. 2.5 hours or less if you can make it in less time you come back up and then there is maintenance status. It's whenever you can make it. (laughter) because maintenance they don't expect you in it at all for the defense. At that time, there were twelve sites in the New York City Defense. Between here and New York State we had 12 sites.

TH: So, depending on the status it would be different amounts of men.

RB: Four were always on A status. Four of the twelve were always on A status. The rest were on release status or maintenance status. Most of them were on release status. Maintenance usually that was scheduled and they knew that there were major repairs going on there either on the missile area or the radar area. They would, you would, you would make it when you can. (laughter)

TH: They were the ones that were...

RB: Now, what they used to do because our barracks area was so far away from here the crew that was on duty for the day and had responsibility for the site they went to the site and worked there. The crew that was not on duty at the site stayed at the barracks building to work there.

TH: At Barracks 74.

RB: Barracks 74.

TH: So they were up here at Barracks 74 while the other crew was down at the Radar Site.

RB: Right. And the next day we would just switch. We would be on details and they would be down at the Radar Site doing things. We could be painting the buildings down there. We could be pushing the sand back off the roads. The cables used to sit in troughs, wooden troughs that we had a plywood and like 2 x 4s held them up. We always would be straightening those. The plywood would always, you know, blister and come apart because it was out in the open you know in the rain and the snow and whatever so we would have to replace the troughs every other year.

TH: Yeah, because its plywood. That's not good.

RB: Yeah. We didn't paint it so we didn't get anything on the cables. You would be out there checking the cable heads to make sure that they were tight. They had to be cleaned. You would do this on release status. Take the cable heads off, clean them out. Sand would get in them and there is a lubricant that went in there. That is why the sand stuck in there. Put it back on. I forget what year it was. They said don't put that lubricant on. It was doing more harm than good because the sand was sticking. It was like Vaseline almost. And so we had to go out and clean all of that crap off. There was always something to do. They always found something for us to do. It was never just go out there, run checks and adjustments and kick back and put your feet up.

TH: Speaking of painting, your radar control trailers, the outside, you mentioned that they had come in one time to paint the interior, but what were the outsides painted?

RB: They were painted white.

TH: White.

RB: Everywhere I went they were painted white. They never painted them while I was here. The outside never got painted while I was here.

TH: Right. It was just that interior to that time you mentioned.

RB: The interior and they painted and re-caulked the HIPAR acquisition radar golf ball, that rigid dome that was over, the huge golf ball that was sitting out there.

TH: Yes. Yeah.

RB: They painted that once while I was here and caulked it. I don't remember what year.

TH: I wonder if they used a special paint?

RB: Oh yeah. It had to be.

TH: Because the radar had a...

RB: No lead paint. No, because I remember we painted the high power the wrong color and I remember it was a special thing. We couldn't grab any can of OD paint and go out there and no, no, no. You had to go out and even there was three cans, you know, around drums like 55 gallon drums in diameter three of them sat in stack electrically connected to each other physically connected and then three legs came off that held up the stack and then the radome on top.

TH: Which turned around.

RB: Which turned around. The top was the top drum was the dry mortar alright. Even the legs and everything on it were painted that special...(tape stops and restarts)

TH: Speaking of painting and what was that color again?

RB: The best way to describe it was like the color of the UPS trucks. It was weird. We used to call it dog shit brown. But that's the best way to describe it.

TH: For that LOPAR...

RB: It was the only one painted that color and the ABAR and also the High Powered Acquisition Radar (HIPAR) were all painted that color.

TH: Well, lets, you have been giving a lot of good background information as to how things were done at the radar site. I just want to get back to some of the questions that they, the general questions. So just quickly again, what were your jobs, what were your jobs and job? So you started as...

RB: Okay. I started as a fire control technician. Alright, originally I was trained on the computer to relieve (inaudible) in rank and whatever. You had to learn as many positions as possible. So actually I was qualified in all positions including the ABAR and the High power and the generators with the exception of the Missile Tracking Radar. I learned how to operate it but never really learned how to calibrate it.

TH: Did they send you to a training center or was this done...

RB: No. All OJT.

TH: On the job training right here?

RB: On the job training.

TH: Wow. So, you went through...

RB: And it was funny, when I came back from overseas I was then sent to the training center as an instructor. (laughter) That was the first time I had seen it was when I walked through the doors to become an instructor.

TH: Really?

RB: To teach it.

TH: Yeah because you mentioned when you left here in 1969 you went to...

RB: Korea. I was in Battery F, 4th Battalion, 44th Artillery.

TH: Was that the Nike Hercs?

RB: Yes. As a matter of fact, it was the Nike ATBM system which you had only seen pictures of here. It was more push button then whatever but same exact system.

TH: For air defense?

RB: Yeah. We were going to use the Nike Missile equipment a slightly different way. The Nike Missile and there was supposed to be another missile, the Nike Zeus which never went into production. It was called the Nike X and it never went into production so they only built a few of the sites and they never we deployed in this country. When they decided to upgrade the systems in Korea they just went all there. There were six sites. They just sent them all to Korea. We just fired the Nike Hercules over there.

TH: So, what background or education did you get before coming here?

RB: Basic training. That was it.

TH: Just basic training. (laughter) Good old basic training. What type of work did you do after leaving the service?

RB: I worked in electronics for a while and then I was with the New York City Fire Department, Department of Emergency. It's called Bureau of Emergency Medical Services. I was a paramedic with the City of New York.

TH: That's kind of different. You went from technical, you know.

RB: You couldn't make a living in electronics.

TH: Really?

RB: Not that I was overpaid so much as a paramedic. (laughter)

TH: Did this job aid you in your future work?

RB: Not one bit.

TH: Wow, because you went from one career that was really technical equipment and you ended up...

RB: Not one bit because the system really had not changed all that much from the time it was designed. It was still tubes. To give you an idea, that unit that put the little marks on the early warning scopes to tell you where the target was, what targets were friendly, what targets were foe, the FUIF, Fire Control Integration or something like that. Fire Unit Integration System or something. That was about eight feet long and stood about, I'm 6'1". It stood about 6'5" or 6'6". It was taller than I was. I remember that. But I

could reach the top of the rack. When I went overseas, they had the FUIF also but it hung over the escape hatch behind the computer operator, between the computer and the early warning plotting board and it was about 36 inches long. It was solid state and it was about 24 inches high and stuck out from the wall about 6 to 8 inches. So, the training I had here was useless. As a matter of fact, the FUIF in Korea went bad one time and we couldn't fix it.

TH: So, you were down?

RB: No. You don't need that with all the others were working. They could still tell you where the target was and Joe, the early warning plotter, the C word was on his board and you could point to it on the scope and tell the battery control officer where the target was. That was his main job. The civilian came up. He had his huge crate and he says, "You got some tools?" Busted it open and it was a brand new one. They unscrewed it from the wall. Uncabled it. Screwed it to the wall. Hooked the cables up. Put the power back on it. "Alright, it works." He goes, "Ship that one back to the factory." He said to hell with it.

TH: That was quick.

RB: That was his whole job. (laughter) He was a factory rep. He brought us a brand new one. (inaudible) When we were on release status one time, I forgot what they did but they were moving, they actually moved the trailers. The brought them up on...

TH: A truck chasis.

RB: No. You had to get under there for some reason. It was up on a big crane and something happened. It dropped. The Fire Control Trailer dropped about 6 to 8 feet. It hit the ground. We couldn't get it to work. We called ordnance. They came from Camp Kilmer. They couldn't get it to work. They called the next level of Ordnance which was in Pennsylvania. They came down, worked on it. They couldn't get it to work and that is when I met the designers of the system. Five old men in sweaters and their lunch in little brown bags came out. They were from Westinghouse and they were the designers of the system and they had never seen it before.

TH: Wow.

RB: And they were looking around, "Where is..." "Ah man and this is great. These guys designed it and don't know where anything is." When they designed it everything, both trailers were in one big room. All the consoles were in one big room and that's how they designed it and they tested it and whatever. They had never been to (inaudible.) They had never been to field tests. "That's the computer, that the..."

TH: Wow.

RB: And they were there for two days. And you know, the schematics were huge big books, you know.

TH: That they brought?

RB: No. They would come in with the schematic and the fellow was about your size, maybe a little smaller. He must have been in his seventies and he just pushed the book. "I don't need that." And he got in there and he's checking the voltages and they had it up and running in like two days. I don't know what the heck happened to it but they had to get the people from Westinghouse. They sent the designers of the system.

TH: And that happened here?

RB: That happened here on C-2. They dropped the BC Van, the Battery Control Van. Something happened to the crane. It dropped about 6 to 8 feet.

TH: So, by the way, how long were you in total?

RB: Six and half years.

TH: Six and a half years. You already said what your profession was after leaving the service because you had to get into something that had...

RB: Like I said, well my wife at that time, I wanted to be a career soldier. My wife at that time, she didn't want it. The Vietnam War was happening at that time and it wasn't popular.

TH: Were there ever alerts of potential enemy attacks? Because they would pull them on you, right?

RB: We would go on 5 minute status. We never opened fire. If we fired one of those things out of here you would know it. All of New Jersey would know it. When that thing moves two inches on its launch rail it has already broken the sound barrier and that Hercules Missile develops as much thrust as at that time as the Atlas.

TH: Yeah. The big ICBMs. (Inter Continental Ballistic Missile) Yeah. The Atlas.

RB: That thing moves two inches on its launch rail it was already broken the sound barrier. They had developed as much thrust as the ICBM.

TH: The Herc was super fast. I mean people don't realize.

RB: Mach 3.82 was its speed. Almost four times the speed of sound. The planes were almost flying that fast, so we were in trouble. B58s were hell. When we would have to track a B58 it would go across the screen and (inaudible) him he was done.

TH: That fast?

RB: That fast if he was in attack mode. We used to run, I am trying to think exercises, RBS, Radar Bomb Scoring. And somebody from the Air Force would come out and he would actually talk to the plane or whatever but I was trained to do his job, controller and they would launch a SAC (Strategic Air Command) bomb up and from wherever. This would happen every day of the week and they would be targets. I remember one target was the (inaudible) of the Statue of Liberty. They would as they approached the defense, usually somewhere around Philadelphia they would call in. B58s were much further out. They would call in and get cleared but they were in the system but they would then they would give us their position but the AADCP would put the symbol over them if you couldn't figure out where they were. They could clear on the range, what they called the range and then you know, they would clear commence. They would go into their attack mode. You know, they would jam our radars. Do whatever to break lock. Then we would tell them to stop. That so much I forget what the time was on that because they would not be jamming when they lined up on the target. (They) hit the target and you had to have 10 seconds of absolute clear and there would be a high pitched tone because there was a box that was hooked into the computer and you would hear it over the radio. A real high pitched tone and that means he is on the bomb run. He is not, he is going to stay straight and level. No jamming, you know, and you had to track him, so your plotting boards would activate. And then they called bombs away and then pull off. Just the way if they had dropped a nuclear weapon. You marked the, I remember the pen would jump, bump bump, bump. You would have to, they would have to tell us the target they would have to mark the target. The target was already on the plotting board along with the outline of the New York Area. So we marked the target. As soon as everything settled out you would shut off the computer, put it on standby actually. The pen would come back down. Pull out the paper. Rip it off. Run out into the Inter-Connecting Corridor. Do all kinds of measurements to see if he hit the target. Then you would radio him his scores, right. SAC was monitoring it. They monitored it all the time. We didn't know it. We thought it was just us and maybe the AADCP and whatever. It was a B52 had come in, cleared...The guy sounded dead tired to me, the pilot. We only spoke to him about it. I guess, one person in the aircraft sounded like he was dead tired. "Alright, you are on target so and so." "Okay, go nuclear." Their jamming was so horrendous that we didn't even bother to change frequencies. Right, lock on them. It was ridiculous. It was like a tracking exercise on an airliner almost. (laughter) They missed the target completely.

TH: This is the B52?

RB: 52. They missed the target completely and read the score back to them and then another voice came on the radio. It relieved the pilot of command of the aircraft.

TH: While he was up there?

RB: While he was up there. And the co-pilot took over and to bring the aircraft back. He was relieved of command of the aircraft in the air. What's going on? Who's that? The

Air Force guys said, "Just shut up and don't speak into the radio. Don't say a word. That is SAC Command."

TH: So the Army here is working with the Air Force? This is interesting. This is very interesting.

RB: It was part of their drills and everything and we used to do that about every other month. I think we would do that.

TH: That was why they had besides up on the hill...

RB: I don't know what their part was in it.

TH: Because you had mentioned that they had some Air Force people up there.

RB: That was an Air Force site up there actually. It was Brigade Headquarters. It was an administrative headquarters up there. The radar site, the AADCP was operated by Air Force personnel. The security personnel were all Air Force up there. Everything.

TH: That is very interesting.

RB: When you came to the gate, because you had to go to Brigade Headquarters a couple of times, we had to tour the AADCP once they took us up there to see what was going on. They were Air Police, Air Security Police.

TH: Air Force.

RB: Like here we had Army military police.

TH: MPs yeah.

RB: Yeah military police at Fort Hancock. Up there they were Air Force.

TH: Interesting.

RB: And the guard at the AADCP door, the single room you went into, was an Air Force enlisted man. There were very few Army. Just in Brigade, just the Brigade Army personnel were there. That was an administrative headquarters.

TH: Okay, let's see, what was your job? You went from...

RB: I went from a trainee with no pass because you couldn't leave the base. You couldn't get a pass until you were qualified. So, I went from like fire control operator or assistant fire control operator I think was the title, yeah, 10 was fire control operator.

TH: What building did you work in? Well, we already mentioned that.

RB: C-2. I don't know the number on it. I know there was a number on the building.

TH: In C-2.

RB: It was on the (Inter-) connecting Corridor which is really not a building it's a structure.

TH: Yes, the (Inter-) connecting Corridor?

RB: That's what they call that cinder block with the two vans.

TH: Yeah.

RB: That's the Inter-connecting Corridor. It's not a building, well.

TH: But that's where you were?

RB: Yeah, the back site.

TH: Did you work in any other buildings or was that your basic...?

RB: Just there. Just there.

TH: Were you working with civilians or military or both? Because I know you were definitely...

RB: Ordnance Corps in Kilmer and Picatinny Arsenal were like the radar technicians whatever. They were civilians who came out. Excuse me, other than that we were all military on the base.

TH: Was it usually the same civilian technicians so you got to know them?

RB: Yes. We got to know them. One guy had been a pilot in the Navy during World War II. I remember him.

TH: And, of course, we know what building that you lived in that was Barracks...

RB: 74. First door on the right. You went up the wooden stairs.

TH: Well, let's face the building. Facing the building where the two wings come out and you have the left and right.

RB: Big U shaped building

TH: Right. Big U shaped building so you are out.

RB: The right wing. As you faced the building, the side that comes out. You go in...
(drawing building on paper)

TH: Like a big U.

RB: There is a door back here on the first floor at this end of the U. This was the mess hall. This was like a candy and sorting machine were over here. The phone booths were over here. Alright, the stairway went up to the second floor on this side. This was like the auditorium over here. The double doors and went around and there were some offices over here. Some rooms back here. There were some rooms off to the side. I don't remember... This room had a stage and this door here, I don't remember. I guess the stairway faced this way going up. Alright, and fire control was back this way. This was bigger than the room. The only rooms on the first floor were battery commander's office, the first sergeant, the clerk's office right here. Went up the stairs and when I made E-5 I was in this room right here. You came up like you were going to fire control. Fire control was this way. Launch control slept on this side. Alright, the two platoons, C-1 and C-2 we both slept on the second floor. All fire control personnel to this side as you faced the building all launch control this way and up in here C-1 would sleep on this side C-2 would sleep on the other side. The same thing with C-1 and C-2. Alright, and then come around here and right around here there was a room much smaller than this that was a the room was like from the wall there from there to where the filing cabinets are, three of us slept in that space. Three bunks and two double lockers.

TH: Right here where we are?

RB: Three of us. There's a room up there. You come up the stairs, make a right and there is a door right there, as you make the right. I forgot where the latrines are. I don't remember where they are at all.

TH: We are up on the second, you are describing you are up on the second floor?

RB: Second floor as you come around up the staircase, you turn right. The first door on the right was my room when I was an E-5. I slept in there with two radar mechanics.

TH: And I guess those were the standard single bunks the Army...

RB: Well, it was two bunks. It was a double...

TH: One on top of the other.

RB: And there was a single on the other side. If they throw another guy in there he would get a bunk on top of him.

TH: I guess foot lockers.

RB: Originally, but we had gotten I forgot what year it was, new double lockers. So your footlocker was built, had drawers on the bottom and then, you know, side by side space so all your, all your military issue went to one side. The civilian clothes hung over here. (There) was two drawers on the bottom and there was a big shelf across the top. It was three of these monstrous lockers in there.

TH: Metal.

RB: Oh yeah. Grey. Grey metal. We had to put them together ourselves. That was fun. I hate those things.

TH: Did you get any instructions?

RB: We had pictures. A diagram picture and no tools. We were better off than the launch control guys. We used to carry screwdrivers. All of us carried screwdrivers. We were always making adjustments. You went out and bought your own screwdrivers and stuff like that. I don't know what they did in the launch control. They never carried screwdrivers. We were able to screw this stuff together. (laughter)

TH: I think what some time we need to do, we can't do it today because the building is closed because its part of the marine laboratory. They have a lot of offices and stuff in there.

RB: Oh yeah. I would love to go in there.

TH: Yeah. But I am afraid we are going to find it greatly changed. Because they renovated the building.

RB: That building across from it that says it's the laboratory building, I don't remember that being there.

TH: That's because it was built in the early '90s.

RB: Oh.

TH: Early '90s and at the same time they were building that they totally rehabilitated your barracks, yeah to modernize it.

RB: Because the outside of the building looked the same.

TH: In fact, they brought back the historic look, more of the historic look.

RB: We would call it run down, dilapidated. We didn't call it historic. We called it dilapidated. (laughter)

TH: When you were here?

RB: Yes. (laughter)

TH: It wasn't in that good a shape.

RB: This is all, they got us all here one time and they wanted us to donate to the united fund. You have to remember something when I was a private I made \$72.50 a month before taxes which means I brought home \$54 a month after taxes. When I made PFC I thought I hit the jackpot because I made \$113 a month before taxes. I thought I was like wao! When I made E-6 my salary was \$721 a month before taxes. I made E-6 in Korea. And they were sitting there and they wanted us to donate to the united fund for all the poor people. They tell us about the united fund and we knew it was for donations. And I got up and I asked the first sergeant I got up and I asked, "Is this how to apply for aid or do they expect us to donate?" "Sit down." You know, you can't expect a guy making \$113 a month and they expect me to put money out. It didn't go over good with the first sergeant.

TH: Yeah. Compared to today. Well, it's the same as today it doesn't compare to the outside to the real world outside. It's not much.

RB: Well, if you are computing it on a 24 hour day which the government was working yeah. It's pretty puny, but my son got out of the Navy and he was making more as an E-4 than I he was making, almost 2 and a half times more than I was as an E-6. He was making like \$1800, \$2000 a month, an E-4. Well, of course, they had 12-18 hour days like we did but a hell of a lot more money than I was making. I know that.

TH: It's probably also why people don't stay in the military, especially back then not counting the Vietnam War. But you are putting in these long hours.

RB: Yeah, you are not getting paid for it. I remember sitting there one time, it was on a weekend we were working and I said, "Do you know how much we would be making on overtime if this was a civilian job?" We were painting. Painting the cinderblock buildings, the buildings out there, painting the generator building. I said, "Do you know how much we would be getting paid on a Sunday on a weekend?" But we weren't.

TH: Just to get my bearings here as you showed me, you made a little map of Barracks 74. You would be coming in where the white Herc(ules) is with the Herc is.

RB: You have got a lot more roads here than I remember. Did you add some?

TH: Not really. Did you come in where they got the Hercules Missile? The road comes right here. You got the building right here. So you lived up here on the...

RB: Second floor. The fire control lived in this whole wing.

TH: Yeah. That's the north side of the building, the north side of the building.

RB: Right next, launch control lived here, next to that was a wooden building that is not there no more. I believe two story wooden building. That is where the bachelor NCOs lived. That was all single rooms. I went in there once or twice. It was all single rooms. And right next to that was another wooden building, a long building where trustees from Fort Dix Stockade lived. We didn't do any kind of details here. We didn't cut the grass on Post or anything. Those prisoners did that. There were two long wooden barracks.

TH: Yes. They survived.

RB: The one that was closest to 74 building that is where our NCOs lived and the one next to that was where the prisoners lived. They were trustees.

TH: Now we are talking American soldiers that had...

RB: Yeah. They were trustees from the Fort Dix Stockade. It was better to be here than at that stockade. This is where you are supposed to be and if you walked off the post for good there are no real gates here then it was considered an escape and you went back to actually they took you to Fort Dix and they tried you again and probably sent you to Leavenworth after that for escaping. You didn't want to do that.

TH: What would be some of the things these trustees did that got them that landed

RB: I haven't got a clue. I was never disciplined the whole time I was in the Army. I was never court martial or Article 15'd never restricted.

TH: What did they do? Did they give them any work to do?

RB: They used to cut the grass. They used to paint the buildings, you know like the PX building over here, the PX building, the fire station. They would police garbage. You know the Army doesn't have street sweepers, they have soldiers.

TH: Yeah. Hand pick it up.

RB: We would see them out here picking it up. Sometimes a building got really dangerous. We had a lot of wooden barracks while I was here a lot of wooden buildings left over from World War II.

TH: Yes, there were.

RB: If they got really dangerous they would take it down. I remember they took a couple of those down while we were here.

TH: You mean dismantled.

RB: Dismantled, yeah, they were too dangerous. They were going to fall over or whatever because they didn't restrict you from going into old barracks, the old wooden barracks area. Like I said that is where I took fire training. You go to classroom training in the fire station and then you go out into that area to practice. They used to use one of the old barracks buildings as a gas chamber. You go there once a year. It was once a year to test our gas masks. I had to go through that so, you know.

TH: When you say fire training did they actually put anything on fire or just use the structure? You know like put ladders up.

RB: Yeah. We used the structure. No. They never set any of those buildings on fire. (laughter) I remember when I went through basic training I lived in a barracks like that. It was on Fort Dix and I think they were the last of the wooden barracks. They were where the black troops were trained out in World War II and they were still up. We were told if any of those buildings caught on fire they would probably be completely engulfed in something like two and half minutes. It was so dry the wood so they would squirt water at them and stuff like that. They never (inaudible)

TH: So, the trustees when they cut the grass and there is plenty of grass around here. Did they have, what kind of mowing equipment?

RB: They were gas mowers.

TH: Just a regular...

RB: They were Toro's. Yeah.

TH: So, they had them all over.

RB: Yeah. You had to push them. They weren't self propelled. (laughter) Low bid, low bid, the Army does not pay.

TH: Well, getting back to Barracks 74, now the south wing on the second floor was...

RB: The launch control.

TH: The launcher, okay, was living up there. So that auditorium was down on the...

RB: And there were some rooms off the auditorium. I don't know what the..

TH: Right but you did have the auditorium on the 1st floor.

RB: There was a stage up there. It was a day room normally. There was pool table in the back, whatever. It was a day room but if they needed to give classes off the battery the commander had to talk a lot of us all at once they put folding chairs out for us. That was

also our movie theater. This thing you have marked “movie theater” was never a movie theater while I was here.

TH: The old Post Theater right over here.

RB: Yeah. That was never opened. That was closed. That was never opened. That was one of the closed buildings.

TH: Okay. So, you actually saw, what was it first run movies or something close to it?

RB: Yeah.

TH: Was that free?

RB: No. It was a quarter. As a matter of fact, I used to run it. After a while I worked it. That was the only school they ever sent me to. They sent me to school at Fort Dix to learn to run the projectors for a week.

TH: So it was the movies of the time back in the ‘60s?

RB: Yeah.

TH: How do you like that? And you said in the center...

RB: And you pulled the screen down you come back here and you put something on the board or whatever the pool table and you had these two big projectors and sound things set up and one of the guys would take the quarters in you know and you marked down how many people because you had to keep records and the money would have go into the Army. It got up to like \$20 or something like that and you kept \$10 for change. And we would show the movies.

TH: Was it certain nights?

RB: Yeah. Certain nights, it wasn’t every night. It was like one night a month we had movies.

TH: And in the center of the building on the first floor this was the...

RB: The candy machines were over here.

TH: The candy machines.

RB: There was another corridor and there were offices or rooms back here also where people slept.

TH: On the first floor.

RB: On the first floor. These were the phone booths over here.

TH: The phone booths were, that is going towards the north side in the center.

RB: I think there were two pay phones, telephone booths there.

TH: And then again, on the first floor here, this is going into the north, that's the northwest corner.

RB: This is like the mess hall. You came in this door. You went like straight ahead. You came into the dining area. The kitchen was back here and then there was another hall. You came straight down the hall. The first sergeant's desk was right there down that hall. You came to an office. There was a door there, another door and the first sergeant's desk was right there. The clerk's desk was right here. There was another doorway here and the battery commander's office was right back there.

TH: So that is more towards, that is the northwest corner of the building on the first floor.

RB: Mmm Hmm.

TH: Did, well, the battery commander probably would be...what was his rank? Would he be a...

RB: There were supposed to be a major in charge of a dual site. Normally it's a captain or a first lieutenant of a single site. The last battery commander that I remember here, Eisenberg was his name and he was a major. He made major while I was here. He was a captain actually he was here a long time. He was a first lieutenant when I first met him. He was a West Point graduate. He was a first lieutenant when I first met him. I think he was in one of the launch control platoons. Then he made captain. He moved up to executive officer because there was a major in charge here at the time and then he made major but I went overseas.

TH: But I am pretty sure he probably was living somewhere on Officers' Row.

RB: I don't remember if he was married or not. I don't remember.

TH: I am sure if he was single he probably ended up in the BOQ.

RB: He could have, yeah, or lived off post. You know I didn't go back on Officers' Row much. That's where the officers lived. You don't go back there. You stay away.

TH: Were you restricted from going over there?

RB: No. You just don't, Army tradition. People live there with their families.

TH: Respect their privacy like.

RB: You know, you don't belong back there. You have no reason to be back there. The NCO Club is something. The NCO Club was a wooden building. (Building 112)

TH: It was right up over here.

RB: You took it down, I guess, though.

TH: It accidentally caught fire. And like you, like they were telling you it didn't take long.

RB: It didn't take long.

TH: A lot of old totaled wooden building. It was up over here.

RB: I was never on the Coast Guard site. The Coast Guard Station was along there. There were Coasties. We didn't belong. In fact, the Army had a boat that was bigger than the Coast Guard cutter that was stationed here.

TH: Really?

RB: It was a fishing boat that went out. I would get seasick and it was bigger than the Coast Guard Cutter and it said U.S. It was white and where the name would be it said U.S. Army on there. You know and you could arrange through Special Services you could charter the boat which the battery did a couple of times a year it would go out on fishing. I would always get seasick.

TH: You didn't care for it, right?

RB: No.

TH: They didn't use it as a ferry though.

RB: No.

TH: Because in the old days for many years the Army used to run from here they run an Army...

RB: We used to have to call the duty driver with a van and he would run you up because a lot of us didn't have cars. We were New York guys. You don't need a car in New York.

TH: Right. You got around on mass transit.

RB: Yeah. So, you know, they would run us up to the bus and even coming in we would call from the Port Authority Building and tell them we were coming in on so and so bus and they would have a driver up there to bring us back when we got off the bus out here.

TH: You mean an Army bus out here.

RB: An Army van.

TH: Oh van.

RB: A van from the battery. See the guys in the motor pool didn't stand guard or anything like that either but they had duty driver you know they run back and forth to the bus stop. You know that is a long way. You couldn't walk that.

TH: All the way down to the Highlands Bridge from here. (laughter)

RB: That's a long way.

TH: That is.

RB: And in the wintertime pick the guys up at the NCO Club and bring them back. It was cold out there. I tried to walk it once and I would never do that again.

TH: You would go over here to the NCO Club?

RB: At night, you know you are off duty you wanted to get something to eat, get a beer or whatever, hang out.

TH: You were allowed in there?

RB: Absolutely. It was more of an enlisted men's club because there was no enlisted men's club out here. You had to be E-4 and above to go in. E-3s and below were not allowed in.

TH: Right, because here is a question. You have got the barracks and the missile down here, the Herc and there is its now a big lawn area with a parking lot there used to be three World War II barracks in a row. There was one, two, three. Those were taken down. But also closer to the missile that is all lawn now used to in World War II, the Army built a Service Club for the enlisted men.

RB: Closed up. Never opened when I was here.

TH: So it was boarded up?

RB: Oh yeah. A lot of the buildings were boarded up. There was a Reserve Center here also.

TH: Yeah. The Army, right.

RB: I don't know if its still here. They were here also and they had a lot of these buildings around here also where they kept their equipment and supplies. Equipment, I would assume here. Once a month, I mean you see how it is here today. It's quiet. Even when we were here this is (inaudible). Guys would go into the city. Guys would go home or you would hang in the barracks on a nice day like this but once a month, one weekend a month this place was like a real Army base all of a sudden. They were like, I never forgot this. I was sleeping and all of a sudden I hear, it was on a Saturday somebody hollering and calling cadence and, you know. I am like and staggering out to the window and where the hell did all these troops come from, you know. It's like the whole Parade Ground is full of troops. The streets are crowded and there are cars all over the place and I mean, you know. Oh there is a Reserve Center in here. Once a month you know, we had to put up with the Reserves.

TH: You had to put up with the Army Reserves coming out. (laughter)

RB: Yeah. Play soldier.

TH: But with Regular Army what would...

RB: I was Regular Army. Regular Army and there were draftees in our unit also.

TH: What is your guess or maybe you know what would be the total population? And that is soldiers but there is also dependents right and some civilian workers.

RB: Oh yeah. You know there were some civilian workers. Post engineers I remember. You would call them if you had a problem with the barracks like the plumbing wouldn't work or something. A civilian would show up in an Army truck.

TH: Right.

RB: I think it was painted I was going to say yellow but that I know was Fort Bliss. I don't know what the color was up here. It might have been OD. I don't know. But it would say U.S. Army on the truck and he would come in and fix the plumbing you know or the furnace down below. We had trouble with it once or twice.

TH: So the big actual Regular Army unit was C Battery, was your battery?

RB: C Battery and 3rd Battalion.

TH: And 3rd Battalion. So, was everybody in Barracks 74 then? Was almost everybody?

RB: Battalion was in another building. I don't remember what building number.

TH: But probably another barracks over there.

RB: Yeah you didn't belong in somebody else's barracks.

TH: Right.

RB: You know, unless you were invited or whatever but you just didn't walk into somebody else's barracks.

TH: So per soldiers how many? Well, what was your unit's strength then roughly, C Battery?

RB: We were approximately 250.

TH: 250?

RB: Because we were a dual site.

TH: Yeah.

RB: It was about 128, 125, 120 something. We were twice the number of people.

TH: But then of course there are married sergeants. They've got kids. The officers have kids. So I guess...

RB: That actually lived on the Post I couldn't tell you. There was a trailer park here too when I was here.

TH: Yes. Yep.

RB: And if you had like a trailer and you were from another unit you could put your trailer in there. I remember I had a, I made friends with a sergeant named McGraw. I don't remember his first name and he was the maintenance sergeant at D Battery in Holmdel. He would drive back and forth. He had a station wagon. He would drive back and forth. He lived in the trailer park here but he was stationed at D Battery in Holmdel.

TH: So he commuted to work.

RB: Yeah. He drove back and forth.

TH: Let's see. Where did you eat? Well...

RB: We ate in the mess hall. We ate in the PX because when you came into the PX you came into the cafeteria end of it first and off the cafeteria was the military products you know. The small thing in there and at the NCO Club.

TH: How was the food?

RB: Hmm.

TH: (laughter) It depended on the cooks right?

RB: It depended on the cooks. You couldn't go into the PX on the weekend when the reservists were there. Because they just lined up like you know because I remember one time you came down from the site and a Saturday for us was going to be like a half day because the OC line operators were going to be on duty. So we went in and there was something I didn't like to eat like chili or something so me and my buddy walked over his name is (inaudible). And we walked over to the PX and there was a line out the door. What the... These reservists have got to go. (laughter) I mean we walked all the way down to the NCO Club and had lunch there.

TH: And they crowded you out.

RB: And even there was crowded their NCOs.

TH: Did you have to pay for food over here?

RB: Oh yeah, down there and you paid in the PX as well.

TH: And do you remember any of the prices at that time for like a hot dog, a hamburger?

RB: Hamburger with fries was something like \$1.10 something like that. Beer was like, bottled beer 35 cents a bottle.

TH: Did you drink any? (laughter)

RB: Oh yeah. In those days I could drink.

TH: Do you remember any of the brands that they had here, any of the popular brands?

RB: I remember they always had Miller High Life. That was like the last to go. It tasted like shellac. You know High Life? There was no light beers back then. Budweiser always, we always drank that. That always went. Schlitz I think. They didn't serve it on tap too much. I think the NCO Club you could get it on tap. The PX sold no beer whatsoever. You couldn't get a beer in there. There was absolutely no beer allowed other than soft drinks allowed in the barracks. You were not allowed to drink in the barracks over there.

TH: That mess hall was like GI Joe type, you know regular mess.

RB: Oh yeah. We pulled the KP in there. No we didn't pull KP either. The prisoners pulled KP.

TH: Those trustee?

RB: The trustees pulled KP. We never I never pulled KP.

TH: Really? That's not that bad.

RB: I remember at the other sites, D Battery and A Battery the guys pulled KP from both facilities.

TH: Was that the days of the metal serving trays?

RB: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Metal trays.

TH: And you just go down the line and...

RB: I remember they took those away and they gave us regular plates and stuff.

TH: Really?

RB: Yeah. You had a big tray and you had to carry everything around

TH: Did you help yourself or did you ladle it out?

RB: It depended. It depended who the mess sergeant was. Sometimes you know you were told, I mean they put it on and sometimes on the weekends they were still drawing rations for like 250 troops on the weekend and maybe feeding 50 because we were all gone you know. We were all out of here unless you know we had A status. You had the firing crews for the weekend here. They were here and whoever was unlucky enough to be here. You know, who couldn't get a ride out or whatever. They were broke so they were still drawing rations for 250. So you take all you wanted.

TH: And that reminds me like when you are down at the site at the radar, IFC Area could you come up here to eat?

RB: Yes.

TH: So did you do that?

RB: They had a bus to bring us up. Even on firing status.

TH: You could still....

(Recording abruptly stops. Second tape begins)

TH: Park Ranger Historian Tom Hoffman and this is the second cassette tape. We are doing an oral history interview with Mr. Richard Busch who was here back 1965-1969 and we are getting a lot of good stories and information about his service here at Fort Hancock today. Rich, you were just telling me as we were putting in the tape that you were here when Battery Gunnison guns were still down there. Tell me about that.

RB: Yeah. That was the very first place I went to when I got here and I got in trouble right away with the military police. When I, I had come straight from basic training and basic training at that time was very strict, very, and I got here and I was like where is all the discipline, where is all the, it was very relaxed. So, me and a guy who had also come in the same day that I did and was off the whole week before he and I decided to go in fatigue pants, t-shirts, low quarters and fatigue baseball caps and we took towels and we decided well, let's go down to the beach. And we had swimsuits on underneath. And we are walking and all of sudden we notice there is a military police car following up and the military police pulled us over and I never forget this, the MP (military police) got out and he took one look at us and said, "What's this new summer uniforms?" I, switched the rank. I was a private E-1. We just got there right out of basic and he was like an E-4, I think and he was just looking at us. Turn your butts around, get back to the barracks get in a uniform and I am gonna forget I saw you two. (laughter) We went running back to our barracks, put on our boots, you know, and t-shirts and tucked them in and whatever and went walking. That's when we ran into our battalion sergeant major, Sergeant Major Bonzell. He was here the whole time I was here. He was fishing on the beach. He had two MPs who carry his beer chest and his chair down for him and his tackle box and set himself up and he sat out there on the beach. (laughter)

TH: Really?

RB: Because I was walking into his line. He was a hell of a guy. He was something else. He and brigade sergeant major who was also (the) same sergeant major the whole time I was here was Sergeant Major Jesnacki. They were both corporals in the same searchlight battery on Pearl Harbor on December 7th. They had been in the Army that long. Almost the whole time together, you know, and lieutenants used to be just terrified of them. 2nd lieutenants would, they would just go around terrifying 2nd lieutenants together.

TH: Really?

RB: Oh yeah.

TH: Because they had been around. They had been in the service a long time.

RB: When they said something they just did it. It didn't matter what the rank on your collar was. You just did it. You know it was like unbelievable. We were on one of these practice missions. It was a three or four day one so we actually had to move down to the metal buildings and move down there with C rations and keep the system manned all the time. We fought with a simulator battles and everything. We had CBR battles and gorillas trying to attack us supposedly. Just what might happen with a real third world

war breaking out. And I mean I was like dead, dead tired and there was no place to lay down. I mean those barracks were crowded. Everybody was down there, even the clerks because Building 74 ceased to exist in a real war. Everything moved there even the clerks.

TH: And we are talking about the Radar Site?

RB: Right. The Radar Site and the Launcher.

TH: Everybody was down there.

RB: Everybody was down there at their end. So, the buildings were really crowded and so the only beds that were open was where the officers were going to sleep. So the sergeant major said, "Go ahead and lay down," to me and this other fella. We had been out on walking the fence line for hours and we were dead tired. So, I just VOOM, fell down. A lieutenant came in to go to sleep and here we are laying in the bunks, you know, and he started to raise hell, you know. "Who told them they could..." and Sergeant Major Bonzell jumped out, "I told them they could. Is there a problem, Lieutenant?" (laughter)

TH: The lieutenant scurried away.

RB: Yeah.

TH: You mentioned you patrolled the fence line?

RB: During that war game. Otherwise there were no guards patrolling unless there was some directive. I know once there was a directive that came down that we had to put two men walking the inside, not the outside, the inside. We patrolled the inside.

TH: Inside.

RB: If I remember correctly, there had been an incident in the (Sandy Hook) State Park and it involved firearms. Somebody had gotten shots, there had been some rounds fired. I don't remember what it was. It definitely involved a gun, you know, and down through the OC line from the AADCP we were ordered. We would post armed guards in our areas patrolling the inside of the fence because they hadn't caught this guy or whatever. They didn't know where he was and the beaches weren't fenced off. You could walk right from the State Park beach at least when I was there. I don't know about now, you could walk down the beaches and right down along here and be up in the federal area. Like I said, the Radar and the Missile Site, the Missile Launch Area you could go right on the beaches, you know. The Fire Control Area and C-2 there is a gate that lines up with that road that goes right out to the beach you know. It was kept locked all the time but I remember it was me and another guy we got the first shift. It was four hours walking and finally the police caught the guy and whatever. So, we knocked it off with the rifles and one carbine. We put the carbines away and whatever.

TH: So that is what you patrolled with?

RB: That's what all of us had, M-1 carbines.

TH: How about by the entrance there by the compass rose, the guard?

RB: They had a carbine too.

TH: That's what they had an M1 carbine?

RB: He had a carbine. The only people that had who were on guard that had .45s were the dog handlers. There were sentry dogs in the Launching Area at night and in the exclusion area at night. There was a dog handler who was a military policeman with a sentry dog. He was trained, you know, to walk with this dog on guard and they would walk the inside around the launchers and whatever and make sure nobody got in that far. There was also alarms on all the doors to all the underground magazines. But that's you know whatever. That's when I got my 10 seconds of fame. The alarm system went out and it was (a) rainy, cold night and they couldn't get it to reset or set, whatever and by Army regulation it was too nasty to walk the dog on guard that night. So the dog was in his air conditioned heated dry kennel. But the alarm system was out on these nuclear missiles. So, what do you think we did? By Army regulation, we were standing out there double arms in the whole part facing out with our carbines guarding these missiles in weather that was not good enough for the dogs to walk. So, when I was relieved, I said, "There has got to be a way." I said, "It's a simple circuit." A burglar alarm is a simple circuit. I learned that in college. I went down and found where the problem was, cleaned it out, fixed the wires. The alarm reset and we all went back to the barracks. My ten seconds of fame. I could do no wrong for about a week.

TH: That's great. Well, this is interesting because you know here you are, its your operation is 24/7, you know, around the clock, 24/7 year round and, you know, its cold out here.

RB: Oh, the winter. It's freezing. You didn't go out in the wintertime. I am serious. When you were off duty you didn't come out of that building. You had a car or a duty driver take you up to the NCO Club. You see how close the PX is? That was excruciating to walk sometimes. It was freezing cold. You go to the city. You take the bus or they had a van or someone would give you a lift.

TH: But outside of that time you were having the, what was it? War games, like or...

RB: Oh, yeah that was about once a year.

TH: Once a year.

RB: They would have a big exercise.

TH: But there was no patrols no...

RB: Not unless there was a very good reason for it.

TH: Because I was just wondering if the Army worried about saboteurs, you know.

RB: Obviously not.

TH: Yeah, being on Sandy Hook.

RB: Even up, you took Holmdel which is on top of a mountain in the middle of, that was D Battery. They had basically the same setup. Their equipment though sat inside a huge bomb shelter that was above ground. They had a five ton door on the shelter. They would all move in there in an emergency and there was one in the Launching Area too. They told you that building could withstand a direct hit from a 750 pound bomb. You might get knocked around and that was the worst that would ever happen to you.

TH: In Holmdel?

RB: At Holmdel. A Battery, (Old Bridge) the one that looked just like this and what got me was their Launching Area sat facing the highway. You could see the missiles from the road.

TH: When you go up the street from Barracks 74, you've got those mess halls along the street and then there is an old Mortar Battery which a lot of people...

RB: From 18-- something.

TH: Yeah and it was often called the Bombproof.

RB: 1895.

TH: Yeah it was built back in the 1890s. It was a Civil Defense Fallout Shelter.

RB: I wouldn't want to be in there.

TH: Back when you were here.

RB: What I remember, the walls were cracking at that time right. The concrete was not that thick. The fallout shelter here maybe, but would it withstand a blast? No. I remember where the Mortar Battery are at the far end, and how I know the date because the date is on the breastworks like. There are two big doors. The magazine actually, the powder magazine probably and the date 1895 is above the door. I remember that, alright. That's where the wall had cracked and fell apart and you could see how thick that concrete was.

TH: I mention the Mortar Battery, you know, up the street from your barracks and this is just opposite the Lighthouse with the stepped wall. You remember the accident right? They had a tower there.

RB: A big metal water tower there. I don't remember what year it was. I think I was an E-5 about three and a half years after I got here. Your records might show when they took that tower down. But somebody was killed I remember. They dynamited it down. A chunk of metal came flying out. I was at Battalion Headquarters when it happened. Of course, the sergeant asked me to take some papers over. Make copies of it. We didn't have a copy machine. There was only one in Battalion Headquarters.

TH: Battalion Headquarters was at...

RB: Right here.

TH: Okay.

RB: It was to the rear of the PX, behind that. I don't remember the street names or anything 'cause it was walking distance I remember that. Because he asked me to do him a favor and I said, "Yeah, okay," and I was in there and all of sudden there was this loud explosion where they dynamited the (tower) and then I heard sirens and somebody said that somebody got killed out there when they dynamited the tower down. But there was a big water tower there for years. Again it may have been left over from World War II. I don't know. When I was here that Lighthouse actually worked. I don't know if it still does.

TH: Still does.

RB: Oh okay, because I remember that thing working. There was a Coast Guard Station there. The Coast Guard maintained it.

TH: Yeah. That's my question if you know, the old keepers house next to the tower, to the lighthouse there...

RB: He lived there.

TH: Was it Coast Guard?

RB: It was a coast guardsman. I saw him and he had a Coast Guard pickup truck. He had a pickup truck that had US Coast Guard on it. It was painted grey.

TH: He was actually living in the building?

RB: He actually lived there. There was a family there, a wife, kids. They actually lived there.

TH: Were the, getting back to the gun batteries because you were mentioning that you remember when the guns were at Gunnison, you remember when they were taken out by the Smithsonian.

RB: I went on leave and they were gone when I came back. (laughter) It was two weeks I went away. What happened? One of my friends told me they took them. They came in one day and just took them.

TH: Were you allowed out to go into any of the old gun batteries, like...

RB: Sure. They were all open. Everything was open. None of the doors were welded shut. Like the guns were up at Gunnison. The electrical connections had been severed to the guns. I think the breech blocks had been taken out. Other than that, I think they still traversed and I think they still up and downed.

TH: I was just wondering the state of the gun battery. It was just abandoned, right? It was just open. You could walk in.

RB: Yeah. Walk into what I guess was the observer's position, you know, where you plot targets and whatever, call the elevation and azimuth and whatever was there. The cabling was all still there but was cut where it went to the gun. That wasn't there but you could see where it went. It met the gun and cut cables again. The breech blocks were removed. That I remember because it couldn't fire. It wasn't plugged. You could go and look right out the barrel.

TH: They still have any paint?

RB: They were black.

TH: Black.

RB: I remember them being black as far as I can remember, very dark.

TH: Was that a popular beach because I remember you mentioning you and a friend were headed down there.

RB: Yeah we did. We used to go there. If we were off duty, we used to go right over (to) the gun battery. Right down on our beach. That's where we were. Sergeant major in the summer time would be there with his beer chest.

TH: That's funny. How about up here? There is a certain area up here. We call it North Beach. This was called the...

RB: Okay. The Officers' Club was up in this area. An old wooden Victorian building.

TH: Yeah, you can't see it. It's right over here and some barracks, some World War II barracks and a mess hall in here. That stuff got changed into what they called the 1st US Army Recreation Area back around 1966 and '67. It was still here when I got here when the Army was closing Fort Hancock in '74.

RB: We used to have boats and stuff. Each battery had a power boat you could take out and tool around in the water with a couple of Coast Guard boats. That was here. Other than that....

TH: But then opposite the Officers' Club what we call today North Beach was that the Officers' Beach then?

RB: Primarily. You know, we didn't hang out here too much on the weekends.

TH: You wanted to get out of here right?

RB: In the summertime, we used to go down to Sea Girt and go to Atlantic City.

TH: Really?

RB: Gambling wasn't here then.

TH: Right but it was still a place to...

RB: We used to go to Atlantic City. Sea Girt was the area to go to and Asbury Park.

TH: I was going to say Asbury Park.

RB: And we got out of here, you know. If you were stuck here, like I say I had to do I had OC line the next day or I had CQ or something like that or I had duty the next day or we were so dead broke we couldn't go anyplace. At the end of the month, most of the battery was here. You didn't have trouble finding a group. Most of us were here broke. (laughter) You know, we would hang out at the beach in the summertime or we would go over, you know, like I said you couldn't fool around too much behind the barracks because the buildings across the Parade Ground were the officers' homes. So, you knew there was going to be a complaint if they see something they didn't like.

TH: Right. So you steered clear.

RB: Go the other way. You know, we will go this way. Stay out of trouble.

TH: I guess you used the bus to get down to places like Sea Girt and way down to Atlantic City?

RB: No. Yeah. The commercial bus. The Army driver would take you to the commercial bus. That was it as far as he went unless he had official business from the

battery. Like once I remember the range hot on the tracking radar went out once and they couldn't fix it on site. So they (were) told the ordnance guys had the parts and they couldn't fix it either. Picatinny (Arsenal) had the parts right on the Pennsylvania-New Jersey border. And me and duty driver were detailed to go down, because this was a confidential order, classified order with an armed guard and everything. Went down to Picatinny Arsenal. Gave them our part. They gave us another. You know, it's a big thing. It weighs a ton. And it was also electronics, everything is electro-mechanical. Put it in the van and drove all the way back up from Picatinny and dropped it at the site but that is under orders to go down there. Keep all your receipts.

TH: Did you ever have to go over to Fort Monmouth?

RB: Oh yeah. That is where the hospital was for us. The big PX was at Fort Monmouth but that was when you went on sick call or you had to go down for some kind of physical or if you had, oh pay, pay was at Fort Monmouth.

TH: Really? You would have to go over there?

RB: No. No. The pay records were there.

TH: Oh, the pay records.

RB: That's where we were paid out of Fort Monmouth. So, if I had a problem, one time with savings bonds and everybody with their savings bonds. All of sudden I stopped getting them and they were still deducting them. So the first sergeant said, "Okay, let's fill out paperwork to stop it." I had stopped taking them out for two and was still not getting them. So there was, and I used to get it through the mail and the mail came here. So a complaint went through Army channels and one went through the post office as to why I wasn't getting them. The first thing they check was the address the bonds were going to. Was my mother getting them? No. Everything is coming in the military. And they found some guy in payroll was converting, that was the word he used, from a couple of guys, you know, and I remember all of sudden one day at pay, not at pay at mail call I went in there and they handed this stack of about 40. That was how many were missing, about 40 bonds and they made good on any bonds that were never heard from again. Yeah. We used to go to Fort Monmouth a lot. That was where sick call was. The hospital for us was. The pay records were there. The quartermaster sales store was there. That used to be right when you came in the gate past the barracks. There was a bunch of barracks when you came in and there was this old wooden building and that was quartermaster sales. You could buy uniform and boots, whatever. That's where you had to go. The PX was right across from it.

TH: I guess bigger facilities too, right. Because this was an older fort so there facilities were probably bigger and better.

RB: Oh yeah. They had everything. I mean we used to go there to steal parts off the Army vehicles to keep our trucks running.

TH: Steal?

RB: I think the statute of limitations has run out. We stripped civilian cars in the street.

TH: Get out of here. To keep your vehicles going?

RB: To keep our vehicles going. Parts we couldn't get. I remember going out with, there was an aura that you come from New York City that you gotta be a thug and a crook and the first sergeant called us in one day. Mendleson, I think his name was. A Jewish sounding name and called us in and said, "I need three volunteers and this meeting isn't taking place. The motor pool is in bad shape and this is a list of things we need." And at that time we had commercial vehicles. They just painted them OD and put U.S. Army on them. Right. This is what we need. That's it. We stripped an Army ambulance right in the PX parking lot. They thought we were from the motor pool coming to fix it. They looked at the truck and it said Battery C, 3rd of the 51st on it. It had nothing to do with Fort Monmouth. We'd pull up and say, "Hey, that's a 1950" whatever. Took the battery right out of it.

TH: By the way, concerning pay day, what day was that? And were you paid at the barracks?

RB: Yeah. We were paid in that large room either there or the mess hall whatever the pay master set up. Usually we got paid over here. We would just line up.

TH: That was once a month right?

RB: Once a month. Yeah. They didn't switch to twice a month checks and all different options and direct deposit until I came back from overseas in 1970 something. When they switched I was at Fort Bliss at the time.

TH: So when you were here...

RB: Every month you came up in front of the pay officer. You saluted, sir, private, sergeant reports for pay. And he finds you in the pay book, you know, and he would say how much money you were supposed to get and then you would sign the receipt. They would hand you the receipt, a copy of it. That was your voucher. What you started out with and the deductions and then he would count it out. Never got the change though because they didn't have coins. And you counted it again in front of him to make sure the count was right and you left. The next man came up.

TH: So you had your money for the month.

RB: For the month. You were paid for the month. That was it.

TH: What social activities did you take part in at Fort Hancock?

RB: They used to have dances when it was warm enough to bring people in at the NCO Club.

TH: Really? Did you dance to live music or would it be like records?

RB: No. They had a band and everything.

TH: Really?

RB: Yeah

TH: That's nice.

RB: Yeah, so we used to go to that occasionally. You didn't have to wear a uniform.

TH: Would that be like once a month or...

RB: Yeah. It was usually once a month in the summertime. Summer and spring, nobody wanted to come here in the winter or the fall. It was very windy out here in the fall.

TH: The girls for the dances, were they...

RB: Local towns, Sea Girt, Atlantic Highlands, Middletown I think.

TH: Yeah, a number of towns.

RB: Yeah. Local towns.

TH: Was it the Army bus that went and got them?

RB: No. They came in on a charter bus. I don't know. There was a Special Services Section here. Do you remember a building with a...

TH: The gym?

RB: Yeah. The gym was open when I was here. The gym was open when I was here. That was open. The movie theater wasn't but the gym was.

TH: Connected to that gym was the original YMCA building and that's where Army services were.

RB: Okay. That said Social Services on it. There was also a small medical detachment out here as well. I remember going there for shots.

TH: Was that like a Dispensary?

RB: Yeah. It was a Dispensary. It wasn't a hospital but there was Army corpsmen and nurses and an Army doctor. I don't know if they lived out here or what.

TH: What kind of shots would that be for?

RB: When I went overseas, I got my shots there. Every once in a while they would come up with some shot that you were supposed to get or whatever and they would line us up.

TH: In that gym was that like a bunch of the guys would get together?

RB: Yeah. Go play basketball or whatever, weightlifting.

TH: Did the post have any teams?

RB: Yes. On the Parade Ground in the back we used to, battalion had touch football. We were, "the Bally High All Stars." It was a real cheap wine at the time called, "Bally High." 25 cents a gallon I think. It was really cheap. You could get shellacked because it didn't taste like it had a punch or anything to it. It had a very fruity taste to it. You could get shellacked ten seconds before you knew it. Flag football turned into full contact brawls out there between the batteries and they fought. We had that and we had softball. We had that.

TH: Did you have any sports jerseys made up that said something like Fort Hancock Softball Team?

RB: No.

TH: Nothing.

RB: We played in civvies. Civilian clothes.

TH: You just got out there and just...

RB: We didn't have no money to spend on... the Army wasn't... did you see the condition of this Fort when you took it over? Do you think the Army was spending money out here?

TH: It is neat to know they were still bringing the ladies out for dances. That is interesting.

RB: That was in the spring or summer. Start around May 'til probably just after Labor Day.

TH: Did you attend religious services at the Fort because they had the...

RB: The church was open. No, I didn't.

TH: Did they have like different faiths in, well you might not know if you weren't religious.

RB: They had a chaplain that used to come by once a month for mandatory, we all went for moral guidance or something. Something like that they used to call it. He was a bible beating Baptist and that was as close as I got.

TH: He came to you. (laughter) Mandatory.

RB: They marched us in there and sat us down. Everybody fought to be on OC line that day.

TH: Really?

RB: Nobody wanted to go to that. Character guidance, I think it was called.

TH: But they marched you over here to that. Was it at the Post Chapel?

RB: No. He came to the building.

TH: He came to your barracks.

RB: He came to 74.

TH: Okay.

RB: The auditorium.

TH: We always asked you which beach you went to.

RB: Yeah we used to go here.

TH: It was right down that, Gunnison Road.

RB: It was walking distance.

TH: Yeah. Did you take excursions to New York City?

RB: All the time.

TH: Did you go by boat, train or car? We already said you had to get down to the south end to get on the bus.

RB: We had a thing with Academy (bus line) They understood what kind of soldiers we were. We would come and get off the bus and call immediately. New York was just outside the fifty mile range. They allowed us to go to New York. Our pass was only good for fifty miles. They allowed us to go to New York which was just outside the range and so we could walk to the bus, but the first thing you did was call the battery. And, (asked by telephone) "Is there a recall?" They would say, "No, everything is fine." Hang up and go our way. If it was, because we always bought a roundtrip ticket when we left and if there was a recall in effect cell phones weren't invented yet, nothing like that. Beepers, I think were maybe just coming in but nobody could afford them. Not at our rate. So that was as soon as we would get to New York we would call while we were still at the bus station.

TH: To check in.

RB: To check in that everything was fine. Okay, if it wasn't, pile right back on the bus where people were lined up. You would go right back on the bus. Tell them we were on the next bus going down. Somebody would have a schedule and we'd be there at so and so hour. You know and they would have the driver out there waiting for us. While we were around, you know, walking around every couple of hours you would call in.

TH: Do you recall how much a round trip ticket was back then?

RB: Oh about maybe \$2.25. Roundtrip from here to New York, Port Authority building.

TH: Did you know of any servants, minorities or women who worked at the Fort in either civilian or military jobs?

RB: Minority? They were mostly the wives of military personnel who as far as I knew. The only civilians we came into contact with were at the PX. You got to realize in our, in the Air Defense Command everything was confidential. Everything was classified even the number of people on the site. Even rosters were not published. That was a classified document. At Battalion Headquarters there were no civilians working. None. The only civilians that I remember were a few Post Engineers. They were all retired military who worked on site who worked on the base. They never even came out to the site, rarely. I don't think they ever came onto the site. Plus it was something nobody knew anything about. But even in the motor pool, there were no civilians in the motor pool. There were civilians who worked in the PX, civilians at Social Services, the Officers' Club. I was only in there once.

TH: I was going to ask you if you ever got to get in there.

RB: Once because the NCO who ran it used to be our mess sergeant. He was our friend. He invited us down so I got to see the inside of it otherwise I would never have been inside of it. At that time you came in there was a big picture of General Hancock.

TH: We still have that. (laughter) In the main hall, he was in the main hall.

RB: Yeah. As you came through the front door. But I don't know who worked in the kitchens. Everybody at the NCO Club was off duty that I knew of. The chaplains here were all military. Their assistants were all military.

TH: So the civilian employee population was pretty small. Yeah.

RB: I don't know about the Reserve Center. I never came in contact with them at all in their buildings.

TH: Yes. I think in this question when they ask if there were any servants its because in the old, old Army that is the pre-World War II Army, these officers like in Officers' Row they had an option out their pocket to hire lady to do the maid service because you know those are big buildings and the third floor could be maids quarters. That's why they ask that.

RB: It was either done by us or the prisoners.

TH: Minorities would be like African-American soldiers. Did you have any black guys or Hispanic guys?

RB: The Launching Area was primarily black. I noticed that right away.

TH: The launchers?

RB: The Launcher Crew as you begin interviewing them you will start noticing they were predominantly black and originally I was supposed to be one of them. I think because of my education and because I was white the captain spoke to me and changed it right away. He changed my training. I hadn't started training. He changed me to Fire Control but I noticed that most were black or Hispanic although we had blacks and Hispanics in Fire Control. There were educated blacks and Hispanics. There were white people in the Launch Control. There were two levels what I called in Launch Control. The maintenance people who were educated. These were the guys who were educated who knew how to fix the launchers who knew how to assemble the missiles very specific training at Fort Bliss. There was no OJT (on the job training). There were like the radar mechanics they were to the Launching Area. And what you might call white trailer trash you would end up in the Launching Area and the dog handlers. That was the only place we had dogs.

TH: At the Launcher Area? Was this a fun or boring place to be working?

RB: It depended. It had such a time like anyplace. It's what you make of it. If you think you are stuck and think it's the end of the world. Holmdel would be worse.

TH: It was just a site.

RB: That's it. You lived on the radar you lived in the Launcher Area and that was it. That was it. They were in the middle of nowhere. At least here you could walk out of your barracks and go to the beach. You could go fishing. You had Social Services. You had activities. Here in the wintertime it was unbearable. It was brutal. There was nothing going on. There were days you just wouldn't walk down the steps of the barracks sometimes. It was so icy. But it was like anything. It was what you make of it.

TH: In regards to being kind of close to home.

RB: Yeah. I went home when I got a pass if I could go home for the weekend Friday afternoon the duty driver would take me to the bus stop and I would go home. I would walk in the house right about supper time. I would walk in right about seven o'clock. My dad would bring me back on Sunday afternoon.

TH: Did anything especially humorous occur? You have told me some funny stories already.

RB: I have heard some of them. We were supposed to go on maintenance status or release status because of major work and right after we came off of A status and we sat down me and a couple of NCOs and we it was the summer time. I remember that. We, battalion just gave us an ORE, Operation Readiness Evaluation, brigade gave us one in the middle of the week, region gave us one yesterday. You only do the ORE when you are on A status and ARADCOM was on the list too. We are safe, you know. When we went to bed that night up in the buildings right, we took our boots off. We took our pants off, right we could relax, right. The battalion commander was out with the new battery commander. They were taking him over here. He had a French sounding name. I can't remember his name. They were with their wives and one other officer from battalion. Our battery commander's wife turned around and said wouldn't it be funny if at the end of the night they all went home and went to the battery for an ORE. That sparked the battalion commander said and they all lived here on Fort Hancock alright. And they were coming home I guess the way I heard the story as they were getting ready to pull onto Officers' Row, he was a lieutenant colonel, the other officer was a major and he was a captain, our battery commander. He said, "No. No. No. Take me to Fire Control," and C-2 was on alert, A status and then he jumped in the van. The other officer went down to Launch Control. Alright, and they walked in with their wives to the Inter-connecting Corridor. The guard, his battery commander, battalion commander open the gate and wave them through. You know, you just stop them long enough to say you vouch for these civilians. Yes, I will. Not a problem. You give a distress code okay, and wave them through. Lock the gate behind you. Walked to the Inter-connecting Corridor. There is the OC line operator with his feet up reading the newspaper (which was) perfectly legal to do. He is awake monitoring the radios, monitoring the line. Have to ask the question, "What is your battery status?" He said, "A status," you know, 15 minutes to fire. "What is there a firing crew present?" "Yeah. They are all down at the barracks." You see how far those metal buildings are from the Inter-connecting Corridor? That's a long run. Inside each of those buildings, those metal barracks, was a coax and horn mounted over the latrine door. And when he flipped the switch to hit the

siren, right, they also triggered the claxons so whatever barracks the crew was sleeping in that night would go off. Right. Now we are undressed. "Holy shit." You know, here we come flying up the, it was a blacktop path. The best way to describe it through the back area I mean to the back of the C-2 area. Guys were flying through the doors and they were like half dressed. I am the last one because I am crew chief that night. My language was very colorful at that time. I've got my pants in my hand and my boots and you know, they are not laced up and my shirt is open. And f- this and this better be a g-damn war to get us out of bed at 1:30 in the f- morning and da da da. And I am looking and everybody is frozen and here are these women all dressed up nice in high heels and whatever with the battalion commander all in suits and he said, "Stop. Stop. Stop. Everybody stop," you know. "Sergeant, maybe you better take your men out and get them dressed." (laughs) He called the Launching Area to stop the drill. I was like we didn't know you were coming. We went to bed. You don't have to have your pants on to fire one of these things.

TH: You never expected that.

RB: No. You get into your position get you equipment up and running, wait for the missiles to come above ground and go for it and lock on. You don't need your pants to do that. You don't need your boots laced up.

TH: That is funny. In fact, the next question, what stands out in your mind about Fort Hancock? That is a standout right there. That is a standout.

RB: Me and my always get into trouble for not having the uniform on from the day I got here.

TH: Really? Well, they used to be sticklers about that.

RB: You know the drill.

TH: So that is what stands out in your mind?

RB: Well, you said funny. You know, but I thought this was good duty here. I don't know if anybody else did not like it here.

TH: Everybody has got their own opinions.

RB: Big city boys. I grew up in a big city. I loved it.

TH: The questions, the last one is did you keep in touch with anyone?

RB: Not really. I left from here for overseas and then I came back to Fort Bliss, Texas. A few fellas went over with me but we were broken up when we got overseas. We went to different units. So, that was that.

TH: Did you ever get to see, and mentioning Fort Bliss, Texas and that is where out that way maybe in New Mexico where the Army had the...

RB: SNAP training?

TH: Yeah.

RB: We went every year.

TH: Really?

RB: Every year that I was here.

TH: So, how would they do that? Would you be scheduled to go?

RB: Yes. We would get a call on a Thursday afternoon, late Thursday afternoon and we always went in February. You knew approximately what time of year you were going. Not exactly what week but what month basically you were going. We would get the call late that afternoon. You knew you were on what they called the SNAP team.

TH: And that stands for?

RB: Short Notice Annual Practice and we would run drills that night here and also for a long time they had something called a T-1 trainer. A huge tractor trailer truck like that connected into your Battery Control and your Fire Control Van and your Tracking Van and it could simulate targets, missiles firing at you all kinds of weather control, weird missiles and all day Friday we would run drills. All day Friday and part of the day Saturday on Saturday after lunch we would pack and we would be given depending upon your rank anywhere from \$20 to \$50. High NCOs got almost a hundred. Saturday night they would take us, bag and baggage out to Newark Airport. They would have a charter flight that would come in and pick us up. We would usually fly to Philadelphia, pick up another crew around Philadelphia. Then we would go out to El Paso, Texas. Land at the airport out there. There was a military terminal where we taxied off to that. Then we would have buses that would take us to McGregor guided missile range. And that is desolate. The sky meets the land. If you went on AWOL for about three days because they could still see you walking down the road three days later. I mean it is that flat. If you think there is nobody around here, on Sunday there is absolutely nobody there that was on duty. On Monday, you wake up and it's (a) military post. Where did they all come from and foreign troops as well? When I first started going to SNAP, European troops had to come back here. Then they put in a training and evaluation site on Crete. They didn't come to McGregor anymore. I think that was about, that would have been about '68 I think. Otherwise you would see German troops, alright, Italian troops anyone on the Nike system. We would go down there on Monday morning they would issue us a missile, a Hercules missile and the launch crew would be evaluated on assembling, transporting and putting it on the rail. You were issued and Ajax missile that was already

assembled but not fueled so that training the launch men actually fueled because that was a liquid fueled missile.

TH: The Ajax.

RB: The Ajax was not solid fuel.

TH: So the still had them around for...

RB: When I was in back then. I don't know now.

TH: But that was the liquid fueling was dangerous.

RB: Red and white nitric acid. I remember the launch crew talking about it. Some of these guys (inaudible). We would be taken to a Fire Control Site. We would have to do a complete set of weekly checks and adjustments. Anytime we found something that was not right, in other words you made your regular adjustments to the equipment or if something like a part had to be replaced or something like that time stopped and you turned the site back to the range personnel and they corrected the problem and then you went ahead. You usually on Wednesday, if you were a good crew, you were ready to fire on Wednesday if the equipment wasn't screwed up. You were ready to fire on Wednesday, alright. Each of the sites had a trainer hooked to it. A D2 which was the forerunner to the T1. It was the exact same size as and it looked exactly the same from the outside. You couldn't tell any difference in it, the T1 inside, and they would run two tactical scenarios. And I remember the target would come in and before you were ready to fire if you were ready to fire they would stop the target and make sure you were ready to lock on it and not a commercial airliner or something like that and then restart the target and fire. And then they took everything from the event recorder and then the officers went to a meeting that night and you would get your score out a thousand. And they would take the measurements and tell you how close you got to the target and this and that. If your missile, one target you fired with the Ajax missile, one target you fired with the Hercules Missile. If either missile went wild that was not counted against you because you didn't assemble that missile. You were assembling the missile that was going to be used next week by the other crew coming in. So, the crew the week before you had assembled that Hercules missile. And range personnel had assembled the Ajax. So, you weren't responsible for the missile because they did all the checks and adjustments on the Ajax and told you it was ready because you didn't have the books. You didn't have the training. By the time I was in there were very few people who knew how to work on the Ajax missile (were) still in the Army and that was that. They weighted it and then you were off until Sunday. You could go to Juarez or whatever. Usually in about a day and half everybody was so dead broke we ended up sitting in the barracks and eating in the mess hall out there because we couldn't afford anything and Saturday was desolate around there. That was the worst day to be out there and then Sunday morning you got up after breakfast they took you out to, bused you out to the airport. Your plane was ready to get on and get home. You came here. You used to come back in Sunday night here the battalion would have a bus out there for us. Usually

it was our bus and a van for the baggage our duffle bags and whatever and throw them on the bus, the van and get on and go.

TH: Wow a whole day of travel. Wow.

RB: Monday morning, you went to the site because the other crew here was manning the site for a week. The people that weren't, didn't go. But C-1 and C-2 went separately. They didn't all go together. C-2 went in February. I don't remember when C-1 went. I think they went ahead of us. They may have gone in October.

TH: What were you firing at? Did they have like drones?

RB: A point in space.

TH: Wow, so it got up there.

RB: The trainer, the trailer simulated on your radar a target. It looks like a target on all the radars and you can measure with the computer on the event recorder just how close you got to the (inaudible) and they tell us we got within...I was always amazed at how accurate the missile were. We were always within 10 feet of the target. Most we were ever away was 25 feet firing an HE (high explosive) round with 640 lbs of TNT. That was the size of the warhead. It would get a plane out of the air setting off the detonation. Even the Ajax, I was shocked at how accurate they were.

TH: And super fast these missiles were.

RB: Yeah. Like I said the Ajax, the Ajax I don't remember too much about it. The only time I came in contact with it was at McGregor. They were all Hercules when I got here in '65, flying at almost four times the speed of sound. Out at the range, the maximum range and engagement would only take maybe 20-30 seconds.

TH: From the time it fired on the ground and got up to the place you were?

RB: It was flying to 98 miles. That was its maximum range, 98 miles. 200,000 yards. So, it was about 20-30 seconds tops.

TH: Did you actually see the missiles fire?

RB: Oh yeah. If you were on the crew that was not firing. Like we would bring two crews down. They were made up of the entire platoon. The same thing at the Launch Area. So, you could have, like I was on the B crew maybe as a computer operator and acquisition radar operator, Torres, Willie Torres was his name and he was on A crew. He was there as the acquisition operator. The BC van crew, the crew chief (inaudible) over here. The telephone operator, the switchboard operator might, you know, not your normal crew, not your normal switchboard operator. They were all mixed up but for SNAP you always trained as a crew for the SNAP practice.

TH: So it goes, from the missile would go from on its launcher, right?

RB: Yeah.

TH: Could you describe that? It goes up.

RB: The launcher for the Hercules you fired 89 degrees. It's not perfect 90 degrees. It looks like a perfect 90 degrees. No. It's 89 degrees. When the fire command would come through you had four boosters the size of the Ajax, single boosters strapped together and they were solid fuel. They would, you know, you could hear it in the Fire Control Area a couple of miles away. You could hear this thing firing and you see the bright flash and all the smoke and also, go and follow the thing all the way out and fire 25 miles away and BOOM, the flash 25 miles away and it be gone in less than 10 seconds of engagement at the range. Just to give you an idea, when I was in Korea I was on the SNAP team there and even though we were in a forward battle area we still had SNAP. We didn't come back. We went to A Battery which was like in the middle of the country. I don't know the name of the town or anything like that. Same scenario and there the problem is the Launching Area sits inland and the Fire Control Area sits towards the sea. When you fire you actually fire over top of yourselves because the target is coming in from the seaside.

TH: So the missile...

RB: It actually passes over the IFC Area and I was standing, I was the tracking supervisor. Stands, there are two tracking radars, the target tracking which is your elevation, azimuth and range operator. Those three guys control that. Standing behind them is an NCO and he fired from above. He is called the tracking supervisor. He is in charge of the tracking crew and you jammed the radar you are jamming the range actually so you can't see where the range is. He had, and there is another radar that operates on an ultra high gigacycle frequency and it's tootable from a box that is on the wall or he could hold it in his hand. I used to see them mounted on the wall and he had a little scope above the elevation operators scope and tells them what frequency he's on and what jamming frequency he is on and he can move away from it. And he can switch real fast. He can reset the other transmitter and the antenna and as the enemy aircraft was approaching the frequency you are on you hit a button and BANG all of a sudden you are at the other end of the frequency, so you are never jammed. The range operator scope was once it was on the console it was placed all the way to the right and that escape hatch. He's got two lines on the A scope. The bottom one is for the regular tracking radar the TTR and the one on the top is for the TRR, the Target Ranging Radar. So when he is getting jammed down below because he can't change that frequency, alright. He just keeps the target centered on what they call the gate, alright. He just looks at the top line and I don't worry about what he is doing over there. He is just keeping it centered. Telling the computer what the range is. And I am up here watching my little A scope with one or two arms on there. I don't remember that. Two arms I think telling where I was in relation to the frequency Transmitter A and Transmitter B and where the enemy

was. He was a single line back and forth. You could shoot right past him. One time we were running these practice drills and I was the tracking supervisor in charge of the tracking range and we were really giving him hell. We were really screwing with the Air Force guys. I would jump back and forth. I would wait until like the very last second and then BANG recalibrate of the other transmitter. I would just hit the button and BANG go right to it. You know and he would a couple of time shift back and forth like where the hell did I go. You know and the van you got to realize is totally black. The only light is coming off the screens and you can't see. The reflection in the B scope, that's the big square scope in the tracking one and you can't see any reflections off of that. The people come in and out and I thought it was the maintenance people used to always come in behind us and whatever. This time it was the brigade commander had come in with his sergeant major and a third person I think was the maintenance officer, he was the maintenance officer. (inaudible) he was a warrant officer. And I thought it was like the maintenance guys who came. They used to like to watch sometimes. You couldn't go in the Battery Control Van. You couldn't go in there when they were engaging. There was supposed to be one radar mechanic in there and that was it. That was his post. Stand by near the door in case something happened. Theoretically the same thing in the Tracking Van but the Tracking Van wasn't the command post. There was plenty of room. You know, these three guys were sitting down. I am standing right behind them and the MTR operator is sitting in his little cubby hole facing the door. So that whole gangway is open and what happened was I knew somebody had come in behind me but I am watching the scopes and we are giving the Air Force guys hell. We were driving them crazy and I had just done one of these fast maneuvers and the guy was shifting back and forth and we were still locked on and you can't stay locked on for I think 30 or 45 seconds and we had just knocked down like eight teams in a row. BANG. They couldn't break us in the tracking, you know. This guy was like jumping back and forth and trying to stop like he was frustrated. Like where did they go and I didn't even look back and sometime I turned around and there was a full colonel standing behind me. (laughter) And his sergeant major and he just said, "Keep it up, keep it up." I said, "Oh s&*!" He was a brigadier general. I don't know what his name was now. Christian, Krispen something like that. Whoever was in charge of brigade up there I guess 68th.

TH: When a missile, when a Nike Herc went off was there anyway you could describe the sound? 'Cause you could mention you could hear it.

RB: Loud roaring. The thing in Korea it passed right over us and it sounded like a freight train and all of a sudden everything started to shake and it's called east 60M box and it's mounted on this bracket that you could hold it but I never did. Everything was like shaking and this thing actually broke out of the clips that hold it in place and it was really hard to put it in and take it out. Broke out of that and all of a sudden had never been that close to a Herc firing and it was what...(laughter) we were ready to run out the door. "We thought what the hell was that?" And that was what it sounds like passing over. Holy... I don't know what altitude it was but everything was shaking.

TH: In your van?

RB: In the van and it was unbelievable and that thing because it not only, they are pretty heavy sitting down but we had cables in the corner that were like rings.

TH: Yes.

RB: We had cables that came down and on all the sites even out here. You had cable that came down and were about I don't know about my thumb maybe about a half inch in diameter it came down and attached to stakes that were way down in the ground. Anchor it in place and it wouldn't move around and they didn't move and this van was dancing all over the place. It was unbelievable.

TH: From that Nike Herc.

RB: Passing overhead. Unbelievable.

TH: Was it the famous switch, the firing switch that had like that little cover over it?

RB: Oh Yeah.

TH: That's the, you flip that...

RB: I have one of those home someplace.

TH: Really. (laughter)

RB: The red switch. The ones on the ATM systems were a little faster. You could just flip them up.

TH: The color scheme, I always see there are color pictures of the Nike but the boosters were painted.

RB: OD. The fins were all white. The missile was all white and it did say U.S. Army on the side and there were no other markings. It was a small stencil. They were taking there were some access hatches along the missile. That had the small stencil. I didn't remember what it said. They did say U.S. Army on the side.

TH: You, come to think of it you were here during the big blackout.

RB: Yeah.

TH: In New York City.

RB: I was asleep. I got up and I thought they were kidding me. I went outside because we went on generators here. We weren't blacked out and we looked towards the city and I knew they weren't kidding.

TH: Did you ever have any, I don't want to say close calls but like you mentioned early on in the interview there was a lot of air traffic here being in the metro area.

RB: We never came close to firing a missile. We never had a situation like we have now where American troops have the authority open fire on American soil. The closest thing we ever did, this was when I was being trained with the High power the sent me over to C-1. There was some talk of getting a High Power (HIPAR) over in C-2 but that never happened. They said go over there and I was detached for a couple of days to learn how to operate it. I was on duty there and it was at night. I had ten frequencies on it. We only operated on frequency one through five. We only on a schedule checked frequencies 6 through 10 on a certain day of the month because the frequencies were so high and so strong, the output of the radar. The High Powered Radar could never be jammed. We knew the Russians knew the frequency of the High Powered Radar but they only, and we knew they knew the first five frequencies because those are the ones we operated on all the time. Never operated on any of the upper frequencies, 6 through ten normally. Only to check them at night, late at night on a certain day of the month. They would be given like all the way up at Logan Airport in Boston would be given a warning that we were going to do this. And you just BANG, BANG, you went down the line checking the frequencies to make sure it stayed within, there was a block in the number of the meter. Stayed in there and BANG went back up to frequency one. End of test, that's it. All the tests were ten seconds, if that. Go through all the frequencies because it would interfere with the radars at Logan Airport. (It would) actually knock them off. As part of your drill to make sure you were not in frequency six through 10 alright when you drilled or trained with the radar. You were never supposed to have those frequencies used. It was near the end of my training and a Delta Airliner (inaudible) had an electrical problem and didn't know where he was and nobody could see him on radar because their radars weren't strong enough to see him and somehow we got the call the AADCP. C-1 was on A status at that time. It was a Delta Airliner and they asked us if we could see it. The ABAR didn't have the range. The High Power had the range and bigger than life there he was.

TH: On HIPAR.

RB: On the High Power at C-1 we could see him. And I remember we tracked him all the way to Logan Airport. We gave him positions because on our screen we had the map. The military (inaudible) system. So, we were to read the position to the AADCP and they would translate. It's different for civilians. They were translated into for him so he could get his position and get him to where he could line up on Logan Airport. Then they weren't able to see him until, what 20 miles out. I don't know what the problem was. We saw him from here. We tracked him all the way down. We had a letter and everything from Delta Airlines and whatever. When I think it was Logan Airport finally said they had him on radar you know, absolutely that was him that they would take over tracking. We got the call, "Alright that's it. You can break off." We tracked him for well over and hour.

TH: On the HIPAR?

RB: On the HIPAR. The ABAR couldn't see him so we got in closer.

TH: Which by the way, ABAR is the I think...

RB: Both of the Battery Acquisition Radars. That's what it stands for.

TH: Right, but an early type.

RB: Yeah. It was the first early warning radar that the Ajax and the Hercules system both had. They never changed it. Then the High powered which was High Intensity Powered Acquisition Radar is what it stood for. It had the giant golf ball. (inaudible) C-1 had the High Power.

TH: Yet you still had the ABAR the years that you were here?

RB: The whole time. The whole time. A battery had an ABAR still. The only time you really depended on these radars was when something happened to the AADCP.

TH: And AADCP stands for... what was that?

RB: That was the, they controlled the sectors firing.

TH: Up on the hill.

RB: Up on the hill from Atlantic Highlands. The AADCP was I don't remember now what it stood for.

TH: But that is what you got firing commands?

RB: That was the Air Force.

TH: Up on the hill.

RB: Yeah. They did the identifications for us. That's an enemy aircraft. Once they identified it we took over from there. You know we picked them up on, well we had already seen them on our Low Power or our ABAR alright. The LOPAR had 200,000 maybe, I forget now, 250,000 yards.

TH: The ABAR?

RB: No. The LOPAR.

TH: Oh, the LOPAR. 250,000 yards.

RB: Yards. Yeah we measured everything in yards and in mils. No degrees. Everything was 6400 mil in a circle. 16.9 mils in a degree. Everything was measured just the way the artillery is measured too. We never had any close calls. Never. We had a couple of, funny story. When I arrived here I was sent here straight from basic training. They had lost so many personnel who had ETS'd, separated from the Army, that they only had one crew on site that was qualified. They had no other people. We had a humongous, when I got here crew of privates. (laughter) It looked like a basic training center here almost coming in every day to fill the holes and whatever. They had their own little school going in that auditorium in Building 74. You know, go to class and then go out to the site and whatever and train. We were all restricted to base until we qualified in the A position. We had been training and training, training, and training and the only way to be qualified is to go through an ORE, Operational Readiness Evaluation at battalion level, alright. And they came out when the battery requested them and they worked with them and critiqued the drills and this and that and that's how we qualified. Well, we are sitting there one night and it was just before supper, just before we left for supper. No. We had already come up here. We are at 74 and we were queuing up for supper and all of a sudden they hollered that we were going to 5 minute status for real and everyone went piling back into the buses, right and they had no red lights on them or nothing and screaming out of that parking lot. The launch crew and whatever they went first because they had the furthest to go. They had to go almost to the front gate where the launching area is. We went behind in these old 25 passenger school buses running down that street along the bay and we pulled into ours and they kept going. We ran in, you know, we started our drills and whatever and C-1 was on release status, so they had no crew there. They couldn't come up. We ran in to man the underground pit. You know and in the drill when the missiles coming up the launcher crewman had the arming plug in his hand. The actual one is a safe plug in the missile and the arming plug has a colored streamer that tells you what size warhead is in the missile, what kind and what size is in the missile and you are supposed to take it out and replace the plug, cut the streamer loose, let it go and slam the spring loaded door on the warhead compartment. But in the drill, he takes out the safety plug and pulls it up in his hand and says simulate arming of M- whatever, M23 which is the biggest one, biggest missile we had, biggest warhead we had. He puts the safe plug back in. the crew chief is standing right next to him when he does this and verifies the arm plug is in his hand right or if it is going for real that the actual arming plug has gone in and the streamers are showing. And then they slam the, what you call it closed. In the drill, they says simulate blah blah and he puts it back to safe. They close the warhead compartment in the missile goes up its elevator, right. Then they put the arming plug back in its box or whatever where its kept whatever. They call it the basket. and we are going to battle stations for real. We bring four armed missiles above ground for the first time in our lives, right. And the crew, who later made sergeant and everything with me. We were both career soldiers and poor guy, he was a private just like me and so he stood there just like what he did in training. Took out the arm plug. His crew chief was standing right next to him. Ford was the crew chief's name. Held up the plug, said removed safe plug and now he is supposed to say insert arming plug. Put to armed position and take the rubber band off the streamer and let it fly out. A red streamer and the two of them would verify and show the crew chief when he slapped the spring loaded door closed, right. (Said), "simulate the arming plug," and he put back in

the safe and took a step back, you know. The crew chief looked at him and, "Boy we are going to war for real. Give me that damn thing." (He) pulled the safe plug out and shoved him out of the way. (laughter) Let the streamer fly and slammed the missile closed. Everybody was in the Launching Area, you know. They are standing on top of the buildings and whatever. There is a big berm around the whole area. You aren't supposed to be anywhere near that thing when the missiles are going up. You (had) guys on top of the berms cheering. The missiles are coming up with their red streamers on them, you know. "What are you crazy? We are going to war for real. Get out of the way." Jefferson, that was his name. We made sergeant together.

TH: Just getting back to night of the blackout. You were on duty down there?

RB: No. I was asleep in the dayroom and I fell asleep. When the lights went out I was still asleep. We switched to generators on the Post. The Post was on its own power system and we went over to (inaudible) system. It took a couple of minutes with the Post Engineers and whatever. Down there you have to switch manually. Bring the system up. There were some people down there right away so when the power went out, the commercial power went out you shut down the system. The generator operator started the system. (They) started the generators up. They switched over to what we called tact power. We were running on our own generator. Again it was on a telephone pole, a huge switch. Each battery had its own switch. It was right outside the generator building. You had to throw it manually. When you disconnected from the commercial power and went to tact power. You didn't do it, once in a while depending on, the battalion didn't want you to switch but if you had ARADCOM ORE, Operational Readiness Evaluation, part of the drill is you go on tact power and normally they would just say somewhere to contact, generator up. So, you would have to fire up this generators. Get them all balanced out and then swing the switch and hopefully everything would work. You know, if he was good you wouldn't even see the lights flicker, nothing would flicker. You wouldn't even know you were on...As a matter of fact, one time I had this one guy, Rickets, he was damn good at the generators. A little guy from Brooklyn or Manhattan I don't know and they didn't think it switched because the lights didn't flicker and the radio evaluators went out and looked at the control panels and said, "Okay your generators are running. There is a load." It showed that they were under load. You could hear from the vans you could hear when they switched but you could hear the generators going hmmm. And he went out and he looked at the pole even to make sure that switch was down off the commercial lines. I guess he didn't believe it.

TH: Your memories are extremely good. I think maybe we could have another interview sometime because we are going.

RB: Okay Yeah.

TH: But Richard I would like to thank you very much for coming down. I really enjoyed hearing this and maybe we can do this again.

RB: Sure. Maybe in the summertime or whatever.

TH: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW