

Gateway NRA, Sandy Hook
An Oral History Interview with George F. Horn
52nd Coast Artillery, 1940-1943
Interview with Tom Hoffman and Elaine Harmon, NPS,
July 2, 1987
Transcription by Jo Ann Carlson, Volunteer 2006
Edited by Mary Rasa 2011



Mr. Horn poses on his motorcycle at the southern end of Sandy Hook. Highland Beach bathing pavilion is in background.

PRIVATE HORN LIKES IT AT FORT HANCOCK

Private George F. Horn, five years a sample weaver for Botany, and who is now with Battery C, 52nd Coast Artillery, Fort Hancock, N. J., has responded to the invitation The Botanist editors extend to all our men in the service to send along letters about camp life, also to enclose a picture or two of themselves.

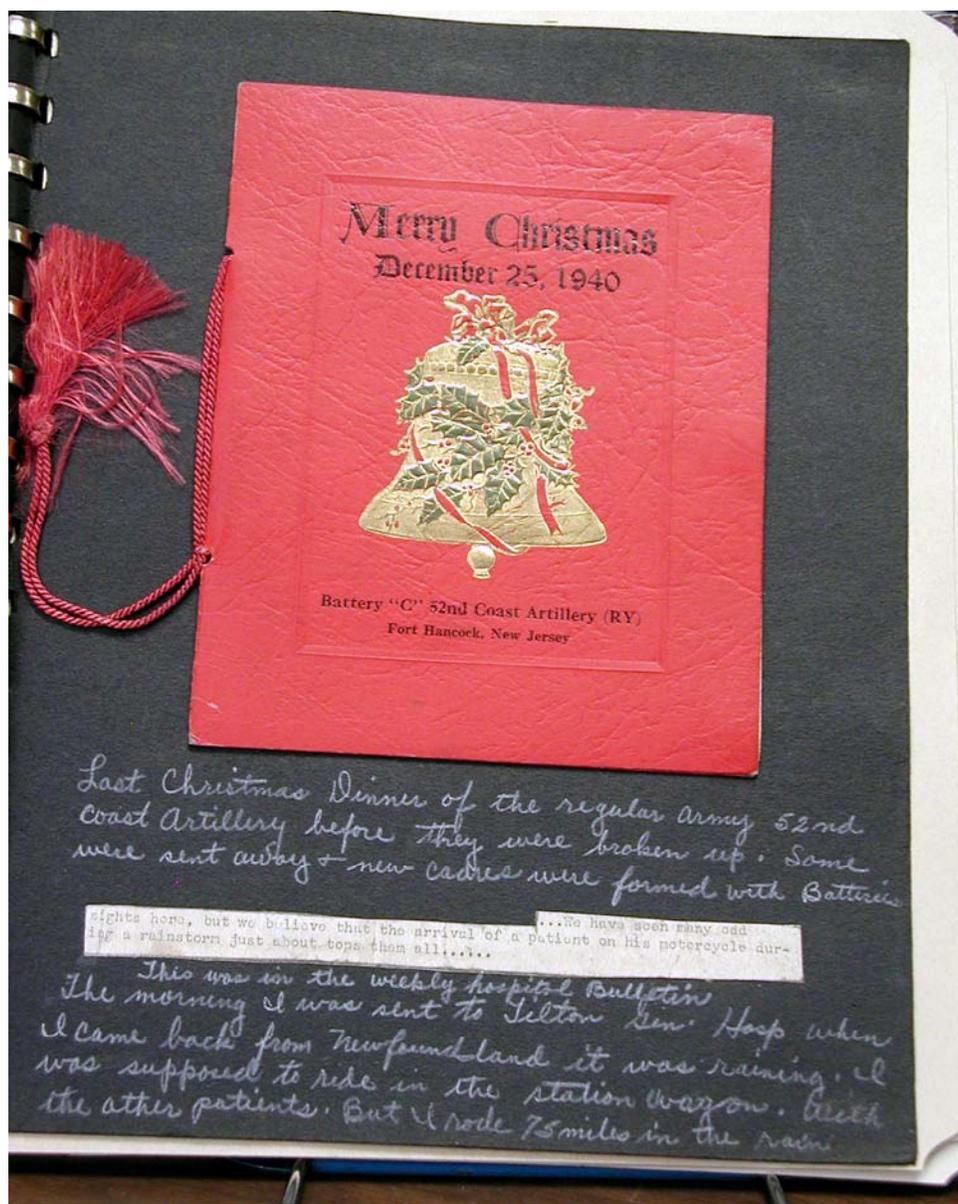
In a letter to Mr. Henry F. Remig, Personnel Manager, he writes interestingly of Army life. He is a railway unit, but the boys get plenty of marching, also lectures on how to roll packs and pitch tents; pull guard, K.P. and other duties. They even shovel snow when it gums up the works temporarily.

Private Horn has been through plenty of gas mask drills. Of course there's lots of time for play, too, with dances Thursday nights and Sunday afternoons. There's also a post theatre and also a Y.M.C.A. for recreation.



That pack and rifle Private George F. Horn is carrying in this photo weigh just 65 pounds, including the "tin hat." George, who was a sample weaver when he left Botany to enlist, is a member of Battery C, 52nd Coast Artillery, Fort Hancock, N. J.

An article clipped in Mr. Horn's scrapbook.



Christmas Menu from Mr. Horn's scrapbook.

Images are courtesy of NPS/Gateway NRA

Editor's notes in parenthesis ()

...1987 and my name is Elaine Harmon. I'm Museum Technician for the Sandy Hook Museum. We will be shortly joined by Tom Hoffman, Park Historian, who will be interviewing Mr. George F. Horn who served at Fort Hancock September 13, 1940 through the end of 1943 with the 52nd Coast Artillery, Battery D. Mr. Horn is presently 70 years old. He lives in Patterson, New Jersey and has brought a tremendous amount of memorabilia. (A) great collection of photographs, insignia and he is showing me his scrapbook right now. He served with Battery C, 52nd Coast Artillery, Headquarters 2nd

Battalion 52nd Coast Artillery, and then D Battery 52nd Coast Artillery, detached service. So, apparently he has a wide variety of experiences here and this afternoon he is going to be telling us all about it. The date is July 2, 1987 and it was deleted at the beginning of the tape.

EH: First we will start off with how did it feel to start at Fort Hancock? What's your earliest recollection of being here and your arrival on September 13, 1940?

GH: When I left Passaic, New Jersey where I enlisted, I was taken to Newark by bus and from there we were put on a train to Atlantic Highlands and then from Atlantic Highlands, they brought us into Fort Hancock with an Army truck. And then we were introduced to the supply sergeant and from there, formalities, like issuing your clothes and everything else. And I wound up in Battery C, 52nd Coast Artillery where I started my recruit training as a trainee and a soldier.

EH: You mentioned a uniform being issued. What were you wearing in those days, 1940?

GH: Well, we had the regular blouse and the straight pants but then we got the regular overcoat and everything else, but they really fit like a burlap bag. We still wore them during our recruit training 'til we were to go on our first leave after our recruit training but I didn't want to look like a potato bag going home, so I went to the Post Tailor to get everything re-tailored, re-cut and fitted to me so I could go home looking half decent.

EH: The Post Tailor at that time I presume was Bernie Duze.

GH: Bernie whoever he was, I remember him. Luckily we couldn't exist on what they were giving us at that time for pay which was \$21 a month. Prior to that, I was making, as a young fella which was a very good salary before joining the service about \$28 to \$32 a week at that time as a weaver in the Botany Worsted Mill. So, being a regular soldier getting \$21 a month was pretty hard to get all these things done with your uniform. So, being that I had extra money I was lucky I could get it done and pay for it out of my savings that I had before. So, then that's how it started on me having a nice tailored uniform. But while at Post, I used the old burlap bag set-up that they gave us.

EH: Was it standard olive drab?

GH: Standard olive drab.

EH: And you mentioned the suntans.

GH: The suntans we had. Later, I acquired the old Coast Artillery issue of the breaches and the Endicott Johnson boots which I used when I rode the motorcycles. And being as it was a GI issue, prior to my enlistment you were allowed to wear those clothes off post only, not during regular Army routine duties. Normally, during the day, we never wore the uniforms too much. We wore the old blue denim fatigues, denims.

EH: Which I had heard about but I had never seen.

GH: They were flat pancake-type fisherman hat, flat hat, wide brims all the way around. We'd have inspection usually every Saturday morning. I'll never forget that when we were breaking in our recruit training they had a corporal that I was assigned to his group. His name was Arthur Lakefield. On the first field inspection we had, I'll never forget, on Saturday we were supposed to go on weekend pass we had an inspection but due to the fact that my field pack was not rolled properly and all, I was knocked down. I couldn't go on pass. That Saturday afternoon, for 2 or 3 hours on the Parade Ground we had a full feet inspection. That's what I was knocked down. We had to practice rolling and unrolling the pack the whole time, that whole Saturday afternoon. So, I very well remember Corporal Lakefield. As a matter of fact, he was from the next town to us there which was Garfield (New Jersey). From what I understand, after our recruit training, right after that, a month or two later Corporal Lakefield was discharged. And I never seen or heard from him until Mr. Al Zwiazek told me, I asked him if he remembered him, and he said he did. Then talking, I remembered also back around the time of my enlistment Corporal Lakefield married one of the girls from a town right near us, that I knew, and her parents. Her name was Lillian. As a matter of fact, he did recall and I asked about his wife because I knew her mother, and all, and her brother. So, we got together talking on the phone about that. Then as time went on I got into motorcycles. I was on the 12-inch railway guns and I worked down in the Battery down there and I was elevation data board operator on the guns. Then we had a Sergeant Yates there that was in the outfit. He was a real tough old timer but he was real good. It seemed we had, in Battery C, a lot of the old timers that had maybe 15-20 years I think at that time. I don't know what time of service they had. We went out on maneuvers. We had the USO come in and give shows.

EH: Do you remember the celebrities like for example, Lana Turner?

GH: No. I don't, but I remember the girls from Keyport used to come in for the weekly dances.

EH: They were trucked in. Yes.

GH: They were trucked in from Keyport. I remember that and then we went into town lots of times.

EH: We know from the old newspapers called the *Foghorn* of that period that Lana Turner was here, the Dorsey brothers were here, Bob Hope was here and Judy Garland. All I think on the USO circuit.

GH: Yeah. Could have been.

EH: And the *Foghorn*, you know, naturally would be so proud to announce that these big celebrities were here that it was actually very well publicized. That's how we know of it.

A few veterans remembered Lana Turner. She was called the, "Sweetheart of the Coast Artillery." That's what we heard over and over.

GH: While we were here, on one of the maneuvers, I had an attack of appendix and I was rushed to the Post Hospital and I was operated for appendix.

EH: How long were you in there? Do you know?

GH: I don't recall. Dr. Major D'Azzio, that was his name. When I got back to the Battery, I don't know which one it was, Headquarters or in Battery D, there was a Sergeant Lipzie and old timer that came in from the Philippines. He was in the Battery. I think he was a First Sergeant, and when I came back from the hospital I was put into his outfit there. He said, "You've been gold bricking long enough in the hospital. I'm going to put you to work." He put me to work digging holes for the garbage for the mess hall.

EH: Bury the trash you mean?

GH: Bury the trash. So, I don't know what the idea was. So anyway, I got another attack while I was digging the ditches. They rushed me back to the hospital and the Major wanted to know what happened. The reason was, I went back to the barracks and I was ordered to take it easy for about 3 or 4 days. That's when Sgt. Lipzie got mad and said, "You've been gold bricking long enough in the hospital, it's about time you did some work." Then he put me to work digging these trenches. He was a tough old timer. So anyway, when I got back on the second attack to the hospital after I was operated and digging the ditches and the Major asked me what happened. I told him what the Sergeant did to me. He said, "We'll take care of him." He got on the phone and balled the hell out of the Sergeant. After that I remember when I was back in the barracks and didn't do anything for about a week. Then, I went into routine. Also, like I said, I rode motorcycles. I was down in the motor pool. That was another thing which he didn't like because being I rode motorcycle down at the motor pool, I didn't stand many formations which he didn't like. He wanted me to stand in these formations. But I got out of that then the regular Post activities that we had. Then later on they broke up the outfits. Then they made like Headquarters 2nd Battalion and from there I went to D Battery and all, regular routine.

EH: Do you remember which barracks you were in?

GH: It was over here somewhere. I was in Battery C. Then I was transferred from there into Headquarters Battalion which was right next to it, but I don't remember where C was. I took my wife into that in 1974. I picked it out at that time. I went up there and showed my wife the barracks. We were in this big open room. There must have been, I don't know, 80 or 100 beds up there on the second floor. I don't recall. I know the latrine was on one end of the room. Then we had the Sergeants and all at the other end. And they had small individual compartments, very small. I think there was a room for two sergeants and I don't know, a desk or something was in it. But there was quite a few of those at the other end. That's about the only thing besides attending the dances we had

on the Post. Also prior to that before I joined the service, I worked as a bartender. So, when the lieutenants used to run the Officers' Club and they had their parties, I remember Lt. Porter appointing me in charge of the liquor department for the party. But it always seemed that a bottle or two always used to disappear at the parties to my buddies at the barracks (laughter). And I'll never forget one day on a Friday night when a fella named Adams and Hevner got loaded the day before inspection and they really took sick. And we almost got gigged, the whole outfit, because they were throwing up on the floor and everything. Some of these things...

EH: Oh gee, sounds like a mess. Kept you on your toes, I'm sure.

GH: We had a lot of other good experiences and we had our Christmas dinners.

EH: (looking at photos) Well, here's Private Lawrence G. Adams

GH: Yeah. That's him. That would be him.

EH: And you were talking about Mr. Heffner?

GH: Yeah Hevner. Hevner.

EH: It says here John D. Hever.

GH: No Hevner.

EH: Oh here it is. Melvin C. Hevner.

GH: That's him. Those fellas were the two fellas from Pennsylvania. They were from around the coal mining section. They both joined together and came onto the Post they were in Battery D. They were always very close. If you didn't see one you had to go looking for the other one. We used to call them the, "Gold Dust Twins." They were known as the "Gold Dust Twins" because in the old days there were two colored people always on the "Gold Dust Soap Party" and they were always together and these two were just like them. So, we always called them the "Gold Dust Twins."

EH: It's interesting that they are listed in your menu of Battery C. There is Lawrence G. Adams and Melvin C. Hevner, "the Gold Dust Twins." That's a good one.

GH: I called them that, and it stuck with them. We used to go to parties together off in the Highlands on weekends and all, this whole group. And then another fella I'll never forget was in the motorcycle club we had here was Jack Curtis and Ralph Faulkner.

EH: Here it is. Ralph J. Faulkner is in your book and then Jack C. Curtis, right.

GH: Faulkner and Curtis, Adams and Hevner, and I don't know who the other guy was. There were six of us in the motorcycle club. And out of the six, two of us only had

motorcycles, the others were saving money to buy them, but they rode with us on the motorcycles. When we went on leave, we would go into, say, Newark or when I went home on leave if they wanted to be dropped off or they wanted to go into New York, I would ride them up to Newark. There used to be three of us ride on one motorcycle.

EH: Oh no. (laughter)

GH: I used to ride up front on the gas tank, another one used to ride on the seat and the third one used to ride on the fender with a pillow. And we rode up Highway (U.S.) 1 all the way up to Newark on it.

Mrs. Horn: No Garden State Parkway.

EH: Oh my heavens. You guys were courageous.

GH: We were crazy was more like it. We had a lot of fun with the boys.

EH: Didn't you have the old fashioned motorcycles with the side car?

GH: No. Not on the Post here. This motorcycle that I'm talking about was my own.

EH: Your personal property.

GH: On the Post we had Indian motorcycles and there was Harleys there. Very few people rode them. There wasn't many.

EH: I remember meeting a man from Highlands by the name of Mr. Andor A-N-D-O-R Orel O-R-E-L and he donated some photos of himself being an MP (military police).

GH: Right.

EH: With a side car and it was a classic, apparently.

GH: Now at that time when I was here they discontinued allowing privately owned motorcycles on the Post, so we had to keep it in the Highlands. And from what I understand later around 1943 or so they allowed them back on. But my means of transportation, getting back home to Clifton and back and forth or around here to Sea Bright and around Asbury Park I used my own motorcycle. It was not allowed on the Post. But we had a big emblem that we had on the back of our jackets which said, "52nd Coast Artillery Cycle Club." Now that emblem is now in existence but my son has it on his motorcycle leather jacket.

EH: It appears in your photos by the way.

GH: Now there's photos here with that on. You can see it. If you get a magnifying glass you'll probably see that it says 52nd Coast Artillery. I called my son in reference to this

patch that I want to donate to the museum here and he said that he will not take it off his jacket and he's keeping it on the jacket because he belongs to the "NJ Dawn Patrol" which is down in the clubhouse is around Centerville which is near Flemington there. Quite a few people ask him about the emblem. They said they have seen another like it. I don't know who the other guy is that's got it or where it is but so far the only one that I know that exists is the one my son has and he has now in his will willed it to the Museum when something happens to him.

Mrs. Horn: When you left the cycle in Highlands and you couldn't bring it on base, how did you get onto the base?

GH: We hitchhiked in. Whenever a soldier got leave here on Fort Hancock you could either ride the bus or hitchhike off the Post. Now, the only way you could get out, it was 6 miles long, so you either start walking down the Post, because there wasn't always that many people going off the Post but there was always women from the officer's wives or somebody or trucks or something coming in that would always give a lift out to the Gate. Now, to get off the Post you had to have a pass but luckily I had always rode a motorcycle on the Post on the government machine we had two passes and I always had one. I was quite fortunate to have one.

EH: Was your duty actually like as a mechanic originally when you were here?

GH: Well, in and out taking errands to Fort Monmouth and things like that. Going over to Fort Dix taking dispatches once in awhile or going down to the guns. When I wasn't down to the motor pool I would be back on regular duty in the barracks. That's why Sergeant Lipze was always on my tail because I was always out and always not standing formation. He always wanted me to stand in formations. He said, "If you are going to do that assign him to another outfit," but they never did. That's one thing he always had against me. (laughter) He didn't like that. While at the Post with all the activities I was involved with I needed money for this and that. At that time when the one year when the National Guard was inducted into the 245th they came over from Brooklyn they were put into these camps I think down by Camp Lowe and all. And if you remember, I was always buying up all these regular Army Government Issue things. I was buying them off of these guys that were broke at the end of the week after payday. The garrison hats, the belt buckles, the garrison belts, pants, shoes, shirts. I used to buy them up and I used to sell them to the one year enlisted guys from the 245th that came in because they wanted to look like regular Army soldiers. I was always making a buck here and there so I always had some extra money. You couldn't live, in the beginning, on that \$21.

EH: Quite an entrepreneur. Weren't you an enterprising person?

GH: I was always trying to make a buck. I was always that way, even up to this very day. I always had something going, also I gambled and I was pretty lucky at times playing black jack and shooting craps, not too good at craps. Blackjack, yeah, we did pretty good.

TH: Where would some of these games be held?

GH: They were held in the day room, where the pool, the day...

TH: In the barracks?

GH: It wasn't supposed to be, but it seemed that the commanding officer was always gone, or something. The first sergeant wasn't supposed to know about it but he knew about it.

EH: Yes, you have the right to remain silent.

GH: The best crap games were always on the pool table. We had a Sergeant Pierce that was down at our railway guns. He was a pretty nice polished fella, very nice fella. I don't know if he is on there.

EH: On your menu we are looking at some names here. Here he is, Lloyd L. Pierce.

GH: That's him, that's him, that's him. He was a very nice fella. I remember him.

EH: And Sergeant Willard E Yates. Isn't that interesting? Justin Yates was his brother maybe?

GH: I don't know. You got a picture of Yates over there. This is World War I taken in Passaic, New Jersey during World War I, a parade. I had that put in there. This fella here (looking at photos) was from our Post. He dismantled that bomb.

EH: We're looking at the scrapbook that Mr. Horn brought in today which is filled with all kinds of really exceptional things.

TH: It looks like he is getting ready to put a charge on that artillery shell. Soldiers exploded shells with charges of TNT. And you knew him?

GH: Yeah, he was in the 52nd. One of these things appeared in the New York papers and while I was on Post and all I used to read them and then clip them out.

EH: There's all kinds of good stories contained in the scrapbook that we are looking at.

GH: Do you remember did I tell you the story about that girl? (to wife.)

EH: Why don't you record this just for posterity here? There's a miniature vest in this scrapbook: a little woolen vest.

GH: Now, this one here was sent to me when I was in the hospital. Part of the 52nd was also sent to Hawaii. We used to call it Fort Camp. It was actually For Kamehameha, Coast Artillery. Now, that was sent to a fella while I was in the hospital. The date is on

there and everything and his name. This was also sent to me from a buddy who was transferred at the time when Roosevelt exchanged with England some destroyers for our Army bases. Some were sent to Trinidad, some were sent to Bermuda some were sent up to New Foundland. Part of us were sent down to (Fort) Eustis, some were sent up to Fort Devens in Massachusetts. I remember we delivered some stuff up there.

EH: We are looking at a program booklet it says, "A Flying Cockroach Sings." It was a musical comedy produced at the Bermuda Base Command. As you were saying all these people were divided up. But tell us the story about the little knitted vest here that's in your scrapbook.

GH: The little knitted vest was from a girl that I knew that worked in the Botany Worsted Mill where I worked as a weaver. She knew that I enlisted and the first winter that I enlisted here it was cold as the devil here at Fort Hancock. There was snow on the ground, the wind blowing, it was real bad out here. The roads were blocked and everything. So, I used to write letters home and how cold it was, writing to her. So she says, "I will knit you a nice sweater to keep you warm." So, I wrote her back. Thank you very much. She said, "Please get your measurements: your shoulder and sleeve length, your chest size," which I wrote down very heartily, with cooperation with some of my buddies. I was bragging that, "I got a girl here. I got a dame, who was going to knit me a nice wool sweater. Boy, am I going to be warm." So, when the darn sweater did come, it came in a pretty big box and it was addressed to me and I said, "Oh, boy this is from that girl Carol." So, when I started opening up the box, I kept opening it and I couldn't find nothing. (laughter) Paper was coming out, I was taking out paper and I said what the heck is this a gag or something? So on the bottom of the box, was a little box. I opened the box and there was this little miniature brown sweater. There was a note in it that said, "Ya damn fool you didn't think I was gonna sit there and knit you a real big one, did ya?" 'Cause I was always a joker and so was she.

TH: And you told me Monday that you had saved that sweater, and here it is.

EH: What are some of the pranks that you played by the way?

GH: If I told you, you wouldn't believe it. As a matter of fact, this Herman Weiss, who was stationed here from 1934 to 1937, he was the one that got me to join the Coast Artillery at Fort Hancock 'cause he was discharged in '37 and he hung out at the garage where I was working part-time as a young mechanic. He was the one that taught me how to ride a motorcycle and everything else. And at that time, my parents wouldn't let me have a motorcycle of course because my first father was killed on a motorcycle. (inaudible talking) So, I used to ride the motorcycle Sunday afternoons in the back of the garage. Being that my father was killed on one, my mother never wanted me to ride motorcycles. So my first motorcycle was an Indian. Now Herman when he was at Fort Hancock on Sandy Hook, he was on the military police over here. He rode an Indian motorcycle. So, being that he knew how to ride them and the shift was different than the Harley Davidson so he taught me how to ride this Indian motorcycle, which I kept down at the garage. I used to go and ride it on Sunday so that my parents, my step-father and

my mother wouldn't know that I was riding it. It seemed that all my relatives and friends knew that I rode a motorcycle, except my mother and father. My uncle and aunt also knew that I was riding but they would never tell my mother. Then later on, as the years passed, I never see.

EH: Do I have the same person? He lives in Pompton Lakes (New Jersey).

GH: That's the guy.

TH: Monday when I went through the file of 52nd vets he knew that name. And then today he was telling me of all things that Monday, while you were jotting the address down he was out here fishing.

GH: What a coincidence. I called this Corporal Lakefield and asked to get together. These guys to me, same old story 'cause I've started a lot of clubs and I'm doing the same work you did. They have the same old alibi. There's always the same ones, you got the chronic complainers all the time that never do a damn thing. (laughter) This is what's going on. There's no cooperation. when you break your back and there's no thanks for it.

EH: We know. How well we know.

GH: I called Al, the only guy that worked with me and I talked to him and he was very helpful. As soon as I talked to Al, Al seems very interested, the same as I am very interested. So, Al was over to see me the next day. So, I got a heck of a lot of cooperation. The only problem is I can't do as much as I would like to do. I'm tied up with so many things plus I had a heart attack and I'm limited for work but I'll do all that I can to help if I could get together with these guys. I would enjoy getting together with some of the old buddies out at Fort Hancock even if we can help in one way or the other. My wife and I, because she is very good on office work. She was a Girl Friday. She's smart. Don't give her nothing unless it's spelled right because she'll pick it up on you like nothing. I'm telling you never saw a woman like that, she can type, shorthand. (Tape stops and starts again)

GH: This is a separate group. We don't know anyone. The only one I knew was Johnny Fenek 'cause he had TB like I had. We were in the hospital and that's how I knew Johnny Fenek. That's the only thing I know. But don't forget now, I see these guys listed, you got the 245th. When I asked them, "Do you know Johnny Fenek?" "Who's Johnny Fenek?" Maybe there was 300 or 400 people in the outfit. You don't know who is in there. I was on the second floor in one of the buildings. I didn't know who was on the first floor. There was about 150 guys upstairs. There was beds up against the wall and I think there was a double row back to back in the center and I think there was another row against the windows. So, maybe there was about 150 guys in Battery C, maybe more. Then there was guys downstairs. Now, maybe that was more than 150 maybe that was part of Battery C in that whole building. Now you got maybe another 150 downstairs. Now, you've got 300 guys. How do you know who the other guys is?

You didn't bother with the guys downstairs. You might have seen them maybe, on the Post Inspection, or something like that, but that's the only way.

EH: Which brings me to a question, was there a caste system? I mean did you not socialize with certain groups?

GH: No. No. It was all open. You had groups like though.

TH: But like the officers though? I think she meant, when she says caste system she's talking Officers, then the NCO's (non-commissioned officers). That's what she meant.

GH: Oh no, they were different. Privates were here, corporals would be at another section and your sergeants were at the other end. You knew the guys, Tom, three or four bunks this way and three or four bunks that way and then you had maybe another guy maybe ten bunks away. You knew him. Like I rode motorcycles and a couple of other guys were interested and we hung together in a bunch. Then we had one guy from Buffalo, I can't think of his name. He was a Russian guy that used to play the piano. He was a crackerjack, but he got out on a Section 8. He told us he was gonna get out and I would never believe him. He played crazy. They had him locked up in the Guardhouse. They had him locked up in another place, too. In one of the buildings up on top in that attic room, they had him locked up there.

EH: In the Guardhouse?

GH: No. It wasn't the Guardhouse. It was one of the barracks cause he made out like he was nuts. But he was never nuts on the weekend when we had to go to town (laughter) He used to get drunk as a lark and he used to play the piano and we used to get together five or six guys and we'd come back loaded from the Highlands. We had a great time. He said "I'm sick of this Army life. I'm gonna get out". And I said, "You can't." He said "I got a way. You watch." Sure enough he pulled that there that crazy act.

EH: Petrovitch?

GH: I don't know. He was from Buffalo that's all I know. I think his name was Ed something or other, a Russian guy. He got out with a Section 8 and I could never believe it. They let him go. When he got discharged, he was all packed and leaving, he came over and said "I told you guys that I'd get out. Now you believe me?" 'Cause he didn't like Army life.

TH: What kind of prisoners would you have in the Guardhouse from time to time because you mentioned?

GH: Just guys that went AWOL (Away without leave). I'll never forget another time when we had one day, see they were always hitchhiking. If we wanted to go to town or anywhere like New York, we had to get on highway, what's that 36?

TH: 36.

GH: Well, we used to hitchhike to (NJ state highway) 36 then onto (U.S.) 1 and then all the way to New York. Well, this one time it happened, this weekend, we went out. Come back Monday morning we had to stand in formation. I couldn't understand why. We had to be all dressed up and lined up. Here we found out on this weekend, that some guy got off the Post and was hitchhiking to New York and a woman picked him up. He raped her. And we had to stand up and she picked the guy right out. I'll never forget that either.

TH: That was in the barracks here?

GH: In the barracks here, we had to line up. This was around '41 -'42. They got the guy. (Reasons to get in the Guardhouse) Or little things maybe a guy stealing from another guy from another Post or banging up a car, or getting into fights, you know. Refusing to do work....

TH: How about did the soldiers really obey people like corporals and sergeants?

GH: You had to or you'd go in the Guardhouse. I mean, there was no horsing around.

TH: Were there any instances where an enlisted man would try to hit someone like an officer or a sergeant?

GH: Yeah that happened a couple of times, yeah.

TH: Into the Guardhouse.

GH: Into the Guardhouse and AWOL, stuff like that.

TH: What would happen? I'm sure they wouldn't sit around. Did the prisoners go....

GH: Oh no. They went on detail. Oh yeah. They had live ammunition in the guns too.

TH: The guards.

GH: Oh yeah. They didn't fool around.

TH: Did they do that with the rifle?

GH: The rifle yeah. You went out with maybe 2 or 3 guards. And if the prisoner got away, you had to serve his time. The guard did oh yeah.

TH: The guard did if the prisoner got away.

GH: And another time they used to have, and they discontinued after I was here, because I remember I got left in New York. We used to have a ferry going out from here that used to take us down to the Battery. On a Saturday night you used to get leave and you would jump on the ferry. You had to get back to the Battery by 12 o'clock. If you weren't by 12 o'clock you missed the ferry.

TH: 12 midnight.

GH: 12 midnight. I had to be back for KP Sunday morning. I missed the damn boat. I had to hitchhike all the back from New York and I got back here in time for KP (kitchen police) in the morning otherwise I would have been in the Guardhouse.

TH: How did you have to get back? Did they have a bus?

GH: (Laughter) Hitchhike back from New York.

TH: Wow. That is a long way.

GH: You are darn tooting. Hoping to get a ride. Oh, I could tell you good stories too that we had. When we were broke and needed money. Should I tell them or no?

(Break in tape. Stops and starts again.)

EH: We are looking at a scrapbook.

GH: No. No. I started it when I was in the hospital in Fort Hancock.

EH: We are looking at a scrapbook. It's a brown leather scrapbook with the most beautiful ornate cover to it. It's got about 20 embossed insignia bordering the margins with the great seal of the United States smack in the center of the scrapbook. Mr. Horn bought it in the PX (post exchange). Do you remember what it cost? I mean some incredible price of maybe \$1.00 or so?

GH: I have no idea. They used to sell pillow cases in there too.

EH: Yes, we have the Fort Hancock towel.

GH: That was the biggest thing. We were always taking them home to the girlfriend. I think all the girls around the state must have had enough of these pillow cases. 'Cause everybody, when they were a soldier, was sending pillow cases home.

EH: We don't have a pillow case, but we do have a towel that's Cannon cotton towel that says Fort Hancock woven across the front of it.

(Mrs. Horn asks in audible question)

EH: That we got in a flea market believe it or not. That was not acquired here but you said you started the scrapbook while you were in the hospital.

GH: I started it while I was in the hospital.

EH: But how about you didn't really quickly narrate about the collection of cloth patches that you had brought, for example, First Army.

GH: They were off my blouse. I took them off my blouse.

EH: And I have a zerox of you wearing most of the insignia. But you were describing to me the difference between tailor made and battery issue.

GH: Tailor made was a custom made insignia of your own outfit which the PX sold. They sold these. But these insignias that were tailor made, you could not wear while standing formation. You had to use battery insignias. But when you went on leave, you put your tailor makes on so that you looked real spiffy.

EH: I never knew the distinction. That is interesting.

GH: That's what we called them. We called them tailor makes and these are battery issue.

EH: And I see you have the ruptured duck which is the classic discharge lapel pin. And I was kind of looking at your other second ones.

GH: This was the hat pin, if you remember. That was regular on the sides. I took out a picture and you had to wear them on both sides of your lapels, see. (looking at photo).

EH: And I'm also looking at all the marksman awards that you received.

GH: Not all of them, I didn't receive all of them, only one set, but these were the ones they were giving out at that time. Sharpshooter we had that. We used to put all that garbage on when we went on leave to impress them.

EH: And a bunk tag no less, issued to George F. Horn serial number 12008722. You remarked that even that serial number appears on the blanket.

GH: The last four numbers they always put on, 8722.

EH: Four digits and the rifle number issued to you was 1264789 and the bayonet number.

GH You had to know them.

EH: Really, you memorized it?

GH: Oh, you had to. That was something they made you do. And then the dog tags, see that's my step-fathers name on it.

EH: Oh yes. So, that's who to notify. Isn't that interesting? Do you recall any really dramatic moments out here? Whether they be I don't know, some of the unusual events?

GH: A couple of scares that there were submarines off the Hook a couple of times. That's about all. And then the 7th (Coast Artillery) I know the mining outfit they were alerted or something like that.

EH: Did you participate in the war games at Fort Tilden? I remember seeing clippings of the war games.

GH: Yeah, like I said, we went over to Fort Jay a couple of times. We went over to Fort Wadsworth. Just for a day or two we used to go over and take stuff over and come back.

EH: How about notable storms and winters?

GH: The only thing is it was darn cold out here in the winter. I can remember the time when we were snowed in and when I got sick too. When we had to sleep on maneuvers out there. We had straw for a mattress. You had to sleep with your overcoat on and your galoshes on to keep warm and the fire out in front otherwise you froze to death.

EH: Oh my goodness. And you mentioned that one of your assignments was elevation board detail.

GH: The requirement of the guns was that you had to set up your own phones for the big guns. And what they would do, you used to call the plotting room, you can put that down the plotting room as we used to call it, was known as the girls room.

EH: (laughter) Where did it ever get that name?

GH: I don't know, the girls room, the nickname for that was the girls room. That's where they did all the plotting of the ship. Now, when you fired the guns you always fired on a predictive point. They would give you the elevation and azimuth and you had to set it up. Now when they gave it to you on the gun, you had to put it on this board, 'cause you were away from the gun. Your plotting was always done in what we called the "girls room" in the box car. And when they plotted the course of this ship, first they would track it. You would track your boat. And after you tracked it, they would, over the telephone field piece, which you set up there was a board on it like a chalkboard on it on a swivel that would rotate. So you would the...

EH: My understanding was that the plotting board was to predict the target, a moving target, basically.

GH: The plotting did the tracking and the plotting where the ship was supposed to be and you fired so many degrees you fired at a predictive point. Now here it is where the phone was being set up.

EH: Yes. I see it in your snapshots.

GH: Here is the elevation data board. I was an elevation data board operator, also.

EH: Is that you standing there?

GH: That's me there. The elevation came over and you would mark it 4740 then you swing it around. Then he would send back the azimuth and you would mark the azimuth. Then the guy would be setting it but as they are tracking this thing over the phone, every 30 seconds or so they would send a new one. So, what you had to do was scratch this out quick, write it on, flip the board around so that the guy on the gun could set the elevation and data again. And then when it was ready to fire they pulled the lanyard like I told you and when he fired it the whole god-darn beach flattened out. And you had to open your mouth and all because of the sound and all.

EH: Yeah, because of the concussion.

GH: Yeah the concussion was really bad.

EH: (looking at photos) Are these taken here at Fort Hancock?

GH: Fort Hancock, that's right out here in the old days. I was just telling my wife I don't see no railroad tracks out in the bushes where we used to be.

EH: There's some traces of tracks.

GH: Now see the thing is all mixed up. I have stuff from New Foundland. That is all mixed in. You can take the patches. I will set it wherever you want. See these should be over here.

EH: How big were the guns?

GH: Well, you had 12-inch mortars, that's what was on the railway, and the rifles. You got a picture of one of the rifles here in one of these pictures. Now this is a 12 inch mortar here and this is where we used to stay out on those maneuvers. See those pup tents?

EH: Oh my goodness. Very rustic.

GH: Then we would go out somewhere and they would throw it. See the barracks bags? They threw all our clothes out. Now this is inside here for the guns, this is inside the ammunition car. You had a railing go through the center of the car see. And then the

shells, like c-clamps, you would grab that and on this track you used to push it out to where the gun was. Then we had a tray there that used to slide into the gun. Then behind it would come the powder charge – a big bag, like a 5 gallon can, it was out of canvas, with the powder charge and you put that in. Then the other guys had their job, they closed it up the breach and everything. You used to talk to them.

EH: Do you know how many men constituted a gun crew?

GH: I don't remember.

EH: 'Cause Al Zwiazak, we have him on tape. He could tell you exactly, who did what.

GH: (looking at photos) This was Cook, I don't know where he was from. I don't know if he was from Rutherford, or where. But these were the guys that went out – they sent us out on boxcars. Here's your rifles here. And this here was leaving Fort Hancock, you got a picture here of it.

EH: Oh yes. While we are looking at your scrapbook, we are also looking at the collection of Sidney Horowitz is in the photograph second from the left. He recently popped up at one of the veterans reunions and we are tracing in the photos, tracing his journey from Fort Hancock to Fort Hamilton and then from Fort Hamilton over to New Foundland. And you did the exact same thing, is that correct?

GH: Yes that's right, same way. (looking at picture) He was from New York too. Now this is Adams.

EH: Was his name Sparky Adams?

GH: No. No.

EH: Because there was one who had a nickname Sparky Adams.

GH: Cook. Cook. That is me there.

EH: Al Zwiazek always talked of Sparky Adams.

GH: That's me there. That is Adams. Also being on elevation data board operator, they put me on sentry duty too. I didn't get out of that either.

EH: Were you on walking post for the sentry duty?

GH: Yeah, sure. That was all walking post.

Mrs. Horn: They did a lot of convoy work.

GH: Yeah. I told them that was Fort Monmouth when you went to Fort Dix, Fort Jay.

Mrs. Horn: (Inaudible)

EH: Well, what was it like?

GH: When you went on a convoy and you were driving a motorcycle maybe there were three or four motorcycles on a convoy. And you had one or two in front leading the convoy. When you came to a crossroad, so no cars would come into the convoy, you would stop at that road. In other words, you were coming down this way and the road is coming in here. So that nobody comes in, you would stop over here, to stop the cars from coming out and the procession would go through the convoy and then you would drop back. And then the guy from the back would ride along the convoy to keep the cars the hell out of the convoy, then ease up in front. Then when you came to the next one this guy would stop the cars again and he would fall back to this crossroad until the convoy would go through – in other words, like playing piggy back, one, two, three. Now if a guy cut in to your convoy you went after him with your motorcycle and you rode him right the hell out of that convoy. He had no business being there. You rode him out. That was work. It was a lot of fun. I enjoyed that.

EH: How long would a convoy be? How many vehicles?

GH: It varies. Even like now: 15, 20, 10, depending on where you were going what you were taking. It depends sometimes it was only three on a convoy.

EH: How long could it be?

GH: Oh, 15, 20, whatever it is. Soup kitchen could be going out. It all depends on how far you were going. If you were just going out taking supplies from one outfit to another, you only took two or three. Or if you were to be a dispatch rider you would take a message from here to Fort Monmouth or you would take a ride over to Fort Dix or somewhere.

EH: So your job was to prevent it from being interrupted.

GH: That's right. Then later on they got away from it because too many guys on the motorcycles were getting hurt. They were taking spills. Then the Army, more or less to avoid injuries, the Army went more or less to the Jeep. Up around here they were using mostly the Jeeps. They did away with the motorcycles I think later on. Military Police North. Then they couldn't get enough guys that would ride the motorcycles because it was too dangerous. Too many guys were getting hurt.

EH: Because of the speed involved, was that it?

GH: I don't know. I don't think they knew how to ride the motorcycles. They weren't used to it. Some of the guys only learned how to drive the motorcycles when they were in the Post. Some guys never drove a motorcycle or rode a motorcycle. These were the

guys that were getting hurt. And these clowns, that rode in the civilian life were all right because we went through fields and we took spills, and you knew how to handle the machine. These guys never had that experience. It's just like learning how to drive.

EH: I'm sure I couldn't handle it very well at all. I wouldn't do well I'm sure. I'd be the first one injured.

GH: See after I got that first medal, I lost it. You had to keep up your shooting, and if you missed, you lost it. Boom that was it. You used to get \$5.00 extra a month in your pay.

EH: There were a few clippings here. What's nice you have Popular Science 1941, the original article. We are delighted because we have it in the Zerox copy form from Harry Wozniak, but to see the original, Tom Hoffman is doing cartwheels because its November 1941, Popular Science. The title of the article, which begins on page 90, is called "Harbor Defense, the Men of our Coast Artillery, Have A Big Job." In fact, all we have, I don't think we have the complete article. It actually gives you the dimensions of cannons, the weight of projectiles, approximate range and a lot of photos.

GH: It also tells you how high the guns fired, too. How far the projectiles went.

EH: It's very interesting because it gives you so much detail.

GH: Well, I'll tell ya, they (Germans) had all this before the War started. They weren't dumb, them Germans. They had everything lined up. That's what I got a kick out of. The Japs that attacked Pearl Harbor figured it out. They knew where to pull in and what time and everything. That's how they got in there.

EH: Interesting clipping here: "Private Horn likes it here at Fort Hancock. Private George F. Horn, five years a sample weaver for Botany and is now with Battery C, 52nd Coast Artillery, Fort Hancock, has responded to the invitation the Botanist editors extend to all our men in the service to send along letters about camp life. Also to enclose a picture or two of themselves. In a letter to Mr. Henry F. Renig, Personnel Manager, he writes interestingly of Army life. He's in a railway unit but the boys get plenty of marching also lectures how to roll packs and how to pitch tents, pull guard duty, KP and other duties. And even shovel snow when it gums up the works temporarily. Private Horn has been through many gas mask drills. Of course, there's plenty of time for play too with dances on Thursday nights and Sunday afternoons. There is also a Post Theater and a YMCA for recreation." Then it shows a photo right next to it, "That pack and rifle that Private George F. Horn is carrying in this photo, weigh just 65 pounds, including the tin hat. George, who was a sample weaver when he left Botany to enlist, is a member of Battery C, 52nd Coast Artillery, Fort Hancock, NJ." Incredible!

GH: The gas drill used to be down toward where the Camp Lowe section was. And a couple of sergeants that you didn't get along with too good, they'd pull the mask off on you while you were inside.

EH: Oh, my!

GH: Then you'd come out coughing your brains out. (laughter)

EH: Another clipping is from the World Telegram, dated February 19th, but no year is evident says, "This man's Army. A gun is much like a woman and must be humored, men at Fort Hancock say." And it says, "Reports of unsatisfactory conditions at the Army camps where New York Selective Service boys are training have been coming back lately and have been told and re-told in one form or another. Because of this, the World Telegram sent Allan Keller, Staff Writer, to look in on Fort Dix, Camp Upton, and Fort Hancock and report. The following is the last of three articles. According to this, it says unsatisfactory conditions.

GH: Well, these were boys used to Brooklyn, pampering and all so when they come here. This was the story. They couldn't go on leave every week and run home to Brooklyn. I mean you had camp life. Hey, you're in the Army, you're not home now. You see the thing was they couldn't understand that you had to take discipline. You had to live under Army regulations. These guys weren't used to it. So they used to cry home to mother and to get in good with the sergeant they brought him goodies and all this garbage. And you know, the sympathy act was put on with this whole bunch.

EH: There is a sub-title here: "On the Chauncey De Pew". That was a very famous Hudson River Dayline steamer which is now a very famous restaurant. I don't know if you know that the boat was converted it into a restaurant.

GH: Is that the one that used to run between New York and the Battery?

EH: We did a little research, Tom and I, and discovered that it is – I have to ask him where it is anchored – a permanent floating restaurant.

GH: It's in New Jersey, I think. It's at one of the docks.

EH: Tom has tracked it down and we thought of having some of the Veterans Reunions held on that boat.

GH: That would be nice.

EH: It's expensive. It's an exclusive dinner club. We thought that it might discourage people from attending a reunion if they know that it's a \$20 luncheon. It's pretty fancy.

GH: What gets me is that they have money for everything else, but they won't do that.

EH: The article says, "Lack of non-coms, Fort Hancock like all the other training centers, is perturbed about the lack of trained non-commissioned officers. Between the general command and the new trainees, the non-coms form a liaison without which a

modern Army could not function well. Regular Army Reserves were called to federal service helped to fill this gap but more corporals, sergeants and first sergeants are essential. At the reception centers, the classification tests given the young trainees have revealed many men of superior background. And from this group, a cadre of non commissioned officers can be built up but it will take a half a year at least. Some bad mistakes have been made in this connection....” And they go on to talk about Fort Dix. But really from you memories...

GH: Another thing that I don't think you have down in there from all the about the Army, in your first enlistment in the Regular Army if you made PFC the first 3 years, that was darn good. That was considered a very good soldier. Now later, after about 1940-'41 they were making them by the bushels. That refers right to that article you said. And when they started these new cadres and all they had to draw out of Battery C, 52nd because that's where your old timers were. A lot of them that had at least two to three years experience already, so they upgraded these guys. So, like I said, if you made Regular Army in the old days like when Al was in, you made PFC, I think Al would verify it, you were considered a darn good soldier. Then if you got broke down from PFC to private, it was a hell of a kick in the backside. At that time when I was made, that was right after recruit training and they picked the guys that they thought would be eligible to command a group. Then you got these wise guys that came in they sent the reporters because things were so dam bad, those were the guys that never wanted to do anything, were spoiled brats back home. So when they told them they couldn't go on leave they cried to their mother you know, and some of them wrote to their Senator. The 245th had a bunch of Senators from New York come over because “they had such a hard life”. They were sleeping in. They had those big squad tents I think there was 10 guys to a big tent like that. I know 'cause I was the guy selling them the belts and the garrison hats at that time. LOL

EH: An entrepreneur, I think you were a very enterprising person.

GH: Was always, all my life. Like I say the things I was doing, I had to have money to go out and all. You couldn't do it on \$21 and later \$30 (a month). The life I was leading in the Army and with the gambling and all, I had a high life. So as a private or PFC you had less responsibility and you could get around a hell of a lot. When you're a corporal and sergeant you had to account for where you were every minute. As a private, you had the roaming of the Post. That was one advantage. That's why I got two passes.
(laughter)

END OF INTERVIEW