

# Oral History Interview



Sgt. Albert King  
Post Headquarters, Adak  
U.S. Army  
World War II

August 17, 2016

## **Interview with Albert King by Joshua Bell**

*Summary sheet and transcript*

### **Interviewee**

Albert King

### **Interviewer**

Joshua Bell

### **Date**

August 17, 2016

### **Biographical Note:**

Albert King was born in New Bedford, MA in 1923. He and one brother were both drafted into the service during WWII and both came home from the war. King served as Mess Sergeant on Adak in the 278th Coast Artillery in the Aleutian Islands. After he returned home, he attended culinary school in New Haven, CT. He has one son and one daughter and enjoys baseball.

### **Scope and content note:**

This interview covers Albert King's high school days, draft stories, and descriptions of training, travel, work, williwaws, and free time while in the Army. King also discusses stories of surviving in the cold barracks, his recollections of Pearl Harbor and the announcements of the end of fighting in both Europe and Japan. Places mentioned are Camp Beale, Camp Edwards, Camp Rupert, Fort Devens, Attu, Adak, and Anchorage in Alaska, New Bedford, Massachusetts, Seattle and Olympia, Washington. He sings the church hymn "Going Home".

### **Indexed Names:**

King, Anthony

King, Conceicao

King, George

King, Manuel

Truman, Harry

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**Sgt. Albert King**  
**August 17, 2016**

**Aleutian World War II National Historic Area**  
**Oral History Collection**

Aleutian World War II National Historic Area  
Oral History Project

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Transcript of interview of August 17, 2017



## **Interview with Sgt. Albert King**

### **Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Program**

**August 17, 2016  
New Bedford, MA**

Interviewed by Joshua Bell, Park Ranger, National Park Service

*This interview is part of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Project. The interview with Albert King was recorded with his permission on a digital recorder. Copies of the audio file are preserved in mp3, wav and wma formats and are on file at the offices of the National Park Service in Anchorage, Alaska.*

*The transcript has been lightly edited.*

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[Start of recorded material - 00:00:00]

**Joshua Bell:** Today is August 17, 2016. I'm Joshua Bell, Park Ranger with Aleutian World War II National Historic Area and I'm joined today by Albert King. How are you today, Mr. King?

**Albert King:** Oh, half and half.

**Joshua Bell:** This conversation is being recorded is that OK?

**Albert King:** Yeah.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:00:20] Excellent. Thank you so very much. I guess I'll start by having you say your name, please.

**Albert King:** Well, my name is Albert R. King

**Joshua Bell:** Alright, and when and where were you born?

**Albert King:** In New Bedford, Massachusetts.

**Joshua Bell:** And what year was that?

**Albert King:** 1923.

**Joshua Bell:** 1923. And what were your parents' names?

**Albert King:** My father was Manuel and my mother Conceicao King.

**Joshua Bell:** Can I have you spell that?

**Albert King:** How do you spell, that? C-O-N?

**Voice in background:** C-O-N-C-E-I

**Albert King:** C-E-I

**Voice:** C-A-O

**Albert King:** C-A-O

**Joshua Bell:** Alright, and do you have any siblings?

**Albert King:** I have a boy. He lives in California. Oh, and I have an adopted girl.

**Joshua Bell:** Did you have any brothers and sisters growing up?

**Albert King:** Yes I had three brothers

**Joshua Bell:** Excellent. And where did you fall in the mix?

**Albert King:** In the middle.

**Joshua Bell:** In the middle.

**Joshua Bell:** And what did your parents do?

**Albert King:** My parents? My mother was a home...uh...homemaker and my father worked at the Morse Twist Drill.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:01:45] So, what was it like growing up in the 20s and 30s?

**Albert King:** It was, I think it was tough, but I think it was a lot more friendly at that time. People aren't as friendly, like they were during that time.

**Joshua Bell:** Did the Depression affect your family?

**Albert King:** Yes, it did. But we seemed to manage, you know. We had help from the city, you know. And we just did the best we could and we survived.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:02:35] And what was school like?

**Albert King:** School? School was, it was good. I thought teachers in those days were a lot, they had more knowledge. Some of these teachers today, I don't know, they teach, teaching differently than when we were going to school.

**Joshua Bell:** What did you like to do in your free time?

**Albert King:** Free time? When we were kids, we used to play baseball- out in the middle of the street! And broke many windows.

**Joshua Bell:** Where in New Bedford would you play ball?

**Albert King:** Right on Babbitt Street, near the Rural Cemetery.

**Joshua Bell:** Rural Cemetery, and where is that in New Bedford?

**Albert King:** That's in the uh, that I guess that would be, on Babbitt Street...would that be the South End, Irene? Yeah, South End.

**Joshua Bell:** Alright. What's the highest grade level you completed?

**Albert King:** High school.

**Joshua Bell:** It was high school? So when you were in high school, they would have been talking about what was going on in the world. They would have been talking about Hitler, right?

**Albert King:** Oh yeah!

**Joshua Bell:** What kind of things did they talk about? Related to that?

**Albert King:** Well they talked about, how he wanted to control the whole world, and we didn't think too much of it. We were ready to go out and play ball, never mind what was going on in the outs- on the other side of the world.

**Joshua Bell:** Absolutely. What, um, Pearl Harbor would have been attacked when you were in high school...

**Albert King:** Yeah, it was. That was attacked and that was really something. When they attacked, they hit the boat, there was a lot of sailors on that boat. But if that bomb had gone a little further, it would have been very destructive, because it would have knocked out the entire, it had all their trucks and ammunition and stuff in that area. It

was just not too far away from there. But it hit the boat and killed a few of the, quite a few of the sailors on there. That's what I had heard.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:05:23] Where were you and what were you doing when you heard that Pearl Harbor had been attacked?

**Albert King:** I was living here in New Bedford.

**Joshua Bell:** Do you remember what you were doing when you heard about it?

**Albert King:** No, I don't remember. Nope.

**Joshua Bell:** That's quite alright.

**Albert King:** That's probably, I was out playing ball! (laughing)

**Joshua Bell:** I imagine it came a big surprise to a lot of people. So when, at what point, let's see, I'm trying to think, when would you have graduated from high school?

**Albert King:** From right here in New Bedford?

**Joshua Bell:** When would you have graduated?

**Albert King:** Well, see I didn't graduate, I went back to school after I came out of the army.

**Joshua Bell:** Now, after the army you came back? Ok.

**Albert King:** When I finished.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:06:18] So at what point did you join the army?

**Albert King:** I was drafted in the army.

**Joshua Bell:** So Uncle Sam found you?

**Albert King:** Yeah, he found me. I was 18 years old, and I went down. They called me, so I went down and they went to have an examination for the army. And when I got there, I had the measles. And when I got there, the doctor saw the measles on me and they took me right out, so they wouldn't have any other problems.

**Joshua Bell:** When, uh, where did you go for your exam?

**Albert King:** I think it was Fort Devens.

**Joshua Bell:** Out of Fort Devens, OK

**Albert King:** I think it was, yeah.

**Joshua Bell:** How did you feel about getting drafted?

**Albert King:** Well, I just accepted it, you know. I didn't, I knew I had to go and that was it, you know. So you just have to make up your mind and do the best you can, you know?

**Joshua Bell:** And how did your parents feel about this?

**Albert King:** Oh, they were worried.

**Joshua Bell:** Yeah. Were any of your other brothers in the service?

**Albert King:** My younger brother was in the service. He was in the Army also.

**Joshua Bell:** And what was his name?

**Albert King:** Anthony.

**Joshua Bell:** Anthony.

**Albert King:** And my other brother who was George, but he was blind, so he didn't go into the service.

**Joshua Bell:** How did he feel about that? Did he ever talk about that?

**Albert King:** No, we never talked much about it. Cause we were young and you know, we were just thinking about playing ball and having fun. Like all kids do.

**Joshua Bell:** So you went up to Fort Devens and they kicked you out?

**Albert King:** Yep, they kicked me out because I had the measles.

**Joshua Bell:** So then what happened?

**Albert King:** Then I think it was two months later, they called me back again. And I still had to go into the Army.

**Joshua Bell:** Did it cross your mind that maybe because they didn't take you the first time that you might not have to go?

**Albert King:** Oh no, I knew I would have to go.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:08:50] So you went back up to Fort Devens, and what was that process like?

**Albert King:** You go in for the physical, and you're completely naked, you know, and you go through all the, and they check you, your heart, they check everything, you know. And then that's it. You're in!

**Joshua Bell:** You're in. Had you ever had an experience like that before?

**Albert King:** No, no.

**Joshua Bell:** What was that like? What was that like to be in that position?

**Albert King:** You felt out of place really. You didn't know what was coming or not, you know.

**Joshua Bell:** So after, after, after you're in, what happens? What happened next?

**Albert King:** What happened next? Well, when you're in, you get in the, they assign you to some outfit. I stayed at Devens there because they assigned me to the kitchen and I went into the kitchen and I was cooking there for a while. maybe for a month or two.

**Joshua Bell:** Had you had any experience cooking before?

**Albert King:** Yeah, I had a little bit. I worked at St Luke's Hospital here in New Bedford. When I was in my teens.

**Joshua Bell:** And that was something that they, that was a skill that they were looking for?

**Albert King:** Yeah, at that time they needed cooks, you know?

**Joshua Bell:** So what was living at Fort Devens like?

**Albert King:** It was, I liked it there. It as a nice camp. It was, like any other camp. I think it was one of the best ones.

**Joshua Bell:** How did you pass the time?

**Albert King:** There? Well we, there was activity there, you know, and when I had time off from the kitchen, I used to go home, because you know it wasn't that far a way to New Bedford, you know. I was, every time I had two or three days off, I'd come here.

**Joshua Bell:** What was it like the first time you came home after you got that uniform?

**Albert King:** I don't know, it, people were very friendly, and you know, and they were kind of concerned. But very friendly.

**Joshua Bell:** How did having that uniform make you feel?

**Albert King:** Makes you feel great because you're doing something for your country.

**Joshua Bell:** Now did you have to go through basic training before they put you in as a cook?

**Albert King:** No, I didn't go till afterwards.

**Joshua Bell:** Oh, it was after! So you worked for Uncle Sam before you went for basic training.

**Albert King:** Yeah, I was in the kitchen, I was drafted, but I was in the kitchen and then later on I went for the training.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:12:24] So before we get to that, what was a typical day like at Fort Devens?

**Albert King:** It was average day, you know. Things were, you made up your mind what you was going to do and how you was going to go through it And you just had to put it in your head that you were going to do what you're supposed to do.

**Joshua Bell:** What were some of the things you had to do during the day?

**Albert King:** Well, when you worked in the kitchen, that's all you did. You didn't do anything else. You worked long hours in the kitchen and when you came back to the barracks you went to sleep.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:13:19] And what time were you drafted? Was it summer, winter, fall?

**Albert King:** Summer!

**Joshua Bell:** Oh in the summer! So you you're working in the kitchen in the hot summer?

**Albert King:** Oh yeah, it was in June I was drafted.

**Joshua Bell:** That kind of got in the way of baseball didn't it?

**Albert King:** Yeah. (laughing)

**Joshua Bell:** [00:13:48] So, from Fort Devens where did you go?

**Albert King:** Oh I went down to Camp Edwards.

**Joshua Bell:** And that's where you did your basic training?

**Albert King:** No, I went there.

**Joshua Bell:** Still no basic training!

**Albert King:** No basic training. I went there to, there was a call, campus called ECPC. That was a block for AWOLs. All the AWOLs that didn't go, and they would put them here at Camp Edwards. And we had at that time, we had ten blocks at Camp Edwards. It was eight blocks, for the blacks and two blocks for the whites. They would bring them there, and they would put them on, they would get them on the boat eventually, you know. So, I was there for a while.

**Joshua Bell:** About how many people did they have there?

**Albert King:** Oh, it was quite a few...

**Joshua Bell:** Quite a few?

**Albert King:** Oh yeah, they had 10 blocks.

**Joshua Bell:** So how many meals did you help make a day?

**Albert King:** Three meals.

**Joshua Bell:** Three meals? How many people went through the line?

**Albert King:** Gee, I don't know. Maybe hundreds. It was a lot of people. I couldn't believe how many people were AWOL!

**Joshua Bell:** [00:15:24] What did you think about that, people being AWOL?

**Albert King:** Oh, I just accepted it because, I didn't the circumstances were that they went AWOL, you know. Some people went AWOL because they had family problems, others, you know, I don't know what problems they had. I just accepted whatever it was and that was it. In the Army you just do what you're supposed to do and you don't ask questions.

**Joshua Bell:** So how long were you out there at Camp Edwards?



**Albert King:** Maybe four or five months I think.

**Joshua Bell:** Four or five months? That's a long time.

**Albert King:** Yeah.

**Joshua Bell:** And you, I'm guessing you came home when you had free time.

**Albert King:** Oh yeah, I was always home. I had plenty of free time.

**Joshua Bell:** What year was this?

**Albert King:** Um, '40, in the 40s. I think it was '42.

**Joshua Bell:** '42. Not a bad way to spend the war.

**Albert King:** No. I was lucky.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:16:56] And then after Camp Edwards, where, what was your next stop?

**Albert King:** I went to Seattle, Washington.

**Joshua Bell:** And what did you, was that you're first trip across country?

**Albert King:** Yeah.

**Joshua Bell:** What was that like?

**Albert King:** Oh, that was exciting because I never had gone away from home and it was really exciting to see the other world beyond New Bedford.

**Joshua Bell:** What really stood out? What do you remember most about that trip?

**Albert King:** I remember it was Seattle is a beautiful country. And I can remember how beautiful it was, and in Olympia, which is right, not too far away, the grass was so green. It was so beautiful. Everything was so beautiful there. And they had, I can remember they had slot machines, and you put a nickel in it and you'd get an apple. And the apple, oh they were so delicious, oh man were they delicious! It was a, really different. And I, they had a lot of fishermen there. They were fishing out there. In the, they were catching salmon, I think?

**Joshua Bell:** Did it remind you of home? With the fishermen?

**Albert King:** Yeah, because New Bedford, is quite the city for fish.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:18:41] So what did you do out there in Seattle?

**Albert King:** That's where I went there, and did some basic training there.

**Joshua Bell:** What was the name of the military installation that you were at?

**Albert King:** I don't remember...

**Joshua Bell:** That's OK. So you'd been in the Army for quite some time now...

**Albert King:** I was in the Army for three years

**Joshua Bell:** At that point, once you'd got to Seattle, you'd been in for six months, just about?

**Albert King:** Around that, maybe a little more...

**Joshua Bell:** Around eight months?

**Albert King:** Yeah, maybe, around that...

**Joshua Bell:** So you'd been in for a while and now you're going to basic training? So what was that like? That seems a little backwards.

**Albert King:** Yeah, right! I know it. I went to the basic training, you have to go through the infiltration course, I think it is. They call it. And you have to go through that, where you crawl on your belly, you go all through, and they're playing, you can hear the shooting of the guns over you, going over you. And then they had me, you went to the training in the uh, let's see, what did they call that? When you go for practice for shooting. What do you call that anyway?

**Joshua Bell:** Target practice?

**Albert King:** Yeah, target, to see how you were, on the target, and I failed that completely. I couldn't hit nothing!

**Joshua Bell:** How did that feel? Was that frustrating?

**Albert King:** Yeah, it was frustrating, cause I couldn't hit nothing. I was way out of, way off of the target.

**Joshua Bell:** Did they give you, give you a hard time about that?

**Albert King:** No, no. After so many tries they just said, "OK, That's it!" and that was it. They said, this guy is not good for the target practicing.

**Joshua Bell:** And that is when you go assigned as a cook? That's when you knew you had a good job.

**Albert King:** That's it, forget it.

**Joshua Bell:** What else happened at basic training?

**Albert King:** There was after the basic training, you were ready to be, I was shipped out right away after that. You know, you just go there for the training and then you're gone after that. Weren't there, I wasn't there long anyway.

**Joshua Bell:** No, about how long were you there?

**Albert King:** Maybe a week or so.

**Joshua Bell:** Oh, wow! That is a short time.

**Albert King:** Yeah I wasn't there long.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:21:46] That's a very short time. And then you get assigned to a unit?

**Albert King:** Yeah, then I uh, went to, I think I went to Camp Beales after that. That's where they assigned me after that. Camp Beales.

**Joshua Bell:** Where's that?

**Albert King:** I think that was in California...? I don't know, I can't remember some of these things.

**Joshua Bell:** That's alright. So Camp Beales is where you get your...You're seeing a lot of country here, yeah!

**Albert King:** Then from there, I went to Canada, Fort Rupert.

**Joshua Bell:** Which unit were you assigned to?

**Albert King:** I wasn't assigned to anything yet.

**Joshua Bell:** Nope, assigned to nothing yet, and you're already in a foreign country!

**Albert King:** Yeah, and then I went to Fort Rupert, and I was there for a while and I didn't know where we're going. And we were there, when I got there it was, we had summer clothes on cause it was during the summer time. And I had all this summer clothes and I thought when I was going onto the boat, I said, must be going somewhere where it's warm. And lo and behold, we went to Alaska! I couldn't believe it!

**Joshua Bell:** What was that boat ride like?

**Albert King:** That was a terrible, we got in the boat and I was seasick the whole three days. It was just a horror. And I went on a boat, and I can't remember the boat, what the boat's name was... It was uh, I was trying to think about it...I don't remember. I don't know what it was.

**Joshua Bell:** And you, how, did, so you passed the time being not feeling well?

**Albert King:** I was sick all the way.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:24:02] Now, where did you land?

**Albert King:** In Anchorage, Alaska.

**Joshua Bell:** What did you think of that city?

**Albert King:** It, Anchorage was about the best part of Alaska. It had, you know, it had other buildings and different things there. It wasn't too bad there. It was better than the Aleutian Islands where when we went up into Adak. There was nothing up there.

**Joshua Bell:** When were you sent to Adak?

**Albert King:** Tundra, it was just tundra.

**Joshua Bell:** Oh yeah! So how long were you in Anchorage before you got shipped out?

**Albert King:** Oh maybe a month no more than a month.

**Joshua Bell:** And what, did they have you doing anything at that time?

**Albert King:** Well I was, they had me doing KP and different things until you get assigned, you know. I did a lot of KP work.

**Joshua Bell:** Did you stay in touch with your family?

**Albert King:** Yep.

**Joshua Bell:** You did. You wrote back and forth to them?

**Albert King:** Yep.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:25:16] And then you finally got assigned to what unit?

**Albert King:** Then I got into Adak 278th Coast Artillery, the quartermasters. So the quartermasters is a little different than the other units.

**Joshua Bell:** How's that?

**Albert King:** Well because it's all, the quartermaster is for kitchen, for trucking, and all kinds of things. It's where they supply houses and things like that. It's not like the other outfits.

**Joshua Bell:** You must have been happy? Were you happy with that assignment?

**Albert King:** Oh yeah, because I didn't have to get out like the other guys did. Imagine how cold it is out there, and those guys out there, training in the snow. It must, it was rough for those fellows. And they were out there, and lots of times the electric lines would break and they would be out there in the cold fixing them. It was rough, pretty rough out there. Especially with the williwaws. You ever hear of the williwaw?

**Joshua Bell:** Oh yes, those storms that kick up.

**Albert King:** Yeah.

**Joshua Bell:** Did any of those ever affect any meal service?

**Albert King:** No, we seem to, you know, it's like everything else, you know? You do what you're supposed to do and that's it. And I can still remember, we lived in the barracks and in the barracks there are three coal stoves. That's how cold it is in there. Three coal stoves, and they had, there was one of the soldiers there, he used to stoke the stove. That was his duty. He went around to these barracks and that's all he did. And that kept him busy. Lot's of time it was so cold, even with the, when they had the coal in it. So you know what we used to do? I'd bring some pots from the kitchen and put them on top of the stoves, and boy did the barracks get warm, cause the steam from the water. So when we had the storm here in New Bedford, we didn't have any electricity, I remember what we did in the Aleutian Islands, and I put a whole bunch of pots on my stove and lit them all up and it was nice and warm! So, the thing is, by going into the army, you learn a lot, you know. You learn how to survive and that's the main thing.

**Joshua Bell:** Sounds like that was a pretty good benefit to of being a cook, you having access to those pots.

**Albert King:** Yeah! Put them on and I bring the small pots and put them on and oh, that place was nice and warm because of the steam, you know. Like when you go to take a bath, and, how it is, how hot is the bathroom. We learned how to survive, that's it.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:28:59] What was a typical day like on the island out there?

**Albert King:** Typical day?

**Joshua Bell:** Yep, like what time did you get up and what did you do?

**Albert King:** Oh, I used to get up at about 4:30 in the morning because it takes, took at least a couple hours to get ready for breakfast you know, and lots of times we'd have to shovel our way into the kitchen because the snow was so high. And our barracks, we had barrels all around them, that would keep the hut from moving, you know. And then I can still remember going to the latrine up on the top of the hill. They had ropes, I don't know why they had that latrine, but it was on the top of the hill. I couldn't believe it, why they put it up there?! (Laughing) And the wind was just something, and the snow it was pretty deep there most of the time. But we survived.

**Joshua Bell:** So you'd get up at 4:30 and make breakfast, right?

**Albert King:** Yeah, get ready to make breakfast.

**Joshua Bell:** What kind of ...

**Albert King:** Make sure the ovens, it takes a while before the ovens, it's not like lighting up a gas stove or electric stove where you get the heat instantly. Not with the coals, you got to stir it up and make sure that it's burning.

**Joshua Bell:** Right. So what kinds of things would you make for breakfast?

**Albert King:** List them, uh actually, same as you eat now. Eggs, and we have eggs and toast. They have hotcakes too and all that. In fact, the same as you get if you go to a hospital, same kind of food. You know what the food is like at the hospital?

**Joshua Bell:** Well, I was going to ask if the chow was any good since you were cooking it?

**Albert King:** Yeah, they enjoyed it! We had a good kitchen and even the officers liked the food better at our kitchen. They used to come and eat in our place instead of their spot. We had good food, you know. And I always gave anybody who wanted seconds, I'd give it to them, you know. Because I figured, the heck, these guys are here, they're doing their job and they should be, eat whatever they want. And how much they want to eat, you know!

**Joshua Bell:** So after breakfast was done, you had to turn right around to making lunch?

**Albert King:** Yeah, we had a break though in between. One or two hours, I think, we had a break. And then we go right back in and do something (unintelligible). You know take a break, maybe go out and take a shower, you know, come back and work again till about 6 o'clock. So it was a long day!

**Joshua Bell:** It is a long day! But it sounds, like, the kitchens must have been pretty warm, compared to other places on the island?

**Albert King:** You better believe it. That's the warmest.

**Both:** (laughing)

**Joshua Bell:** So what was, what was your most popular meal? What did the guys really like to have to eat?

**Albert King:** They, you know, they like meatloaf and stew and roast beef. We had roast beef, pot roasts. We had all kind of, pork chops, It was whatever, was on the menu. I thought it was good.

**Joshua Bell:** You sometimes hear about different units bartering and switching stuff back and forth for food and stuff. Did any of that ever happen in the kitchen?

**Albert King:** No, no, no. We never had that problem. No.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:33:44] So how did, it sounds like, you were in the kitchen a lot? Did you have downtime?

**Albert King:** Yeah we had downtime, we used to go out to the gym. They had a little gym there. And we used to go there and play handball, you know we'd pass the time with handball, and play games. And a lot of the fellows they would be gambling, but I never went for that. They would gamble, you know, play cards. Some other fellows would lose a lot, all their pay, by the time, unbelievable. But I never went for that.

**Joshua Bell:** Do you remember how long you were up on the islands?

**Albert King:** I think about eighteen months.

**Joshua Bell:** Eighteen months! That's a long time to be away from home. Did you ever get movies or anything up there?

**Albert King:** Yeah, we had, but I don't remember going to see them. Probably had it, but I never went.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:35:05] And were there, were there ever any attacks on your island?

**Albert King:** No, no, no. The only island was up in Attu. That's where the Japs came in. Eight hundred were buried there in Attu.

**Joshua Bell:** So you were up there a long time. Were you happy with your assignment? Or do you wish that maybe you had gone somewhere else?

**Albert King:** No, I went along with it. And that was the main thing. You had to put up in your mind what you're gonna do and do it as best as you know how. And that's what I did.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:35:54] Good. Ah, let's see. So you mentioned you had another brother in the service. Where was he stationed?

**Albert King:** Yeah, he was in France.

**Joshua Bell:** Oh, he was in France. What was his job in France?

**Albert King:** Well he went there but something happened, he was in training and his feet gave out. So he, I don't know if he went back to the states or what. He went to Germany, I think. And he stayed there because of his feet.

**Joshua Bell:** So he, did he join later?

**Albert King:** He was drafted too.

**Joshua Bell:** Oh he was drafted as well. And how did, did you write letters to him, back and forth?

**Albert King:** Yeah.

**Joshua Bell:** You did?

**Albert King:** Yeah, he, he was alright. He didn't go into any action or anything like that. He was lucky. Just like I was. A lot of prayers from my mother.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:37:08] Oh yes! So, what do you remember doing when you heard about the end of the war in Europe? When Germany surrendered? That must have been a big deal?

**Albert King:** Yeah, I remember it, cause I heard it, cause I you know, I had, you have radios there. And I heard it on the radio and I said "Wow, I'll be going home!" And I remember that song, *Going home*.



**Joshua Bell:** Oh, I don't know that one.

**Albert King:** Oh, you don't know that? That was a time to be at the service. It was, what is it? It was a church hymn. (singing) "Going home, going home. I am going home" and I forgot all the words... Well it's a beautiful song. So that's what I remember, that song, *Going home*.

**Joshua Bell:** Did you guys put anything special out, to celebrate? For food?

**Albert King:** No.

**Joshua Bell:** Did you put anything special out? No?

**Albert King:** No, nothing.

**Joshua Bell:** Not for Europe?

**Albert King:** No, there was nothing. Everybody was excited, but there was nothing special. We were out there in the Aleutians. There was not too much out there to do, you know.

**Both:** (laughing)

**Joshua Bell:** Did that kind of change the attitude? Were people optimistic?

**Albert King:** Oh yeah, everybody was anxious, because they knew they were going to go home.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:38:54] Now how about for Japan, and victory over Japan?

**Albert King:** Yeah, we heard that one. That was really something. Thank God for Truman. If it wasn't for Truman, we probably would have been there a long time, you know. When he set off that bomb, that was it.

**Joshua Bell:** How did...?

**Albert King:** And I can remember, do you realize that those Japs, were three quarters, all the way into China?

**Joshua Bell:** Mhmm.

**Albert King:** Imagine that. If it wasn't for Truman, look what would have happened. It would have been a mess, you know.

**Joshua Bell:** So what happened, what do you remember happening when you heard that news? What were you doing?

**Albert King:** I was in the barracks at that time.

**Joshua Bell:** In the barracks?

**Albert King:** Yeah, I heard it on the radio.

**Joshua Bell:** Were you sitting with other people?

**Albert King:** Well, no, because there wasn't too, most of everybody was out. Generally, there was not too many people in the barracks at that time because they're all working. They're in the kitchen and the only time you'd go in the barracks, and you would be the only one in there because the others were still working.

**Joshua Bell:** So when you heard the news what did you do?

**Albert King:** Oh, I was happy, I was so happy because I knew that I was going to go home.

**Joshua Bell:** Yeah definitely.

**Albert King:** That was the best time.

**Joshua Bell:** Were you close with any of the people that you bunked with?

**Albert King:** Yeah, oh yeah, I had a lot of friends. A lot of cook friends. And I wrote to a lot of them when I came home and I sent Christmas cards to them. But I don't get no more Christmas cards because they're all gone now. They're not on planet Earth anymore. When you get in your 90s, you don't have hardly any of your friends are alive anymore.

**Joshua Bell:** It's a small group.

**Albert King:** A very small group.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:41:27] But I think a hearty group. A hearty group with good stories to tell. Well, what the highest rank you achieved?

**Albert King:** I was sergeant.

**Joshua Bell:** You were sergeant.

**Albert King:** Yep

**Joshua Bell:** Were you mess sergeant?

**Albert King:** Yeah

**Joshua Bell:** You were?

**Albert King:** Yep

**Joshua Bell:** That's quite the job title! You were the guy in charge!

**Albert King:** Yeah, right.

**Joshua Bell:** So what were your responsibilities as mess sergeant?

**Albert King:** You have a lot of responsibility. You have going to know how to order your food, you have to make out your menus. You have to do a lot of things, you know. There's a lot to it. You got to know what you're going to get and how you're going to serve these meals and what day this meal is going to be, and what day the next meal is going to be. It's quite a chore, to make out a menu for a week.

**Joshua Bell:** And I imagine you tried to stay ahead of it.

**Albert King:** That's what you have to do.

**Joshua Bell:** [00:42:38] So, let's see here. The war is over, and then you had to get home?

**Albert King:** Yeah, I came home.

**Joshua Bell:** How'd that process work?

**Albert King:** I actually came, by boat into Canada, and then from Canada, I don't where I went after that. I went to some place to, so I could be going home. I don't know where it was. I don't remember. There's so many things I did in the Army I can't remember - (laughing)

**Joshua Bell:** And, you came home to your family?

**Albert King:** Right. That was a happy day.

**Joshua Bell:** Did they meet you somewhere or did you show up at their house?

**Albert King:** No, no, I showed up at the door.

**Joshua Bell:** Did they know you were coming?

**Albert King:** Oh yeah, they knew. Yep

**Joshua Bell:** Then after the war what did you go on to do?

**Albert King:** Oh, I went to, back to school. I went to the culinary institute in New Haven, and went there for two years, and learned how to cook. Well, not learned, but get more knowledge in cooking.

**Joshua Bell:** Sure, sure.

**Albert King:** I went there for two years, and then after that...after that I went to all different parts. I moved so many times, I can't even tell you how many times I moved. That would take a whole day to tell you everyplace I went!

**Both:** (Laughing)

**Joshua Bell:** Excellent. Well, what, is there anything that I didn't ask you that you'd like to share with us?

**Albert King:** No, you've covered the entire, it was a good interview.

**Joshua Bell:** So, soup to nuts?

**Albert King:** Yeah.

**Joshua Bell:** Now, the final, one of the final questions I have is: What are you most proud of, about your service?

**Albert King:** I was proud that I was an American, and being in the land that is free. There is nothing like the USA. That's what I think, and I hope everybody else will feel the same way. This is a great world the USA. The only place where there's freedom.

**Joshua Bell:** Well on behalf of Aleutian World War II National Historic Area and the National Park Service, we thank you greatly for your contributions to help preserve our values and our freedom.

**Albert King:** Thank you very much

[End of recorded material]