

Harry Bailey: There was one fellow who ended up ... I got to Seattle and picked my bunk out and there was somebody sleeping above me but I didn't see him I'd say for a week. Then one morning I woke up he was living down in Seattle. This was a loose outfit, believe me. [chuckling] He used to say to me, he called me "Bunkie", he said, "Tighten up my blankets, I just fixed it up this morning." And he'd go off another 3-4 days to Seattle.

There were not a big number but there were ... because I say it was really loose. I think even the two new Lieutenants that were in command, I mean, they weren't first rate officers by any means. Now, there again, [chuckling] there is crazy things that happen there in Seattle. It was just as well to get away from there and get some responsibility because there was nothing there. I mean nobody did any work. I mean, it was just a place for you to be and go to the school.

And well, I'm getting away from the story, but in Seattle when we'd go out in the morning, they would call a company, I don't know, that could be even 150-200. It was five Companies, maybe six and the Commanding Officer would call for a report from the First Sergeant as to who was there. And as they call the first Platoon somebody would say, "report" and the guy would say "Platoon 1, fifteen men absent." And he'd go down the line and I'll bet you there were 50-60 to 75 guys that wouldn't be there that morning.

Janis Kozlowski: What did they do about it? Anything?

Harry Bailey: I would ... I don't know. In fact, I was said to be absent for five days one time and I had to report up there and they really gave me the business and I don't know what they would do because I guess you're absent without leave—AWOL. But I never heard of anybody getting punishment.

Janis Kozlowski: I always thought the Army or the military was real rigid about things like that.

Harry Bailey: Oh, no, well, should have been, you know. In my case when they claimed I wasn't around for five days, on their roster they were marking it where I was missing but it was the fellow just above me was missing. It was dark, you know, in November, at 6 o'clock in the morning. And he was marking the wrong spot. I finally, I don't know ... they discovered it. But, I got off the hook anyway.

Going back, you know, you get through infantry training you usually go to a replacement depot and whoever's suffering from loss of life or whatever, they take the replacements. This was in Pennsylvania and people were leaving there, you can't believe it was pitiful the number of people that were absent without leave there. And they'd just be gone, I guess, until they were caught. I mean, that too was pretty loose. There again, I'm getting wound up and getting away from the subject. I'm sorry.

Janis Kozlowski: So ... I don't know how much of your life you want to reveal, but I was wondering, did you grow up in Massachusetts?

Harry Bailey: Yes. Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: And then is that where you ended up in enlisting or were you drafted?

Harry Bailey: I was drafted.

Janis Kozlowski: What did you think about that at the time? Were you willing to go or did it seem like a burden?

Harry Bailey: Yeah, I accepted it. Because I had a girlfriend and she says, “I never thought you would go. “ I said, “Oh, yeah, I expected it was just a matter of time, you know.” But, you know, I think when you first go in, I mean, leaving home and that--it’s difficult. I mean, I missed – call it homesick. I ran into a fellow in Maine who was with us when we went to Seattle. I don’t know, maybe ten years ago I found him up in Maine and he told me, he says ... he looked like he was a jolly fellow, always smiling when you saw him. But, he says, “You know, I used to cry every night” he said, “I was so homesick.” [laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: Oh. How old were you then?

Harry Bailey: I was 19.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, that’s pretty young.

Harry Bailey: I thought I was pretty worldly until.... [laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, well as long as you are under your parent’s roof you feel pretty....

Harry Bailey: That is right. Confident. Yes, yes, definitely.

Janis Kozlowski: So then what happened to you after you got drafted?

Harry Bailey: I went down to Carolina and to infantry basic training. Then that was, I guess, three months. Then we went on to this camp in Pennsylvania where there was, like I say, no water or whatever. Then around the middle of July, I guess, we left to Seattle.

Janis Kozlowski: On a train?

Harry Bailey: Yeah, I think it was about 4 or 5 days on the train. You know on that, they had a freight car where the mess car was. That was quite interesting though going across the prairie, I mean, never having seen anything like that before.

Janis Kozlowski: So, you’d never really been out ... away from the East Coast?

Harry Bailey: No, no, I can’t even. No, I never had.

Janis Kozlowski: So that was kind of eye opening.

Harry Bailey: Oh, yes. And I enjoyed it. I mean, the train could have gone on forever the way.... I, you know, used to sit on ...they had some kind of a guard on the train. I don't know why but I could sit out, not on the back, but between cars, you know, on the platform and look out and watch the world go by. Yeah, I enjoyed every bit of it.

Janis Kozlowski: Was it a full train?

Harry Bailey: Yes. I would say, I don't know, about 20 cars, you know, with troops on it.

Janis Kozlowski: How many do you think?

Harry Bailey: I'm gonna say 3- maybe 400.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow.

Harry Bailey: We stopped in Chicago, just, I don't know, to change engines or something. But everybody got off right in the city there. You could look down the track and see all that were on the train. I would guess something like that – 400.

Janis Kozlowski: That's a lot of people.