

Max Rubin

Quartermaster Corps in England

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Max Rubin

Hi. Today is March 15, 1994. My name is Jim Will. I am a volunteer with the Midway Village and Museum Center which is cooperating with the State wide effort to collect oral histories from Illinois persons who participated in the event surrounding World War II. We are at the home of Max Rubin who lives at 630 East State Street in Rockford, Illinois. Mr. Rubin served in a branch of the United States Armed Forces during World War II. We are going to interview him right now about his experiences.

WILL: Max, can you give us your full name, place and date of birth?

RUBIN: Max, no middle initial, Rubin. Born November 2, 1907, in Rockford, Illinois, Saint Anthony Hospital.

WILL: Would you like to give us the names of your parents?

RUBIN: My dad's name is Henry and my Mother's name is Doris.

WILL: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

RUBIN: I have one brother, Isadore, and there were 4 sisters, Esther, Tammy, Goldie and Edna. The only surviving sister is Goldie.

WILL: Your brother is still alive?

RUBIN: Brother is still alive.

WILL: Are there any special details or events that you would like to tell us about your family?

RUBIN: Well, my father and mother and my older sister came from the old country, Poland, Warsaw. They came to the United States. My father started into making a living in the scrap business until he passed away. That was his endeavor.

WILL: What was life like during or just before the war in the '30's for your family?

RUBIN: Our families there were other kids that went to school. My brother and I were out of school at the time. My brother went to work with my father in business after he graduated from high school. I graduated from high school in 1925 and in 1926 I enrolled in Lake Forest College and was there for one semester. Then after that I tried [anything] I could think of and finally in 1941, I opened up a package liquor store and ran that until the time that I went into the service in October of 1943.

WILL: You mentioned that you got married ...

RUBIN: Got married in November of 1942.

WILL: What was your wife's name?

RUBIN: Julie.

WILL: Maiden name?

RUBIN: Julie Fletcher.

WILL: Did you have any thoughts about what Hitler was doing over in the old country before the United States got involved?

RUBIN: It was just a case of reading, listening. You could make your own ideas of what the ___?___ situation when the war was in its infancy and becoming worse as time went on. Same way with the Japanese War, we had no control of that but we were drawn into it.

WILL: Do you remember Pearl Harbor Day?

RUBIN: Yes.

WILL: What were you doing when you heard about it?

RUBIN: I was in the tavern business then in 1941.

WILL: I mean on that particular day.

RUBIN: It was ...

WILL: Do you remember or not?

RUBIN: No.

WILL: What was your reaction of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor?

RUBIN: Well, the old adage: If you kill an American soldier, you're into kill somebody who killed them. That's the start of big conflicts.

WILL: What events led you into military service? I mean you mentioned you were drafted.

RUBIN: Drafted. I was given a pre-induction physical because I had trouble with my eyes. I was given a pre-induction physical. Went to Chicago, passed with flying colors and I came back and waited until I was actually drafted.

WILL: You mentioned you were drafted in October ...

RUBIN: October 1943. Short 6 months.

WILL: Where did you go from here when you were drafted?

RUBIN: I went from here to Camp Grant and from Camp Grant I was designated to go to quartermaster in Virginia.

WILL: Okay. You had a physical induction and test there in Camp Grant?

RUBIN: All my basic was in ...

WILL: In Virginia?

RUBIN: Quartermaster was in Virginia, Richmond, Virginia. Spent 6 months there and was transferred to __?__.

WILL: Do you know the name of your unit?

RUBIN: Was the Quartermasters' unit that I was drilling to and training for Class 2 and Class 4 commodities, which was with food and clothing. After we met the basic training there, I was transferred overseas.

WILL: Do you remember the number of __?__.

RUBIN: I don't remember that.

WILL: How old were you when you were drafted?

RUBIN: 36.

WILL: That's pretty old for ...

RUBIN: Well, 38 was the limit at that time. Then they lowered it after that.

WILL: Okay. Do you remember your basic training?

RUBIN: Yes, but ...

WILL: Any special memories?

RUBIN: Yes, when we got on the rifle range, Christmas time, and snowing and freezing. The day I started to shoot at the target. I'd never had a rifle, firearm or B-B gun in my life. When I got through that course, I got a medal for the record shooting record.

WILL: Sharp shooters?

RUBIN: Yeah. I still have it.

WILL: Now what were you trained to be, I mean basically.

RUBIN: Basically, I was qualified for salvage collection that was a part of the training at the camp. But I wound up being a clerk. I don't remember the classification but that's where I wound up.

WILL: What did you think of the training? Was it adequate or was it boring?

RUBIN: No such thing as boring. You have 18 and 20 year old to do the direction. I'm a 36-year old and the captain of the company—just had to do the best you can. With that attitude, that's what I did on a field fact trip and such. The officer in charge knew that I wouldn't be

the first in line to be up there. I got back all right. You learn to shoot, you learn to exercise and all that.

WILL: What other training camps did you attend?

RUBIN: That was the only one.

WILL: That was the only one?

RUBIN: __?__

WILL: Did you get any leaves or passes, furloughs or anything at that time?

RUBIN: No, you could have a leave but you had to have 6 weeks of basic training or you couldn't leave the camp. All you had was the PX, recreation and movies. That was it. I guess after 6 weeks, if you were married your wife was allowed to come in and could be over night off the bases. But that was it.

WILL: You don't recall where you were stationed.

RUBIN: In Richmond.

WILL: That's Richmond, Virginia?

RUBIN: Yes.

WILL: Okay. Did you meet special friends while you were in training that you remember?

RUBIN: Yes, I met a GI whose name was Edwin Rush. He was the president of State Farm Mutual Insurance of Bloomington, Illinois. He was right behind me when we were inducted. We went through our basic training. He could have gotten out. All he had to do was say the right word but he went along with all the rest of us and he never asked for special privileges. I thought very much of him. I met him when I came back from the service. He has now passed on but he was one of the finest individuals that you ever wanted to meet. He went through just like he was another number.

WILL: Now, you say you don't remember your unit number or anything?

RUBIN: No, I don't.

WILL: Were you transferred at all?

RUBIN: No.

WILL: You stayed with the same unit? Okay. Where did you go after completing basic training?

RUBIN: We were sent to Port of Embarkation. That way you were put into a unit that was composed of various sections and from there we went overseas to England.

WILL: By ship?

RUBIN: Yes, by ship.

WILL: Do you remember about when this was?

RUBIN: 1944, I would guess. Yes. We were in an area waiting for D-Day.

WILL: Now, you were over in England before D-Day?

RUBIN: Yes.

WILL: What happened? Was there lot of waiting?

RUBIN: They had a definite date set for invasion but they had to postpone it 24 hours because of the weather conditions. We were stationed in England and after the invasion we were relocated and went over to France.

WILL: Where at in England—remember that?

RUBIN: Well, I don't recall these times.

WILL: So when you went to France, was it immediately after D-Day.

RUBIN: Shortly after they had gotten further into France so we could establish stations and that. Then we went over to France. We left Eng-

land and got into Rennes, France. That was the headquarters for quartermasters at that time.

WILL: Well, okay.

RUBIN: Stayed there during the duration as a quartermaster.

WILL: You said that your duties were food and clothing?

RUBIN: Yes, in deed. In the army called it Class 2 and Class 4 that is food and clothing of the Army. We supplied different units, Italians, armies and requisition orders.

WILL: Okay. You kind of outfitted them.

RUBIN: Yes. They came in for requisition units. We supplied them.

WILL: Okay. That was what you were assigned to do.

RUBIN: Right.

WILL: What did you think of the United States war efforts up to this time?

RUBIN: We had no way of hearing what was going on other than the briefing that which we wouldn't get first hand any how. But one thing that I still remember in being over there is that I disliked the Red Cross.

WILL: Would you like to explain that?

RUBIN: I'll give you details on that. When we ___?__ arrived in warehouses that included food and clothing we also stored the items that were necessary to the Red Cross such as donut flour, sugar, coffee and those things, we supplied them. They would come in—the ladies, would try saying that was their job. I don't ridicule them a bit. They would come in with requisition orders we would supply them. We would take their goods back down town. Whenever any of the GIs from wherever they came, come into a city, they had to pay for donuts and coffee. To this day I disliked that way of doing it but that was such. The only time that the Red Cross ever

gave anything away free as far as food was concerned, if they had a van and they were out in the field away from any city, if there were units there, they would give them the donuts and coffee free.

WILL: Rather than letting it spoil?

RUBIN: No. That was part of Red Cross operations. If they were run out into the field outside of being in the city, they would give donuts and coffee. Anyway, I'm saying if GIs came into the city, as the English say "Queue up" in line to get and pay for donuts and coffee. I never will forget that.

WILL: Why do you say that they did that? Do you have any idea?

RUBIN: Part of the routine. When I came back home, if the Red Cross ever came to me for money, I showed them where the door was.

WILL: You never saw any combat?

RUBIN: No.

WILL: Did you ever see any casualties?

RUBIN: No. We had a hospital in the city that I was at but we never got to visit them at all. They came back from the front lines and that, I don't know.

WILL: Never had to supply any of the hospitals with food?

RUBIN: Yes. The hospital in our area, they drew their rations from us.

WILL: Okay.

RUBIN: We had them all ...

WILL: What did you think? What is your opinion of the medical treatment at that time?

RUBIN: The medical treatment was excellent.

WILL: Excellent.

RUBIN: I had a Supply Sergeant that would come in for whatever they needed for the hospital with a requisition order we gave them for whatever they needed. At one particular time my back was killing me. It just—well, I don't know what it was. The Supply Sergeant from the hospital brought an officer in with him one day and I explained the situation to him. The officer got me a pass from my company to go into the hospital and give me heat treatments on my back. They would take a barrel, a round 65- gallon drum and cut it in half, so we had a half-barrel. (Will interrupts. Inaudible)

RUBIN: That was up and down. They put tubes in it—electric tubes—fastened and put that up over my back, turned the electricity on and the heat came to my back. Did that a couple times and my back was just as good as I was 12 years old.

WILL: High tech treatment! (Laughter).

RUBIN: I never forgot that.

WILL: What was your attitude? What did you think of the war up to that point?

RUBIN: You don't do any thinking. When you put a uniform on, the government does the thinking for you.

WILL: I mean, were you aware that the United States and Allies were winning the war?

RUBIN: We wouldn't know anything. The only thing that I can remember of that war in France was the "Battle of the Bulge".

WILL: Oh, okay. What do you remember of that?

RUBIN: We had in our possession, I say we I mean the warehouse had in our possession 4 car loads of ___?___ designated for this 'blood and guts' General.

WILL: Patton?

RUBIN: Patton. We got TW, which is a telegram "don't issue the boots."

WILL: ___?___ anybody or just to Patton?

RUBIN: No, just were, these were designated for his 1st Army. He had an order to go from his location to advance 75 miles.

WILL: In what direction?

RUBIN: I don't know. We were to follow with our food and clothing to that point. The trucks were loaded and on their way when they get to the point 75 miles away from the starting point, 'blood and guts' didn't stop there. He saw clear sailing so he went on further. So beyond the 75 mile point, that's where they cut him down. ___?___ he didn't want the boots. It was mud galore, but the General said, "No, you take an extra pair to his men. Take an extra pair of socks, and put them inside of your shirt that when the boots and socks you are wearing gets wet, take those out and put the dry ones in. You had time for that but you haven't had time to put your boots on.

WILL: Your unit never really supplied Patton with anything else?

RUBIN: Oh yes. We advanced food and clothing to him.

WILL: Okay. I thought ...

RUBIN: Our designated location was to furnish him wherever they were going into Germany, Belgium but when he went in beyond the point of 75 miles, that's where the Bulge took place and that's where we lost a lot of boys.

WILL: Where were you at that time?

RUBIN: ___?___, France. That was the only location I had after I got located from coming into England and into France.

WILL: They didn't ship you around?

RUBIN: Yes, after we had captured Germany—after the war was completed in Germany we went from Rennes, France, our unit went down to Marseilles, France. That's the southern

tip of France on the Mediterranean. We were earmarked to go to CBI (China, Burma, India) with all our gear, all our records, everything was at the point of debarkation, Marseilles, ready to go on to ships to go to CBI and the war was ended in CBI.

WILL: Okay.

RUBIN: So we went back to Marseilles into a gathering area on our way...

WILL: When you were over there, did you get any letters from home?

RUBIN: Oh, yes.

WILL: From your wife probably, your sisters and parents.

RUBIN: Yes. I got them occasionally.

WILL: How often?

RUBIN: That is hard to say.

WILL: Once a month, once a week?

RUBIN: I'd say once a month, I was getting letters from the family. Friends of mine would write. Of course I always had time to write because I was not one to go to the PXs and all that for drinking purposes and that sort of thing. I was—that didn't bother me.

WILL: How often did you write?

RUBIN: About twice a week.

WILL: How about as far as packages? Did you get many packages?

RUBIN: No, I wrote and told as far as the food was concerned we had the best there was and we were supplying kitchens, we were supplying units and food. It was there. If you didn't like it you didn't take it. We had no problem there.

WILL: Did the others guys in your unit, did they write a lot or no? Did they get a lot of mail?

RUBIN: The unit I was in went over from the states. It was made of youngsters from the south, Tennessee and Kentucky—as they were named 'hillbillies'. Well, we didn't call them hillbillies because they knew how to shoot a rifle from the hip (Laughter) and anytime you can do that, I said, "You're a good man". I had one occasion while I was in this unit in France. There was a hanging to be held in that area.

WILL: A hanging?

RUBIN: Yeah. A colored GI as the terminology is, 'shacked up' with a French white. The French man happened to come home unexpectedly and the GI shot the Frenchman. Well, the law of the Army is if there is such a thing __?__ trial and if he is convicted he is hung in that area. Well the head of the company that I was with picked me out as one to witness the hanging. They'd take this GI and he is dressed in an American uniform but they took all the buttons off. The United States buttons and they take him up on a scaffold—we were standing at attention—put a hood over his head and a noose around his neck. The old Buck Sergeant standing there with a knife to cut the cord from __?__. Well, we had to stand at attention until an officer goes out and around to check the scaffolding to check and see if the boy is dead. That was the worst part of what I saw over there.

WILL: Hm.

RUBIN: Yes, it is, but that's routine and that's one of the things I did see. There were areas in England over there before we got to the invasion that you wouldn't believe it until you saw it. If you had an American colored company stationed in an area, you had a white boys stationed in another area, you never let the two units go into the city the same night. Alternate.

WILL: A lot of segregation?

RUBIN: Most of the units there that would drive up or handle food or was transporting was the colored boys. They managed to do real well.

WILL: How many were there over there?

RUBIN: I don't know.

WILL: Okay. How about any friends outside of that one fellow you mentioned earlier.

RUBIN: Well, he went—Russ went to a different area. I never saw him after that. In basic training, I never had any close friends in the unit I was with because most of them were from Kentucky, Tennessee, youngsters 18 – 19 – 20, always got into problems.

WILL: Did you feel like, you were—might be the 'old man' of the unit?

RUBIN: Could be. I was 38 years old when I went over, 20 years difference, you know. I didn't associate with them. I kept my place.

WILL: Okay. When you were over there, were you aware of any concentration camps.

RUBIN: Oh, sure.

WILL: Their stories or hear ...

RUBIN: Well, we had German prisoners that were doing our basic work. In our area, the officers would go to the camps and bring these prisoners for physical packaging and physical work in the warehouses. They ___?___ and move cars and once in a while you'd get to be the older fellow, a German prisoner. We would ask them and he'd talk very understandable English. I said to one in one particular instance, "How come you, at your age, you had to work in uniform. He said, "That is how we lived. That's how you do it."

WILL: I suppose they put the Germans who could speak a little English on work detail probably so they could understand them.

RUBIN: We had one guy that was a cook with the enlisted outfit that was as good a cook as we ever had in the army. But the officers' mess found out about him and they wanted him. We wouldn't transfer him. We had fellows that were ___?___. I said, "How long do you have in basic training in order to qualify with a rank. He said,

"Five years." ___?___ Electrician or carpenter—then they went through basic training.

RUBIN: But the funny part of all of this, and it still goes on in Rennes, France, if they captured the camp that had Russian soldiers in as prisoners held by the Germans, we would take them and get an area for them to eat, sleep and did nothing. They would be given rations. We would give them uniforms, GI uniforms but they took the buttons off. The brass buttons.

WILL: Kind of a non-existent, noncombatant...

RUBIN: The only other thing we put a red star on a hat that he wore, showing he was a Russian. They could get a job ___?___. We used to issue them new shoes. They'd go out—you see they were actually an army in quarantine.

WILL: United States liberated them?

RUBIN: United States did a pretty good job. We gave them a new pair of shoes to him and he sold them tonight. Next day he got new shoes from us. Requisition order. They always allowed that thing. These were Russians held by the Germans.

WILL: Now did you talk to any of them?

RUBIN: Not so much the Russians. The German prisoners talked to us because they too were doing the work. Not the Russians. The Russians were just as free as we were. We had to feed them and all that. I'm talking about the Russian prisoners who became the duty boy service of whatever work they did. They had a good life same as these prisoners down here in Rockford. They went out on work release ___?___.

WILL: Out on the farms and stuff ...

RUBIN: They did pretty good.

WILL: Okay. How did you guys celebrate holidays, like say the 4th of July, Christmas, Thanksgiving?

RUBIN: Christmas and Thanksgiving you had the same thing. December 25th we had whatever the food was plus entertainment. Every once in a while they would bring over some ___?___ service. (Will interrupts).

WILL: USO?

RUBIN: USO was areas here in the States that you went to for shows and things like that. But over there, like turkey, came Thanksgiving, Christmas we had regular menus, the boys had back home.

WILL: How did you supply the feed to the front lines for their meals?

RUBIN: We didn't supply front lines.

WILL: You didn't. You supplied as they requisitioned.

RUBIN: Right.

WILL: You didn't ... (Rubin interrupts).

RUBIN: Whether there were units in the area—Motor vehicles, we supplied those units. The infantry we supplied them. Just like I say, when Patton went forward 75 miles that's where we brought the food up to 75 miles but no "blood and guts", he was over in the ...

WILL: Didn't come back for his meals.

RUBIN: But then to top it off, old "blood and guts" got killed in an automobile accident—in a jeep.

WILL: Yeah. That's right. When and how did you return to the United States?

RUBIN: Well, being down in Marseilles when the war was over with I supposed they start making out the rules and regulations for who was going home when. While I was still in Marseilles, they start making up the units of the older guys, the longest ones in and sent us back to the northern part of France. Then we went from

there to home. We got home on the Billy Mitchell.

WILL: That's the name of the ship?

RUBIN: Yeah.

WILL: Well, okay. Where did you arrive in the United States?

RUBIN: I don't remember.

WILL: Were you discharged right away?

RUBIN: Oh, no. You were discharged at the station where you went in.

RUBIN: They sent us back to Camp Sheridan.

WILL: In Chicago? Did you have a rank when you were over there?

RUBIN: Not interested. I didn't want it. You're just a private and when you get discharged, you get discharged with one rank higher than when you went in. They wanted to send me to OCS and I didn't want to because of my—tested me and I was qualified as for that but didn't want any part of it.

WILL: Okay. You weren't injured or anything?

RUBIN: No.

WILL: Okay. Do you remember VE Day? Were you over there in Europe yet, VE Day?

RUBIN: What day was that?

WILL: That was May 8th, I think 1945, I think.

RUBIN: I was still over there. I was discharged ___?___ but I don't remember the day, VE Day.

WILL: When you heard the war in Europe was over?

RUBIN: That's when they started figuring out how to get us home.

WILL: Okay. So you were over in France yet. What did you think of that day? What were your thoughts?

RUBIN: How far away am I from being home. (Laughter)

WILL: How to get home fast. How about VJ Day in Japan? First of all, did you have any thoughts of being shipped over in the Pacific?

RUBIN: Mostly we were already—when the war in Germany was over with and we had all our company units, books and everything, in Marseilles. Japan was still going on. We were, our books and everything, were on ship in the Mediterranean waiting for us, the personnel, to come in when the war in Japan was ended.

WILL: Do you remember the day?

RUBIN: No, I don't.

WILL: Any celebrating going on?

RUBIN: Well, we were ready to go over there to help them finish, I guess. And then we were ready to go over there to help them finish it. But they finished it before we had a chance to get on the boat. We came back to the northern Part of France segregated to go on home. I left from France to go home. I didn't go over to England.

WILL: Now do you remember the atom bomb?

RUBIN: Right this minute, I don't.

WILL: Did you have any opinion of it when you first ...

RUBIN: In the first place, if you don't know anything about it, what it's supposed to do or what it could do or that sort of thing, you got to wait and see the answer. The answer wasn't to explicit.

WILL: As you—have you had any thoughts about the atom bomb in the past 50 years up to the present? If it did the job what it was intended to do or ...

RUBIN: ___?___ once again someplace else in the next 50 years from that date on, I don't believe humanity would allow that. They would put a stop to that.

WILL: Let's hope so. Is there anything that stands out that was your most difficult thing that you had to do while you were in the service?

RUBIN: When you put a uniform on and you got a corporal giving you orders and a 2nd Lieutenant gives the corporal the orders, there is only one thing to do ...

WILL: Hear the end result.

RUBIN: Do it or else. It doesn't make any difference if the kid is 18 years old telling a 39 year old fellow what to do you aren't going to go up and slap in the face or talk back to him. You might as well make up your mind to do the best you can and ...

WILL: That was difficult. What was your most successful accomplishment?

RUBIN: Getting home, of course.

WILL: Getting it over with.

RUBIN: Yes.

WILL: If you had to do it over again would you have done the same or gone to some other unit or branch or, if the war started all over again and you were drafted?

RUBIN: I'd do just like the President of the United States—draft dodger.

WILL: Oh. Okay. You'd head out.

RUBIN: You betcha. If we can have a President of these United States today that was a draft dodger and I'm just as good as he is, I want to be non-drafted, too. Anyone ever tells me now I you ___?___ calling a draft dodger, I don't care what he's doing, he's doing right, wrong or indifferent, if he's the Commander in Chief, he's a draft dodger.

WILL: Do you remember when and where you were officially discharged?

RUBIN: Yes, October 1945, in Fort Sheridan, Chicago, Illinois.

WILL: Now you never had any disabilities in the service?

RUBIN: No.

WILL: Do you have any opinions about the Veterans' Administration?

RUBIN: I think they're doing wrong to some parts of the Veterans' Administration Operations. It just doesn't make sense, in my own personal view; I still get examination of my eyes at the Veterans' Administration Hospital. I know a few years back, I had some tests for detached retina in the left eye. They sent me to Madison to the Veterans' Administration Hospital and they corrected it. They did what they had to do. Since they've given me once year schedule to come in and check and see how it is—how the eyes are doing. Here within the last 3 years or so I got a notice that I'm not allowed to be examined at the Veterans' Administration Hospital because that my injury was not inflicted during the war. I didn't go for that. So now I go, finally found somebody that sends me up to the Veterans' Administration Hospital in North Chicago. As a matter of fact I was there last week for an exam of my right eye. I do get examined for that, but other than that they're not doing well for the—Veterans' Administration is not doing well for some of the boys. I asked them here recently about my teeth. I have a partial bridge and part of the bridge fell out. I asked if the Veterans' Administration in North Chicago if they could put that which fell out—if they could put it back. He says, "The law is if it isn't service connected, you don't get any help." When you do go to that hospital in Chicago, I want to tell you, see some real sights there. Now recently I see that they're going to put the Veterans' Administration Hospital here out on East State Street instead of going to the medical center in Parkview. So I thought to myself, what are you taking, you're going to have to put an office up or building. They said, "It's more convenient for

transportation," which it is, than going out to the medical facility. If you got to put a building up, you've got to spend some money. Why don't you spend some money on the people instead of the building?

WILL: Have a couple of more here. How did your family support you while you were over there outside of the ___?___. Were they in favor of you going in?

RUBIN: Jim, you don't make decisions. They make the decisions. If you once get a number, you're it.

WILL: And as far as your family were they ...

RUBIN: My wife? I don't remember the dollars and cents that was allocated to me. They took, I think, now I'm just guessing, they sent \$50 a month to her and the balance—there were deductions for my laundry and ...

WILL: How did she feel about you being over there?

RUBIN: She had no choice. She didn't make the decision.

WILL: Okay.

RUBIN: Jim, I gave the liquor store up—I didn't want my wife to run a liquor store. I gave it away.

WILL: You didn't sell it?

RUBIN: When I say "gave it away", I paid \$200 for a liquor license. In those days during the war they were getting 20 and 30 thousand dollars for a liquor license.

WILL: Oh my gosh.

RUBIN: The guy that I sold it to was another 4F'er. He's still here. But the point is, my wife was a very good secretary. Before I married her she was a top secretary. She managed to work while I was away. If I remember correctly, I got \$50 per month pay. I sent her that. I got like I

say for the necessities. Of course, I never drank. I never smoked. As a big shot, I'd get ice cream. That was it.

WILL: One other thing, since you were in the quartermasters, was there a lot of black marketing going on? You'd hear stories about it but you can't stop it.

RUBIN: One boy in particular in our unit was going into town—that was in Rennes, France. He's walking into town and ran across a vehicle that an officer was driving and it conked out on him. The officer says to the GI, "Would you stay here, there's something wrong with my car. I'll send mechanics down to get it fixed." So the GI waited a couple, 3 or 4 hours there. Then it registered. So he went out. It was a vehicle—he went out in the back of it and lifted up the back. It was loaded with coffee. The officer was going to make a killing. Well, see every vehicle that's in operation, there is ___?___ in the operations, company operations. It's got a name on the front of the bumper. So he took the name down and—I don't know how long after that he found out where that officer was located. He got permission to see the Commanding Officer. He walked in to him, explained the situation and says, "Now I've got \$50,000 dollars in French francs. I want it sent to my mother."

(Some of this is inaudible)

WILL: Hear stories like that?

RUBIN: Oh sure. We had—there would be endless amount getting back to supplying the area that would supply food and clothing. We always ___?___ and we loaded them up and they'd take off for where they were going to go ___?___ distribution at night. Always traveled at night. The biggest sight you ever got was as big as the machinery. Every once in a while one unit would break down and it would stop. We had an officer in front and an officer in the back of the jeep. The rest were in convoys. They would mark the guy off as having problems. Three or 4 days later he would come back to the unit but he couldn't find his truck, you know with all its equipment.

WILL: How about the red box express? Were you involved in that? Know anything about it?

RUBIN: No.

WILL: I think we've covered about everything. Have you got any other comments or thoughts?

RUBIN: We use to see some funny things going on there. We had a 2nd Lieutenant in our company. He was as useless as that machine out there. He was drunk all the time. We all covered over for him because he was a good boy. But I never—any time a guy got drunk and I have to work with him ___?___ never had any use for him. (interruption by Will) because I'm not a drinker so I don't care whether—We had a unit, Jim, that was one of the best in France. The captain was the head of the company. He used to get excellent reports and he didn't do shit. He sat around on a table and did the planning and delivery and the supplying and that was it.

WILL: And got the credit?

RUBIN: Yes, sir. I would like to have him work for me when I got out. That's how good he was.

WILL: Do you remember any of your comrades while in the service?

RUBIN: No, never.

WILL: Like you said, they were all younger.

RUBIN: Well, you never made friends if you didn't go to socials—whether or not like you didn't go to the PX, sit down and drink beer. Whatever they did well, that was all right with me. I wasn't ___?___, I'm just like that the same way now. You know, I've been a widower for 35 years. I have no family. Two months after my wife passed away at the young age of 50, I bought a business down here and I worked 24, not 24—worked 7 days a week, kept my nose to the grind stone. I had no time to horse around.

WILL: What did you do right after the war, when you got out?

RUBIN: Came back home and my late dad and my brother were in the lumber business.

WILL: Okay.

RUBIN: We couldn't get good lumber after the war. So the various areas in the country, Uncle Sam started selling camp buildings.

WILL: Barracks and stuff, right?

RUBIN: Right. Well, when my dad first started in the lumber business he was getting his lumber, used lumber, from Chicago. But you couldn't get new lumber during the war. That was all allocated. But when I got home, my daughter was still working for him. It was easy going, explained to me the measurements, what various size was, and that sort of thing. She learned how much lumber is in a 2 x 4s ... (Will interrupts). So when Uncle Sam started selling these buildings, the first place they went for sale and I went along with them was these pre-fab buildings down outside of Peoria. They had a camp down there, Camp Ellis. We had 3 sections—was a floor to make a 20 x 20 building, floors. They had 2 sections each. They had a bunch of them for sale down there and we put an order in for a billion(?) and we got them. We loaded them up down there. We didn't have any trouble where the sides were or anything and the roofs were all in sections.

WILL: They had torn them all down.

RUBIN: They separated them by sections.

WILL: By sections?

RUBIN: Right. So that's the beginning of the deal of learning how to measure feet in 20 x 20 building or a warehouse or in the hospital. They were small ___?___ and that sort of thing. So we learned how to measure the lumber and put bids in. We were getting them. The ones that came from Camp Ellis, those sectional ones, we had no problem selling those. Anybody that wanted a 20 x 20 house why ___?___prefabricated.

WILL: Right.

RUBIN: So after that then we started building the buildings. Well, I went from Camp McCoy up in Wisconsin. I bought some buildings there and go up there and hire guys and take them down, board for board and I was selling them. If you wanted to buy a building and you paid me to take it down the lumber was yours. So I got sort of a—the biggest job I had was in 1956. I bought 12 buildings, standing warehouses, theaters, and barracks ___?___ at an old base in Orlando, Florida. My little wife was still alive. We were there for six months. I had 200 million feet of lumber to take down.

WILL: You got it done in 6 months. We're sorry you had quite a struggle ...

RUBIN: Since then my wife passed away, of course, ___?___, my wife passed away and I bought a junk yard down there on Kishwaukee Street. It was an old junk yard, the owner had passed away and had run it for years and years and years but he had the only machine in Rockford that can compress a bale of carbide.

WILL: Okay.

RUBIN: He had a crane operator, just a little guy. In the first place take off the motor, take off the ___?___, take off the ___?___ set it down in the machine and squeeze half of it. Then he'd lift it back up again ___?___ so when we got all through with it you had carbide in a package of 24" by 24" by 4 feet high.

WILL: Compressed!

RUBIN: I bought that company from the bank who were the trustees for the estate. There right behind me ___?___ that I bought ___?___.

WILL: What was the name of it?

RUBIN: Rubin's Junk Yard on Kishwaukee Street. Just before you get to Broadway. The Illinois Central was just up the street and Broadway starts here ___?___ So it's down here near to McDermaid Roofing Company.

WILL: Okay. So that's the general area.

RUBIN: Yeah. I bought it, ran it for 6 years. The Behr's couldn't run it. They had all kinds of money but they didn't have the machine. That kept me going 6 days a week. I forgot roughly. I had about 10 guys working when I first took the place over. I chopped it down to 3 men besides my brother-in-law. I wasn't doing a big volume business but I was making a dollar because if you keep your overhead down, I don't care what kind of a business you got, if you keep your overhead down, you're bound to make a buck. If you spend it by overhead you ___?___. Well that really ran—I sold that place and then went on my own. I'd been a follower government's real estate surplus.

WILL: Oh. Okay.

RUBIN: I bought a place in Winston-Salem. Now this is after 1975, I bought an outfit down in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, which is as large as Barber Colman is down in South Rockford, if you know that area, used to be in the middle of the city—million dollars of equipment there. Bought it and sold it to a guy that was supposed to be a good manager. He was going to check the place out and that sort of thing so ...

WILL: ___?___

RUBIN: Yeah, I bought I started that, the bank down there offered me three quarters of a million dollars for it. I wanted a million and a quarter because I had \$3,000,000 evaluation with the equipment in there. Anyhow this guy that I got in there was going to rent out sections of it to various companies and that sort of thing. Then it got to a point where the payments were still be made by me and he formed himself a closed company. He signed me out of it instead of—I was going to sell it to him and he was going to take possession and transfer the title. I never signed papers to that agreement and he claimed he had a company that was going to buy it an exclusive on it. So what he did, I signed the agreement to sell it to a company. He in turn, after I signed that, he took and scratched it out

and put his name into it. He sent that to Uncle Sam's and Uncle Sam and Uncle Sam approved it. I still have a case on that yet. Then I had a lawyer in Chicago that was going to take the case. He set it all up as a federal case and he set it all up and it was put on the docket. It kept on being stalled off and stalled off and stalled off so I finally went to Chicago to the federal courts there. I find out that the attorney that I had, had just died.

WILL: Oh, my gosh.

RUBIN: He wasn't disbarred on this particular case of mine but he had been disbarred on something else. So now he had something going to ___?___ the case. You see, in the law if you don't start a law suit in a certain length of time then ...

WILL: (interrupts)

RUBIN: It all depends on what kind of case it is. The statute of limitations, if you don't start, it is TS—we had already started it, it was on docket and its got a number and I'm working now to get the case reopened. I've got a lawyer to handle it

WILL: Good for you. Do you have any more comments?

RUBIN: Do you have any more questions?

WILL: Want to say goodbye?

RUBIN: So long, Jim. Nice to have met up with you.