

Military Histories of Anne and Max Zschau, Jr
104 S. 10th St, Marshall, Illinois
Interview conducted by Dan Crews
Volunteer with the Illinois State Historical Society
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Crews: Max and Anne served during World War II, and were both in the military and we will interview them jointly. Anne, please introduce yourself and please use your full name.

Anne: Annabelle Holsworth Coldren, my service records were all Annabelle H.

Crews: Max, please do the same for me if you will.

Max: My name is Max Zschau, Jr. It was actually Max Junior Zschau but I didn't like Junior as a middle name with J as an initial so I call myself Max Zschau, Jr and for the military I didn't have a middle initial. My service records show N.M.I. for "no middle initial"

Crews: at this time give me the date and place of your birth

Anne: May 25, 1920 in Marshall, Illinois

Max: July 24, 1923 in Marshall, Illinois

Crews: please give me the names of your parents.

Anne: Harry O and Anna V Holsworth Coldren

Max: Max Curtis Zschau and Anna Marie Matthews

Crews: Brothers and sisters?

Anne: 4 sisters and 1 brother: Rosamond Holsworth, Helen Elizabeth, Harry Elvin, Clarene Louise, myself, and Emma Jean.

Max: All brothers, Edmond Morris, he was in the Marines, Raymond was in the Navy, me, Max Jr. and I was in the Army Air Corps, Arthur Allen and he was in the Korean War

Crews: Are there any details about your parents that you'd like to mention at this time?

Anne: Yes, My Dad fought in the Spanish-American War both in Cuba and in the Phillipines

Max: My folks came from Germany

Crews: Do you know the approximate date?

Max: Prior to 1914, it was probably 1900. His Dad had moved the children over here to escape the Kaiser. All came to the Chicago area. My mother came over here later.

Anne: His Dad asked her to marry him by mail.

Crews: They arrived here likely just prior to WWI.

Max: My Dad was too young to be in WWI, his brothers, three of them, fought in WWI. That was a "tough row to hoe" because we were German. They were all in the Chicago area, all were gardeners on the north side of Chicago except one, he was in a factory I think. They were all gardeners for millionaires. That was their beginning in this country. Dad came here, picked Marshall, we've been here ever since.

Crews: And your Dad was in the flower business, and so you continued in that tradition.

Max: I did, Art did, and my son Curt is now. All brothers are gone now, they were all florists.

Crews: Anne, we'll begin with you and I have a series of questions that I'll ask now broken into segments, pre-war, war, and post war. What was life like for you before the war and specifically during 1941?

Anne: I worked at what was known as the Ohio Oil Co, that's the building where the school administration office is now, as a secretary. I didn't miss much, we had sugar rationing, gas rationing, my parents were both dead then. But I lived a very normal and happy life. I remember Pearl Harbor.

Crews: What thoughts do you have about the war before the United States became directly involved in the war?

Anne: I was not too involved, I'm sorry to say, I was young, it didn't involve me, I wasn't too upset as I recall.

Crews: Tell me, did you hear the December 7th radio announcement about the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese? And if so, where were you and what were you doing at the time?

Anne: I know right where I was. If I remember correctly, it was on a Sunday and Bob Lowry had come down and we were sitting in front our house on Vine and 5th, and the news came and I simply couldn't believe it. I didn't know what it meant. I knew people were being killed, it was like a movie and it wasn't affecting me, it was terrible.

Crews: What was the reaction of those around you?

Anne: Same thing, unbelievable. But I wasn't ready to fight.

Crews: Had you developed any prior opinions or feelings about what had been taking place in Europe or Asia?

Anne: No, I'd read about, I don't think I was very smart when I was young. I wasn't affected by it, other than we did without hose (stockings), and as I said, sugar and gas, but no, I wasn't too upset. Some of my friends had joined the service, but no, it didn't affect me at all.

Crews: What led to your entry into the military service? And when you talk about this I need for you to tell me if you were drafted or did you volunteer and talk to me specifically about the branch of service you were in.

Anne: Well, I really wanted to do something, and without telling any of my relatives I went to TH and went to a recruiting station, it was upstairs someplace, I think above the bank at 7th and Wabash. My real wish was to join the Navy, the WAVES sounded really good to me. For some reason the Coast Guard recruiter was there and suggested if I wanted to serve, I might as well join the Coast Guard, which I did.

Crews: Was your entry influenced by family or friends, attitudes towards the war, the threat to national security or any other considerations?

Anne: I just wanted to do something. So no, nobody coerced me, in fact I think my family was kind of upset that I had done it without even checking with them to see if I could or should.

Crews: Ok, Max, I'm going to ask you the same series of questions so maybe you've had a chance to cheat and listen to the questions ahead of time but, what was life like for you before the war and specifically during 1941?

Max: I worked in the greenhouse, went to school, graduated in 1941. I'm like Anne, I remember exactly where I was when I heard that Pearl Harbor was bombed, I was at the intersection of Central and Main street in Casey, at the stop sign, driving a truck to our flower shop on S Central, near the railroad track, I didn't know what to think, I just sat there. I heard it on the truck radio.

Crews: Do you remember, the announcer on the radio, did they interrupt programming?

Max: Yes, I was listening to some music I think, and they interrupted and said Pearl Harbor had been bombed.

Anne: in fact did FDR announce it?

Max: Well that was later when they declared war.

Crews: I believe that was the next day.

Anne: It was a very somber voice that said what had happened and they kept repeating that Pearl Harbor not only was bombed but was being bombed.

Crews: Were you frightened at that time?

Max: Well....yes, yes I think everyone was in a state of shock, they couldn't believe it because Pearl Harbor was our western bastion, our air force, our navy.

Crews: Did you know where Pearl Harbor was at that time?

Max: Well, I knew it was in Hawaii in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Crews: Max, had you developed any prior opinions or feelings about what had been taking place in Europe or Asia?

Max: No, I couldn't believe that we were fighting our ancestors, but then, Hitler was bad and he was killing people, so I enlisted in the service.

Crews: Tell us about how you enlisted.

Max: Well, one of my friends, Wayne Crumrin and I, decided that we wanted to go and be able to do what we wanted to do in the service because we were gonna get drafted. This was December 11, 1942, a year after Pearl Harbor, right before Christmas, we went to Indianapolis and enlisted in the Army Air Corps because I didn't want to be in the mud. I wasn't too cranked up about flying either but I wanted to be in the Air Corps.

Crews: Ok, now Anne, we're going to start another series of questions, where and when were you inducted?

Anne: You mean when I was sworn in or where I took my basic training?

Crews: When you were sworn in.

Anne: I was sworn in at Terre Haute and then I was sent to Hunter College in New York City for my "boot" training, quite an experience, it was early in the spring of 1942. Max has always chided me, as we lived in "lovely" apartments near the college and it wasn't difficult at all, I had a good time, made wonderful friends. It was all new, the train that took us to New York City was full of not only Coast Guard S.P.A.R.S. but W.A.V.E.S. too, and we were supposed to follow the leader, and I didn't, and the subway went by and I was left standing. Someone took pity and I got to where I was supposed to go. We lived in apartments, we assembled for reveille, we marched everywhere, we had some tough Marine Drill Sergeants and I remember them saying, "swing your arms or I'll tear 'em off your body and hit you with the bloody ends" or something like that. Now there were several girls who could not keep up with the rigors of the marching and they left very early on. So when I say it was a piece of cake, I don't mean that it really was, but oh, we had.....amateur hour....I guess you'd call it, and I was involved in a singing group and to me it was just a ball. However, at night, there were black curtains on every window and if you looked out you could see searchlights everywhere looking for enemy planes. So we had that feeling. Then when I was sent to where we were to be based in St Augustine, we could not have our luggage tags up so the enemy couldn't see where our train was going. So we were aware that there was a war. I was 22 yrs old. A lot of the training was history, of the Coast Guard. To me it was simple. You didn't have to study very hard. I guess I knew from the very beginning that I was to be a yeoman. I was gonna sit and type, which I had been doing for the last several years so to me the training wasn't very rigorous.

Crews: Did anything special happen during your training that stands out in your mind?

Anne: I think the training was six weeks. I remember writing home for nickels. The Coke machines took nickels and quarters and we never had enough. We were outfitted there.

Crews: Can you tell us about any other training camps you attended?

Anne: That was it!

Crews: When you were in New York did you have any leaves or passes?

Anne: Yes, we visited the Brooklyn Navy Yard....did some nice sightseeing...but that was towards the end of training and we didn't have very many days off.

Max: When did you go to St Augustine?

Anne: Well, that was after my basic training

Crews: What do you remember about the places you were stationed and maybe the friends you made and did you have any associations with any civilians?

Anne: No associations with civilians. We were in an area where there were none as far as I know. I don't think any of the people that I met at basic became a good friend, but I liked them all. There was one girl from Terre Haute who got drunk, and she had problems, and they worked with her, but that was the only bad thing I saw.

Crews: What was your military unit? Any particular section that you were assigned to? Do you remember?

Anne: No.

Crews: What were your assigned duties?

Anne: At boot camp? None! We got up, marched to breakfast, ate, there were women in the line that said, "wipe off that lipstick" because they didn't want it on the plates and cups. Then we went to classes, studied history, how to tell time, marched to lunch, more classes. You know....

Crews: Were all your trainers male or female or a combination?

Anne: They were male.

Crews: So the next step was for you to be assigned to St Augustine. At this point we'll switch back to Max and ask about his early time in the service. Max, where and when were you inducted?

Max: I was inducted in Terre Haute, but I went to Indianapolis to be assigned, got our clothes and was outfitted and was outfitted very well because one of our outfitters was a local citizen, "Hunk" Archer was in the quartermasters so we were fitted well. From there we went to Miami, Florida for basic training. One thing I remember, we were on a regular "chair car" train to Florida, all of us, and I remember waking up in the morning and going down along the coast south of Jacksonville where you could see the ocean and looked out and there was about a dozen ships with their bows up in the air with smoke going up, they had been sunk by Nazi submarines. So for a country boy, that made me realize that we were at war.

Crews: This next question might pale in comparison, but do you have special memories about the time when you were inducted?

Max: No, other than taking the oath at Terre Haute then going to Ft Benjamin Harrison at Indianapolis. Being outfitted, getting our shots and stuff like that. We were separated and I went to Miami.

Crews: How old were you at the time?

Max: I was 19.

Crews: So, your military training took place in Miami, tell me about that experience.

Max: Ok, uh...we marched everywhere, took our basic training on a golf course, where we did all of our crawling in the sand, and sand burs if you know what those are, they were nasty. We marched to cadence everywhere we went. At night we were chosen for guard duty on the tops of hotels, where like Anne said, there were no lights on the ocean side, but that was foolish because the glow of submarines just laid way out away and they could see all the ships going down the coast. At night they had guard duty out on the beach, but we weren't there because there were German submarines that set off spies and stuff, and there were several caught up along there. But we never knew anything about that, guard duty was just to introduce you to Army life more or less. We didn't have classes, we just marched, we got our classes later when we were put into our different units...what we were going to be doing.

Crews: Did you get any passes or leaves?

Max: Oh, uh, maybe six hour passes to go to the south end of Miami Beach and that's as far as we went, we never went anywhere, everywhere we went we walked. Just a few blocks, we didn't really go very far....no, I don't think we had passes at that time, no.

Crews: Do you remember how much, what the Army pay was at that time?

Max: Well, I think mine was \$30 a month with a bond taken out and insurance, which left us with...nothing.

Crews: Nothing to have fun on then?

Max: No...well, there wasn't anything there to have fun on anyway, because...we didn't have anything to do, there wasn't anything to spend money on.

Crews: Do you remember, Anne, how much you got?

Anne: Well, yes, I thought I got \$17.50 but I think maybe that was twice a month, so around \$35 a month that I think I made.

Crews: How did that compare to civilian wages at that time?

Anne: Oh..well, I wasn't supposed to tell anybody then, when I started working for the Ohio Oil Company in 1938 I made \$50 a month. And I could buy a good dress for \$5.95, so if I made \$35 a month (military pay), it was all clear. Food, clothing, everything but personal items were provided. But there was no need for a great deal of money. Well, you went to the PX and stuff was very cheap

Crews: Max, after your basic training, what was your military unit?

Max: I was in the Army Air Corps, it wasn't the US Air Force by itself yet.

Crews: Anne, after you completed your basic training, where did you go and what did you do?

Anne: I was sent to St Augustine, Florida and we lived in a very old hotel for the first part of my stay down there. It was on the bay, and we marched to the Coast Guard base which at the Ponce De Leon Hotel and that's where we worked. I did nothing but type and take shorthand which I had done before and it was very easy, I enjoyed it. It had one great big room with beautiful ceilings and probably 18-20 desks in there.

Crews: Did you work specifically for a Navy officer or was it general clerical work?

Anne: It was general clerical work. However it was interesting, I did drive the commander of the base into Jacksonville near Christmas time so he could do some shopping, so I thought I was pretty special!

Max: I want to back up just a little bit, I remember we stayed at Braznell Apartments for our billeting. It was not first class. The Cadillac Hotel was down the street and that's where the officers were training down there, it wasn't bad. We didn't have that good of food, but it was adequate.

Crews: Max, where did you go after you'd completed your basic training?

Max: We went to Denver, Colorado to Lowry Air Force Base where I took armament training, which was on the .50 caliber machine guns, tearing them down and like that. It was just the basic armament school. We learned about the arms and ammunition, the airplanes. We didn't know where we might be, it was just the basic armament training.

Crews: Did you leave the US at any time?

Max: No, did you want me to talk about after the armament school?

Crews: Sure, absolutely, elaborate on anything you remember.

Max: After we finished school in Colorado, we went to Salt Lake City, that was a dispersal base. We were put in a training command, in other words,and I went from there to Moses Lake, Washington. Everything was heavy bombardment, I think it was the 3rd Air Force, which was the training command, and we trained as B17 crews and I was in the armament department, cleaning guns, installing them for gunnery practice and stuff like that.

Crews: Tell me about the B17 crews you trained with, were they training for the European theater?

Max: Yeah, the B17 was mostly in Europe, the B24s and B25s were in the Pacific mostly. Then later the B29.

Crews: Did you get to meet any or have any social time with the pilots?

Max: Not at that time, no. Most of our work was done at night preparing for the next day when they would go out. We kept all the armament in working order for their gunnery training.

Crews: Do you have any thoughts about the planes you were associated with? The B17 is a pretty famous plane.

Max: The B17 was the finest...it was very airworthy, a good plane, the Wright engines were real good. When we couldn't fly from Moses Lake, which was out in the desert, I didn't know there was a desert in Washington but there is, we closed up shop in November of 1943 and moved to Tampa, Florida to Drew Field. We moved everybody in our Wing and that's what we did there, trained B17 crews. Then, they took some from there to start a new base at Gulfport, Mississippi. Then, the following spring I went to Gulfport. Let me back up a minute, I'd never seen anybody from home. When we came from Washington, we were six days and seven nights in a chair car (train), all the way from Washington to Florida! We came right through Robinson, and I'd never been home, to come so close to home...but when I got to Florida I finally got my first leave and I was home for Christmas. I wasn't home my first Christmas but the following Christmas. When I was in Gulfport, they took all the able bodied guys who could fly, not everybody could fly, I didn't want to, but I did, and they put us in B29 school. I was a gunner and I went to training at the Las Vegas Army Air Base. From there I went to Alamogordo, New Mexico. One thing I want to tell you, I took my B29 navigation training, gunnery training...oh, just all kinds of stuff. I was out on the flight line getting our plane checked over at 5am one morning when the first atomic bomb was set off at White Sands Proving Ground which was out in the desert right above us, just not too many miles right out in the desert. I remember it was just like the sun coming up, only it was pink, just a big glow in the sky.

Crews: What'd ja think?

Max: I didn't know, they said it was an Army dump blew up! It was like the sun coming up but it was in the wrong direction! It was in the northwest, see....so....but I was on the flight line that morning, they canceled all flights that day.

Crews: Do you remember what the approximate date?

Max: Well....it's history,...

Crews: Would it have been late 1944? 1945?

Max: No, it was 1945, because it...it was early 1945 because it was fairly cool if I remember right, they dropped the one in Japan in July...no, August...July or August...one in July and one in August? Well, anyway, to go on, I finished my training at Alamogordo and they shipped us to Clovis, we were to take our crews from there and go to Seattle to pick up our B29 and then fly to Guam, or Honolulu, then out to Okinawa I reckon. My brother was in the Marine Corps and was at Guam and I wrote him a letter and I said I'll be seeing you. While at Clovis our names were on the bulletin board to be shipping out to Seattle, they dropped the atomic bomb and they canceled all shipping orders. That's how close I came to going overseas.

Crews: You came very close to combat, you had to be very...feelings of apprehension, fear and all that, you had spent the majority of the war in a training situation, now, you were heading to battle. Let's change gears a little and talk about news from home. Anne, did your attitude change during the war? Do you remember if any of your thoughts changed?

Anne: No, we lived in a world all our own...we were involved in our own little base...there was a newspaper, Friday night...there were amateur things...there was boxing...we hardly knew there was an outside world.

Crews: What did you think of the war so far...you are living today in the 1990's where we know a few seconds later what is happening in the world.

Anne: I don't think we even had a radio, did we?

Max: Oh yeah.

Anne: In our hotel rooms?

Max: Oh no, we had passes on the base.

Crews: By that time that the bomb was dropped, what did you think of the war?

Max: Well, we had radios that we listened to. We had the PX and the place we went to write letters home. I remember listening to the radio and they called a guy "barracks bag heater" because the war was going to be over tomorrow...he was very optimistic because everything was going right and it wasn't always going right like in the South Pacific. That was really the only way we kept track of things. I know when I was... to tell

you how...we weren't on a base, we were out in the desert. When we were in Las Vegas we would go over to that town Lake Mead just to lay on the grass. I remember calling home and asking mom "What do the trees look like?" Because all we saw was sage brush and sand.

Crews: Well you mentioned home and that's what my next series of questions is about. Anne, did you write many letters home?

Anne: Oh yes, but I wanted them to write to me too.

Crews: Well, did you get a lot of letter? And what other types of things did you get?

Anne: Well, I got a lot of letters but really our wants were so limited. I asked for quarters and nickels for the Coke machines and I asked for food, our food was not the best. We all agreed that the chicken was pelican...I'm sure it wasn't. The food was adequate...

Max: You didn't have horse meat.

Crews: Max, did you have horse meat?

Max: I think we did at basic because the meat was red...red as that pencil...can you tell me any meat that is cooked that is red?

Anne: Is horse meat red?

Max: I think it is...I'll never know...we ate it, that's all I know.

Crews: Max, did you get many letters from home?

Max: Oh yes...my mother couldn't write very well...

Anne: He had a girl friend.

Max: Yeah, and I remember getting cards from Aunt Fairy Imle...she was our pride and joy because she wrote to everybody and I got letters telling me what was going on at home.

Crews: Well, did you forge bonds of friendship with many of the people who you were in the service with?

Anne: I still keep in touch with three. I was a bridesmaid for Brenda who lived in Massachusetts...I keep in touch with Estelle who lives in Washington and Polly Anderson in Boise, Idaho.

Crews: What about you, Max?

Max: I have only one fellow that I keep in touch with...he was my tail gunner . I was a right gunner...right scanner.

Anne: But for years, Max, you got cards from Newbling...

Max: No, not from Newbling. I got cards from Harris in Idaho, and Arnold Frank in New York and but the one I hear from every Christmas is Schultz, he was originally my tail gunner. We were all in a crew and every time we went anywhere we always went together. The officers and the enlisted men. We were like a family and the officers always said not to worry about rank or anything except when we are in the presence of a higher official.

Crews: Have you seen any of these people since the war?

Max: No, but like I said, Schultz worked for the water department and we keep in touch every year.

Crews: Anne, what would you say is the highlight of your military service?

Anne: Oh, we marched in several real big parades.

Crews: Tell me where.

Anne: One in New York City, we were chosen to go to Fort Schuler, that's the merchant marine academy. Rode there on some sort of a boat...I should know what kind but I don't... and we sailed past the Statue of Liberty, marched up Wall Street and we marched up there for the festivities. That was very...

Crews: What kind of festivities?

Anne: I don't remember... I wish you wouldn't ask me that.

Max: Probably a bond drive.

Anne: Well I thought it was just a celebration for the graduations of one of the classes of Ft Schuler.

Crews: Max, what do you think was the highlight of your military career?

Max: The things that I remember. . . I was in the...we were flying over Denver one time and there had been big fluffy clouds and then we ran into a big thunderhead...and we dropped 1000ft and went back up 1000ft in the snap of a finger. And it wrinkled all the fuselage...we were lucky to be alive, I mean...he banked it and came out over that thing...and when we landed all the rivets on the fuselage were crinkled...rivets popped out and everything. Then at that same place, one time, we were practicing touch and go landings and our co-pilot was flying pilot and an instructor pilot was flying co-pilot. And you would come in and land, coast down the runway then you would boost the engines then take off again. Well, the B29 took off with quite a degree of flap and when you took off and gained speed you would "milk up the flaps" and then rise again...but anyway...instead, when you've got so much weight on the landing gears you press the flaps switch and you gun...but he hit the landing gear switch and there wasn't enough weight on the landing gear and we crashed landed...belly landed.. and by the time the aircraft stopped it was ten seconds, and eleven men were out of that aircraft and it caught on fire. And we were running out across the deck.

Crews: Tell me, what did you and your service friends do to celebrate America's traditional holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas...were you back home at that time?

Anne: No we had Thanksgiving at St Augustine. I was homesick...well, I wasn't really homesick...

Max: We really didn't know what homesick was...I don't think I had ever been past St Louis as a kid...dad took us on a trip once in awhile to our relatives in Dwight, IL...but we didn't go away we were just home people...and we didn't know what it was to be homesick.....this was something new to us.

Crews: Tell me Max how did you celebrate traditional holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas?

Max: Well the first Christmas we knew nobody. I think we had several meats...you know it was special...cranberries...

Anne: No presents

Max: No presents except little things that we got from home....it wasn't much because, you know, our folks didn't have a lot of money...nobody had much money.

Crews: Can you tell me Anne about your military rank and did you happen to see any decorations or anything like that?

Anne: Won't take long to tell you that...I was a Yeoman Third Class. That meant that I could type, take shorthand and answer the phone and that was about it.

Crews: Did you ever get any special awards or commendations or anything like that?

Anne: No

Crews: How about you Max?

Max: No, I made Sergeant and would have made Staff Sergeant that would have been at that time. And after we got our plane I would have made Staff Sergeant But I was a Buck Sergeant at that time when I came out.

Anne: Just ordinary peopleweren't we...

Max: Yeah...I never will forget....everyplace we went we hitchhiked because we didn't have cars or nothing...and people would pick you up...today you would never get a ride...but in those days anybody would pick you up... went to a bull fight in Juarez, Mexico and rooted for the bull....we thought that was terrible.

Crews: How did you get along with guys you served with?

Max: Great...everybody was great...Jewish fellows...greatest guys you ever met...they were all great. There was a few in the training command...but the aircraft crew was all great.

Crews: Anne, How about the women you served with?

Anne: The women were all wonderful, now there were men in that office and I think that was the first time I ever knew that there was gay people. There were two guys that worked in our office and I liked them both. And there was one day that they didn't show up for work and I didn't know it then but I know now that they were gay.

Crews: Why do you think they didn't show up for work?

Anne: I think they were discharged because they didn't come back. So I assumed that.

Crews: Is there anything different that you would do with your military experience?

Anne: Yeah, I would try harder...I would try to advance myself in rank. For instance, I was a country girl and I wanted to volunteer to be a platoon leader. Well, there were others around that looked smarter and sharper and brighter so I just always marched in the platoon. But see those are times when hindsight is always better. I think I could have done better than I did. I could have gone to school to enhance the ability that I had but it was just enough to get me by and that is what I did.

Crews: What about you, Max?

Max: Well, I think that I would have...if I knew...this is all hindsight... I think I would have stayed in the service because I had four or five years...another fifteen...I could have...and been a young man...retired and come back and worked. I never did take advantage of the GI bill...we weren't encouraged to.

Anne: We weren't too smart.

Max: I guess we were just "hicks from the sticks" I guess you might say. But I think even today I would say that we were very patriotic. More than a lot of people because we go to all the...I think it's a crime the way they treat the flag today...

Crews: What was the most difficult thing you had to do during your military service? Sounds like you had some close calls you know ...with the planes...were there any difficult things that stand out in your mind?

Max: No those were the...

Anne: You had some terrible dysentery didn't you?

Max: Well, I had...we were playing ball in Denver, CO and I fell down and skinned by hand that was in the afternoon and by midnight I was in hospital with a real high temperature and my arm was all red. I think it was the alkaline soil there that infected everything...yeah I had dysentery down in Gulfport...that's was they called ...from a dirty mess kit. But outside of that, no nothing.

Crews: Anne, same questions, what was the most difficult thing you had to do during your military service?

Anne: I don't think there was anything.

Max: The most difficult for me was to see those ships...it might have woke me up more if...here we didn't realize what was going on...but that woke me up to see what they were doing to us...which made us much more loyal and patriotic...those ships sinking out there that morning.

Crews: I'm gonna ask two questions, they're both the same except that we're gonna change the date. Anne, how did you learn about VE Day and what was your reaction to it? That would have been April 1945.

Anne: I was home by then. The only thing I remember about VE Day is that we celebrated at First Church (Methodist), and I spoke, and I remember Walter Volkers, but that's all.

Crews: What about VJ Day?

Anne: Well, I had mixed feelings about that, because that was brought about through the bombing.

Crews: Ok, we're gonna get to that with another question so we'll hold up on that for now. What about you Max, what about VJ Day?

Max: All I know is I was ready to ship out when they canceled the orders...they dropped the bomb, they canceled all the orders to ship out...all that I remember is they sang the thing in Tokyo Harbor on the USS Missouri, that's all I remember about it.

Anne: You don't remember the bombing?

Max: Well, I remember the bombing, yes, when they dropped it from the Enola Gay, dropped the first bomb, I don't know who dropped the second one, but I know the Enola Gay dropped the first one.

Crews: What was your opinion of the use of the atomic bomb?

Anne: I think at the time I was happy, I'm not so sure that I am now. But the war ceased, and that's why we were doing what we did, so there might be peace.

Max: I think it was great...uh, lotta people today think that the Japanese had been mistreated and everything because we dropped the bomb, but look at all the islands where our boys were and being mistreated and the "death march" and all that stuff. I didn't feel bad about it at all.

Crews: Has that opinion changed over the last 50 years?

Max: No, it has not.

Anne: Mine kind of has, I don't know if there could have been a more peaceable solution, but I think for the time, that had to be done.

Crews: Anne, when and where were you officially discharged from the service?

Anne: I don't know, I received a medical discharge...(chuckle)...but I don't remember when it was!

Max: I was discharged up here at Rantoul (Chanute Air Force Base) in February of 1946. I had a furlough from Lincoln, Nebraska, and I was home over Christmas, then I went up there for my discharge in February.

Crews: Anne, with your medical discharge, did you visit with any at the Veteran's Administration hospitals?

Anne: No, I started out with a severe ear infection, and you got those from swimming in the ocean, I think. Then my ankles and feet swelled terribly, by the time I got home from Florida on the train you couldn't see my feet for my ankles. And I still have problems with that and Max kinda chides me about that.

Max: Whadya mean I chide you about that, I worry about it when she's on her feet so much!

Anne: Well, ok.

Crews: Well, tell me this, Anne, how has your experiences during WWII affect your life, since that time?

Anne: I can't think that it affected my life at all, I've made some lovely friends,...um, yes, I take that back. Max and I are both taking advantage of Veteran's Administration medication, and I'm really grateful for that. We go to Danville.

Crews: Well, Max, , how has your experiences during WWII affect your life, since that time?

Max: Well, I realize that it's made me...I realize how great our country is and how lucky we are. I think the people don't realize anymore how great a country we have...and...wanna keep it that way...I think I'm just more patriotic than I've ever been in my life.

Anne: But Max and I both came back home to jobs. We picked back up where we left off. I think our health has been good.

Max: I got some problems, but at our age, who doesn't? I thank God for the VA hospital.

Crews: Well, I'll ask this final question of both of you, do you feel your wartime contribution to the nation has been appreciated?

Anne: Oh, I'm sure it has...the war would've been won without us...it gave us a sense of...doing something. And as Max said, he might've been drafted, but I wanted to do something, (even) in a small way.

Max: Well, that's true, what really brings it home to you are the ones that didn't come back. I just feel so bad. I had a good friend that died in the Battle of the Bulge with the paratroopers...and he was one of my best friends, we ran around together all the time...and I still shed a tear for him, and for a lot of people. I think it's a shame that our young people don't realize what our veterans did for them.

Anne: But may I interject this, I don't think I appreciated the people that fought in the first world war.

Max: But you knew about 'em. I don't think it's taught today.

Anne: Oh...I think it is...I don't know...

Max: Just think about the fellows that fought in Viet Nam. They went...they didn't ask any questions, but they were run down, disrespected when they came back, and it wasn't their fault at all. They just were doing their duty. This wall out here was the greatest thing that ever was...(the mobile half-scale replica of the Viet Nam Memorial Wall had just been on display in the community)...

Anne: Oh, Max and I just thought it was wonderful

Max: It was wonderful!

Crews: It was an honor for me to be associated with that project....Well, Anne and Max, I want to thank you for your time, and for cooperating with this project and I sincerely appreciate the time you shared with me.

Anne: It's been our pleasure!

Max: Yes, it's been our pleasure, and I hope that we've given you a little insight, I'm not a very good speaker...

Anne: I'm sorry, I just can't remember...

Max: Yeah, there's a lot of things that we can't remember...

Crews: I think you did just fine.

Transcribed by Donna and Doug Duzan – January 2016