

Robert Barry, Army

This interview is being conducted on May 26, 2002. My name is Nick Miller, and I am interviewing my great uncle, Robert Barry, who served in the Army during the Korean War. From 1952 to 1953 he was on the front lines in Korea.

Nick Miller:

Tell me about a couple of your most memorable experiences.

Robert Barry:

There wasn't any memorable, other than the fact that in one position we were there was a valley that we had to come up and we couldn't do it during the day. We had to go up during the night. The road led through this valley and it was under enemy observation, and we were never allowed to travel during the daylight hours, only at night. Our trucks went back to get food and supplies and so forth. We weren't allowed to travel on it. Strict orders. In fact, one replacement near the end of my tour had shot himself in the foot and -- during the daylight hours, right. He was cleaning his weapon he said. It wasn't in my squad. It was in another squad. And they wanted an ambulance sent up. They for a long time refused to send the ambulance during the daylight hours, and the medic -- we have a medic with every platoon, and there's four squads -- three squads to a platoon, so there was a medic with us and he couldn't do nothing for him. You know, he shot himself in the foot. Give him pain killers, that was about -- in fact, he couldn't give him pain killers. He had failed to resupply his kits. The medics were the ones that had all the pain killers and all the medicine. We only had a big Band-Aid, large bandage. That's all we ever carried. And he didn't -- he didn't have replacement pain killers. So the kid was really suffering, and he shouldn't have. He should have been more careful because it was near the end and if he was scared I guess, but we weren't fighting that much. It had slowed it down to every once in a while. So he should have just played it cool. He would have got home safe and sound, but he didn't. They finally okayed a cheap ambulance. They sent one up. But for a long time, couple of three hours, they wouldn't send anything. They asked for it. They told them what the condition was. Wouldn't let them -- wouldn't send them an ambulance.

Nick Miller:

What did you do when you -- when you were on leave?

Robert Barry:

I wasn't.

Robert Barry:

We were always put on -- we spent 30 days on the line under enemy fire. Then we were we sent back far enough that we didn't have to pull in guard duties or a lot of anything else. We were within enemy range. So it was 30 on and 30 off. We kept that up for almost a year, nine months or so really.

Nick Miller:

Where did you travel while in the service?

Robert Barry:

Where did I travel? I traveled from Cleveland to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. In Fort Jackson I was given leave and then sent to Seattle, Washington where I boarded a troupe ship and sent to Japan for two weeks on this special biological training, and after that, we were sent to Korea. I went into Pusan. There was only a small group of us and they sent us over on a destroyer from Osaka Nagura, Japan to Pusan. From there they trucked us up to the front lines.

Nick Miller:

Do you recall any particular or humorous or unusual events?

Robert Barry:

Not really. Nothing to speak of really. May have been unusual at the time, I mean. Oh, I'll tell you one. They used to give us beer rations in the military. They used to give us a six pack, okay. Every 30 days we were allowed a six pack and no -- they were slow in coming up so they -- when they gave us our beer rations, they gave us a whole case, and a squad -- that was eight guys, five guys in the squad, six guys in the squad, and six cases of beer. Man, did they go -- I didn't drink. I took their Toddy. They had Toddy and beer. I took their toddy and they took my beer, and they got drunk. Did they ever get drunk. They were drunker than drunk. They did. Those guys -- well, they had -- we didn't have anything but the regular food, and the thing. There was no beer. So we -- when that came in -- they were supposed to give us a six-pack every month, and they failed to do it for a couple, three months. So when they give it to us, we had a -- each guy got a case of beer. Of course, I didn't have -- I didn't drink so I gave mine away. I took their Toddy, and those guys got drunker than drunk. They were falling down in the doorways. Man, they got drunk. Man, they really got drunk.