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Hum 120

My Grandfather, Carl Jones



Carl Jones

One chilly February day I set out to interview my grandfather, Carl Jones. I sat down on the couch in the toasty living room, while my grandfather sat in the large, blue recliner in front of me as I began my interview.

My grandfather, Carl Taylor Jones was born January 12th in the late thirties to Kathleen Boyd Jones and Carl Hooker Jones in the old Tayloe Hospital. Dr. John Cotton Tayloe delivered him. He has three brothers: Larry, Donald, and Lindsey.

Carl started school in 1946 at John Small School. Grades one through six was held here. After attending John Small School, he went to the old Washington High School on 2nd street. Schools were still segregated during this time. While in school my grandfather was involved in an assortment of sports. He played midget football for two years at John Small School. The team only played three games. One game was tied and two games were lost. In high school he played one year of junior varsity football and one year of junior varsity basketball. His sophomore, junior, and senior years, he played varsity football, basketball, and track. In 1956, his senior year, the varsity football team played for the state championship, but did not win.

In 1957, during the Cold War, Carl was drafted into the US Army along with Skybo Langley, Jack Warren, Kenneth Woolard, Cecil Mason, McCoy Lamb, and John Tetterton, who all were from Washington. They left the Beaufort County Court House on a bus headed to Raleigh. That night they slept in the YMCA. The following day they took a bus to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. While in Fort Jackson everyone was examined. Kenneth Woolard needed glasses. Kenneth was sent to the main post in Fort Binning, Georgia, because of his need for glasses. Later he was sent to France. Everyone else was sent to Sand Hill in Fort Binning, Georgia for basic training. Here, my grandfather learned to fire a 155 Howitzer and was trained to survive in extremely cold weather. He also learned to fire a bar gun. While firing this gun one day the gun got hot from so many rounds being fired. The bipod slid down, so he straddled the gun to tighten the bipod and the gun went off. "That scared the you know what outta me." After basic training, everyone was granted a five day leave with two days travel time for Christmas.



A 155 Howitzer

In 1958, a train took my grandfather and his troop from Fort Binning, Georgia to Savannah, Georgia. On March 15, 5,000 troops boarded the ship “The Patch” to set sail for Germany. While on the ship everyone was required to do physical training, which consisted of jumping jacks and squats. As the ship traveled further out to sea, the waters became rough. Some waves were 35 to 40 feet. Two or three guys broke their arms during physical training; therefore it was discontinued for the rest of the trip. The sleeping quarters in the ship were very small. My grandfather said, “The duffle bags were stacked about seven feet high in the middle of the quarters and everything you owned was in there. The trip was miserable.” The beds were six bunks high. My grandfather was assigned the top bunk. He said, “I’d always hit my head on the steam pipes, but I was glad I had the top bunk. One guy would throw up and it was like a domino affect.

Everyone below me would have puke on them from the person above them.” The trip took about nine to ten days. “The first thing we saw was an Esso station (gas station).”

After unloading the ship, everyone boarded a train for a two day ride to Kitzingen, Germany. It was freezing cold, but they made it to their living quarters. The living quarters were used by German soldiers during World War II. Weapons were then issued and orders were given to go to the stag area for weapon training. After the weapon training was completed, they were sent to Grafenwoehr, which were the training grounds that Rammell the Desert Fox used to train his soldiers during World War II. Here the Russians were observed. When the Russians moved their troops, my grandfather and his troops moved also. He referred to this as being like a “chess game.” One cold night, my grandfather and some of his friends went to the Hillbilly Bar. A huge brawl broke out. My grandfather fought with his back against the bar. A man was hiding under the bar with a hammer. When Carl’s foot came close enough, he smashed it with the hammer. The MPs came and broke the brawl up and put everyone but my grandfather in prison. They could not see him, because he was lying under the bar with his throbbing, swollen foot. Carl was on sick call, because he could not fit a combat boot over his foot. He was put on light duty for one week and was in charge of the latrine (bathrooms). While cleaning the latrine one day, one of the faucets was leaking. He tried to fix it, but didn’t. He finally got so frustrated with the aggravating sound that he broke the faucet and accidentally slit his wrist. “Blood squirted everywhere when my heart would beat.” He was sent to a German doctor to sew up his wrist and artery.

A few months after the latrine incident, the barracks had football tryouts. Carl and Skybo tried out for the team. They ended up making the team for the Kitzingen Saints.

They were on temporary duty while playing football. Out of everyone on the team Carl and Skybo were the only members of the team that had played football in high school. Games were played in Nuremberg Stadium. This stadium was used as a marching ground by Hitler.



An overview of Nuremberg Stadium

After football season, Carl and Skybo were put back on duty in Grafenwoehr. While on duty, Carl was in the advance party. The advance party consisted of ten to twelve men. “A German boy came to base camp one day and asked if we wanted some beer. Of course we said yes. He brought us back beer. It was bitter cold. The average temperature was about five to ten degrees. Instead of sleeping outside we rented rooms from our “beer boy’s” family. The wife would cook us breakfast every morning. We stayed with this family for about three or four days.” If they had stayed in their tent they would have risked getting run over by the convoy trucks, which were unable to see the

snow covered tents. They were close to the Czechoslovakia boarder. They accidentally crossed into the communist country, which could have cost them their lives, but they were lucky enough to make it back into Germany.

A few months later, in August of 1959, my grandfather boarded "The Upsure" to set sail for the United States. "The beautiful blue ocean was calm, unlike the trip to Germany. The light blue sky was filled with lazy clouds and seemed to collide with the ocean in the distance." This boat ride was filled with sun tanning and reading books, not vigorous training drills. "It was like a cruise." The boat headed for a port in New York. Everyone's first sight was the Statue of Liberty. The boat then began to turn away from the port and had to go back for a man who had fallen overboard. "Everyone's heart dropped, because they were so anxious to get back on to American soil."

After getting off of the ship in the cool comfortable weather, Carl rode to the airport. "The airplanes were crappy looking, but I got on one anyway." The plane headed for Fort Jackson, South Carolina. The humidity was 100% and the temperature was 105 degrees as they unloaded the plane. "It felt like walking into an oven." He stayed one week here to be processed out of the army and to muster his out pay. After this process was complete, Jack decided to take a bus back to Washington, North Carolina. Carl and Skybo decided to hitchhike their way back home. Before Jack left he said to Carl and Skybo, "Tell everyone I'm on my way when y'all get back home." Then Carl and Skybo went to the PX (the store on base) and bought pants and shirts with a palm tree print. They changed in the back of the store and tossed their army uniforms in the trash. "Skybo and I looked like Cramer off of Sinfeld." Back in those days' people would pick up men who were in service. An eighteen wheeler picked them up and hauled them from Fort

Jackson, South Carolina to Fayetteville, North Carolina. They had a friend that lived in Fayetteville so they went to use the pay phone and did not know that the phone system had changed to the dial system. They were unable to get in touch with their friend so they tried thumbing to Washington, North Carolina again. A sergeant from Fort Bragg in a 1955 fire red Chevy picked them up and carried them to Dunn, North Carolina. Night was approaching so they got a hotel room from the only hotel in town. The next morning they set out on their mission to thumb their way back home. They were unsuccessful, so they rented the room for another night. The next morning, they called a friend in Washington, North Carolina. "Dag on if Jack hadn't already made it home." Jack drove to Dunn, North Carolina and picked up Carl and Skybo and took them home.

In 1970, my grandfather met my grandmother. Both of them were working for a financial company. My grandfather worked for the office in Washington and my grandmother worked for the office in Greenville. My grandfather would have to go to the Greenville office for meetings and my grandmother would be sitting at the front desk. "She was the prettiest thing I ever laid eyes on." They got married November 13, 1971. My grandmother had two children from a previous marriage, my Uncle Rob and my mother, Jane. Carl raised them like they were his own. On April 12, 1972, my Aunt Paige was born. My grandfather worked for the same finance company for 42 years.



Carl and Cathy

Carl has four grandchildren, me, my brother (Tyler), and my two cousins (Josh and Emma). I am nineteen. Tyler is sixteen. Josh is five. Emma is one. He is very fond of us all. When Tyler and I were younger, my grandfather would put shaving cream all over his hairless head and all over his face. Then he would sneak out of the back door and come around to the front door and knock. My grandmother knew what he was up to, so she would make Tyler and I answer the door. He would scare the mess out of us. After a few times of this joke, Tyler and I would catch on when we heard the shaving cream can dispersing shaving cream in the bathroom. Tyler and I would then go out the front door and try to scare him. Now he tries this little joke on Josh. He also would tell Tyler and I about a ghost that lived in the house when we would spend the night over there. He said her name was Ms. Davis and she owned the house before they did. According to him she was murdered in the bathroom. When Tyler and I would go to sleep he would make howling noises down the hall and go outside and tap on the windows. Another thing he would tell Tyler and I was there were alligator-like monsters that lived in the Oakdale

Cemetery and they would poke out your eyeballs. Then he would take Tyler and I riding through the cemetery. My grandfather had fun with his shenanigans.

Now my grandfather is retired. Since his retirement, in 2004, he has had a few things happen to him that the family thought was funny. For example, after one hurricane a branch had fallen on the power and cable lines that ran to the house. My grandfather gets the idea to throw a rope around the branch and tie the rope to the back of his car. As he took off down the road my grandmother ran out and yelled "Carl, No!" The power and cable lines, along with a few boards had ripped off the side of the house. Another thing that he has done is chased an emu out of the back yard. Some one in their neighborhood had an emu as a pet and somehow it managed to escape and wander into my grandmother and grandfather's back yard. My grandfather ran out of the house and chased the emu while doing a "shoo" motion with his arms.

Now he spends a lot of time with his family, working in his garden, and hanging out with his friends. We (his family and friends) all get to hear about his war stories. According to Josh, my grandfather lost his hair in the war when a bomb exploded, which caused his hair to be blown away. Carl loves to recall the time that he spent in service. He was thrilled when I asked him if I could write this paper about him and I was happy to give him the joy of recalling all of those old memories. Before, I thought I knew my grandfather pretty well, but because of this paper I discovered there were some things that I did not know about him.