



Kenneth J. Lee

**World War II
U.S. Navy
Apprentice Seaman (Midshipman)
V-12 Unit**

**Korean War
U.S. Army
Corporal
32nd Machine Records Unit**

Kenneth J. Lee

**Veterans
History
Project
Transcript**

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**Veteran: Kenneth J. Lee Rank: Apprentice Seaman
(Midshipman)**
Branch of Service: U.S. Navy Theater: World War II – Homefront
Unit: V-12 Unit

Had you completed high school at that time?

Yes, because of the war we got out of high school the end of February and that was to permit us to go to college because the draft wasn't until you were 18 years of age. But I chose to enlist in April. It was a chance that I could get some college education because of enlisting at that time.

So you were actually 17 when you enlisted?

I was 17.

There was a great feeling of patriotism in the country at that time.

Yes, I was a member of the Sons of the American Legion. As a result, unbeknownst to me, immediately, I became a member of the American Legion when I enlisted and that was forwarded on later on in my pay grades. They gave me credit from the time I was enlisted and the time I went into the service.

Being a young person at that time it must have been an unusual environment to be in, you're finishing up your last semester in high school and then you're thinking about what you are going to do and there's a war on...

I was thinking about it earlier than that. I was at a basketball game on December 7th with my father. They stopped the game and announced that Pearl Harbor had been bombed and attacked. I turned to my Dad and I said, "Where's Pearl Harbor?" And he didn't know. Nobody knew, I don't think anyone knew at that time. It prepared me for the fact that my uncle was going in. My other uncle was going into the service. As a result I knew that I was going into the service because it was pretty bad at that time.

So there was a general acceptance in the family that you would be going in.

Yes, I had the idea, in fact, I am doing some memoirs and everything and I'm toying with different titles. I felt that really that I was born to die. Then things turned different, then I was born to live. I've got a lot of material that I've written. I was a good letter-writer and I took notes. Some of which I brought here today.

It was one of those things. I knew that I was going to go in.

May I ask what high school you attended?

I attended St. Philip High School. It is now called St. Philip Basilica High School and closed down in the late 1960s. They still have a reunion, the first weekend in May, an all-class reunion and I go to that. I was the class of 1944 and there aren't too many people who are showing up at the table.

So was that a west side high school in Chicago?

It was roughly at Kedzie Avenue and Jackson Boulevard.

Was it the Servites who taught there?

The Servites and the Viatorian Fathers, the Servite Brothers part of their education was to teach in the school and they attended Loyola. A lot of the Brothers who taught me became priests. I kept in contact with a lot of them after I got out of the service and I traveled with my company.

So when you enlisted you chose the Navy, then?

Yes.

Could you swim or you weren't afraid of water?

I couldn't swim very well. I had an accident as a youngster at a pool in which I dove too deep and I hit the bottom of the pool and that frightened me a little bit. We used to take vacations up to Lake Geneva and I was not really a good swimmer.

But you chose the Navy.

Yes.

Had any of your uncles, anyone in the family gone into the Navy or your friends?

My one uncle had gone into the Navy. He was at the upper part of the draft. He was close to 38 years old when he went in. My other uncle was only 9 years older than I. He was in the Army. He was an officer in the Army Transportation Corps, throughout, later on, different cousins of mine went in. Neighbors where I lived - we lost a close neighbor in 1942; his plane was shot down in the Pacific. It was very tragic at that time.

Mr. Lee when you were inducted would that have been downtown Chicago?

Yes.

And then you took a train to Great Lakes?

No. We were in the Insurance and Exchange Building as I recall. They took us right down to the train station and put us on a train to DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. We were to study there and take all our Boot Camp, Physical Education down there and we took anywhere from 18 to 20 credit hours in classes, basic classes. And the reason for it, coming out of high school, they had used up all the young men that were in college and they had started that program to get officers for the Navy. This was going to be the addition to it because they were running out of officers because of the battles that were occurring in the Pacific. And the way it worked out is that we went 3 trimesters in a calendar year and after 4 trimesters, 2 years of college, at that point we would become a midshipman in preparation to become an ensign.

So you were on an officer track, then?

Yes.

And that was because of an aptitude test or education?

I had good grades in high school, and as a result I continued with my education.

Was that the first time you were ever away from home for an extended period of time?

Other than visits to my grandparents in Indiana. But mostly I had only traveled between Indiana and Wisconsin. I hadn't traveled around much at all.

There must have been a lot of different types of people there from different parts of the country?

Oh yes. A lot of the men who were overseas had qualified to join that program. They came off their ships and were brought in with us and, of course, we were 17 and 18 years old and they were 22 or 23 years old. They hadn't been to college but they got the opportunity to go to college. They already had sea duty. As a result, I was fortunate enough to room with some of the individuals. In most cases I kept track of them throughout and even to this day. I still know people that go back to the middle forties.

There can be quite a bit of difference between a 17 and 18-year old and a 22 and 23 year old, especially when they been overseas already.

It was an interesting thing because a lot of us were athletes in high school and I never smoked in my life. I was given the choice: "Do you want to smoke or do you want to play basketball?" I wanted to play basketball so I never smoked and it carried on with the people I associated with at 17 and 18 years of age and one fellow was a very close friend. His dad was a coach of basketball. He never smoked. It was natural for us to be together.

Did you have a chance to play basketball when you were down at Greencastle?

I played in a kind of intramural arrangement at college. I didn't make the varsity. I was too short. I was 5' 8". I played basketball for all four years of high school on the junior team.

Was that 5'9" and under?

5'8" and under

Your service history states your unit was the V-12. What did that signify?

They had various groups. They had a V-5 which were Navy people going into the Navy Air Corps. They had different names, letters. These were basically volunteer- the V. It might be "Volunteer" or might be "Victory" We did have some Army. They had an Army contingent at

that school also for Army officers. They were doing the same thing as the Navy. And they would go on to their officer training and V-5 would go on to their flight training and the V-12 would go on either to supply or to engineering, or pre-dental, or pre-medical also that were in the V-12.

During the two years you were in Navy, most of the time was spent going to school, developing as an officer?

Yes, as we got into the program more, after 16 months, we started getting more military training. I was transferred to Purdue University. Because the war was turning in our favor - but they didn't know what to do with us; they might not need us. In 1945 the European war was over and everything shifted to the Pacific. As a result of that, at Purdue I was taking courses in seamanship, damage control, communication, celestial navigation, which I didn't have at DePauw in Greencastle.

Did you ever get on the water when you were in Indiana?

No, we never got out on the water, other than cooling my feet in the river in the summertime. It was hot down there. After, when we went to Purdue, I was not going to be an engineer and you could only get B.S. at that time, a Bachelor of Science at Purdue you couldn't get a Bachelor of Arts. Because of that, they separated us, after one semester there. There were 12 of us who were transferred to the University of Pennsylvania, the Wharton School of Business and we got more classes in regard to economics and accounting.

It is a wonderful school.

It was a very big school, even in those days.

At DePauw, without the Navy there they would have very few. They had a dormitory for people who were possibly unable to be in the service or young enough. There were less than 200 men so they had a lot of girls who joined the crowd down there. It was a situation there were a lot of men there but very few girls if you wanted to have a date. I can remember asking a girl for a date; it would be about 2 and ½ months before she was open for a date. When we went to Pennsylvania, we did things in water like how to abandon ship, using cargo nets.

That must have felt

Yeah, we had to jump in the water with a lot of debris in the pool, as a result, to simulate putting your arms to protect your face but you could still hit your elbows with debris floating

You weren't thinking about the time you hit your head in the pool.

No, I didn't think of that. That's the situation we were in. They didn't know what to do with us the war was coming to an end. And they made the decision because we had signed up when I was 17. I was going to be in there until I was 21. It was what they called a minority situation.

And the only way could get out was at the convenience of the government, a COG. That's what they chose. They gave us an option we could stay in and continue on with the peacetime program, which is the Naval ROTC program, which is still in existence now, but you had to complete a peacetime course and then you would have to serve another eighteen months in the Navy after that; that was the requirement. At that point, I chose to get out. I had the GI Bill I could finish up my education and go on with my life or what I thought was going to happen. I was classified 1C in the draft.

But at that time your heart wasn't set on being a navy officer and having a ship and sailing the seas?

No, at that point I decided the schools were 3 different patterns of enrollment, less than 2,000 at DePauw. I went to Purdue at that time where it was about 7,000. I went to Pennsylvania and it was about 15,000. As soon I got to Pennsylvania and the Wharton School of Business when you're in a lecture hall, they say number "315" - they didn't know your name. They just knew a number for you.

I immediately applied to go back to DePauw and transfer whatever credits I earned, but all the military credits, couldn't transfer. They didn't want that. So a lot of us went back there to graduate - that was the easiest. So that DePauw set up a program for the military that were coming back. I had to learn a language. That was a requirement of DePauw and I was able to take a course at Purdue in Spanish. It was an open class that I could take, I had one 3-hour class that I could take so I said, and "I'll take that." I also took Business Law course there - I took of two of them there and that was able to be transferred down. I don't think I transferred anything from the Wharton School of Business down there. When I got back to the school in September '46, back to DePauw, they had arranged they would have special language courses for the military only. In fact, I think there were maybe one or two girls that qualified for it that were in the class. We had it five days a week, 2 hours a day. Plus the following year we had another 3-hour class - so that was 8 hours of Spanish. But I still had to get my mathematics courses in. I was taking Math and Spanish my senior year. I had the qualifications for everything, 128 credit hours. But of all the schooling I had. I had 168 or 169 credit hours, but those were all Navy courses. I couldn't do anything with so I graduated when I was 20 years old from college.

Wow. From DePauw with your

Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics.

Now the fun began. I got a job in industrial statistics, right in my line of business. I worked for Western Electric in the Hawthorne Plant.

You had worked hard but it sounds like you secured a wonderful education, kind of matched your abilities and aptitudes. You didn't have any difficulty when finishing your college education in securing a job?

No. I got the job - very interesting. I went to night school that they provided for industrial statistics. I got course recognition for that. That was first in my mind so now I'm turning 21 and I said to

myself, "I'm going to go back and do graduate work." I worked for 14 months at Western Electric, and I gave notice and I said, "I'm going back to school." And there was no problem. But two months later, they had a cut-back at the Western Electric and anybody who didn't have two years of service was going to be laid off. Well, I would have been laid off 2 months later and it would have been in the middle of the semester at school. I did it in August and at the end of September was the cut-off date – I would have been out of a job! And I wouldn't have been able to get into school because it would have been too late because they had gone to September; they had gone to to 2 semesters.

So at what school did you take your graduate courses?

I took graduate courses at DePauw in Mathematics.

Back at DePauw?

Yes, I was taking the classroom courses and about to start on my thesis and I had a health problem. In December, it was either cut back on something or quit altogether. I talked to my counselor, Professor Eddington, who suggested that I delay the thesis and just get the coursework in and then make a decision. I did that for the entire year so I had all the coursework done but I still had the medical problem.

Were you still able to use GI Bill for the Master's?

Yes. The tuition was unbelievably low, compared to what it is now.

You must have liked Greencastle, Indiana.

I did; it was small but a lot of interesting things happened in that town that people don't know. John Dillinger robbed a bank there. Abraham Lincoln had his casket come up through Illinois and down through Indiana. There's plaques. They also had the underground railroad that went through there in the Civil War - a lot of history there. I really love it.

A good friend of mine graduated from DePauw and I think at one time his father was on the board there. His last name was Steele.

No, I don't recall that. So that's what I did. I didn't get my Master's. I came back, looking for a job then. It was now 1949 and I was interviewing downtown. I had a person who was helping me from Brookfield and he set up an interview with a company that was downtown. I was walking to the train station and, in those days, I passed a phone booth. I called him and asked if he had any other situations that I could see. I'm walking to the train station. It's about noon time. I said, "You got anything for the afternoon?" He said, "Yeah, I placed somebody in the Opera Building, right by the train station, Allstate Insurance. Here's a name, ask for this person, Mr. Brazier." So I went up there. There was a receptionist. To the right was Mr. Brazier's office. I went there and right away he says, "You got too much education for this job." They were rehiring people that were coming out of the service. But he said, "Over in the home office, which is the corporate office, is the other way, a Mr. Blackman." So he called and asked for Bill Blackman and said, "I have a young man here you might be interested in. I went over there and soon as I walked in there I noticed Mr. Blackman's

shoes. They were spit and polish. And I said, "You were in the Navy weren't you?" and he looked at my shoes! "You were in the Navy?" I went around and I interviewed with about 5 different people. Everybody who was an assistant to the president and

A good sign

and I went in there to this person who was the actuarial and I had all this math background. I had life insurance courses that I had taken and they hired me.

And the insurance company was called

Allstate and they were owned by Sears at that time. I went into that and they were replacing a lot of the supervisors - there's a picture that I brought of the young lady. They were the supervisors and there hadn't been any male supervisors. There was only one man supervisor at that time, and I was working for a young lady. We didn't have any computers in those days. We had tabulating equipment, that was it.

You were working for a lady supervisor which I imagine was a new experience at that time.

Yes, that was something so the situation changed.

Had your family always lived in Brookfield or did you move from the West Side?

We moved when I was 3 years old. My mother, she was born at the Hawthorne Race Track in the infield. My grandfather was a groom there and that's where they provided living quarters with the horses. I was born in St. Anthony's Hospital, around 19th and California, and they moved to Cicero, I don't know the exact place, but it was in St. Anthony de Padua Parish. My grandmother, her parish was Queen of Heaven, 54th and 23rd street, so I was baptized there. Then my folks got an apartment, basement flat, whatever it was, close to Grandma's house, not necessarily on the same street, in Cicero. And later they moved to Berwyn, Ridgeland and 26th St. I have good memories from all that.

So even though you moved west, you went back to the West Side for high school?

Yes. We rented a house in Brookfield. My dad did. And he worked in the city and I went to St. Barbara's Parochial School in Brookfield. There were 20 in my class; a small class - there were fifteen boys and five girls and I know the names of all five girls. I went to a reunion last October. I was the only one from the class there. I know a lot of them had passed away. One fellow that was a year behind me, he lives in Virginia. He went into the service when I did.

So when you were working at Allstate, you took the train back and forth?

No, I took a bus. They had a Bluebird bus. It stopped one block from my house. It was an express bus. Going into the city it would pick up people for Chicago. Once it got to Chicago, Cicero Avenue, it would not pick any more people. He would let them off but he wouldn't pick them up. And they dropped me right at Randolph and Wacker, right by the Opera Building.

So while you're working at Allstate, did you have Naval Reserve commitments?

No, I was classified 1C, which was the normal thing. When I went back to apply to DePauw to do graduate work, they said, "You have to go into the inactive Naval Reserve, and it's 4B. And I said, "What does that mean? Do I have to go to classes or a meeting?" "No, you don't have to do anything." You're going to be down at DePauw and the closest location is Purdue and that's 52, 55 miles." I said that I don't have a vehicle to get to get there. There's no buses, no transportation. Nobody is going on a state highway. There's not that much traffic. He said, "Oh no, you don't have to go to any classes – just 4B that's all." I said, "OK."

Now comes the Korean thing, June 25th 1950, the start of the Korean War. General Hershey and President Truman say, "Hey, we got a lot of guys in the Naval Reserve." They didn't know what to do with them. "Why don't we draft those people for the Korean War?"

All of a sudden I get a notice in October. I'd been reclassified 1A. And, of course, I am 23 years old, and they were taking people up to 25. I went from not being on the draft to - they're going from 18 to 25 I'm at the top of the list! I get the notice on a Saturday. And I'm 1A. It says report for a physical on Tuesday. I can't get in touch with the draft board. They were located at Harlem and Ogden. I knew where they were.

So what I did was – I called the Navy right away and I said, "What's this? I'm in the Naval Reserve." And he said, "Oh yes, they can do that. Unless you're a cargo-handler or some other position – it's not going to be a Navy war. We're going to be off just providing supplies to the Army. It is going to be a land war. We can't call you up back into the Navy." I said, "Well, what happens?" He said, "You go check with your draft board."

So I went to the draft board and I said that I would like to have it reviewed. They set up an appointment just to delay it. In December the draft board met and the vote was 3 to 2 against me. They were not on my side. I had been two years away from home and everybody else hadn't gone in yet. Since it was December now, they weren't drafting anybody in December because of the holidays. They postponed it until January 15 of '51, and then they give me 30 days to get my affairs in order and February 15th of 1951 I went into the Army to basic training.

But the nice thing about it was there were a lot of other guys in the same situation. There were 9 of us out of 200 that had been in the Navy before. And it came to a funny decision. They asked at one time the whole company, "How many people do not want G.I. insurance?" So, I raised my hand and the other 8 raised their hands – we already had G.I. insurance, how could we get G.I. insurance. So everybody else was dismissed. This Corporal, he is going to take us to the Captain, he says, "Why don't you want the G.I. insurance." We said because we already have it. "No you don't!

This Corporal took us to the Captain. He tells him that these 9 fellows don't want the G.I. insurance. They say that they have it. The Captain dismissed the Corporal. He says, "Were you fellows in the service?" "Yes, we were all in the Navy." "That's what I thought."

He said, "Right now, you go over to the PX. There's a Navy patch that you can put on your fatigues. Put it on your fatigues. You'll have no trouble whatsoever and send the Corporal back in here."

So we went over and got the Navy patch, sewed it on our fatigues. So now when we are in the barracks and they are looking for a detail, for KP or something like that, they see the Navy patch on and they wouldn't pick us! We were all disciplined. We knew we couldn't beat the system.

We did the training and everything else.

But I had all this education and fortunately enough I had a friend of my folks who came back from Korea and he was stationed at Camp Breckinridge in Kentucky – that's where I was.

His name was Laufewski; he was a Colonel, which is pretty high up the chain. He said, "Have Ken come and see me." Because I knew him, he had been at my family's house and everything before the war.

So I go in there and the Sergeant is there and I come in with my fatigues with my patch on it. I said that I would like to see Colonel Laufewski. Sergeant said, "What do you want to see him for?" I told him "He's a personal friend of mine". He looks at me thinking he is a Colonel and you're private! So he opens the door and says, "Colonel, there is private named Ken Lee here." "Oh yes, send him in." And he looks at me and says, "Go on in."

The Colonel said that he had talked to the Captain over there in classification. He said when they attempt to classify just say that you want to go to the next higher level until you get to Captain Roberts – I'll never forget the name. So I get to Captain Roberts and he had the MOS (Military Occupation Specialties) book- about that thick.

And he said, "You got how many years of college, 5 ½ years? And you have graduate work in Mathematics." He said, "Well this will get you into a Machine Records Unit which was IBM equipment" and I was familiar with that. He said you may go overseas and you may not. You get into one of those units and it is desk work and we need people like that.

I said "What's the classification?" He said, "Well read it." It was Scientific Professional Specialist. And the MOS was 1400; I remember that. I have my orders. It is one of these things I brought and that is what it shows.

I got into that unit, and of course it was like going into a MASH unit with all the characters. We had 'em all. And the first guy that I met, I relate to "Radar," the guy who knows everything. This fellow's name was Billy Bangs and he never got my orders. I said; "I got my orders, here, it just says 32nd." "I didn't get your orders." Anyhow that's how I got into it. Then everything was messed up.

First of all the fact they found out that I was in the Navy and I became, instead of an E1, an E2. And I just got out of Basic Training and I was PFC, and everybody else didn't have a stripe. They were an E2 but I was a PFC. But I got all that pay coming for every two years that I was in

the Navy Reserve added on to my pay as PFC so I was making more than a Corporal. And when I was made Corporal, I was making more than Sergeant. And the guys couldn't figure it out.

But the education paid off and that's what saved me.

At that time, you were still in good shape athletically so you didn't have any trouble with basic training, or running around, doing pushups or mopping...

No. Even when I was in Seattle, Washington, I talked to the Warrant Officer. He said to me, "Do you play golf?" "Yeah, I play golf." He says, "What do you shoot?" "Low 80s, sometimes in the 70s." "Oh, you got to be on the golf team." I said, "Hey I just got here. How am I going to pay golf if I'm working?" "Don't worry about. Who is your Sergeant?" He talks to the Sergeant. He says, "When I come in for PFC Lee, you're going to excuse him, aren't you?" "Yes," and he did.

The next day he comes in. He says, "I got an assignment for you. I'll talk to Art. We're going to play golf." He goes over to Art and Art comes over, "You're excused."

His name was Rogers. "We're going to play golf." "But I don't have any golf clubs." "I got you golf clubs and everything."

We went out. I never played the course before. I shot an 82 and he shot an 82, and he says, "You're on the team." "I'll get you off for practice." I said, "I'm supposed to work around here." He says, "Don't worry about that."

Then they found out that I played baseball. I was playing baseball with an old time baseball player's son Earl Averill of the Cleveland Indians. He had been an All-Star player. His son was the catcher on our team. So now I'm playing baseball.

What position?

I played the outfield. That's the way it went. "Do you bowl?" "Yes, I bowl." "What's your average?" I said, "About 180 to 185." In those days that was ... "A 180, 185?" "You're on the team."

Well, I decided to ask for the night shift. A friend of mine was on the night shift that I buddied with. He came out of basic out of New Jersey. And there was his bride, and she got a bank job in Seattle, and he's got the night shift. They never see each other. I said, "Jim, what if I went on nights? Can I learn the night shift? I'll do it on my own." He said, "Yeah, then I can transfer to the day shift." "OK."

So I went in there on nights. I was playing golf during the day. I went in there on nights; I was helping him out and everything. So he talks to a different Warrant Officer, and he says, "I'd like to go on days." "Oh, no you can't, Jim. You're too valuable." Jim said, "No, Ken knows the work. He's been sitting here helping me." "Oh. Ok, have him come in next week too and I'll be around to watch him." So we did that and I became the night supervisor.

As a result, we had it made then I could be off during the day anytime I wanted to.

So you still had enough time to sleep for all the athletic activity?

I hate to admit this, but in the course of a month, a month. I had worked only 30 hours – the whole month. I was constantly going to a baseball game or a golf tournament and my niece I found out – I wrote a lot of letters, a lot of letters. I was going through some of the letters. In the two-year period in Seattle I had maybe 600 letters that I written home but I always talked about home things first in the first paragraph and then I'd say "this what I did in the service," and as a result I still have all those and they are all on the computer now. And I brought one book, the Basic Training that I did in Kentucky - I have it all documented – everything that I did. I took it to a reunion. Down there, I was assigned to Company K, 101st Airborne Division out of Kentucky. And I gave that but I wanted it back because I had pictures in it and everything that we did, everything that we did in the way of machine-guns and BARs, and so forth. So it was an interesting life to say the least.

So that Basic Training in Camp Breckinridge lasted

14 weeks.

Then it's by train to Fort Lawton?

Yes.

And then you are in Fort Lawton until...

We moved to Ft. Lewis the last month.

But I got to Fort Lawton; it was on June 7th of '51. And they were closing down Fort Lawton. They did turn it into a park in Seattle. It's a beautiful piece of land there. In fact, they had a golf course on there. So we were going to move to Fort Lewis. And as a result of that we had to move in January. And I'm getting out in February. When we moved to January- that's the only work Jim and I did – was the move. Jim and I went into the Separation Center, waiting to be separated from the service. As a result, we had nothing to do. His wife was up in Seattle and if we had nothing to do that day, we'd drive back up to Seattle. They had an apartment there so I'd stay with them and then we'd come back the next day. Then finally we got on the list to get separated. Jim got separated a day or two before I did. I just stayed down there. I had a car at that time. Then I drove back from Seattle.

The records that you were working with, were they primarily personnel records?

No, these were IBM records, creating ships that were going to Sasebo, Japan, ships of men going to Korea, the Far East Command. Once you go to Korea you go to Japan first and fortunately the fellow at the other end in Japan was a fellow who worked at Allstate that I knew so we were blaming each other for errors.

What would happen is, we'd put the IBM cards, anybody going overseas had to have a serial number; you had to have an MOS – a Military Occupation Specialty. If you were a rifleman, you were a Triple 07 (0007), if you were a WAC, you were a Triple 08, if you were Combat, trained, and you'd be a 4745. If you were a cook, you'd be a 3060 - all the different numbers. Everybody had an MOS; if they didn't have an MOS you'd look at their name and say, "He's probably a truck driver." And we'd put it down as a truck driver and he mightn't know how to drive.

But then we had the ones going to Alaska. Now Alaska was not involved in the war, but they were concerned about Alaska. They had personnel up there, Army and Navy. And a friend of mine from the Navy that I knew was up there. He was a dentist, sent to Kodiak, Alaska. And his wife and a child came through Ft. Lawton. They stayed in the dependents. And there's only 1 ship that went up there, it went up there about every two weeks. We would create the records for the dependents and those personnel going up there to take the places of the ones that are there.

Did each of those going up there have to have an IBM punch card?

Yes. When they got to Korea, they were all going to combat units as replacements. Nobody going to Korea was getting a separation card, but when they came back from Sasebo, back to Seattle. Now these are guys coming back, they could be going to a Separation Center to get out of the Army or they could be going on furlough to be reassigned so that was a separate colored card and there was another one. They would be a whole unit, a special unit that would go in an intact unit. They would go together. They might be in an Army Unit. They had some American-Indian Units – all American-Indians, like the Code-Talkers. We'd ship them over as an intact unit. All of a sudden they get a change of orders, of course, they're going to Korea. They get a change of orders by fax or something. They say: "Don't go to Japan. You go to Australia instead of Japan." We didn't know that they went there. People in Japan are waiting for them to come, and they are not going to get there. And that happens and they are lost somewhere in the Pacific. But it was a responsibility of the Sixth Army; that's what we did.

Just recently *The Lion King* played at the Palace Theater and the Assistant Conductor was the baby that went with his mother up to my friend in Kodiak who was the dentist. He's 51 years old. I sent a note up with one of the ushers that I wanted to talk to the Assistant Conductor, Douglas Reed. He said, "I'll have to have the Head Usher come and talk to you." So I wrote out the message. I told him that the last time I saw you were a baby. I'm the guy who met you when you came off the ship. They were coming back with two babies; his sister was born up in Alaska. And I said, "I'll be wearing a red jacket." Because when I look up at the ship, everyone's going to have a Navy uniform on or an Army uniform. There's nobody going to have a red jacket. You can find me but I can't find you."

I picked him up and we went to lunch and I took him to the train. I still talk to his wife out in Connecticut. He passed away last year.

And your good friend, from the night duty, was it Jim?

He's in an Alzheimer's Unit. I just got a letter. Every Christmas, I send out Christmas Cards and if I get cards back or if I don't hear from anybody. In February, I follow up. In fact, when I get home, I found out where this one guy is. And I got a message last night when I got home about 11 o'clock, "Call me tomorrow morning," but he's out in Arizona so it's still morning out there, but I was going to call later on. And we found this guy, and he's out in Arizona. We've been looking for him for two years.

So do you still have strong associations, friendships with people from the Navy and the Army, or is it primarily the Army?

No, both. But the Navy is getting – I lost 3 guys from the Navy last year. I was able to go to one wake and funeral in Madison, Wisconsin. He was in the same boat. He was called back and he almost had the same thing. He was about to go on a ship and he was in California and an Admiral's aide came up and he says, "Anybody here play golf?" A couple of hands went up. "What do you shoot?" My friend Ron, he was a good golfer. He was on the golf team at DePauw. He says to him, "Your orders are changed. You are going to go to Hawaii. You're going to play golf with the Admiral in Hawaii." And that's what he did. He was all set to go on a ship and they pulled him out. He died in Madison.

The other fellow, his wife died a couple of years ago, and he died in Iowa, and I heard through the grapevine on that one and the other fellow was the dentist who was up in Alaska. He died last March.

Did you join the VFW or American Legion or any other formal organizations?

Well, I was in the Sons of the American Legion because of my dad, and as soon as I enlisted I became a member of the American Legion. I've got over 70 years.

So you were active...

I am a paid-up member for life. Our post is down to about 30 people. The last meeting that I went to there was only 3 of us, the Commander, another officer and myself.

Is that post in Brookfield?

Yes, and so the Commander says, "You make a motion that I pay for the lunch, and Ken, you second the motion. And I'll buy the lunch for the three of us." And that's what we did.

When you came out of the service the second time, that would have been in 1953, right?

Yes.

Did you have any trouble getting into the job market then?

No, of course, I went into the Army Reserve for five years, no meetings and everything else. I got out early; it was 1956. Based on that, I was 30 years old. I went in when I was 17 so 13 years of - I got 4 discharges. I finally got a discharge from the Naval Reserve.

When you were in the Army Reserve, were there monthly meetings? I missed that.

I didn't go to any monthly meetings. It was an MP Reserve Unit out of Cicero, Illinois. Never went there or nothing. Instead of five years, they cut it down; I got out 2 years sooner.

Did you go back to work for Allstate?

Yes, I went back to Allstate. When I went back, I could get my old job. OK, but this one fellow that had helped me out when I was learning some of the IBM equipment says "Hey, we're going to go into computers, and with your background, they're going to set up a research group. You can come back and get your old job, and they will give you a raise. Or you can come back and work for me. And I can give you all the overtime you want. And in six months they're going to set up this research group for computers and they want you to be in it. But by working 6 months to a year with your overtime (and at that time I think was making maybe \$300 a month, with the overtime I'd be up to \$600 a month) When they approach you to make the change (I had got back in February or March) if it doesn't come through in August, it will be in the first of next year. You'll have a whole year of payroll - double your payroll. Now if they want you, they got to give you a raise." And that's what happened. So another fellow math degree, graduate work, I was math, graduate work. Our boss was a finance person; he had all the contacts.

So now we're traveling to see what GE has, RCA, Control Data - all the different companies IBM, Univac - and all the different computers. We could tell; we went to all the schools. I programmed every computer. I programmed the Batman's computer. I can still do it. It's still in my head. I can write a program for that right now.

What language would that be in? COBOL?

Oh, it was before that. It was all hard-coded. There were no operating systems in those days. If I said "64, 74, 02," this is "clear and add," "add" and "store" it. Those are the same codes that are in my head right now. This stores it and clears it out. If it is a 12, it stores it but it doesn't clear it out. It stays in the register - all the different things.

Our biggest thing, we had this drum and we're talking milliseconds, not nano-seconds and everything that you got now. And it was 8.5 milliseconds. That was fast in those days. But this drum rotated. They had the same information; you could put in 20 different spots on this drum. So you put the first instruction here and you time it out as how far when that instruction will be executed. So when you get ready to do the second one, it might be all the way over here. That would be the end of number one so you want put your Number 2 instruction right here. Now the 2 instruction would go all way around here and it ends right here. That's the two. Well, then you want to put your Number 3 instruction here. And you fill up these 20 spots. As a result, it made a big difference to the company because we're going to go through this thing. And you had 20 instructions that you could put in this loop and that's what we did.

So finally we went to the Bellevue Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia. We had Bob and myself. Our boss's name was Van, and Fred was the salesman for the company and the salesman goes out of the room, you know. And Van, our boss, says, "What do you think?" "We can make it work." Bob and I said, "Yeah, we can do it."

It's a scientific computer. We don't have to use sines and cosines and such. We can add, subtract, multiply and divide, that's what you're going to do. You don't you have ratios for the programs and such. We said that we can write a program. "We have a program that it takes 3 months to do with tabulating. We can do it in less than a day on the computer - less than day." "Wow," he said, "that's a lot savings." The other guy can do other things. All the girls who had calculators on their desks, whoosh, all the calculators are going. They don't lose their jobs. They get something that's a little more interesting. They had a lot of background and so that's what we did.

I went to school in Poughkeepsie with IBM. I was there for 8 weeks with programmers. Bank of America, couple of guys who were high up in Silicon Valley and a guy from Dow Chemical. We were there, living, learning about these machines that hadn't even come on the market. We had a non-disclosure agreement with IBM. Allstate had it and the White Sands Proving Ground. We were the only two that had it. With the one condition our Boss said to IBM, "if you make an offer to Bob or Ken, you're out! Don't try to steal them from us." So we didn't have to worry about anything.

And then our Boss he had a management bonus, we crashed that. We're not management we're technical people. He said, "These are the guys who doing the work. When you have a problem in Atlanta, who do you call in - you call Ken and Bob. And Jim who was responsible for Atlanta, he says, "What do I tell them down in Atlanta?" And Bob says tells them to go to number 300 and we'll start from there. So now the Boss, that's Van's Boss, Jim, tells him "Go to 300 and then tell me what you got in 300." "What do I do next?" he tells us. Tell them we want to see what's in there and all of a sudden, Jim is a hero in Atlanta so we got in the Bonus Pool.

So you made your career then with Allstate Insurance?

Yes.

Did you give any thought to staying in the Service which might have had a use for your talents?

If I went in again, I would stay in. I had 4 years of service and 9 years of reserve time, and I only needed 16, 20 years would be all I need. And, of course, Viet Nam didn't start until 1961.

Yes, I was beginning to wonder if you would be called up 3 times!

No, but it was a great ride. I didn't go overseas. I learned how to shoot mortars, bazooka guns, BARs, but hey if they wanted me to do, well I, but I couldn't hit that flag with a '45. I was great at 500 yards, but if they got any closer, I'd throw the rifle at them and not shoot them. It was difficult. But I met some nice people. I did what I was told to do, and I could do it a lot better.

At Allstate Bob and I were quite close together. When the postage is going from 10¢ to 12¢ in a big company like Allstate and they were sending out 36,000 pieces of mail and you're spending another 2¢ that's a 20% increase. We came up with the idea – if you have a savings account and they used to have a limit of \$10,000 that was covered. But if you said OK like in my case Ken Lee and my wife's name could be Claire Lee and my daughter's name would be Barbara Lee and all the different combinations. We could get 7 different combinations and we're sending out 1st Class mail – 7 people at the same address! It didn't make sense. What if you only sent out one! There's only person going to read it and he might not even read it. We saved a ton of money. We went down from 36,000 pieces of mail down to under than 13,000 - 23,000 less and that was just one location.

The other thing we worked on, Bob and I, you go into a big company like Allstate and other companies they had file cabinets. They got your policy in there. You got a credit report. I went to the bank yesterday, OK I got x number of dollars in that bank. I went to another bank; I got x number OK, fine, I'm set. If I got a credit report and everything it would be great. I could spend that today and I might write a check – I'll make up some figures – say \$20,000. I don't have \$20,000 in that bank. The check could bounce, right. My credit would be gone. They had all these pieces of paper that they were saving in there I said, "Why are you saving all those credit reports? It's only good on the day that you get it. The next day it doesn't mean a thing." "What do you mean?" "The guy could be broke! He could have gone down to Vegas and he lost all his money. What good is it looking up his credit report?"

We put a program together to get rid of the filing cabinet. Look at all the space that they saved. They had a thousand filing cabinets in the Allstate Building over on the Edens Expressway – a thousand of them! What are you going to do with them? I said, "Get rid of them." Microfiche was the thing at that time. You could put it on microfiche. They had the index cards - just tables 3 or 4 tables that would be longer than this Library Board table of accidents .You go in and pull out a 3 x 5 card. "Well, you had an accident back in so and so." – put it on microfiche! Why use all this space? They are behind in their filing if the first thing that goes over there it isn't in there – they can't find it because they haven't got the stuff in there. There were a lot of different things.

It got to the point that we were kind of specialists in the company. If a person had a problem, if Pricing had a problem, they never wanted to exceed State-Farm in the prices but they would round up upward or downward, depending on the situation. That's old hat. You don't always do it subjectively. Oh yeah, we have to round downward on this one. I said, "You look at Chicago and rate a policy and we'll rate a policy on the computer and we'll have less errors than you have." You got a person going through the rate manual and she picks up a rate that was for Will County farmland and it should have been the City of Chicago and they give them a real low rate. The customer says, "That's pretty good, I'll take that." So we lose money on it; he has an accident in Chicago. And just the opposite if you overcharge them, what's going to happen? He'll go to another company. You overcharged him, you lost a customer. So you're losing money when you keep the customer and give him the wrong rate. We finally go to the point where we rated them they rated them and then we compared them and we showed them where

they made errors. They didn't even know they were making errors. They were on the wrong page.

Yes, eliminating human error would make a difference.

These people, once you got your confidence with the computers and then we had Information Support Units and I was in that area. A guy from Accounting calls you, "Hey, I got a problem." I said, "Well, what's your problem?" "Yeah, I can do that. But don't go through channels to do it. you'll never get it done - we'll have to see how much this is going to cost. Give me your information, I'll look at it and I'll have it back to you in a day or two. And that's what I'd do. And I just put down on my sheet, "Miscellaneous Project." He's happy. He got his work done. I'm happy. My boss is happy; he knows I'm not doing it that way, but, you know, different things.

They had an Affirmative Action Group, women, name like "Lee" hey, I could be an Indian, I could be an Asian I could go right up to the top categories. So I'm in charge of getting all those things to submit. "What would like to do in the next year, what's your next position? And one guy says, "I'd like to be a Senior Supervisor." "What is your long-range goal?" "Assistant Vice-President," I put that right on the top. And he's got an Hispanic name. I go into my boss, "so I got all things ready for Affirmative Action. You may want to read the first one." And he looked at it. "Assistant Vice-President?" He says, "You got to change that." "No, I can't change that. That's what this fellow believes. He is going to be a Senior Supervisor and his long-range is to be Assistant Vice-President. I can't change that; those are his thoughts." "AW-NO, change it." I said, "I'm not changing it. If you want to change it, you talk to Frank."

This fellow's name was Jim, we didn't get along too well. He said, "I'll call Frank." "Ok." He calls Frank, "Will you see Ken? He wants to bring something over to you." He says, "Sure" so I go over. I talk to his secretary, "Frank wants to see me; I got the forms." So I said, "Jim wanted me to change this Affirmative Action form. I can't change it, but I want you to read it" - because he was the Assistant Vice-President!

And he looks at it and he used some language that I don't use and he says, "I was wondering who the ---- that was going to take my job. Send it in the way it is." I said, "Will you call Jim and tell him that you're going to send it in the way it is. I'll give your secretary the whole sheet." Well Jim didn't like it. He said, "Frank liked it because that's the way he is, you know."

You know nobody could get along with that guy, Frank. I met him in Pittsburgh, never met him he was in the Pittsburgh area and I was on another assignment there I said, "You going out to dinner?" "I don't know where to go." He says, "I know a place. Why we don't go together?" That's how I met him. That was the first time our paths crossed. Later he came into the corporate and he became the big boss. As a result we had a good time and everything.

I was thinking the Army is a big company, a big organization, a big bureaucracy involved too and then Allstate is a big company with lots of departments and you were able to travel.

I went everywhere, all over the country. I put in tele-processing lines. I hooked up Salem with Seattle, Menlo Park with Sacramento, Santa Ana with Pasadena.

If it hadn't been for that early enlistment college officer track in the Navy, would you have been able to go to as good a college as DePauw?

I probably wouldn't have gone to college; that's one thing. I worked in a drug store. My first job - I caddied at a golf course, making 70¢ for hauling a bag around that broke my back I got a job at the drugstore for 25¢ an hour. It was a Rexall drugstore. I really worked hard, and I did a good job the first week. He raised me to 30¢ for the second week. It got to the point where I was helping out at the soda fountain. They had a lot of reports to do. I'm 15 years old. I was playing basketball. Drug stores were open from 7 o'clock in the morning until 11 o'clock at night.

Every bill that you wanted to pay, for a gas bill, you write down the number, the amount they would collect each month and collect the bill. They got a nickel for everyone that was on there. I did the electric bills, the gas bills. The water was separate I think. I did those two. I knew how to do that.

Then I went to the cigarettes and the candy and the magazines. I was in charge of that. We'd put the magazines, no *Police Gazette's* were put out. We put everything that was shocking and stuff; we put them underneath. If somebody asked for them, you could give it to them. None of the kids could see them. We had the *Life* and the *Look* magazine, the *Journal*, *McCall's*, all of these things but none of those detective stories and stuff like that.

We had comic books and then I got cigars and cigarettes. You can't sell them to kids, you know. They have to have a note from the parents and then you had to take the note up and give it up to the bosses. I couldn't accept the note. Of course with the war going it was hard to work days I was going to school but in the summertime I was working and then on the weekends I worked and it got to the point where I used to check the drugs that were coming in and I helped the druggist. I always commented on "It's a Wonderful Life" in regard to Jimmy Stewart and the druggist is prescribing the wrong thing.

Our druggist he'd say, "Get that white bottle up there with the black lettering on it and bring it here and he would count, he'd make sure this is the one, "OK, "Count 20 of these out there and I put them out 5-5-5-5 and put the cap on it. And he'd say "Yep, OK, put in this bottle," and he'd have the bottle all made up with directions and everything else. Because in those days they were making up salves and they had the pestels and capsules. It was interesting and the code I still know it. He had codes as to what the cost of the thing was. It was a situation of markings or certain situations you look at it and that would be the code in that particular drug or toothpaste or whatever it was. The thing is it would be 1-2-3-4 and this X meant you repeated the "4" again so this would be the value of it. And then you went on to other symbols. It would come in and I would code it for him and he'd look at it and say, "Yeah that's right. Now the rule is when you put things away, you always put it back in the same spot." If you put the toothpaste here and you had shaving cream here, it didn't make any sense. You still put the toothpaste here and the shaving cream here. Never change the positions. So if anybody was out of something, I had put the stuff away, I knew where to go down in the basement and when a new person came, "Well, where's the toothpaste?" "Well, it's in by the shaving cream." "What?" "And don't tell me. We don't change anything!" It was a real experience and I was detailed enough.

You might have gone into the drugstore business.

He would've sponsored me to become a druggist because he asked me one time. The thing is the war was going on. He lost an employee; one of the fellows went into the Army. He was married, had a child.

Was the druggist the owner of the store?

Yes.

As we approach the end of the interview, there are always a couple of questions we ask and you've anticipated these to a degree. Mr. Lee, how do you think your military service and experiences affected your life?

It made a lot easier for me, especially the information that I gathered and meeting people. I used to be afraid to talk – not any more. I got involved with charities. I used to grab a microphone and my hand used to shake. I had the Marriott on Michigan Avenue, 1110 people for dinner and they all found a place to sit down. I had it on the computer. I was the emcee and unbeknownst to me that was the night they gave me the State Deputy's Medal. It was a rare occasion. They said I started with the Knights of Columbus and I've gone up through many chains. I was head of the CYO in Chicago. Recently, I was Citizen of the Year in Niles. I was the Knight of the Year in the State of Illinois in 2007 – all because of the different things. I was responsible for over two million dollars in charities. I was in charge from Indiana to Iowa and I-80 to Wisconsin and in charge of the all awards that went out that year. We collected \$1,700,000 for the intellectually disabled people that the Knights support. So just taking on the responsibilities when they came, "You want to get it done, I'll do it."

And the last question, Mr. Lee how do you think your military experience affected your thinking about war or the military in general?

I think it is a real learning experience. I would advocate it – that everybody should go in. You learn the discipline. Some of the things that are happening now with the youth, it would be a good thing for them to go in. You learn the discipline that you have to do and the things you say you can't do, you can do them. Some of the things you go through, you wonder why. I was never too much of a camper as such, but you learn a lot of little things that help you out. If you are on the side of hill, you better have a big rock under your chin or you'd be down in the valley real quick.

Mr. Lee, is there anything you'd like to add to the interview that perhaps we haven't covered?

Well, I am writing a lot of stuff myself. I'm writing memoirs. I started with the early ages - a lot of these things I wanted to get them down. A lot of those things are private, but I did have a health problem early in life and different things. I have a saying, "Just say no." My daughters think it is a situation of different activities. I made a promise to my wife when I was struck with cancer in 2000 and she said, "Don't you dare die before I do." So I said, "No" to cancer. I did whatever I had to do and fortunately a lot of the stuff that I mentioned earlier – I never smoked,

so when I was taking the chemo, the fact that I had the 3 lymph nodes out of the 21, that was roughly 15% that it might occur again, but I didn't smoke, so you can you automatically cut that in half so it's down to 7 ½. That was in 2000. It's now 2014 and I'm down to – he only checks me once a year now. But then I was hit with a cancer again, prostate cancer in 2005 which was a little more difficult. My wife was disabled in '98 and she repeated it, "Don't you dare die before I do!" So I took hormone shots. I took radiation. I had to sign up for 25 radiation treatments. By the end of 18 I was able to take a volume test and if I passed the volume test, then I wouldn't have to take any more radiation. And I said, "Well, what's the volume test?" "Well, we look at it, you know." It was the worst test I ever took. And I passed it. So I stopped radiation for a whole month.

And so we had a reunion with all the kids and everything, and they all came in and we went to an area where we had gone for vacations, the whole family. It was pretty serious and I had a procedure. They implanted radium seeds and it went pretty well and I was back to normal again. My PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) was undetectable. So I kept my promise and she passed away in 2007. So I kept the thing going and gave my daughters a birthstone with "Just say no," and I started to cut back on my activities and that's what I did. They think it's my activities I cut back on.

Last year I had to go in – a relapse on the prostate cancer. I spent 8 days in the hospital and had another procedure and fortunately it's almost a year now since I been out and I'm still good. Just working on that is a challenge. But from the same point of view, I accept it.

It seems like from the early days you accepted the challenges and were able to go with the flow and on the basis of your natural talents you make the best of it.

But I brought some pictures that you wanted.

So I am going to conclude the interview then Mr. Lee and say thank you very much and I'm glad you said "yes" to the interview.

Reader's Note:

The following 10 pages document Mr. Lee's service to his country during two wars, first in the US Navy during World War II and then in the US Army during the Korean War. Scans of photographs, letters, and official papers follow and serve to amplify Mr. Lee's remarks.



Mr. Lee

In February, 1945, Mr. Lee's parents visited him down at DePauw in Greencastle, Indiana. The picture is taken in front of the Delta Upsilon Fraternity House. His mother is standing to his right and his father is standing behind Mrs. Lee. He was a member of Delta Upsilon Fraternity. Mr. Lee's girl friend is to his left. Mr. Lee's brother is standing behind him.



Mr. Lee down at DePauw with his good friends in the Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps . In the front row are Darwin Reed, who would become the father of the Assistant Conductor of *The Lion King* mentioned in the transcript, and on his left Dwain Maitre. In the back row from left to right are Thomas Longo, John Longfellow, Mr. Lee and Howard Lindsey.



April 30, 1951

Dear Mom & Dad,

I'm sorry for not writing lately, but you can imagine how it has been. After last week I was really tired. It was the hardest week we have had so far, but it looks like this one will run a close second.

Over the weekend, after a 3 hour parade Saturday afternoon I went up to Greencastle and visited Bob. I was up there at 9:00 o'clock, but I missed him since he left at 8:30 P.M. for his date. I had a few beers with the boys and waited till he got in. Sunday the D.U.'s had their sweetheart banquet and Clarise was over for dinner. Bob and I took some pictures in the afternoon and this evening I brought them over to the PX to be developed and printed. It will take 4 or 5 days to get them back.

I just received your airmail letter of last Wednesday. It must have been lost somewhere on the way. I thought the pictures were fair. Perhaps the ones I took will be better.

We went out to Range 23 again today and had landscape firing with our rifles. It was a blistering hot day and we had to walk back the 13 miles. The lights just were turned out so this writing might change a little from time to time.

Tomorrow night I have Guard Duty again and I'll write then.

Love,

Ken

Letter from Kentucky during basic training to parents at time of Korean War, noting the physical challenges and also a trip up to DePauw University where he had studied during World War II. Mr. Lee assigned numbers to the letters and typed them when he compiled the letters for his own personal memoir.

Dear Mom & Dad,

Even though I wrote earlier this afternoon I thought you would be interested in the little vacation I have had thus far. After the rain finally stopped we managed to get a ride into Evansville from another fellow in the barracks who was driving to Chicago. We (Bill Lovelace and Gordon Biesboer and myself) arrived in town about 3:00 P.M. and were very, very lucky. Here's what's happened!

We were walking down the street toward town since we were left off on the more or less outskirts. As we progressed down the blocks a station wagon stopped with two men in it and asked us where we were going. We told them that we were going to try to find a room for the night and see the so-called sights. They offered us a lift to town and we accepted. As the conversation increased they suggested this Sunset View Manor residence as a place to stay since the hotels were probably over-crowded and this place took the overflow from the Hotel McCurdy. The fellow who owned the car knew the owner of this place and the other man in the car was his valet since he was a cripple. (Time out for a drink.) I'm back now. Anyhow he got us a room \$6.00 for the 3 of us. I'm in the room now in this house which has 28 rooms and is over 100 yrs. old. We have 2 single beds and since we wanted to be together the landlady had a full-size cot brought in. Actually the price was \$2.00/person since this is normally a \$4.00 room.

After we secured the room the man who picked us up drove us all over town and dropped us at the bus station where we could check the schedules for tomorrow. We are going to ask the landlady for the man's name & address so we can thank him. He mentioned that he's 77 years old but doesn't look it at all despite his handicap.

We walked around town a few minutes and then went to the Lamplight for some drinks and dinner which was recommended as the best place in town - and it was. I had a ham dinner and a few drinks there to start the evening. From there we went to an Army Store and I had some Navy patches and some brass for Bob Clark. We then went to the U.S.O. to have my patch sewed on. It looks fine - a wonderful job. Afterwards Gordon and I bought a bottle of gin and the necessary tools to make a nice cool drink. We plan to finish the evening by writing letters (which we all are doing now) and have a few drinks. The radio is playing music and we have both windows open since the weather has become very mild after the rain. It's wonderful to be in a room again and relaxing as we are.

I'll probably sleep fairly late tomorrow and go to 11 O'clock mass at St. Mary's church which is 5 blocks from here. After that we'll probably head back to camp and get a few personal things done such as shine boots and wash clothes.

During the last hour we have talked over the problems of Gordon with his girl. No result has been established and no action has been taken.

It is 10 o'clock now and the gin is beginning to affect me now. We have almost hit bottom now but we have run short on mix. I'm completely relaxed now. Bill is already asleep and Gordon is still writing his girl.

Goodnight for now.

Will write soon.

Love,

Ken

#47 in Mr. Lee's collection of letters written home from Basic Training. He discusses "a little vacation" up in Evansville, Indiana where they found accommodation and a cooling beverage.



Private First Class Kenneth Lee on a visit to Allstate prior to reporting to in Fort Lawton, Washington as a Machine Accountant Supervisor, and after his assignment from Camp Breckinridge. Allstate Supervisor Marge Caruso is pictured with Mr. Lee in this June, 1951 photograph.

1951 KENNETH LEE

AIM

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CAUTION

OBJECT

X

Military Service

Ken Lee

Marge Caruso

71

HEADQUARTERS
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION AND CAMP BRECKINRIDGE
Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky

SPECIAL ORDERS
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31 May 1951

E X T R A C T

26. PVT-1KENNETH J LEE [REDACTED] Race W A/S Unasg TOE 21mos ETS Nov 52
MOS 0007 Mos os None is rel asg (Pipeline-Trainee) (14) Co K 502nd Abn Inf Regt
101st Abn Div Cp Breckinridge Ky Second A and is trf asg to 32 MRU Ft Lawton
Wash Sixth A (dy: Machine Accountant Supervisor). EM is identified as being
selected under provisions of par 21b SR 615-25-38 and is asg against request
for asgmt of Scientific and Professional Pers submitted by CG Sixth A and is to
be utilized as provided in para 22 SR 615-25-38. EM has completed fourteen
(14) wks tng in ATP 7-600. WP 7 Jun 51 rept prior to 2400hrs 12 Jun 51.
Trans by rail, bus, air or water auth. TC to furn nec trans. TO will
issue twelve (12) meal tickets nec for journey. FO Ft Lawton Wash will pay Per
Diem Alws auth less amt of meal tickets furn. TDN PCS 2110425 1-19 P431-02
S99-999. EDCMR: 12 Jun 51.

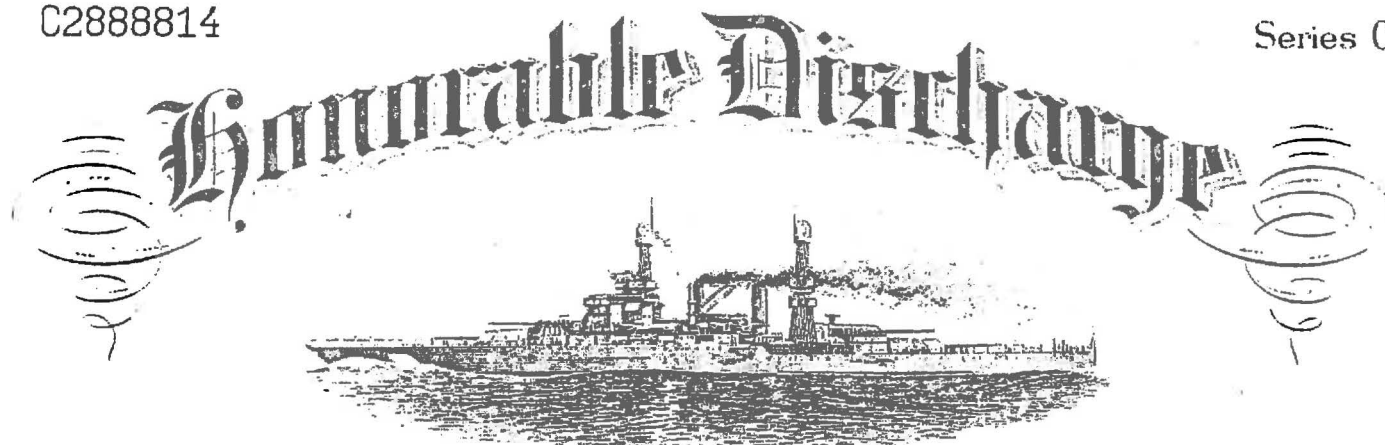
Auth: Ltr AGPA-NR (17 May 51) Subj: Asgmt of Scientific and
Professional Pers dtd 17 May 51 and TWX TAG AGPA-NR 5164 dtd
28 May 51.

Copy of scan of Mr. Lee's Special Orders authorizing his assignment and transportation from
Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky to Fort Lawton, Washington. He had completed 14 weeks of
Basic Training.

10 2001 T&C W000

C2888814

Series C



from the
United States Navy

This is to certify that

KENNETH JAMES LEE

AN APPRENTICE BOATMAN USNR

is Honorably Discharged from the U.S. NAVAL PERSONNEL SEPARATION CENTER
GREAT LAKES, ILLINOIS *and from the Naval Service of the United States*

This 28TH *day of* JUNE 1946

*This certificate is awarded as a Testimonial of Fidelity and
Obedience:*

R. H. FARA

R. H. FARA, ENSIGN USNR
BY DIRECTION

Mr. Lee's Honorable Discharge from the U.S. Navy in June, 1946

Authority for discharge BuPers Man Art. D 9106

FOLLOWING DATA TRANSCRIBED FROM NAVPERS-553, NOTICE OF SEPARATION

Serial or file number [REDACTED]

Date and place of birth 2-20-27 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
(Date) (Place)

Date of entry into active service 7-1-44

Highest rank or rating held APPRENTICE SEAMAN

Service (vessels and stations served on) _____

V-12 DEPAUW UNIV. GREENCASTLE, IND. 7-1-44 to 11-1-45

V-12 PURDUE UNIV. LAFAYETTE, IND. 11-1-45 to 2-26-46

V-12 UNIV. OF PA. PHIL., PA. 2-26-46 to 6-28-46

Remarks _____

VICTORY MEDAL

AMERICAN AREA CAMPAIGN MEDAL

STATE OF ILLINOIS
COOK COUNTY
FILED FOR RECORD
1117044
1946 JUL 8 AM 10 46
391
AND RECORDED IN
BOOK
RECORDED
PAGE
87
Edward J. Hauck

R H Fara

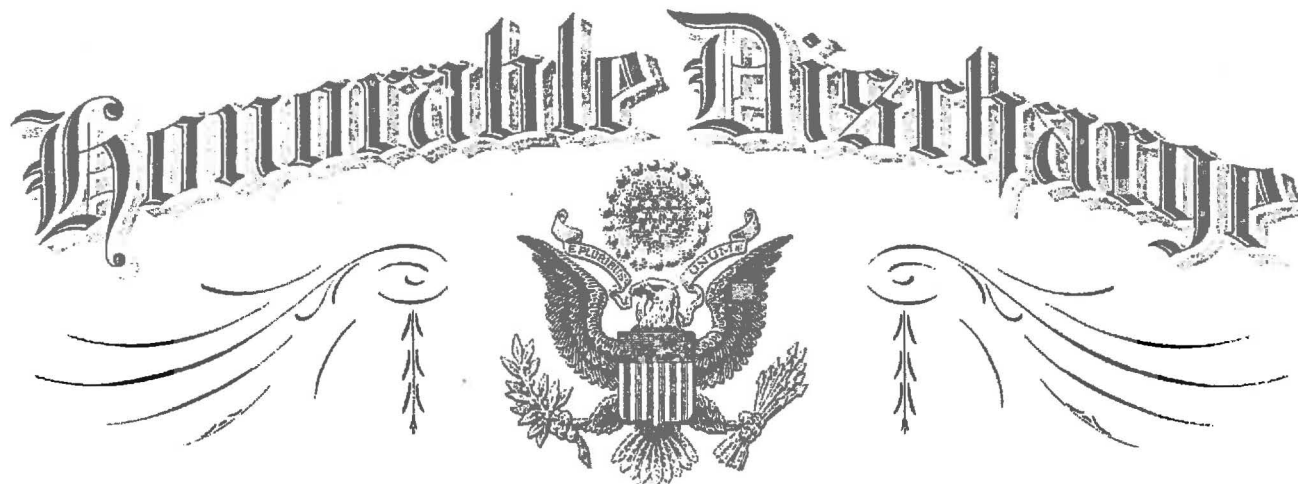
R. H. FARA, ENS. U.S.N.(R)

BY DIRECTION

Other entries previously made hereon now covered by NAVPERS-553, Notice of Separation.

RH

Mr. Lee's Honorable Discharge in 1956 after serving in the U.S. Army



from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

This is to certify that

Corporal KENNETH J. LEE, ER 55 129 092, AGC-USAR, Ready Reserve, who was inducted
16 February 1951 and transferred to the Army Reserve 16 February 1953

was Honorably Discharged from the

Army of the United States

on the 5th *day of* November 1956 *This certificate is awarded*

as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service

AR 135-133 & Par 3a, SR 140-177-1

F. J. Belanger

F. J. BELANGER
CWO, W-2, USA

HONORABLE		ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES		ARMY	
1. LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE NAME LEE KENNETH JAMES		2. SERVICE NUMBER [REDACTED]		3. GRADE—RATE—RANK AND DATE OF APPOINTMENT Cpl (T) 16 Jan 52	
4. COMPONENT AND BRANCH OR CLASS AUS AGO		5. QUALIFICATIONS 1400		6. EFFECTIVE DATE OF SEPARATION 15 Feb 53	
7. TYPE OF SEPARATION Trans to USAR		8. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION ETS SR 615-363-5 Release to USAR		9. PLACE OF SEPARATION Reception Center Fort Lewis Washington	
10. DATE OF BIRTH 20 Feb 27		11. PLACE OF BIRTH (City and State) Chicago Illinois		12. DESCRIPTION SEX Male RACE White COLOR HAIR Brown COLOR EYES Brown HEIGHT 5'9" WEIGHT 148	
13. REGISTERED YES X NO		14. SELECTIVE SERVICE LOCAL BOARD NUMBER (City, County, State) #111 Riverside Cook Illinois		15. INDUCTED DAY 16 MONTH Feb YEAR 51	
16. ENLISTED IN OR TRANSFERRED TO A RESERVE COMPONENT YES X NO		17. MEANS OF ENTRY OTHER THAN BY INDUCTION ENLISTED [] REENLISTED [] COMMISSIONED [] CALLED FROM INACTIVE DUTY []		18. GRADE—RATE OR RANK AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE Pvt E-1	
19. DATE AND PLACE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE DAY 16 MONTH Feb YEAR 51 PLACE Chicago Illinois		20. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE (St., R.F.D., County, City and State) 3106 Oak Ave Cook Brookfield Illinois		21. NET SERVICE COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES EXCLUDING THIS PERIOD A. YEARS B. MONTHS C. DAYS	
22. NET SERVICE COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES THIS PERIOD 2 0 0		23. OTHER SERVICE (Act of 16 June 1942 as amended) COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES 6 0 5		24. TOTAL NET SERVICE COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES 8 0 5	
25. ENLISTMENT ALLOWANCE PAID ON EXTENSION OF ENLISTMENT, IF ANY DAY MONTH YEAR AMOUNT		26. FOREIGN AND/OR SEA SERVICE YEARS MONTHS DAYS		27. DECORATIONS, MEDALS, BADGES, COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND CAMPAIGN RIBBONS AWARDED OR AUTHORIZED None	
28. MOST SIGNIFICANT DUTY ASSIGNMENT 32nd Machine Records Unit Ft Lawton Wn		29. WOUNDS RECEIVED AS A RESULT OF ACTION WITH ENEMY FORCES (Place and date, if known) None		30. SERVICE SCHOOLS OR COLLEGES, COLLEGE TRAINING COURSES AND/OR POST-GRAD. COURSES SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED None	
31. SERVICE TRAINING COURSES SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED None		32. KIND OF INSURANCE (amount and premium due each month) N. S. L. I. 10,000 PL 23 U. S. G. L. I. None		33. MONTH ALLOTMENT DISCONTINUED NA	
34. MONTH NEXT PREMIUM DUE NA		35. TOTAL PAYMENT UPON SEPARATION \$391.94		36. TRAVEL OR MILEAGE ALLOWANCE INCLUDED IN TOTAL PAYMENT \$133.38 To.#	
37. DISBURSING OFFICER'S NAME AND SYMBOL NUMBER G F May Lt Col FC SN 215-316		38. REMARKS (Continue on reverse) Released from active military service and transferred to the USAR for five years No time lost under Section 6(a) appendix 2b LCOM 1951 Blood Group "A" No permanent grade		39. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER AUTHORIZED TO SIGN L G WALTERS CWO USA ASST ADJUTANT	
40. V.A. BENEFITS PREVIOUSLY APPLIED FOR (Specify type) COMPENSATION, PENSION, INSURANCE BENEFITS, ETC.		41. DATES OF LAST CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT: FROM 49 TO 51		42. MAIN CIVILIAN OCCUPATION 0-36.510 Statistician	
43. NAME AND ADDRESS OF LAST CIVILIAN EMPLOYER Allstate Insurance Co Chicago Illinois		44. UNITED STATES CITIZEN YES X NO		45. MARITAL STATUS Single	
46. NON-SERVICE EDUCATION (Years successfully completed) GRAM-MAR 8 HIGH SCHOOL 4 COL-LEGE 5 1/2 DEGREE(S) NA		47. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES AFTER SEPARATION (St., R.F.D., County, City and State) See item 20		48. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED [Signature]	

DD FORM 214 JAN 50

INDIVIDUAL'S COPY (TO BE DELIVERED TO THE INDIVIDUAL BEING SEPARATED)

1

Mr. Lee's Army DD Form 214, his Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty