



Robert S. Goldberg
U.S. Army—Korean War
Homefront
Army Chemical Corps
Corporal

Robert S. Goldberg

**Veterans
History
Project
Transcript**

**Interview conducted
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**Niles Public Library
Niles Public Library District
Niles, Illinois**



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Veteran's History Project Transcript

Veteran: **Robert Goldberg**

Rank: **Corporal**

Branch of Service: **U.S. Army**

Theater: **Korean Conflict, Homefront**

This Veterans History Project interview is being conducted on Monday, August 21st, in the year 2006, here at the Niles Public Library in Niles, Illinois. My name is Neil O'Shea, and I'm speaking with Mr. Robert Goldberg. Mr. Goldberg was born on August 10th, 1930, and now lives in Glenview. He has kindly consented to be interviewed for this project.

Mr. Goldberg served in the United States Army during the time of the Korean Conflict, and we're very grateful for his deciding to come in and to share his story with us. And from our brief discussions, it sounds very interesting. So, let's begin then. Mr. Goldberg, how did you come to enter the United States Army, were you-

010 (tape mark counter) – timing entry into armed forces

It's an interesting question because I was at the point of graduating with my advanced master's degree. And I wanted to be available when I got out of the Army for employment. So instead of waiting for the draft to be called, I went to the draft board and requested that my number be moved to an appropriate time, so that my discharge would coincide with employment, which was in the educational system, and I would be working in September, so I was looking to get in and get out sometime in July. Then I was drafted.

I had previously requested entry into the Coast Guard Officers' program, but I was turned down because of lack of funds to have the number of officers that they had previously had. When I was drafted and went through my basic training, I received a letter, in my barracks with the United States Army uniform on my back, saying that funds now are available, and they are ready and willing to take me into the Coast Guard training program in New London, Connecticut. Because I was now engaged, I said, "No, thank you," and kept my appointment to the US Army.

May I ask where you were attending school at that time or--

I was getting my degree from the University of Illinois in science and biological studies.

And—so, you mentioned the timing of your service. So you were able to go, you were able to enter then in July of '53, and you were able to come out then in July of '55? And that was going to be helpful as far as planning?

Yes.

Putting your degree to work. You mentioned without, it wouldn't have been any question then of your being drafted? You would have been drafted...

There was always a question, but it was minimally possible that I would not, because everybody was being drafted. The Korean Conflict was still there. It was before the arrangement to stop fighting, so I knew that there was very little chance of not being drafted. And I decided to be in control.

Were you living in Chicago at that time, or Champaign, or?

I was living in Champaign at the time, finishing my master's degree.

And you were working on that full-time?

I was full-time.

And, then, so, were you able to complete your master's then before you entered, or?

I was.

You were.

I was. Which was beneficial, and now that I think back, of course.

So, how long did you have to defer entering into the Army to complete the degree?

My degree was completed. I was drafted as a master's degree recipient.

So, you would have had your master's anyway, before you went into the Army?

I would.

Yeah.

Hopefully, I would.

And, so, you didn't have a choice on branch of service then, or did you?

No, I had no choice at all. I was drafted into the US Army infantry and was told that I was going to be sent to wherever there was a need for the infantry.

Where was your induction? Was that in--

I was taken by train from Illinois to Missouri, Camp Crowder, which is no longer, and then I went from Camp Crowder to Fort Riley, Kansas.

Now you would, I'm guessing that a lot of the other enlistees or people you found yourself in service with weren't necessarily-- already completed their college education, had master's degrees?

I was probably—five percent of the people in the area of basic training that had that kind of education.

So was basic training interesting? A lot of different people there from--

Oh, my. Yes.

All walks of life, and?

Oh, yes. Well, growing up in Chicago, on the West Side of Chicago, and also growing up in a rather liberal university, I was pretty well indoctrinated with a variety of folks. And because of that, it wasn't shocking to be in a barracks with people that didn't have all of the social graces that I experienced in college. Because in my neighborhood, we had people that just unfortunately were like that, and a lot of immigrants that were still learning. But I was not shocked.

Nothing that you couldn't cope with or--

Nothing I couldn't cope with, and I really probably benefited from that in some ways.

066 – getting along in basic training with a broom

So, after boot camp, does the Army decide they were going to make use of your special training and background?

Well, that's a great question, because I just don't know. I experienced a variety of jobs before I really got into where I finalized. I learned right off, the very first few days, that if during the pre-basic training time, if you were able to find a broom and carry the broom wherever you went, you probably didn't have to do some of the work that was offered if you didn't carry a broom. People would look at me and say I've already got a job. I was-- my job was carrying the broom. And the big thing was to hide the broom, so that nobody would take it while I was eating or sleeping. But before I went to my final duty station, I was a bus driver, which was during the time of my security clearance, which took up to about ten days. So, I was finally cleared for secrets in my job, which later on in the interview we might be able to get to.

Right. So, are you still down in Camp Crowder?

I was at Camp Crowder until they decided what infantry I was going to go to, I suppose. And then I was just told, "Here is a train ticket, and you're going from Missouri to Kansas. And here

is how you are going to get there.” And I got there, and, when I got there, I was in the infantry. I think it was the First Infantry Division. I don’t remember where, because it’s a blur. All I remember is that Kansas is very dusty, and very hot, and it has a very flat terrain except for a large hill that we were asked to go up and down a few times a day, seven days a week.

Did you find that you-- did you put on weight when you were in the military? Did you lose weight, or did you change your appearance, or--

No, I don’t think that I lost weight tremendously because they did feed you stuff that would stick to your ribs. I think I maintained my weight and my health. I never got sick, and my appetite was always good.

So you were in-- you were with the First Infantry Division in Kansas?

I’m not sure if I was in that division in Kansas. I was in it in, yes, in Kansas. I’m not sure about in Missouri.

Right. So, you went from Missouri to Kansas.

To Kansas.

And this was still relatively early days, right, and this was still within three or four months of your going in.

Yes.

100 – assignment to Army Chemical Center, Edgewood, Maryland - not overseas

But then you’re going to go somewhere from Kansas, too, right?

From Kansas, I was given a piece of paper that said I am now going to be offered a few days of freedom in my home in Illinois, and I was to make my way down to the Army Chemical Center in Edgewood, Maryland.

After your furlough?

I was supposed to get to the Army Chemical Center in Maryland on my own with the order, which was a couple of sheets of paper and an envelope that said to be delivered to X on Y.

So, at this point, are you thinking, I might be sent over to Korea. I may not be sent over to Korea. And maybe your family is wondering, and, now, all of a sudden, you’re going--

All of that was erased as soon as I was given the paper that said go to Edgewood, Maryland. Prior to that, every day you were told, you’re going to somewhere over the ocean. Now, they didn’t say which way. But every day, they said you’re going into combat, war, somewhere else.

So that was an important piece of paper for you

Yes.

And your family, right?

Yes, that was a very important piece of paper for me.

And you knew that that was the Chemical?

I knew that was the Army Chemical Center.

So, you would have figured, by this time, they're going to realize what a valuable employee they have in your person and--

I would think, at that time, I thought, yeah, they recognized my skill, which I never knew I had. But they did.

So, we get to--

I was a rookie all the way down the line. I was a rookie right out of college, and I had never done anything in my industry, which was going to be education. I had graduated, and, now, I was going to go somewhere where they valued me.

Yeah. But you did have --you mentioned your getting an advanced degree?

I had it.

In chemistry or in science?

In biological studies.

125 – army assignments, “a crapshoot”

In biological studies. So, I'm just curious. Did the Army, like, they analyze peoples' transcripts, or did they give them tests, or how did they make the decision that they would get-- there would be thousands upon thousands of people coming in, and they've got to put each person in the best slot, I would imagine.

My feeling is it's a dartboard. My feeling is it's a crapshoot, because a very good friend of mine, who was an architect, did get sent into the Engineering Corps. I mean, he was sent to Korea, and he said he never did anything with his architecture background, although he was in the Corps of Engineers. And what he did--

At least they got that right.

They got that right, yeah, but he was a--

So, you get to Maryland, there?

I got to Maryland.

138- cleared for secret work

And you were going to be in Maryland, now, for how long?

Well, as far as I was concerned, at that moment, I was going to be in Maryland for the rest of my two years, which would have been, at that point, one year and probably nine or eight months. But before I could do anything, they needed to make sure that I was not a spy, and, so, they needed to clear me for a certain level of involvement with things I was going work with. And that was going to be cleared for secret. Now, I wasn't cleared for top secret, which made me very saddened, but I was cleared for secret. And before I was able to do that, time was going to lapse, and they taught me how to drive a bus. So, I drove a bus for two weeks, close to two weeks, and drove the ladies' Army basketball team to and from their games.

I didn't know they had a ladies' Army basketball team.

Yeah, it was called the WAACs, the lady WAACs. And when I wasn't driving the ladies, I was driving the post bus, getting people from A, to B, to C, to D, and back again to A, if they wanted to, on one of these big buses with the air brakes and the air, you know, that was very important.

Important jobs, yeah.

Yeah.

So, after ten days, then, did they-- I wonder how they did the security check? Did they talk to high school teachers or family?

I understand they did-- they did talk to my family. What they asked them, I'll never know. And they may have talked to friends, because I only listed people who were going to give me very good references.

158 – Look Magazine blows the cover

It's dumb, if you don't. And they did. And, then, I was cleared for secret. And what happened, now, I guess is as good a time as any to tell the story about our officers. And we also had civilians. There were two groups in the Army Chemical Corps. We had the Army level which was, of course, administered through the Army, itself. And then we had the civilians who worked as researchers. And, so, the head of my department was, in fact, a civilian. He, in turn, would answer to the head of the group of Army that we were involved with, who was a colonel. And he, in turn, would answer to a low-level general that was involved with us.

But we were told, almost on a daily basis, not to leave anything on our desks at night. Everything that we were going to write on and throw away, we were to shred. And the shredding in those years was tearing up. We didn't have a shredder. We would shred, and all of our drawers where we would keep our equipment, our notes of work that we were doing, and we can get into this later, we were to make sure were secure. And we did. We were not to write to our families and

tell anything about what we were doing. Where we were was not a problem, because the name of the place was Chemical Center and Research, stuff, but not to say anything about it. And we were all pretty good about it. We didn't do it.

Until one morning, we got up, and we went down to our day room, and, there, we found the current magazine, the current week of *Look* magazine. And the headline in *Look* Magazine was: "Look what's going on in the Army Chemical Center!" - basically. That's a paraphrase. And we took a look inside, and there were our laboratories, and there were our things that we were going on with nerve gas, which I can now say, and the way the Army is researching - nothing technical, and nothing of a secret nature. But, at least, there it was! Our cover was blown! And we didn't know whether or not to take that magazine and stamp it "SECRET," the way we were told to stamp everything that we did. And, so, there lies the competency of our government and its security. *Look* magazine blew my cover!

190 -research on antidotes to nerve gas

So, I was cleared for secret, and I went into the laboratories. And in the laboratories, I was responsible, not for the chemical part which was the actual manufacturing of nerve gas which was organic phosphate poison, which today we know of as nerve gas, and is paraoxone and parathion, which I can say, had been researched early on in the 1920s, I do believe, as an insecticide for farmers. And we also were testing the way atropine would be an antidote. The chemists were involved with doing the actual manufacturing with the chemistry. And we in the biological area were responsible for finding how this stuff worked on the body. Not being able to work on our own bodies, we were working on other mammals. And we were responsible for trying to establish an LD₅₀.

An LD₅₀

LD₅₀, what is that?

Right, my next question. Please, what is an LD₅₀?

LD₅₀ is short for lethal dose, 50 percent. So, what our government wanted to know is if you took a dose of this nerve gas, which was highly toxic, and, by the way, it's not a gas, nerve gas is really a liquid that is highly volatile, and when exposed to air will evaporate into the air as tiny droplets, is how it is to be distributed, tiny droplets, and the droplets will evaporate, get into the air or get on your skin, and you are absorbing it through the wet parts of your body, which would be the mouth, the eyes, and any open sores. Skin, itself, will absorb it through the pores, but not as readily as through the moist tissues. And, so, we were to take this highly toxic material, mix it with a substrate (a vehicle that carries a substance but not the substance itself, e.g. a pen carries ink) and that substrate was peanut oil, and then we would take this small amount, which was measured in microns, and inject it into a variety of mammals, and see at what level we could cause 50 percent lethal.

225- mouse, goat, rat, pig and monkey and the LD₅₀ level

In the mammals?

In the mammals. So, we'd take twenty mice and inject them. And when ten died, we knew that's the lethal dose, LD₅₀, for the mouse. And then we'd try it on a goat. And then we'd try it on a rat. And we went up as high as a pig and a monkey. We didn't do monkeys too much, because they were very expensive, and we just wanted to test different body functions with the monkeys.

Were you-- You were accustomed to working with lab animals, were you, because of your college studies? You were used to working with--

Minimally.

Minimally.

My work in college was with a hamster.

A frog, maybe, or?

Oh, a frog's not a mammal.

That's right.

A frog is not a mammal, so we didn't work on frogs. We worked on hamsters, and mice, and rats, which were cheap, easily available, easily reproduced, and we moved on once we found the LD₅₀ for that, tried to use a finagle factor of some sort to project weight.

Right.

Toward rat to a goat, so how big is the goat? Interestingly enough, the pig was the most highly resistant to this nerve gas. Why?

Intelligence, was it?

No. No, you don't have to be smart to be resistant to the gas. The pig body was more resistant than just about any other body.

Because of the fat, the layer of fat, or whatever?

Correct.

Now, none of you, formerly civilian researchers, or whatever, you weren't-- there was no queasiness about being involved in this project, working on something that would be a kind of

Well, first of all, we didn't have a choice.

You didn't have a choice.

We didn't have a choice. They didn't ask us would you like to, or would you not.

Yeah.

They said, "You will" is how everything is prefaced. "You will," at this point. And we just did. We were-- we were sort of elite in that we knew we had skills, and we really didn't have to get our fingernails muddy too often, although we were responsible for handling this stuff, and had to wear monitoring devices, and had to spend a couple of days a month in staffing the dispensary where the stuff was really manufactured chemically.

So were you able to hit upon the LD50 level for human beings then?

Well, we anticipated and projected, even though I might have liked to, on some of our officers, make an experiment. We did have a pretty good handle based on our work with the goat and the monkey as to what the LD50 would be in a particular dose of the stuff.

275 – getting along with the officers

Your officers, were they, some of them, hard to get along with?

No, the officers we used to get along with, because we didn't take anything from them. They were regular Army. We were not, and so their biggest problem was trying to get us to play soldier the way they were taught to play soldier.

Salute, and "Yes, Sir," or something?

And all that.

Yeah.

We did cooperate with them and had no trouble in getting along. The only trouble might be getting some of us out of bed in the morning to do that Reveille and the end of the day sort of stuff, but, for the most part, we all got along. They knew what they had to do. We knew what we had to do. They recognized. We recognized. And the place ran pretty well.

So, finding that LD 50 level, that occupied most of your time in Maryland then, did it?

That occupied all of my time.

All of your time?

286- developing an experiment to test gas mask training

In Maryland, with the exception of the experiment that we developed because of ancillary effects that one could get, not being able to put a gas mask on in time. With gas as a gas, and the only thing that a gas mask would do, if it was the right kind of gas mask, to filter out nerve gas would

be to inhale it into the lung, a gas mask couldn't, and if it was a good mask and not just over your mouth, and up over the eyes, which most of them were, then it would protect the eyes, which was a moist tissue, and the mouth. It would not protect your ears. It wouldn't protect any open sores. It wouldn't protect your skin where the gas, or this liquid, could enter through the pores. But we knew that there was a problem with the training of how to use a gas mask.

And, so, we contacted Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and gave them a proposal. The proposal was to come and do an experiment using huge balloons filled with carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide, not enough to give you any kind of bad results, but enough so that if you inhaled a little bit of it, it would show up in the blood. And, so, we would seat a person in a hyperbaric room, which was pressure controlled. And the door would close, and they would reduce the pressure. So, now the door was sealed, and they would have this balloon over the experimentee's head, and the experimenter had a safety pin. The signal for the gas being in the area would be the pop of the balloon. So, you didn't have to scream, "Gas!" The experimenter would stand behind the person who was being experimented upon and would prick the balloon. The balloon would break and the pop would happen at that point. The experimenter now is timing how long it takes for that person to put on the mask. We would take a blood sample before, and a blood sample after, and we would then compare the two. That difference would give us an idea of how much of an exposure one would have in putting on a gas mask. Now, this did not take into account individual differences. You might have somebody who was fast, somebody that was slow.

The persons you were using in this experiment, were they volunteers or--

They were volunteers, we think, from Wright-Patterson. And that was a base that was in Ohio.

In Ohio.

That was in Ohio, but, you see, that was the Air Force base and they had this chamber, the chamber that could be made airtight, but we developed the experiment.

The experiment?

332- letter of commendation

The experimental design in our unit. I had a letter of commendation for that that says, "thank you very much, Corporal Goldberg, for being part of this 'tremendously' dangerous experiment."

342-domestic weapons of mass destruction

Did you ever think that, now there was no nerve gas used in the Korean War, right?

Nerve gas, to my knowledge, has never been used. And I certainly hope that it will never be. And this is the stuff that is a weapon of mass destruction that we looked for and never found. And my suggestion is to our government if you're looking for these weapons of mass destruction; let's look in our own backyard. We made this stuff. I don't know for a fact that it was ever destroyed

although there is a lifespan. It does deteriorate over a period of time. It's not easily decontaminated. And when I left, they were still working on it in 1955.

So, the words that were given to me when I left the Army were, "Corporal Goldberg, you do realize that from now on you're no longer able to read or discuss anything that you've done that is secret." Now, this stuff was written by me, had my name on it, and I no longer was supposed to be able to read it. And I never tried. I never wanted to. I never had a need. There were a few things that were published under the Army's guidelines.

Whatever happened to all that, I can't tell you, because I left and I left, so my experience with the Army was one that was behind the scenes. But I do believe that all of us that were behind the scenes, even though we weren't in jeopardy of being shot at, we were in jeopardy for something else.

Certainly.

And, so, I consider myself a veteran of the Korean Conflict, even though shortly after I got in, they resolved the conflict, but I still was there.

370-re-entry into civilian life as educator

Now, so you were discharged then in July of 1955, but because of your planning and your education, perhaps you had less difficulty reentering civilian life than perhaps some other people who served in the Korean Conflict at that time? Were you able to get a job easily or--

Well, I was able to get a job, because there was a need for educators, teachers, which I started out at. And ended up after a few years after that, I went into administration and ended up as a school administrator. But while I was in the Service, the Army Chemical Center had a laboratory, and the laboratory was doing all the work that I did, in addition to the chemists that were doing their work. And we had to have these rats, and guinea pigs, and various mammals, and others. And we did test a reptile. I forget which reptile it was. We did have the invertebrates. The vertebrates were fish, and reptiles, and frogs. And we brought school kids into the Army Chemical Center Zoo, we called it where the animals were being raised, and we gave them tours of the site. Nothing that was secret. Just let them hold a hamster, let them pat a mouse, let them have a rat nibble on their finger, let them see a monkey, go into the goat pen, and I was asked because of my training in science, as perhaps an educator, to run this program for a while. So it gave me a little bit of experience in what I was going to do later on. Of course, my experience with later on was the High School, and we were dealing with elementary kids. But it still gave me an experience, so it was beneficial.

Did you stay in contact with any of the people you met in the Service?

I did. I did. To this day, we still exchange Christmas cards with a couple of them. And to this day, I still call now and again one of the guys who was in the Service with me. He was in the chemical end. I was in the biological end. Because of a cutback in funds, once again I was a victim of a cutback in funds, they didn't promote me to Sergeant when I was supposed to be, because my time was ready for that, but they didn't have enough money to pay the people. So,

they didn't. He got out as a Sergeant, so Sergeant Hurtt and I are still in contact with each other, but not very many others.

Did you join a veterans' organization or anything like that?

I did not. I had no need for that.

420-insight into government competency

How do you think your service in the military and the experiences you had there, how do you think it affected your life?

Oh.

Did it contribute to any views you had of --

Yeah. Yeah, it did. It showed me that there is a tremendous amount of incompetence in our government, and it also showed me that there are parts of the government that can work, if allowed to work without interference from others. It taught me to be reliant on myself, to try and make decisions without having to ask permission because, in the Army, my experience was if you started to ask permission, it would not get done, but it would get done six or eight months from the time that you wanted it to get done. And so doing it on my own, taking responsibility for what one does was a lesson.

448-elected officials and national service

Because I think I was reading something where one of the political strategists, I think, for the Democrats was recommending three months of universal service on the part of everybody, so that's a--

Well, I think that you shouldn't do anything for somebody or you shouldn't criticize anybody until you walk in their shoes. And to have senators and congressmen of other kinds making decisions to send young people, when they have never been at that point, is tragic and unconscionable. So, I do believe that all of our elected officials should have to have spent time in the Service, documented time, time that has a history to it, and time, not pretend time. I do believe in that, yeah, as I believe that all of our elected officials should probably spend a couple of years in jail before they take office, and that will teach them what not to do.

463-opportunity to travel with saved leave-time

Is there anything else that you think you should add to the interview?

Well, I don't know what the interview intent is. I've given you my view. One thing that was very beneficial to me was the ability to be able to save the time that was due to me, called vacation time, in the Army it's called leave time. And they gave me the opportunity to save that time, work through what you might consider to be a reasonable year, and not take any vacation, and then work through another six months, and not take any vacation. No leaves. Oh, a weekend

pass, now and again, was given, but don't take any leave. So, at the end, you had it all accumulate and you could do with this anything you wanted to do in all one lump sum, which I did as a thirty-six day leave to Europe. I was able to hitchhike with the government vehicles. I went to an Naval airbase - Patuxent, Maryland, and was able to hitchhike with a friend who was also in my unit to Europe. So, it cost me nothing. All I had to do was show transportation back, which I did by buying a ticket on a ship sailing home, the SS Liberté, which was a French line ship. So, I got there free, and I paid for my way back.

And this was before July 21?

This was before July 21st of 1955. Thirty-six days or thirty-eight days before that, more or less, maybe forty days, I was able to go in uniform to Italy, where I took off the uniform and put on civilian clothes and traveled on my own as a civilian. If I needed to, I put on the uniform again and could go to any base and have the facility there to my need, which I didn't have. So, the Army did give me a benefit there, where they let me save my time and use it however I wanted to, and we had a lot of folks in the Army Chemical Center who did that. Of course, we were of a different educational level and knew how to play the game.

512 – getting “clearance” to visit West Point after 9/11

You mentioned that you were able to call upon your Army experience to your advantage when you were recently in New York, was that right?

Oh, yes. Yes. I was in New York and wanted to go to West Point, never been there. We were in the area, and this was after 9/11, and so, we went up to the gate, and they very politely said, “You are not welcome here, as anyone is not welcome here, unless you have official business, because we are very, very concerned about security.” And we understood that and dropped it. And then I said, “You know, let me try something.” And I carry with me a certificate of service of the Armed Forces of the United States, which has my name, and my rank, and it has also my dates of service. And I carried this. I don't know why; I just do. So, I said, “Excuse me, sir,” to the guards at the gate. I said, “I'm a veteran of the United States military, and I wonder if this card would allow me any kind of a privilege to come in?” And he takes the card, and looks at it, and says, “Excuse me,” and goes to what looks to be a higher authority. And they chat with their rifles in their hand, and he comes back, and says, “Sir,” he called me sir. Of course, I was older, so guess I could be called sir. “We think you might be able to go on a tour on your own, providing you stay on the main roads. And if you will give me your word that you will stay on the main roads and just see, you know, what's going on, and not enter any of the buildings; I think we can allow this.” I said, “Thank you very much, and we will.” And then, in closing, he said, “And, sir, if anybody asks you why you are here, tell them you are going to see the dentist.”

Anyway, my card that I carried for all these years and probably never saw the light of day until that time at West Point is now beneficial so I guess I'll just keep it.

Mr. Goldberg, thank you for a very interesting interview. And it is about a subject that nobody has touched upon at all in any of the nineteen interviews we have done to date. And I think some of our students and interested patrons will find it very intriguing. And I am going to go and try to find that article in Look magazine.

It probably is 1953, maybe November. But we didn't know whether or not to stamp it SECRET, which was our joke!

Well, this interview will not be secret, so--

No. No.

So, it's okay, I guess.

574 - a "closing" comment

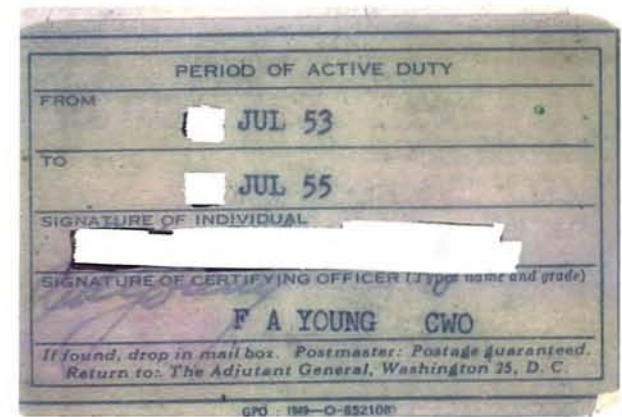
And I thank you for giving me the opportunity to do this. I hope that people will learn. And my closing comment is we always thought that our two years was lost in our life and, in looking back, I really can only remember the nice things. I'm sure there were a lot of bad things that I moaned about, but I don't think I can remember those as compared to the number of good experiences that I had with this two years that I spent in the Service. I didn't make a lot of money, but I did get an insurance policy that I have to this day, but, other than that, I am considered to be a veteran, and I am proud of it.

Thank you.

You're welcome.



Mr. Goldberg's Certificate of Service
card that served as his
"pass" into West Point in 2004!



Bivouac, October 1953
Robert Goldberg, on left,
and Larry Iverson, Squad Leader
Ft. Riley, Kansas



Heckert, Robert Goldberg, Conrad, Iverson, left to right
Bivouac, 10/1953
Ft. Riley, Kansas



Assault with protective vest
Erv Golembewski, Bob Heckert
and Robert Goldberg
Ft. Riley, Kansas

"Phi Tau Alpha"
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article, provided by
Mr. Goldberg, which
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ARMED FORCES

Soldier-Scientists

Under Old Soldier George Washington's portrait and Old Soldier Napoleon Bonaparte's framed maxims ("There Is No Strength Without Justice"), a military court convened last week at the Army Chemical Center at Edgewood, Md., to judge ten young privates who never wanted to be old soldiers at all. The ten: drafted college-trained scientists stationed at the center to carry on Army chemical research. The charge: bringing discredit to the Army with bawdy songs and raucous conduct during an off-post beer party.

Grated Carrots. Behind the court-martial was a tender Army sore spot. Needed mercilessly for "wasting" the nation's young scientific brains in routine basic training, the Army high command had set up a policy of assigning draftees with some scientific education to special groups such as the Enlisted Scientific and Professional Personnel. Fresh from campuses and freer academic life, the ESPPs kicked hard against regimentation, cut sloppy military figures, took to hissing noncoms and arguing with officers.

Old Army types complained that the soldier-scientists were coddled with special barracks and mess halls, interviewed incessantly to make certain they were happy, chauffeured to their jobs instead of marched, allowed to lead an undisciplined 40-hour week consisting of 36 hours' laboratory work and four hours' Army duty.

The Old Army was most riled by an informal fraternity that soon sprang up at Chemical Corps, Ordnance Corps and Quartermaster Corps bases where the Army's 3,300 ESPPs were stationed. Its name: Phi Tau Alpha. Its Greek-letter symbol was scrawled on walls, carved on railings, sometimes written over salads in grated carrots. In reality, it had no meaning beyond a concise four-letter fate for the Army, easily understood when Greek letters were carried over to English equivalents (F.T.A.). But some old soldiers mis-

took Phi Tau Alpha for a cabal, possibly a spy organization. They put Army Criminal Investigation to work tracking down its prime movers, threatened to call in the FBI.

Grated Nerves. The Maryland Chemical Center resentment flared one night last September after 100 ESPPs hired a nearby boat club for a party. Toggled in civilian clothes, they drank beer, played bridge, settled down to sing homemade songs.* Irked by the noise and obscenity, neighbors called the cops. State troopers, accompanied by an Army Criminal Investigation agent, swooped out of the bush, grabbed a handful of men while the majority filtered into the darkness. When the handful was ordered court-martialed, the trial became a celebrated case. ESPPs at the Chemical Center and other ESPP "campuses" chipped in \$300 to a defense fund, hired flamboyant Baltimore Lawyer Hyman Pressman, a longtime expert at fighting for desperate causes.

Pressman's defense last week was flashy but futile. He challenged officers assigned to sit on the court until the court was left with only one major and two warrant officers. He argued that the cops had no evidence that the accused were noisemakers, produced neighbors who said that the party had been orderly. But his defense character witnesses were no help: they were fellow ESPPs, who bristled the court by admitting under cross-examination that they hated the Army. At trial's end the three-man court deliberated six hours, found the ten defendants guilty, fined them \$25 each, restricted them to post for 25 days, demoted each one grade in rank. The Chemical Center's 400 ESPPs were incensed but silent; Old Armymen were openly delighted. Said one: "Maybe now these boys will get over the idea that this is a college campus."

* Printable sample:

*Take down your service flag, mother,
Your son is an ESPP.
He'll never get wounded in action,
Extracting the square root of three.*



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