Gillette: ... Yes, so when this world was coming to normal, like it is now, when they, how would you say it? When God got this world pretty well fixed the way it should be, two humanaries lived onto it and they get his food right. There were this person appeared was making an animal, a rock, a deer and all the wild cougars and they asked this person, "What you want to be?" Well, the oldest deer, the oldest brother of the deer said, "I want to be deer," so the Indians would call him Mowhitch. And took the mussel shell on the horns, "Here, go now, go in the bush." So, and that's how the deer is. And the youngster brother said, "I'll be crab so the angels will call me crabs." So he put his hand out because this fellow tell him to put his hands out. That's why you see all that figures on the crabs, all around them nearly. He was the laziest person when he was on this earth, the youngster deer, laying down all the time. Never move, no matter what the father and what it says. That's why I guess you often see a person lazy in certain age. Because the beginning part of the teens are changing into human and all kinds of animals, turn into that.

They absolutely don't know where the white people come from and we don't know where the Indians came from. So, much as I hate to say it, we don't know who we are. (laughs) That's the size of it in this world. Because everything is made through the
God's spiritual, I guess you'd say it, right. You don't know who that person was changing this man to be that animal and fish and so on. We don't know him, nobody know it, where he came from, who he was, yet he made that person what he wanted to be. No time, just (claps hands) just clap on his back and it's all finished. As they are now. And I think all the time the deer was hawks. Nobody had the fire, and the fire we have now. So they put these under cedar bark, that's the deal honestly, in his arms...

Don: The deer did?

Gillette: The deer, yeah. Because that man don't want anybody else getting near to his fire. So he started dancing around hoping will touch that fire when he turns around. So went all over dancing around and he touch that fire all right on his knee. That's why you smell that burning smell on his knee, the deer's.

Don: Oh, I see.

Gillette: They never get away with it. You can smell them. It's burned. He stole that fire from that man and bring it to that person and they start the fire then. That's why the Indians used to twist, twist a little stick on there to get them burned. Because the deer brought that little, little bit burning on that what they had on his knee, on the cedar bark, twisted together. Wasn't burning, just a little flint on it and she sees sparking and burning anyway. That's why the Indians got that fire going, why the stick just to heat the end up, twisting it together. Yeah, well, the deer was the foxiest, I think, put the dancing clothes on to get the fire. They did, they done it. That's how we got the fire now. I think that's where the match came from too. Because somebody got smart, know how to do it, what to do when the fire was around.

Don: You once told me... Last week you were telling me about the War, when you went into the army. Can you tell me any of your experiences or stories? How did you get into the War?

Gillette: Yes, I guess I can try to.

Don: Was that the First War?

Gillette: World War I, yes, 1918. World War I started in 1917 for sure, getting heavier. And they were taking all the young fellows all over. Some of them were trained, some of them were just take and sent out. A lot of people had done that, that World War I. And in here, in Victoria, I was working in the C.P.R. wharf and there was, there were quite a few Indians working at the C.P.R. wharf that time. We used to laugh at them, people walking the street and the army guys were there, with a gun on their shoulder, a big sharp knife and the gun. And take that down on the back of the man. We didn't know what they were doing. We knew they were going to kill that man when
they get him in the bushes. They were about fifty of them, fifty army guys marching along. My uncle used to make us laugh. Like what they used to say, I don't know what they used to say in the army when I was sent for. My uncle grab his gun, turn around, "Alla Um, See Um," all that sound the army make it when they, when they are on patrol. That's not what they were saying but that's the way my uncle put it out. "Alla Um, See Um," (laughs) that was close enough, I guess. (laughs) He used to start laughing at them. And the time we have seen peoples conscripted in town, right here in Victoria. Some fellows they cry, don't know what they're crying for.

Don: Were they forced to join?

Gillette: Oh yes. With a gun in their back they had to be forced, they had to go. You, well, on 1918 from... I used to work at C.P.R. wharf when they come back. You couldn't see a man on the streets. You'd be lucky to see from C.P.R. wharf, Johnson Street, you get to see woman, one woman on the road.

That was that much of Victoria was cleaned, no fooling. I got my training because out of 10,000 people with them in London, there was Scotland there, and I come home.

Don: Did you, were you forced to join or did you join on your own free will?

Gillette: No, no, no. We was conscripted, all the Indians. All the Indians. The biggest mistake on the part of the government, when you come back, you were Indian. They know where you belong to and they'll take you back. If you lost out your pension right there. It's different now, sure, yes. They get their pension now. But when you go back through the reservation, what I'm talking about, years I'm talking about, you get nothing. You were Indian again. Now they know that they are Indian, they became part of it, yet they took it.

Don: Did you get overseas?

Gillette: Far as London.

Don: Far as London.

Gillette: I got pneumonia there, it was all. That's why that ship with the 10,000 people aboard scuttled. Nobody alive, not one. Caught that ship just as it pulled out...

Don: From where?

Gillette: I think, I think myself, I don't think it was scuttled by a torpedo, I think it was somebody planted on the ship. When it moved, well, bound to do something in that. In the open ship.

Don: It was leaving England, was it?
Gillette: Yeah. Ah, it's a good place, boy. Never forget that. Well, anyway, long as you got the government's clothes, everybody is your friend. They know you, they don't know who you are when you got your suit on. You know where you're going. Most of them speak it out though, one word. He's not coming back. Yeah. What's the use say no, because you don't know where you going, you don't know how far you going. Nobody knows. That's the craziest part of the Army. You don't know where you are going except the sergeant or the captain, that's all. You don't know what you're doing. Yet you are in the army. You don't know where you're going but you know you are going to get your dinner.

Don: That's all you know.

Gillette: Yeah. That's about it. But I just say about sleep, you know. You might get into the canteen, yes, you going to sleep, it's in your mind. But when you get in there, you don't know what's going on down there, when you're going to sleep. That's another step. You got to watch, watch out to live. The best, never mind the others, go to sleep, go to sleep. No matter how much your body, long as you don't answer them, it's all right. And if you answer them, you open the door. What they want and they get more what they want because they'll find you crazy too. That's what they after. There is something to argue about, talk about, they will never quit. Day in and day out, until you get the habit of it and they let you go in your own time. They let you go when you know how to say, how to do things.

Don: Where did you have your training?

Gillette: Right here in Esquimalt canteen. We used to laugh at them boys, Indian boys. We walked from the canteen house to the harbor to East Saanich and come back. And a lot of our, well, let me put it this way, the right word, what I am trying to say, your uncle is right there and he fall out long ago. Before we go through five miles he stopped. Got tired and crazy, I call those crazy buggers wouldn't tell you nothing. They are shipped back on the truck but you have to walk back yourself. That's what we were mad about, us young fellows. Why they don't tell us? (laughs)

Don: Then you wouldn't want to walk.

Gillette: And boy, start off without breakfast. You're hungry and tired, yet all they say, "Go in the shower," that's all. Go through the shower, you come back, get your clothes on again, you're waiting for your lunch or coffee or something like that. And then the bell rings, you have to run for it. Because you'll never find a place to sit down. And all that men. No, I find out that time how people feels and the other person looks like he'd say, "To hell with them." You're all alone in whatever you do. No matter if you done a good thing, you're still all alone. Because that's how we feel one another, whether it's Indian or white man or Norwegian. Do the same thing, to heck with the other one. Mind his own business.
But what business is he in. (laughs) He doesn't care for you.

Don: How long was your training period?

Gillette: Well, those days I'm talking about it wasn't amount of anything in the training. As long as you are in there, as long as you are conscripted, they ship you out.

Don: They didn't show you how to use a gun or...?

Gillette: They show you in the canteen, that's all.

Don: That's all.

Gillette: How to clean the gun, how the fire the gun, all that. But when you're finished it that day, you have to clean it, oil it. Got to. If you lift the nozzle up and put it back in again you have to pull it out altogether and oil it. If you don't do it the sergeant will get after you. They don't do it the easy, they grab the gun and throw the gun. No matter whether they are two feet away from them or ten feet away from the... It doesn't make any difference, as long as you do it. You'll do it too, you don't be careful that fist coming, if you don't dodge it, you get it in your face. Got to dodge, got to watch your step. On the other hand, I figured whether you're Indian or Englishman or Scotchman, didn't make any difference long as he's a boss. He's way up top, he's got a big man behind him.

Don: Right.

Gillette: He don't give a damn to you. Whether you got a good shoes or good clothes or torn clothes. No.

Don: Were you treated differently than the white men in the army?

Gillette: No, no. Everybody was equal. Tough life. (laughs) Try to climb that up on top, I don't know if they will make it. (laughs)

Don: It was a big wall.

Gillette: That is all, that's what they do. Long as you make it with your fingers, you are all right. But you have to have a good grip. That was the main thing in their life. As long as you have a good grip, something you can grab, you grab it. You don't want to fall back on the floor again and the sergeant was right there, "Get up and go." And you see, if you don't move he'll kick you. You got to get away damn quick. I think it is what they told before to take over the job and do it and they do it. No mistake, boy, all that trouble coming.

(END OF SIDE A)

(END OF TAPE)
STORIES AND STORYTELLING (GENERAL)
- creation myths
  IH-BC.74
  G. CHIPPS #3
  186
- enlistment
  IH-BC.74
  G. CHIPPS #3
  186
- military service
  IH-BC.74
  G. CHIPPS #3
  186
- overseas experiences
  IH-BC.74
  G. CHIPPS #3
  186

WORLD WAR I

- enlistment
  IH-BC.74
  G. CHIPPS #3
  186
- military service
  IH-BC.74
  G. CHIPPS #3
  186
- overseas experiences
  IH-BC.74
  G. CHIPPS #3
  186