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ALPHONSE ANTOINE

Alphonse Antoine, a former councillor on the Wikwemikong Reserve, has led an interesting and varied life. He fought in the Second World War and in Korea. He has worked in the U.S. and Canada at a number of different jobs: auto factory, railroads, lumber camps, river drives, etc.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Residential school.
- Work at lumber mills and on railroads.
- Service in WW II and Korean war.
- Brief period of 'farming' after discharge from WW II.

Tony: It's April 3, 1984 and we're in the home of Alphonse Trudeau....

Alphonse: Antoine.

Tony: Antoine, I'm sorry, at Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island. First thing, Al, is when were you born?

Alphonse: 1910.

Tony: That would make you 74, then.

Alphonse: Yeah, October 30.

Tony: Whereabouts?

Alphonse: South Bay.

Tony: Did you always live at Wikwemikong?

Alphonse: Well...

Tony: Did you grow up here?

Alphonse: No.

Tony: Whereabouts?

Alphonse: Well, my parents lived in the South Bay area when I was small. I guess I was about five when they left, left the reserve to go out and work, you know. There wasn't that much work around here. Anyway, my dad liked to go fishing. He wasn't much for that kind of work; he liked fishing and hunting. So he went fishing out at the west end of Manitoulin when they first moved away. From there they went, I think, to the north shore. Lake Huron there, or to Manitoulin Island there, on what they call the north shore. And from that time on, they just worked from place to place. Wintertime they went up to CNR, CPR, way up north - lumber camps and that. They never did come back here. But in the summer months, they came back pretty near every summer and done fishing and around this place called Burnt Island. A big outfit there, Purvis. Purvis outfit. That's where he worked most of the summer and the fall. And then winter coming on, he'd go back north again and work out. Never did come back to the reserve.

Tony: When they moved away to the west end of the island, where did they live then? Did they live on a reserve down there or...?

Alphonse: No, no. This Purvis had a fishing station there and had a bunch of houses and we had a house where we stayed for the summer.

Tony: So a lot of your childhood was spent travelling around the north shore of Lake Huron?

Alphonse: Yeah, for a couple of years and then they put us in the school. They used to call it the Spanish Industrial School - it was called then. In Spanish.

Tony: But just before we get on to there, when your dad was working up north, what sort of work was he doing?

Alphonse: He worked in the lumber camps, you know, cutting timber. He didn't trap up there much.

Tony: Big family? Did you have a big family?

Alphonse: No. There was two girls and another brother. But before we left South Bay, I guess the first four that were born here died through sickness or some other circumstances. But there was four that was left when we left. And there was another one born around Cutler; he died.

Tony: What did you kids do when you were up north, up in the lumber camps? What did you do with your time?

Alphonse: Just stayed home, played around. I was only small then you know, six. Played with other kids, you know, French kids and that.

Tony: When you went to the industrial school in Cutler, was that your first experience in going to school?

Alphonse: Oh yeah, yeah.

Tony: You hadn't been to school before?

Alphonse: No.

Tony: How old were you then?

Alphonse: I would have been about seven or eight years old.

Tony: What can you remember about that? What was that experience like?

Alphonse: What, the school?

Tony: Yeah.

Alphonse: Well, thinking over my school days in Spanish, the Jesuits there were running it you know, the Jesuits. And they, I'd say, more or less imposed everything on us. They wouldn't let us talk Indian; they wanted to cut out the Indian language, eh. And, it was tough. I went to school three years and then I got up to senior fourth where - that's the eighth grade. And we were supposed to go to a high school or something but never did. We'd go from there on, for third year. And then I went to work half a day on the farm and go to school half a day. Every year I would pass my, what they call it, pass the entrance for the senior fourth, but they just kept us there, you know. We'd go and sit in the class and go over the same thing the year they had before, and then go out and work on the farm, eh.

Tony: How much time was actually spent in the class and how much time was spent on the farm working?

Alphonse: About half and half.

Tony: About half and half.

Alphonse: Yeah.

Tony: But they didn't teach you very much.

Alphonse: Not very much. They were pretty strong on preaching. Shoved this, what you call the Catholic religion; brainwashed us with that.

Christine: What would a day be like in that school? From the time you would get up, what would you do? Was your day all planned out?

Alphonse: Oh yeah, every day. You get up in the morning, wash, fix your beds. Then we'd go down and go to church every morning.

Tony: What time would that be?

Alphonse: Oh, around about 7:00, 7:30. And then we'd go and have breakfast. The same thing every day, mush. Bread, no butter, no sugar, no milk. Bread and mush, that's all, and tea. No sugar.

Christine: No milk?

Alphonse: No, just straight mush.

Ernest: They had a separate dining room though, the priests and the teachers.

Alphonse: Oh yes, they were someplace upstairs. They had a room upstairs and they had a little elevator from down below and the kitchen used to send it up, eh.

Ernest: Dumb waiter.

Alphonse: Yeah.

Tony: They didn't send the same food up?

Alphonse: Oh no, oh no. No, they had butter. They ate pretty well I guess. But the first year, I worked in the barn. So I used my head. I'm going to get ahead of these guys, you know. I took care of the hen house, as well. So after the boys got through with the work, went to class, I'd boil up eggs. And there was cream in the cupboard. It was locked though, so I took the screws off of the hinges. And I got the cream out there and I'd steal bread from the kitchen. Boy, I was living good you know.

Tony: (chuckles) You could have bread with cream and boiled eggs.

Alphonse: Oh yeah, that was, really.... But one day, a priest prefect on me. What they call a prefect is a person that was intending to be a priest, you know. He would take care of the boys, eh. He come out to the barn one day. He didn't like me anyhow. Me and him had a couple of fights. And he says, "What do you got?" I was steaming these eggs in there you know, with steam. I says, "Nothing." I went over towards the boiler and I got ahold of a poker. If he come near me I was going to give him the poker. But anyway, he had dumped my little pot there and out rolled the eggs and I lost my good job in the barn. They put me in the field then, on the farm. It was pretty rough there, you know. Boy, I ran away a couple of times.

Tony: Did you? Where did you go when you ran away?

Alphonse: Oh, just not far. Cutler. I had an aunt living there. Stayed there a week and she says, "Well, maybe you

better go back there," because the police was there a couple of times looking for me over there. So she says, "Maybe you'd better go back. They'd probably get you anyway." So I went back.

There used to be a storekeeper from Spanish; he'd bring groceries up to the school or up to Cutler. And then pick up orders and travel that in a horse and buggy. So I went with him. But while I was going through French down there the police passed by there and stopped and, "Hey, you from the school?" I says, "No." "Yeah, I think you are." So they put me in the car. And got out to the edge of town there, where the bush was, I jumped out. They ran after me, they caught me again. This time one stayed in the back seat with me and took me in the school.

You wouldn't believe what I'm telling you now. When I got over there, this priest, the head priest, you know, the superior, wanted me to take my shirt off. I seen this thing what he had in his hand was a... you know the cat of nine tails what the Christ got whipped with? That's what he had in his hand, big knots in the end. And they were going to give me that on my back but I wouldn't take my shirt off. Anyway he started beating my back and all over. After that was done, I got a leather strap - about this thick, about my fingers narrow, probably about this long. And I got 25 each hand. My hands, I couldn't close them after that. I was tough too; I wouldn't cry and that made him mad. And then they put me down in the cellar. There is a room down there where they had vegetables, turnips and cabbage and carrots. The next room was an old broken floor - you know, not a floor - all broken cement. It was dark; you couldn't see your hand. I was in there four days, bread and water. About the second day, I broke the door down and I got some turnips and carrots and piled them in my room. And whenever he comes I'd pick up these big rocks. I says, "You come near me you gonna get this rock right in your head." And he wouldn't come near me. But I was down there four days and nights. I could tell when they got up in the

morning. They were going to church and come back, having breakfast. I could hear them upstairs from down there. Going to class. You could hear them playing out, you know, in the yard. I could hear them a little bit. That's what I got for running away.

Tony: How did you feel about that when you were down in that room? Down in that cellar?

Alphonse: Oh, I wasn't scared or anything. Bread and water, no place to lay down you know. Just them old rocks and cement, broken cement around. Yeah, just sit there or lay down. When I got too tired, lay down there. Tried to tell my parents that. Oh no, they wouldn't believe me. "You're telling lies." My mother was very religious, strong, really believed in that.

My dad, he wouldn't say nothing. Very quiet man. He wouldn't say nothing. But I was in there, that school, seven years. Seven years.

Tony: And you didn't learn very much.

Alphonse: Well, I just went up to senior fourth, eh.

Tony: Yeah.

Alphonse: That's like eighth grade here.

Christine: What did they teach you in the classes?

Alphonse: Just reading, writing, spelling, geography, history, and math. Arithmetic, we called it them days.

Tony: What about the farm work? Did you learn very much of that?

Alphonse: No. We learned how to plow. The priest, the brother, there was a brother on there. He done most of the seeding. And when they plant potatoes, they get the whole school out. Everybody plant potatoes. Take a row for two, two boys. One or two days, they'd have the whole thing planted, the boys would. Some days they'd take them out away from school; they were going to clear land, stumps and stones. That's how they run that. Haying time, the boys done all the work. They'd take extra boys, big boys, that way. Maybe second class, third class boys, bigger boys to pitch hay. They'd work in the barn. We done all the work for the cattle. Milked the cows and throwing the hay down and all this. Mostly them boys done all the work.

Tony: Did the farm and the animals belong to the school?

Alphonse: Oh yeah, yeah.

Tony: They didn't make you go out and work for other people?

Alphonse: No. And we couldn't step even one inch out of that

yard. My God. It was really strict when I was there. But after I left I heard that they used to let the boys go up to the village for a walk and even let them smoke a little bit, you know. It wasn't like that when I was there. We used to play hockey in the wintertime and have a holiday on Thursdays and play hockey. We'd have Espanola come down and the priests tell you, "Don't get rough now, don't be rough. If you don't want to get a strap, don't get too rough with the other team."

They had what you call Spanish Village come down, people from the village, you know. And we get beat the first. And they started hollering, "Shove them guys over the bank." It was only a board about this high. The rest was snow, snow bank. And then we got mad you know, getting beat. We'd slaughter them guys. Put them over the bank, have them all over the ice, and just murdered them. Yeah, we beat them every time they come down.

Tony: Sounds more like you beat them up every time they came down.

Alphonse: Oh yeah, we did. They were rough them guys. Well, we fight every day amongst ourselves, you know.

Ernest: I'll tell you about a story I heard concerning, this was later on when, I forget what age you - just before Clem. The town's people were Spanish and would always support the boys, eh, the whole village. And apparently this was a game between Blind River, that was a bitter rivalry between Blind River and Spanish. And there was a priest there, Father Skillan. He was a very outspoken man from the Blind River parish. And he was refereeing that night, but the people didn't know. I mean the crowd; the boys knew, I guess. And there was a guy by the name of George Frost, a Metis. And he was drinking and I guess Spanish was losing. I guess Father Skillan was calling a lot of penalties. And I guess this George Frost couldn't take it any more. So when the period was over he went over to where the boards were, where the referees left the team. And he nailed him and he jumped on him and pounded him to the floor there and he was really giving it to him. And he was very strict Catholic, very strong Catholic, this Frost. And they pulled him off the priest, "Hey George, don't do that. That's a priest." And he says, "I don't give a damn if he's the Pope. He's not going to come here and cheat our boys."

(all chuckle)

Alphonse: Yeah, that stuck with me. You know, the way I was treated over there. Today I still go to church but just keep myself in hand, you know. I don't get off the track altogether, like, away from the church. I believe in church and living right but these things what happened to me in school, it I still, I can't get it off my mind, you know. The way they used to preach, and what you hear today, "You've got to be good," and all that. No, that wasn't what they showed

us. You know, actually beating little boys like that. Little wee fellows, you know. Take some guys and throw them about ten, fifteen feet. Great big priests beating up on the kids.

Ernest: I was explaining that to Father McDowell and he says a lot of these leaders right now, the present leaders of our Indian political groups, a lot of them come up through the residential school system. And some of them are very anti-Catholic now because of their experiences, like you say.

Alphonse: Yeah, well like me, I still feel that and I still think that, you know.

Ernest: There has been a lot of bitterness about that.

Alphonse: By God, a priest won't to come to me and talk to me like that anymore.

Ernest: And we still have respect for the church and God, but it's just that system.

Alphonse: Yeah.

Ernest: That residential school system.

Alphonse: You know, I seen in the paper now that it dawned on me, you know, that they were actually trying to extinguish or dissolve the Indian language away from the children over there. If they heard us talking Indian, bang, we were strapped. Get an awful beating. And the way they used to call us to get us up in the study. Call us animals and pigs and what not, you know. I still remember that to this day. I was a fair big boy, you know. I think that's the kind of thing that's not going to rub off me. I'm not going to forget that.

Tony: No, I wouldn't imagine so.

Christine: Were there nuns there too? As well as priests?

Alphonse: Well, there was another school. Like the girl's school, across the road.

Christine: Oh, it was separate altogether?

Alphonse: Oh, yes.

Christine: Oh, I see, I thought it was together.

Alphonse: On Sundays you wouldn't dare look sideways over there. You got it. You look at them girls, you know. That's how strict they were actually. Mind you, I seen my brother getting beat up once right after church, along the corridor there, because he got caught looking over at the girls. Yeah.

Tony: How often did you get to go home? You know, in a year?

Alphonse: In the summer.

Tony: Just in the summer?

Alphonse: Yeah, in June.

Tony: Christmas time or...?

Alphonse: Oh no, nobody went home. Just in the summertime. Like, after school you know, vacation time. Then back in again.

Christine: So you would celebrate Christmas then and other holidays at the school?

Alphonse: Oh, yeah.

Christine: What was that like? How did you celebrate the holidays?

Alphonse: Oh, maybe we got an extra, we got a little square piece of butter or something, you know. But, pretty near the same thing all along, I remember. It was stew, stew, Monday to Sunday night. On Thursdays they used to give out butter. About that thick, about a square inch once a week.

Ernest: And they made their own butter.

Alphonse: Yeah, we'd make it over in the barn. When I was working there, I took a big chunk and hide it up in the hay.

Ernest: Your own bread.

Christine: Were your parents or other people's parents ever allowed to come to the school to see you?

Alphonse: Oh yeah, they visit. But most of them, you know, they wouldn't believe you. Tell them anything about the

school, how we were being treated, they wouldn't believe you. They were brainwashed, you know, from way back. Like when this reserve was first, the priests come here on this reserve. And they decided to be unceded, eh. They wouldn't surrender this part of land, island. The priests were here more or less the power. Least what I hear, anyway. If you didn't listen to the priest or went against his wishes, he put a curse on you. And it was an old story, but it doesn't seem to me, according to them anyway, it was done regular, you know, because they had that whip handle over them - you know, threatened them with hell and I don't know what all. I heard so many of them stories I started believing them, you know.

Oh, and another time, a fellow was drunk. Priest got to the old man, he got mad, and this drunk guy he punched the hell out of him. (chuckles) Not long ago there was a priest here had a wedding. They throw just a little bit of confetti and a bit of rice, just last summer it happened. Well, this priest from Kaboni, he went inside madder than hell and went and got a

broom and said, "Don't throw this stuff around here." At a wedding. He should have been happy with them people and talking nice to them. Throw the broom at them and "don't throw that stuff around here." Now, if I'd have been there, now, I'd have broke that broom right there in about ten pieces.

Ernest: Before I forget, I heard a comedian say about this movie actress. He says, "She's been married so many times, she's got rice burns."

(all chuckle)

Tony: So, what happened when you left school, when you left Spanish? Where did you go then? What did you do?

Alphonse: Well, my mother come home. My father had died while I was in school and she come home. She used to work way down around Buffalo for a doctor down there.

Tony: In Buffalo, New York?

Alphonse: Yeah. And she come home for good. She knew I was coming home for good, you know. Going to let me go. I was sixteen then. I had an aunt living in this lumber town. It wasn't a permanent place. It was good there while the mill was running, while the work was there.

Tony: Where was that?

Alphonse: Spragge.

Tony: Spragge.

Alphonse: Yeah. So later on, after the mill started I figured I had to do something, provide something. My brother, he never stayed home. He went away and looked after himself. But I stayed with my mother and two sisters, eh. And then I asked one of the men one day, an Indian guy, somebody I knew anyway, I said, "How do you ask for a job?" "Just walk up to the foreman and say, 'How's the chance for a job? I want to work.' That's all you tell him." So, alright, the next day at noon there, I knew the foreman would be around. I'll walk right up to him and, "Hey there, are you the foreman?" "Yeah." "How's the chance for a job?" I said, "I want to work. I got a mother over there, I got two sisters." I says, "I'm the oldest, I'm the only one. I gotta work and get some money and feed them." "Yeah," and he started asking me a few questions. "Your mother, how old is she? And your sister?" "Oh, smaller than me," I said. "Alright, I'll give you a job." Then I started right there all summer long.

And later in the summer a foreman come there. He used to be a foreman in Cutler. I knew him when I was small, eh. I hadn't been going to school yet and I know this big Frenchman. I heard he was the foreman. My dad used to work for him. So he come there, in this Spragge. I see him there; he's getting old. And I says to him, "Hello, Joe." Joe Ouellette his name

was. I says, "I know you." I says, "You know me?" "No, I don't know you. Where do you know me?" he says. "Oh," I says, "Cutler. You used to be foreman over there. My dad worked for you." "What's your dad's name?" I told him, "Peter Antoine." "Oh, yeah. Oh, I know you." He says, "How would you like to work for me in the yard, eh, in the lumber yard." I says, "Doing what?" I had a good job in the mill, eh, sawing. "Oh," he says, "Nothing much. You'll estimate lumber for me. And maybe climb around a little bit in the evening. We count courses and then you mark them because I can't climb these. I'll fall down, I'm too old. But in the daytime, that's all the guys do is just go and - you know how you went to school - you know how to scale lumber?" "No, I don't know." "Well," he says, "I'll learn you how."

So he got me out of the mill and I worked for him. Boy, did I have a good time. Sit down and estimate lumber. He showed me how; I caught on right away. Besides, the weekends, I used to go down to Spanish and see my old teacher. He used to be a bank manager one time, really good on math, eh. And I went down there about three times on the weekend and he showed me how to, you know, multiply and inch and a half and all that. He says, "What you're going to do, the kind of work you're doing," he says, "takes a lot of practice, speed, count fast."

He says. He could go, you know, look at a row of numbers and he could just add it like that there. The bank manager you know, he could count, eh. He said, "You practise, practise. But get them correct," he says, "don't guess. Make sure you know what you're...." So I was thinking here, the company wanted to put me to school then. 'Cause they had tried me out and I had counted faster than the regular scalers, licensed scalers. Faster and correct. And they tried me in the office one time and oh, great big row of numbers and, "See how long it'd take you to do this." And I started. "Gee, you're sure fast," he says, "and correct too." He corrected them you know. All correct. I could have had a good job there but damn the place burned down. The mill burned down, the lumber yards burned down, half the town burned and the company moved over to Bl....

Christine: That was at Cutler?

Alphonse: Spragge.

Christine: Oh, Spragge.

Alphonse: Yeah, about nine, ten miles from Cutler, west. And then another company, McFadden, J.J. McFadden, they moved to Blind River then. I think they bought that Carper-Hickson that was running the town there, lumbering.

Tony: So did you stay with them for quite a while?

Alphonse: Well, I worked for McFadden there in Spragge for about six years, I guess. When they moved away, the town - all half of it was burned down. There was no more work; they

wasn't rebuilding or nothing.

Tony: What brought it down?

Alphonse: Fire.

Tony: How did the fire get started?

Alphonse: I think somebody set it; they probably wanted insurance on it. They weren't selling that much lumber and the lumber business was more or less, pretty well done. Their

limits, you know, their lumber, their timber limits here in back of, near (inaudible), about thirty miles up there. Pretty well cut out and I think - we heard that anyway.

Tony: Where were you living when you were working there?

Alphonse: The village was there. Right across there was a little island, a pretty good size one, and there was about ten families on there. We were living across there.

Tony: Were you married by then?

Alphonse: Oh, no.

Tony: Just on your own?

Alphonse: Yeah. I was looking after my mother all this time. And then we moved up to the Sault and then I used to work for the Abitibi and go up to the lumber camps most of the year. Look for construction jobs and that. Finally my mother got married, close to 1939. Then I was all alone, I was free. So she give me a chance. I guess maybe that was her idea that I could, you know, get married or make a home of my own. Goodness, I was about 33 then, you know. I had a lot of girl friends in my younger days. I liked the (inaudible). Anyway, I was drifting around there.

Finally one day I said, "I'm going to join the army." It was getting pretty rough over there, overseas. Really calling for volunteers. Well, I guess I might as well go, help the country out. Give me something to do steady, anyway. For a while there I didn't know anything, you know. The circumstances, the results of army and fighting and all that, I didn't know anything about it. Nobody knew. We found out when we got there. But I think I had pretty good training in the army, you know, discipline and that.

Christine: Where did you train?

Alphonse: Oh, for a while in Toronto and then we went down to Nova Scotia, to Debert.

Tony: Where did you join up?

Alphonse: I wanted to be in the infantry and they put me in

engineers. Field engineers. But that was really better, actually, because you learned a hell of a lot more, engineering, eh. But we done infantry just the same. We went through infantry training plus all the engineering. Like

destroy bridges or build them, air fields, obstacles, anything. I blow up bridges about three times as big as that at Little Current there. I had a section of men. All I done was see that the dynamite was in the right places, everything. Bank seats, blow the bank seats out all in one shot, bang. I blown about three of them big ones out. You know, you get your orders, they give you a number where the bridge was at, the coordination on the map. You go there and do your job and that's all there was to it. Nobody look behind. You come and report the job was done.

Tony: When did you go overseas?

Alphonse: Umm...

Tony: You joined up in 1939 did you?

Alphonse: Yeah. I went over I think in 1940, the next year. The middle of the next summer, oh, about a year after I joined.

Tony: Where did you go to?

Alphonse: Well, down in Nova Scotia.

Tony: Yeah, and then from Nova Scotia to...?

Alphonse: Well, we got on there in Halifax and landed in Scotland and we were stationed around the southern part of England. Trained there, you know. Oh, we had good times, hard times. But I say we done pretty well. You know, eat good, good clothes, fairly good place to stay all the time. We got along with the people over there very good. We used to get a leave once in a while, you know, about five days. We'd all go up to Scotland. Gee, there was nice people up there. Not like the Englishmen. We didn't like them; we'd fight with them all the time.

Tony: Fight with the English?

Alphonse: Yeah. Oh, they wouldn't talk to you. They didn't like the Canadians. But we went up to Scotland, up to northern England. What they call that northern England.

Ernest: The midlands.

Alphonse: Yeah, the midlands. Up around there, their people were very sociable. Edinburgh.

Tony: Up around the moor district there.

Alphonse: Yeah, Aberdeen, I was all through there. Very nice

people, real nice people. Yeah.

Tony: So did they ship you over to Europe then? Did you go over from England? Over to continental Europe?

Alphonse: Yeah.

Tony: When was that?

Alphonse: The invasion. That's when they made the invasion there, eh. We were there about a couple of days after they made that beachhead, eh. And then the tanks, made room for. Once we got a footing in there, then the tanks come in and the tanks went through and then they moved ahead. We went up along the coast. All through, clear right up north, right up to the North Sea. That was our route. I guess the United States army was right in the middle there.

Ernest: I don't know why, they always put the Canadians in the very worst part.

Alphonse: Yeah.

Ernest: I was watching, I was training up there. The Canadians in the cold. Boy it's cold. Why can't they put the Americans in there, in the bad spots for a change. Always in the nice climates.

Alphonse: Yeah, it was rough up there around Holland. See, what them Germans done there, they'd blow these dikes, eh. Let the water, sea come in and flood.

Ernest: They called the Canadian Army the Canadian Navy for a while. Those boys were drowning there.

Alphonse: You know, towards the end, they had Navy, young guys about fifteen, sixteen years old, come and fight with the army. That's how bad they were. And them young fellows were really fanatic, you know. They would come up riding. I seen one day there, a fellow come right up the road. He didn't know any better, I guess. He come up there with a rifle, coming towards us. We were among the tanks, like the engineers are. The one section always travelled with a company of tanks and that's what we used to do. Seen this fellow coming up, a young fellow. It wasn't very far, about 150 yards or so. This tank guy, I guess just to show him an example or something, he lowered that big 17 inch and let her go. It was H E, high explosive. That fellow just disappeared, eh. A lot of times we had our own planes making mistakes, you know.

Tony: Bombing?

Alphonse: Dive down on us, yeah. But we'd run away from the vehicles, like on the field. And go into the street. I run off one day, me and another fellow followed me, like engineers. They always depended on me, my men, eh. This fellow he come tagging behind me so we lay face to face like that, you know,

head to head like. And these fellows were coming down just whooping there, and would come down and brrrrrrrr, and he sprayed. He was trying to get us, I guess. He ripped the ground there with a big fifteen calibre and just in between our heads. It passed in between me and him, you know. We went either way, one way or the other, cut us in half. That happened three or four times. After the war, the army guys, you know, every time they see the Air Force in the bars, right away, a fight.

Tell you what I seen, actually seen one time. I don't know if it was ever published or people ever knew. We just broke out of Falaise. We were grouped there and then we started next morning. Like the road was here, and the Polish division was fighting with us. They had a tank division. Coming up this road, we were going this way, going north. And the Canadian tanks moving up in this area in here. We come out, just breaking down. We heard the bombers coming; you could tell, you know. After you been in there long enough, you could tell everything, what's going on. Hear them bombers coming. By golly, you know, just after they got over the Polish division (she was on this side here) they opened up. They shoot the bombs right from the big bombers; you see them dropping down. They wiped that whole armour division right out. That was the one that was fighting with us. Good thing we never got wiped out or they would have done all over here, you know. Because they were just on this side. We were moving ahead; we were moving with us like that, they were on this side.

Tony: They were parallel to you?

Alphonse: Yeah, they were on that side of the road. It was done right in front of our eyes there. A hundred yards, two hundred yards. Five thousand men wiped out.

Tony: And this sort of thing happened pretty frequently, did it?

Alphonse: Well, there was another time a regiment, infantry regiment took over a town, Canadians, eh. And I guess they went in there too soon. And they didn't notify they had taken the town already and the bombers come over and bombed that town

not knowing the Canadians already had taken it. And they wiped out that regiment.

Tony: Do you remember which town that was?

Alphonse: No, it was so long ago. Yeah. A lot of things happened like that you know. Mistakes.

Tony: So did you spend the rest of the war in Europe?

Alphonse: Oh yeah, I stayed right to the end. Right till the cease fire. Our engineer outfit, we had a celebration right after cease fire. We had lots of whiskey and there was one day, about a week before the end of the war, we come to a

village that had a saloon. And down in the basement there was all chock full of champagne. Anything you wanted, it was there. And we got all the best stuff and put it away, you know. The rest we'd throw it out, the tank guys go and buy it. So we cleaned that out. The fellow that owned that, he was there, the old lady. The old lady wouldn't leave that door, they had it locked. So I says, "Take her away," I says. A couple of guys grabbed her and I shot the lock off of there and went down to see what was down there. Oh, talk about a drink! So we stored some of that away....

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Alphonse: They give me the wrong orders, you know, you going to get the men killed. I knew what was going. And the guy said, "You don't put him back in command, we're going to give the other fellow a hard time, whoever you're going to put in there. Because this fellow knows. He never makes mistakes and he always pulls us through." "Well, give you back your stripes again, Sergeant." But towards the end, I lost them again. I had my own ideas too but you see some of them fellows they come from college eh, officer's college and they know the warfare according to the book, not the actual stuff. And we'd been through it already you know. All summer long and we knew how to go about our business. That's what I told them fellows, you know. I told the commander, too. I says, "I don't want to get my men killed and I don't want to get killed."

Ernest: That's what the (inaudible) told the British army. They didn't want to walk out there in the square so they put them on the flats and they just about went crazy them fellows. They walking and (inaudible). They thought it was ridiculous.

Alphonse: Yeah, we come back, you know. And they were calling for volunteers eh, for Japan. Right after the cease fire in Europe. About that time my mother was - you know I had a letter from my aunt - she was on her last days with cancer in Detroit. So in order to get back over here, quick, the first ones that were going to be shipped back was the volunteers for Japan. So I volunteered. They asked me right away, I often do that you know, because I'd ask for, you know, to come back to see my mother. No, I can't. "We let one, you don't know how many we'll have to let go. So we just can't." But anyway, he asked me right away, he says, "You volunteering because of that?" I said, "No." I said, "I want to fight the Japanese." See, if I had said the other way, I said yes, well, they wouldn't have taken me you see. And I wouldn't have had a chance to get back. But I got back in time. We landed in New York. Queen Elizabeth, we'd come across on the Queen Elizabeth. Half American troops and half Canadian troops. Twenty thousand on there. We got only fed twice a day, too many men to feed three times a day, just twice. But there was a lot of canteens and that; you could buy stuff.

Ernest: I came back on that thing, that far east force. And

the way they had it set up, the ones that were supposed to come home, they had points. The long servicemen were supposed to come home first.

Alphonse: Oh, yeah.

Ernest: Or people that had volunteered for a far east force. So I came home with the old timers. And I remember in Aldershot, they called us in for lectures. Some officer would come in and brief us on the Japanese. And it's ridiculous what they were teaching.

Alphonse: Oh, yeah.

Ernest: Oh, they can't ride a horse, they can't, they've got bad eyesight. (chuckles) And we had a guy, a French fellow, used to imitate them after they left, a French fellow. A little French guy. He had the Crow of the Year, he won the Crow of the Year award. He was an engineer and he would imitate them. "Oh boy, are we going to have fun in Japan," he says, south Pacific. "Japanese can't ride a horse, can't shoot, they can't see, poor eyesight."

(all laugh)

Ernest: See what comes up from the top?

Tony: Oh, yeah.

Alphonse: Yeah.

Tony: Well, that was just a prejudice, that was just a bit of racial superiority from them.

Alphonse: Funny thing I seen there, just comical. I had one of my men there one day. We were trying to get eggs and trade them with our canned stuff, eh. And this, I think it was in Holland someplace, "Eggs, eggs." Well she didn't know what eggs were. What the hell was the use of shouting eggs. So the fellow got, one of my men got a bright idea. He made a nest on the road and he put some stones in there, you know. He got over he started cackling like a chicken, eh. "Oh," then she understood it. "Oh, yeah, eggs, eggs." I still remember that. He was pretty smart though, make that woman understand. Put stones there and he made a nest in the road there and started yelling like a chicken. Then the woman understood what we wanted. Eggs (chuckles). Oh boy, crazy buggers.

Ernest: There was one thing I could never forget. To see how the upper crust lived. And we guarded a brigade up in Holland after the war. Our regiments close by took turns. And it was Queen Julianna's estate. The room where she had her baby was declared Dutch territory. And she wouldn't suffer with her people but she was back. And every time we made that circle around the fence, those people running the farm, they'd run over and they had lots of eggs for cigarettes.

Alphonse: Oh, yeah.

Ernest: And a cup of milk for two cigarettes, and eggs. I'd try and walk pretty fast getting back again. And that just shows you, people were starving in Holland. Remember they were lining up for... but she had cattle. The only place there was cattle; they brought in cattle right away. Just shows you. How could somebody love somebody like that, love their queen? And yet she runs away from the war, let's her people suffer and then she comes back and she's eating just as good. They never suffer. You think people would say, "Well, get the hell out." You know, tradition, see how tradition is.

Alphonse: Yeah.

Tony: So they brought you back on the Queen Elizabeth, eh?

Alphonse: Oh, yeah. Well, it was shortly after and then the cease fire over in Japan and then war was over.

Tony: Before you got over there?

Alphonse: Oh yeah, oh yeah. But I stayed in Detroit there, I seen my mother before she died. I was there. Tend to all the funeral and that. I was glad I got back in time, you know. About 20 days after I got back, I got out of the army. And the same old thing, I travelled all over. I went all over, worked all over the States and Canada.

Christine: Did you get any land or anything as a veteran after the war?

Alphonse: Oh, they promised us lots, lots of things, you know. But I stayed down in the States quite a bit. Finally I got a letter from, was it Veteran Affairs or Indian Affairs. That was the last year they were going to - if I didn't apply for it, they'd forget it you know. I was getting up in years around that time. I was working down at Waukegan, Illinois. I was there for about five years. Worked on the railroad there, maintenance gang. That was an easy job there. Real nice job there, easy. And so I come home then. I got \$3000. They bought this land for me up here in Rabbit Island, \$1000. So I had \$2000 to buy stuff, you know.

Ernest: Just interrupt Al here for - they formed this Indian War Veterans Organization just now, just recently. (Inaudible) And I think they're trying to get further benefits because the Indians, I did too, we only got \$2320 and that was it. And that's all you got. And the Indian Affairs administered it. But the white veterans, well, they got loans. Some didn't have to pay. Some of them got houses. Us, we just got that. That's all we got. No more, that's it. And usually that went to, say, if you wanted to get some chickens or something, all the cheques went to that. And I don't know, probably I think there were a lot of kick-backs steamed there. You know, for the

agent handling the stuff. And that's all we got. So they're trying to get something more for us at this next stage. I think it's right.

Christine: But you got some land out of it?

Alphonse: Yeah, I got a farm up there, no equipment to work it, no nothing. Old log house there.

Ernest: We didn't get nothing.

Alphonse: No horses, no tractor, no nothing. Not a darn thing. It took me that \$2000 to fix the house up and get stoves, bedding, tables and make it a place to live. My money was all gone.

Tony: So you had a farm and nothing to work it with.

Alphonse: There was not a thing.

Ernest: They didn't give you enough to get started.

Tony: We'll stop there for now.

(Break in tape)

Alphonse: You always carried a rifle. No matter who you were or where you were, boy, you carried it. But they never expected that. They had a little, they ran a kitchen outfit, eh. And then these Germans opened fire on it and killed three of them. Killed one Captain and two workers there, you know. That's the headquarters. See, the headquarters is actually not a fighting unit, eh. They do all the paper work and take care of the stores and things like that. General Ross, that's the fort division commander, called a few engineer platoons. He says, "Take this town right off the map," he says. "Blow every house. Flatten it. Just give the people five minutes to get out of them houses. If they don't get out, blow them up." We went up the street, five, six houses at a time. Bang, went up in the air. Be another outfit working a couple of the streets over and in the evening there was a few left and they put the flame thrower to them. Flattened everything right down flat.

Christine: This was a town as big as Sudbury?

Alphonse: Yeah. Just to retaliate for firing on.

Tony: This was in Germany?

Alphonse: Yeah. No, it was up along the coast 'cause we was on the coast. I forget what country it was in. Yeah. Yeah, it would be a way up in Holland someplace, north Holland. Some of them old people wouldn't get out, just got blowed up in the houses. That's what war is you know.

Tony: So you were a sniper were you, Al?

Alphonse: Well, among other things, yeah.

Tony: What were all the things that you were, then?

Alphonse: Well, they used to get me, like, before we went in a battle, like before the invasion, they used to take me out on the range all the time you know and zero all the Bren guns and that.

Ernest: My dad was telling me he didn't go to school. He could hardly talk English when he joined the army. But he says he was a real good shot you know, with a gun. And he noticed that in the army, an officer came over and said, "We're going to make you a sniper." And he didn't know what that was. He thought it was a promotion. (all chuckle) And he says, "I asked the fellow, 'What's a sniper?' 'Well,' he says, 'you go ahead of everybody and pick off Germans.' So I started missing all the targets," he says, "so I didn't make it."

(all chuckle)

Alphonse: I was never out, you know, sniping or anything. But you know, on special occasions or something, like when we're nailed down and they call. I know when we were in Petawawa training, there was a Colonel there. He was supposed to be, well, he said it himself you know. He was bragging. Apparently he must have been a pretty good shot one time. He says, "Nobody in this outfit can beat me," he says. I forget what his name was. We was just young trainees then, you know. We got on the range from 100 yards, 200, 300. Three hundred yards, we had to put on gas masks and you shoot 300 yards. Pretty hard you know with the gas mask. Only mistake I had was, like, the bullseye is here, eh. I fired on the line, one shot. All the rest was right here. I had him beat so bad he never showed up there again, on the range.

Tony: Where did you learn to shoot like that?

Alphonse: Oh, I don't know. I didn't do much. I never handled guns that much before I got in the army. I used to go on hunting trips and that, you know. And then the old fellows, they would teach me how to aim and how to judge the sights. The sights or how you hold it firm, eh. How you squeeze your, don't want to drag it like that or you'll miss, steady. You get to know your rifle, how it acts. Your trigger, if it's hard or easy to.... That's what I learned.

Ernest: I was such a rotten shot, you know. It was in Petawawa, we were up on the rifle range. And there was a phone call. There was always a phone from the fire end to the.... Somebody called up; there was not a mark on my target. And here, you know how bad my eyes were there. I didn't take my glasses. The army give me glasses but I couldn't find them. You know, there is a guard around the site with a .303 Lee Enfield and you got a peep sight and I had the guard in my peep

sight not the site. I was hitting the... (chuckles)

Alphonse: Yeah, the other guy. (laughs)

Ernest: Without a shot on the other one, you know, hitting it.

Tony: So you worked on the railroad when you got out of the army, down in Michigan?

Alphonse: Yeah, for a while. One place there I worked for about five and a half years.

Tony: What were you doing?

Alphonse: Oh we'd, like train wrecks, eh? Between Chicago and Milwaukee, and within a hundred miles of them. That's the stretch we took care of, any train wrecks and switches. It's all electric switches, you know. That's about all we done.

Ernest: (Inaudible)

Alphonse: Once in a while would lift track, you know, get bumpy someplace. In the wintertime, we'd be all our own bosses and just step on a train and tell you where to go, they want you to go, "Go shovel them switches down there. And at four

o'clock you can grab the first train and come home." So this was good.

Tony: When you quit there, you came back to Wikki (Wikwemikong) did you?

Alphonse: Yeah. And I applied for this grant. About that time an Indian agent come in here, a new one. He'd been up around north someplace. He got chased away from over there. What he done here, you know those officers come from North Bay to come and see me, I guess. I don't know what they wanted. They was coming to see me anyway and then he happened to drop in at the Indian office here at Manitowaning. And this Indian agent, I don't know what kind of lies he told them and everything. You know, he never did come and see me. He turned back from there. I don't know what this guy told them. See, what I was wanting was equipment. A little bit of equipment. Maybe even a tractor or horses. Do something on the farm. But I found out afterwards that this officer, he had wrote to me that he was coming to see me, see. He sent me a letter. But he never did come. And I went over here and found out that he got as far as the Indian office in Manitowaning.

Then he wrote me a letter, this fellow from North Bay. "You don't need nothing. I found out in Manitowaning that you were okay," and all that, you know. I don't know what kind of lies he told him. So I went, so I went over there. I heard somebody too, the chief and him. I went to see the chief first and, "What did you have to do with this?" "Do with what? I didn't have nothing to do with your grant or nothing." "I got a letter," and I showed him the letter. "No," he says, "must

have been that Indian agent over here." So I went right up over there and I got a hold of the guy, you know, right. And I asked him what he said. I said, "Well, what did you say to that guy? He was supposed to come and see me and you went and told him a whole bunch of lies because he never did come and see me." And I said, "And he wrote to me that I didn't need anything." I says, "Is that some of your work?" I says, "I know where you come from. You got chased away from the north over there, a reserve over there. And you come here and carry on the same kind of thing over here. Somebody should hang you. I got a good notion to plant you one right now." I had a hold of him. Boy I was tempted to, you know, just drive him. I was really mad. "I don't think you're worth hitting," so I says....

Tony: How big was the farm that you bought?

Alphonse: Pretty good size, about a hundred acres. About fifty of cleared land. Two or three nice big fields, you know.

Tony: So what did you do with it? I mean, you had no tools or anything.

Alphonse: Nothing. I don't do nothing. I borrowed. I planted a garden but I had to borrow plows and discs and that. Hire somebody to come and do it. It was alright. But I couldn't do nothing. I hired, one summer I hired a couple to cut the hay and put the hay in the barn. And I got a hold of - someway, I don't know how I got them horses - I got a team of horses. And I kept them for two years. One winter I worked them on the farm there and in the wintertime we cut pulp wood, cedar posts, around the area. The next winter then I went up to... yeah, it was a good farm. I didn't know nothing about farming in the first place. I went up to Massey and I worked up there one winter with my team, eh, hauling pulp wood. Then I sold them. I sold the horses. But I never did do anything with the farm. You know, I had nothing to work with.

Tony: How long did you keep it then?

Alphonse: Oh, about ten years.

Tony: Did you? What became of it?

Alphonse: I sold it. Sold it for \$500.

Ernest: Gee.

Alphonse: Real nice land but no fence. Just an old wooden fence - and cattle, they'd just lean up against it and then they'd come in. There was no use planting anything. They'd come at night and even in the garden. I made another fence in the garden, real strong but they broke it down. Yeah. So I gave up on that anyways.

Christine: Were you married by that time?

Alphonse: Oh, yeah.

Christine: When did you get married?

Alphonse: Oh about, I come back in 1959 and I got married in 1960, the next year after. I didn't like the idea that I should be up all alone in the old farm house up there, you know. Live with somebody.

Tony: Which year was it that you got the farm?

Alphonse: Oh, about 1960.

Tony: It wasn't till then, eh?

Alphonse: No.

Tony: You got the farm in 1960 or you sold it?

Alphonse: I sold it, oh, about ten years after.

Tony: In 1970.

Alphonse: Yeah, and I moved down here. Because I wasn't doing anything on the farm. I couldn't even get a new house. Darn old, that house the roof was just about caving in. The gable ends were just like that, eh. I showed the chief and that, oh.

Tony: Was it on reserve land or off reserve?

Alphonse: Oh yeah, sure, on reserve land.

Ernest: Before 1960, he also served in Korea.

Tony: We'll get back to that in just a second but what did you do between? After you came back from working on the railroad and then you bought your farm and tried that out and then you went up and worked at Massey, eh? With your team?

Alphonse: Yeah.

Tony: What did you do then, after that?

Alphonse: Oh, I come back, stayed on around the farm there, just putting gardens in in the summertime for another couple of years and turn around about 1970 anyway and then we moved on. The place was all full with poison ivy. And the family, the woman I married and our kids too, they were all allergic to this poison ivy. God, they see that thing, just look at it and they'd get it you know. And they wanted to move out of there in the worst way. They were always, you know. So I said, "All right, let's get out of here, we're not farming." They wouldn't work, not even the garden, you know, when I wasn't there. When I had that farm, I worked for about three years up in the KVP then it was called, eh. Espanola pulp mill. KVP was running. I hurt my back and then I come home for good. Could never work after that.

Tony: You also joined up with the Korean war, eh?

Alphonse: Oh, yes.

Tony: When was that?

Alphonse: Oh, it would be around about 1950. The summer of 1950.

Tony: You were demobbed from the Canadian Army after the Second World War. And you worked in Michigan for a while, eh? Or...?

Alphonse: Oh yeah, different places though. Mostly in the States, you know.

Tony: And then you joined up again.

Alphonse: I come back, yeah. One summer I come back and I worked for a uranium outfit in Montreal River. I mapped out, I made a map for them. I run the lines for this guy. I knew how to run lines and work out a map, eh. So I done that for him. This time I had my cousin up there working with me and he didn't like this pick and shovel outfit, you know. They were digging rocks there. So he says, "I'm going to join the... I'm going to Korea." I says, "You're crazy. You'll get killed over there. It's not fun when you're in a war. It's not any fun." "Well," he says, "I couldn't care less. I'm going anyway." So he went down to the lake, about five or six miles. About half an hour after he left, I left. I better go and look after this guy. (chuckles) I went down with him and told the guy I'm working for, "Well," I said, "I'm going to Korea." He'd been a flyer in the Second World War, that guy I was working for. So, took us down, down to the Sault or he was going down anyway for something, supplies. He took us down there and buy us a lot of beer and we went to Korea. We trained down at Petawawa for a little while. Not very long and then we went out to the west coast, Seattle or Fort Lewis, Washington, Washington state. We trained over there over the winter. In the spring we pulled out and went over. I was with the Second Battalion RCRs.

Tony: What's RCR?

Alphonse: Royal Canadian Regiment. There was about three, about four regiments in there.

Ernest: There is some people confused with... in the WWII, the names, if you were in the first division, Royal Canadian Regiment. And then the second division they had the Royal Division of Canada. The seconds were the post brigades. A lot of Wikki (Wikwemikong), quite a few Wikki boys in there, that Royal Regiment of Canada.

Alphonse: Yeah. A lot of these boys that joined up and went over, I don't know where they went or what outfits they went to there. They were in the Forestry Corps, a lot of them. I don't know what they done after. They made lumber and that, but I guess they done a little training like on the infantry and that. You know, they had fight when they had to, alongside of it.

Tony: So did you go into action again in Korea?

Alphonse: Oh, yes.

Tony: Did you? Whereabouts?

Alphonse: It was up around, I forget the name of that river up there. It was way up anyway on the part of that there. Oh, it was pretty rough there. People were poisoned. That is all they eat was rice. I wondered how they lived on that. Because they didn't farm nothing and they had no cattle, no sheep, no cows, no nothing. And they planted this rice, like if there was hills, eh. And then there's a valley coming down like that. At the bottom, they'd make these paddies because they have to have that much water, you know. I couldn't see anything else what they lived on.

Tony: Were you an engineer there, too?

Alphonse: They knew I had been an engineer in Baker Company in there. A lot of them tried to get me, you know. There was an engineer outfit there, they tried to get me but my commander, he says, "Oh no, we need that fellow. You're not going to get him."

Tony: So you were in infantry?

Alphonse: Yeah. Because I done mostly all, like at night eh, we set up new positions. I'd go down and blow maybe about a hundred yards, set up booby traps. Flares and dynamite and all kinds of things. I knew all about that stuff. And I taught them other guys, you know. Showed them how to set up. So they wouldn't surprise us at night, eh. They would walk into these wires. The flares whooped and there would be dynamite and grenades blowing and going off. And I set them so far, here

and there. There is nothing to it, you know, because you know how. Really nothing to it. But the dam, that was a puzzle. They couldn't, they didn't want to tackle it. I was the one that done all that. That's why they wouldn't let me go. I had a lot of different outfits trying to get me but no, "You're not going to get him."

Tony: How long were you in the Korean war?

Alphonse: I come back in 1951 or 1952. Then they had a cease fire over there too, later on. One night I went in. What they wanted to do was capture some prisoners and get information out

of them. So we went in one night about three or four miles, about four miles into their territory at night. Got up in there and after they knew we were in there, they surrounded us; they got around us right in there. They tried to attack a few times that night but I was really, I had to take over. Our officer was a newspaper man in civil life and he went to officer's school, eh. He would try and give commands and a couple of guys pretty near got killed. And one of them grenades hit me in the mouth here too, some pieces of tin, eh. Because they have what you call - the kind of grenades they have is not like ours. Theirs is concussion grenades, you know, just powder and tin on there. Ours is all steel and when it blows, it will fly in 100, 200 pieces there like bullets. There is a difference. And I got a piece of tin up in here, right in the mouth. I had blood all over; I was an awful wild man.

I jumped out of the line and I went back there and I told the officer, I says, "You don't know how to give commands. You shut your mouth." I put the bayonette right at his throat. I said, "The next time I hear you, I'm coming over here and I'm putting this bayonette right through your neck. You got a couple of guys pretty near killed already," I said. Down in my corner, I was fighting like hell down there, you know. They were trying to get in, sneak up to the trench, up on me. All the fighting, and I took over the command on the line, our section, you know our outfit there. There was corporals there and sergeants that didn't know how to give commands. You know, when them guys attacked there at night, know what to do, when to shoot. So I took over, I give the commands, they listened to me. They wouldn't listen to nobody else.

Then on towards morning, funny part of it is two or three of them officers there and they didn't know which way to come home. Boy, you know, from our position here, we come straight pretty near north, eh. We're just up here. But they know damn well they should have head south. They come up on a hill, they was on top, they say oh, they go back down a hill, followed a ravine back down to the line, just as simple as that. You know, and they say - I heard them, I was standing not far from

them. And they were going close to daylight. If we got caught in there, we were sure as hell going to get wiped out 'cause there were lots of them. Outnumbered us maybe about 20 to 1, around that area. "So where's that Antoine?" "I'm right here," I said. I heard them you know, I heard them talking. They didn't know which way to go back. I says, "You fellows don't know how to go back," I says, "so fall in line, I'm leaving right now." I says. "Follow me, that's all." And we went down, we had two prisoners. Finally we got down a ways and my officer says to me, he says, "You're going the wrong way." I said, "What the hell's wrong with you?" I says, "You know, when our line was over there, we were facing north, now we're going south." I said, "Go and look at your compass." He pulled out his compass and on the side there is a little screw to release it so it'll work. He hadn't even unscrewed that.

He was looking and twisting and, well "If anybody wants to follow this crazy outfit here," I says, "follow him. I'm going home. Follow me." So I took them in. They all got in, brought those two prisoners. And this officer of mine, during the night a bullet grazed his neck here.

Anyway, he went up to headquarters and I guess he was talking with this Rockingham; he was our Brigadier, he was the head guy there. About nine o'clock fellows come running to me, say, "Hey, you're wanted on the phone, Antoine, somebody wants to talk to you." "Me," I said, "What for?" Thought to myself, well geez, I'm going to get court-martialled for threatening an officer that night. He must have went to the brigadier. I went over to the phone anyway. And "Hello, this is Private Antoine." "Well," he says, "this is your Brigadier Rockingham. I heard you're a one man war up there last night," he says. You know how them newspaper men, they bullshit. They make a big story out of nothing. To me it was nothing anyway. Yeah, but I brought them fellows, the three companies that went up there, they all followed me and come back. Even them officers. Surprising, you wouldn't believe it. They didn't even know their way back.

Ernest: Rockingham may be in the army yet, eh?

Alphonse: I don't know what he is now.

Ernest: Yeah, he was Johnny's colonel in the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry or just a major then. But he was going to lead the Canadian division. They were the ones for defense.

Alphonse: Oh, yeah.

Ernest: They picked him.

Alphonse: Oh yeah, well he got to be the head guy in Korea.

Ernest: There must be a (inaudible) too around him.

Alphonse: Yeah, he was a big guy. He was big. But he liked his troupes rough and ready. He don't care for this here school discipline. Or college, you know. He really liked his men rough and tough and fighters, eh.

Ernest: Johnny was telling me while they were in France, I think he was only a major. He said they were held up by a sniper and he took care of them himself.

Tony: (Inaudible)

Alphonse: Yeah. Oh yeah, I was agreeing with that. You know, when we left Fort Lewis, they left a bunch of men to clean up our barracks and that, eh. And I suppose after they got through cleaning our barracks, they started up drinking up beer. And after a while they got rough, you know, and breaking things and they called the American troops over. They

were over on the other side of the field, the square. The Canadians turned on them and beat the hell out of them. (chuckles) Anyway, there was an awful... they almost wrecked the place, you know. And it was reported to Rockingham about these guys, you know, raising hell and breaking everything. "Well," he says, "that's my men. That's the way I like my men," he says, "fighters. Not a bunch of sissies." (chuckles) So we knew him. I seen him a few times up in the front when he was around. He'd go right up to the front line to see the guys and talk with them.

Christine: Did you get any benefits from serving in the Korean war?

Ernest: Don't ask. They didn't get anything.

Alphonse: No. I got wounded three times and the third time they shoved me back in the lines then. That's automatic standing order. When you're wounded three times, they take you off the front line; they won't let you stay there. And I got sent back, about seven miles back to a supply company. We supplied gas and food and that, you know. And I got on the gas truck so I'm right up there in the front line every day again. We used to get our supplies of gas from New Zealand, Australia and they had dumps, eh. You go over there and load up and take this gas up front.

Ernest: And the tanks.

Alphonse: Vehicles and cooks and whatnot. Oh, I had a good time.

Ernest: He was telling me, Alphonse was telling me they had Koreans carrying a lot of your packing, a lot of hills. And he said, all they lived was on rice, what they had in their pocket. Just plain rice, not cooked but raw.

Alphonse: Dry rice.

Ernest: And they could carry a terrific load.

Alphonse: They had, I don't know, some kind of a rack they had. And they were husky looking too, you know. That wouldn't surprise me. Them people, how in the heck they built up to be good, big strong guys. They weren't tall, they were mostly all short people, eh. For height anyway. But never see, try to give them canned stuff and that and no way. And lots of them wear sandals or something. Try to give them shoes, they wouldn't wear them. They had a way of life and that was it, you know. They were more comfortable and they got along the way they were. And they didn't want our stuff.

And one day, one morning we was lined up for breakfast and we had a front line out there, you know. That's when I was delivering gas that time already. Early in the morning we went up there and delivered this gas. And of course, I still had to carry my rifle, even if I was miles behind. And this big noise,

rattling cans, holy... everybody put down their plates and run for positions. See what the heck that was. We look. It was foggy that morning. Here was one of them god darn old wild boars, pig you know, wild boars, teeth, big tusks stick out about this. And he was running and rattling those cans coming through there, you see. So right away they called me, "Hey, Antoine's around here. Get him to knock that fellow down." So I went over there and I seen him. (shoots) We handed that over to the Koreans. They, how do you call that? They put him on a stick and they....

Tony: Spit and barbequed it.

Alphonse: Yeah, barbequed it, that's what I wanted to say, yeah, barbequed him all day long. They took turns, you know, turning, slow, slow. Made a fire and then, there's not much timber around there. The biggest timber I seen there was about twelve, fourteen feet high and about this size, eh. And their houses, they make their houses with these sticks around the

outside, and the rest is straw. And they take a big outfit like maybe seven or eight families and they would build something in a circle like that and they build a floor about, oh, about that high off the ground.

Tony: Maybe two or three feet off the ground then.

Alphonse: And they make this fire in the centre....

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

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