

Robert J. Cook
Cedar City Library Veterans' History Project
Interviewed by: Bryce Goodwin & Shelly Goodwin
Date: 2006
Final Edit: August 2012

Interviewer #1:

Could we have you start by stating and spelling your full name?

Veteran:

Robert James Cook, born 3/30 of... 3/7 of 1930.

Interviewer #2:

Could you state today's date?

Veteran:

May the 6, 19...No, it's 2006.

Interviewer #1:

Where do you currently live?

Veteran:

I live out here in Cedar Valley. 3181 North Bulldog Road.

Interviewer #1:

Is this the same area where you resided when you were drafted?

Veteran:

No. I was living in Delta.

Interviewer #1:

Did you enlist or were you drafted?

Veteran:

I enlisted.

Interviewer #2:

Why did you enlist?

Veteran:

I... my mother passed away when I was 16 and I was chief cook and bottle washer, I had 4 brothers younger than me and I got to where I couldn't take it anymore, so I enlisted in the service.

Interviewer #2:

What year was that?

Veteran:

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December 1947.

Interviewer #1:

In which branch of the service did you serve?

Veteran:

The Air Force.

Interviewer #1:

Did you serve full time or in a guard or reserve unit?

Veteran:

I was full time with a 1-year extension during the war.

Interviewer #2:

So how many years did you serve?

Veteran:

Four.

Interviewer #1:

Where was your headquarters or where have you been stationed?

Veteran:

Well, I took my training in San Antonio, Texas, then went to Fort Francis E. Warren, Wyoming for training and from there I went to Long Island, New York, Homestead Air Force Base and I was there for about 10 months, then I went to Alaska and I was up there for 2 years.

Interviewer #1:

And that's all the places you went?

Veteran:

Well, from there I went to Delaware... Dover, Delaware. No, Wilmington, Delaware.

Interviewer #2:

And what were you training to do?

Veteran:

I was... took care of generators.

Interviewer #2:

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So then the Air Force trained you to do that?

Veteran:
Yes. We had radar units we made.

Interviewer #1:
During what years did you serve?

Veteran:
From December '47 to '52, January of '52. No. It was actually '51.

Interviewer #1:
What was the highest rank that you achieved during your service?

Veteran:
Sergeant.

Interviewer #1:
Sergeant, what does that do?

Veteran:
That's just a rank, sergeant. Buck Sergeant.

Interviewer #2:
So did you have men under you?

Veteran:
No. I didn't really have men under me.

Interviewer #1:
Were you decorated for your services?

Veteran:
No.

Interviewer #1:
Did you serve in combat or non-combat positions?

Veteran:
Non-combat.

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Interviewer #2:

So did you go to Korea or were you working?

Veteran:

No. I was in Alaska when that started and they froze everything, no movement whatsoever, in the station there at Anchorage. And that's where all the troops that were going to Korea... they were flying over there; they would land and re-fuel in Anchorage down and in Elmendorf. When they'd fly them back, they couldn't stop from there. They had to refuel there.

Interviewer #2:

Was there a big Air Force Base there?

Veteran:

Elmendorf.

Interviewer #1:

Did you meet any famous or historical figures during service?

Veteran:

No. Not that I can recall.

Interviewer #1:

When you reflect back on your military service, what is the most vivid memory?

Veteran:

Most vivid memory... was when I was in Alaska I used to see these guys coming in our shop; I was in an electronics shop where they repaired radars and stuff. And these guys... it was in the wintertime and when they parked their Colts, the back of them was all bleached out. I never understood why and I found out about 2 weeks later they had a radar sit up on top of the mountain. We had to have a machine what they call a tucker which is similar to the snow mobiles now that we could take up on low dawn. Now, we'd tie a little power unit that I had to go start and operate. And we went up there and set up this radar and when the guys got through where they could go down, they would turn around backwards and sit down and down they would go [motioning with his hands] and that's what would stamp their coats.

Interviewer #2:

[laughs] That's funny...

Veteran:

In fact they'd be down waiting for us when we'd get down in the...

