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Interview with Bill Young

Bill Young

California State University, Monterey Bay

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Chinatown Renewal Project
Interviewee: Bill Young
Interviewer: Kris Kritscher
Date of Interview: November 2, 2008
Duration of Interview: 58:20

Kris Kritscher 00:01

All right. We're here with Mr. Bill Young. I'm Kris Kritscher working for the Asian Cultural Experience. Do we have your permission to record this interview?

Bill Young 00:17

Yes, you do. Yes, you do.

Kris Kritscher 00:19

All right.

Bill Young 00:20

Speak a little louder, please.

Kris Kritscher 00:22

All right. Sure.

Bill Young 00:23

Good. Thank you.

Kris Kritscher 00:24

All right. Good. Thank you. All right. First off, what do you know about your family coming over from China?

Bill Young 00:40

The only recollection I have of my parents was when I went to kindergarten, in San Francisco Chinatown. I was probably about five or six years old. I remember that incident very clearly. I was just graduated out of kindergarten, and I didn't want to go to first grade. And I cried, and I cried, and the teacher says, "Okay, you go, stay in kindergarten for another six months." That's the only thing I remember. Until I was probably about 14, or 15. In San Francisco Chinatown. It was a very, very bad time. And during the Depression. My parents both came from China. And I found out that I was born in Birmingham, Alabama. I don't remember that at all. And then the next thing I knew. My younger brothers and sister was born in Stockton, California. I never knew that. And then I know, my parents was down in Fresno for a while, wherever they can find a job. wherever they can find a job. Things were very bad. So when he finally settled up, settled down in Chinatown in San Francisco, in the early 30s. I went to Francisco Junior High School, and two years at Galileo High School,

Kris Kritscher 02:33

Galileo in San Francisco?

Bill Young 02:34

Galileo in San Francisco. Then I finished my high school here in Salinas, 1942. The family actually moved in here, into Salinas in 1940. That's quite a few years ago. My eldest brother, number one son, felt that Salinas was a better place for the rest of the family to grow up. So he moved our family into here, into Salinas, in 1940. I went to the Salinas Valley High- no, the Salinas High School, on South Main Street, and I graduated in 1942. But meanwhile, we moved in here in 1914. My second brother number two son,

Kris Kritscher 02:46

And what was his name?

Bill Young 03:30

His name is Francis.

Kris Kritscher 03:33

And the eldest brother was —?

Bill Young 03:35

George. George moved us in here and took care of us. And my brother Francis, number two son, was drafted in 1941, before the war started, as you may remember, President Roosevelt started the draft before the war even started. So Francis, number two son, he took his basic at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and next year, in 1942, he was probably one of the very first Chinese that was commissioned a Lieutenant in Field Artillery. We were very proud of him. So in 1942, he graduated and the same year, my — number three son, his name is Albert, he got drafted into the service.

Kris Kritscher 04:32

Your brother Albert?

Bill Young 04:33

My brother, Albert. He was drafted into service. When Francis was drafted in the service, my father had a heart attack. When my brother, Al, was drafted into the service. My father had his second heart attack.

Kris Kritscher 04:43

Wow.

Bill Young 04:50

Then I got drafted in 1943, but I didn't meet the physical requirements because I -

Kris Kritscher 05:00

Physical requirement of — what? You're too short, you're too —?

Bill Young 05:03

Sir?

Kris Kritscher 05:04

You didn't meet the physical requirements, why is that?

Bill Young 05:07

Yeah, I didn't meet the physical requirements, because I couldn't see the big E on the board.

Kris Kritscher 05:13

And you had a story behind that? You had a story for why you couldn't see it.

Bill Young 05:20

I went to work in the shipyards, in the Richmond shipyards. Kaiser. They were building cargo ships for the war effort. And I was welding. So I worked the midnight shift. So I worked at night, until about eight o'clock in the morning, got back to San Francisco and went to take my physical. But after welding for eight hours, I couldn't see the big E. So I didn't get into service. So I felt very bad about it. So I went to see an optometrist on Grand Avenue. And he gave me pills to take so many 1000s of units of vitamin A every day. And I go down there twice a week to take eye exercises on a machine he has, so that several months later, I went back, I went to the draft board, and I told the draft board, "Send me another notice. I want to get into service." So they did, so the day of the examination, I didn't work that night. The night before I didn't work. So I went to the examination, I passed. I passed. That was 1944. I took my basic training at Camp Roberts, applied to go to Officer School, and I made it. I think out of the company of about 200 people, 37 of us applied to go to Officer School, and then we went and took physicals, interviews. Process of elimination. Out of that 37, only seven got to go to Officer School.

Kris Kritscher 07:18

Wow.

Bill Young 07:18

Out of that seven, only two graduated on time. I don't know how the hell, I made it. I got lucky. And I made it.

Kris Kritscher 07:26

Wow.

Bill Young 07:27

And I was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry, and I was 20 years old.

Kris Kritscher 07:34

Wow.

Bill Young 07:37

Then the war with Germany was over, but the war with Japan was still on, and they were moving all the troops down to the Pacific area. The Air Force, the Navy, and the Army for the planned invasion of the Japanese islands. Nobody knew anything about the atomic bomb, except the president. Even Truman, at that time he was the vice president, he didn't know anything about the atomic bomb. So at the University of California, Berkeley, we were chosen to take a Mandarin course, there was about 40 of us. And there were about seven or eight Chinese Americans that were officers mainly—mainly the guys were in the Air Force bombardiers' navigators. I was in the infantry. But while I was going to the language course, I met my wife at the I-House on campus, UC Berkeley. We went — we were invited to the dance, all the officers, so I went to the dance with several of the other officers, looking over the field of nice young ladies. I saw one I liked, I got her, I danced with her, a date with her the next day, and then married her before I went overseas.

Kris Kritscher 09:05

And you said something, you said something to the other officers? Something about that's my wife?

Bill Young 09:13

Oh, yeah. Yeah, when I saw that young lady, I said, "That's for me," and "that's gonna be my wife." I went down there. She was dancing with somebody else, I tapped him on the shoulder, you know? I got to dance with her. Got a date for the next day. If I had to do it over again, I would have done it sooner.

Kris Kritscher 09:21

[laughs]

Bill Young 09:37

She was a good looking broad. Then we went to language school learning how to speak Mandarin. We were supposed to be connected with the Chinese army, some way, for the planned invasion of the Japanese islands, but President Roosevelt passed away, Truman ordered the atomic bomb, and the war was over. Then we got married about two weeks before I went overseas — the first time — as an army of occupation. So I came back in 1946, went back into civilian life, and when the Korean War broke out, I got called back. Then I was stationed at Fort Ord, here.

Kris Kritscher 09:43

[laughs] So you were stationed at Fort Ord?

Bill Young 10:30

Yeah, I was stationed at Fort Ord for several months. I became the company commander, Company K, First Infantry Regiment. I went overseas. In 1951, I joined the 17th Regimental Combat Team, Seventh Infantry Division, and we were pushing northward, and we were fighting for the high ground, fighting for and stabilizing the high ground. We were moving toward the 38th parallel. I spent the winter, 1951-52 —that winter—up in the hills. It was cold, ice and snow. And we're fighting against the Chinese Communist army. Of course, we— outside the Air Force, and the artillery, they sent out barrage. Also, a lot of time they would drop surrender notices to the other side. So the hills are all covered by these surrender leaflets. All the Communist Chinese army had to do is pick it up, read the directions on it, and crawl toward our line. So one day it did happen. When it was just getting light, we noticed a flag waving

out in front of us. And then we see four of those Chinese army crawling toward our lines. So a couple of the soldiers went down and searched them and escort them back to our lines. So I was called to interview them, and they couldn't speak Mandarin. They couldn't speak Cantonese. They couldn't speak English. So we had to run them down off the hill and hand them over to the MPs. That's the last time we saw them, but I did see four of them coming toward our lines. So I came back home in 1952 and went back to the store.

Kris Kritscher 11:38

And what store was this?

Bill Young 13:00

It was the Salinas Drive-In Market on Monterey Street. It belonged to my brother. I later became a partner at the store. So I retired as a butcher 35 years of, in the union. And then I start doing my payback time to the town that's so good to me.

Kris Kritscher 13:34

You said when you worked at the Drive-In Market you first started in produce? Yes, I was. When when the family moved here in 1940. My brother and his wife has a lease on the produce department of the Salinas Drive-In and the produce department of [unclear] Market. That's where my brothers were working. So I went to work, after school every day. School ends at 3:10 in the afternoon. I'm down at the store at 3:30 and working to about 8:00, five days a week. I work all day Saturday and all day Sunday. I don't know how many dollars I got, but not very much. I know my brothers when they were working at either [unclear] South or the Salinas Drive-In, same hours. It was 12 and a half a week. It was lucky. It was lucky that they had a job. And which brother was it that had the lease? Was that George?

Bill Young 14:45

My brother George, number one. He's the only one, of the six brothers, he's the only one that didn't serve in the military. I think it's Chinese tradition, number one son always stays home to take care of the family — papa, mama, and the young kids, and the girls of the family. So what he did, he applied for a deferment. He went into farming, while his wife took care of the two grocery—the two produce stands. So he can, he'll be deferred from the draft, and it made, it made perfect sense for the family because when the other brothers got into the service, there was nobody bringing any money to take care of our parents, and the young kids. But to me, number one son, George, he's the greatest of our greatest generation. He stayed home and took care of the family. As you could see from the picture, there's five out of six in the service.

Kris Kritscher 16:00

And so, let's see, Albert, no, Francis, Francis was the first in the military?

Bill Young 16:08

Yeah, Francis was the first.

Kris Kritscher 16:11

And that was in 1940?

Bill Young 16:15

1941, just before the war started.

Kris Kritscher 16:17

1941. Okay. And then in 1942, Albert was born?

Bill Young 16:24

Yeah, 1942. Albert was born. After Francis was drafted. My father had his first heart attack. Brother Albert, the second one drafted, my dad had his second heart attack. When I got drafted, at the time that I didn't make it, my father had his third heart attack. He ended up in a Chinese hospital in San Francisco. He was there for about 10 months before he passed away. So when he passed away, I went down to the draft board. That is when I asked the draft board to send me a notice.

Kris Kritscher 17:04

And then the brother that was drafted after you was Howard?

Bill Young 17:08

It was Howard. He retired now. He, he was a master sergeant. He was with the 25th Infantry Division. He was on MacArthur's staff after the war.

Kris Kritscher 17:23

Wow. So, George, Francis, Albert, you, Howard —

Bill Young 17:36

—and then my brother, youngest brother is Ben. He was, in the Korean War, he was in the Air Force. But, he didn't go overseas. He lucked out. He later became a dentist.

Kris Kritscher 17:39

Ben. Let's see. And so you were a butcher for the Salinas Drive-In Market?

Bill Young 18:04

Right.

Kris Kritscher 18:05

And you later became a partner of that market?

Bill Young 18:08

Right.

Kris Kritscher 18:10

And there was also something about an auto agency?

Bill Young 18:12

The what?

Kris Kritscher 18:12

An auto agency?

Bill Young 18:14

Auto agency?

Kris Kritscher 18:15

Yes.

Bill Young 18:16

Oh, the building. The old Salinas Drive-In, right now, is the parking lot for the Bank of America. The people that owned that building that we leased from sold that property to the Bank of America. So, they took that building and wiped it all out. And right now, stands the Bank of America down on Main Street. There was automobile agency directly across the street from the old market. So my brother went over there and leased the whole building, took out everything from the inside, took off the gas pumps and things like that and made it into a grocery store. And it was a little better than 10,000 square feet. It worked out very well.

Kris Kritscher 19:18

Um, let me see there was Oh, yeah. And you've been a volunteer at the Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital.

Bill Young 19:28

It was after I retired. Well, at the store, we catered to the carriage trade — doctors and lawyers and business people. I knew a doctor. One of our doctors was Dr. [unintelligible] When he heard that I retired, he went to my wife and he told my wife that "I want him to volunteer at the hospital." So after a couple of times, I called Dr. Polfor. I said "Give me a year. I want to clean up my garage. [Chris laughs] Then I'll volunteer." So I did. So I volunteered over 10 years at the emergency room, at the hospital, and plus a lot of other things to keep busy. Christmas time and Thanksgiving time, you'll see me down at Dorothy's Kitchen. I'll be carving turkeys and ham and serving the homeless and the hungry. I've volunteered a lot of time here, too, when we added the multi-purpose room. I've been keeping myself pretty busy. Let's see what else have I done that's worth anything?

Kris Kritscher 20:54

Well, you've done quite a bit that's worth quite a lot. I have to say. What was that you said about when they put in the multi-purpose room?

Bill Young 21:02

Oh, the multi-purpose room, I painted inside, outside, on the floor. I've laid tile on the floor. This building itself, the old building. It used to be wooden planks. So I use ply board—plywood—four by eights, laid over the whole floor, and after that put in tile.

Kris Kritscher 21:33

And you also said that you—when you volunteered—you also donated blood.

Bill Young 21:40

Yeah, a lot of times I read in the obituaries in the paper where this guy donated 60 gallons. It's impossible for a man to donate 60 gallons of blood. I've donated 14 gallons. Fourteen gallons is 112 pints.

Kris Kritscher 22:04

Wow.

Bill Young 22:06

It takes, if you donate blood every three months — every three months you go there — it would take you two years to reach one gallon mark. Two years. So 14 gallons took me a little over 28 years. Every three months to go donate blood. Not just here in Salinas. I started donating blood when I was working in the shipyards and the time I was in the service, but after I came back from fighting over in Korea. I hate the needle!

Kris Kritscher 22:42

[laughs]

Bill Young 22:43

But donating blood, it doesn't bother me. If I get my flu shot, I don't like that needle. But donating blood, those needles used to be like a large nail. But now it's much better. But I quit donating blood. The last pint of blood I donated was when I was about 75, and it took me a couple of days to get over it. I think I've had enough. I'm 84.

Kris Kritscher 23:14

Well, you've done a lot. You've done a lot and you've done a lot to give back. Let's see. Oh, you mentioned that when you're volunteering at Dorothy's Kitchen, you cut carved turkeys at Christmas, and hams—

Bill Young 23:29

Oh yeah

Kris Kritscher 23:29

You mentioned there's a ham story?

Bill Young 23:31

Oh, there was one time I went down to — I don't remember whether it was for Thanksgiving or Christmas—they had the turkeys. A lot of people just tear parts off, but I see a turkey in front of me, I'll just bone it out. Bone out large pieces. Pass it on to the next person, then they can slice it. But the ham. They had about a dozen hams who just got out of the oven. Nobody knew what to do with it. It still had

the hough on it. It still had the hide on it. So when I went in, they clapped their hands. So I took my knife out, and I bone out the whole thing. Nobody else knew what to do with it. [laughs] But that's what you get for being a butcher. And I always carry my knife on a scabbard that's held on the side of my, my body. It has all the knives I need. Of course, it's less dangerous when you have four or five people cutting up on the table, if everybody cut and then leave their knife down, somebody else will grab it, they're going to cut themselves. So after you get through with your knife, you just shove it down in your scabbard, that you have at your side. It's a lot safer.

Kris Kritscher 24:56

Let's see. When you were growing, when you were living in Chinatown, did you eat a lot of Chinese food? Or do you eat mostly American food?

Bill Young 25:10

We ate a lot of Chinese food. It's a lot less expensive. Mother would cook a pot of rice, all you need is a little bit of this, a little bit of that to go with that rice. But if you tried to fix an American meal, then you, then you have your soup, your salad and your entree, and it involved too much money to put out a meal, especially with a large family that we have. Most of the time, there's at least seven or eight. And we had grandmother living with us. So there's a lot of mouths to feed. A pot of rice is comparatively easy to afford.

Kris Kritscher 25:59

You said they'd make the rice, so the rice was the staple?

Bill Young 26:06

Yeah, that is correct.

Kris Kritscher 26:08

And then there was a "little bit of this, a little bit of that." What is the "little bit of this, a little bit that?" Anything that comes to mind?

Bill Young 26:13

Greens. Chinese style swiss chard is one. Now, you asked a very good question. Memory doesn't go back that far. We were never too delighted to have dinner cause there really—very—wasn't much of it. Just a lot of rice. And a lot of salt fish.

Kris Kritscher 26:49

Do you know what kind of salt fish?

Bill Young 26:52

You asked a very good question. No, it wasn't very. They used to come in cans about the size of a tuna fish can.

Kris Kritscher 26:59

Oh, okay.

Bill Young 27:02

And the fish was small. [laughs] Probably a little like—little sardines.

Kris Kritscher 27:06

Yeah, like little sardines. Was there ever a time when you walked in to, walked into the house? And you could smell dinner cooking? Was it like a certain smell? Like you could tell what it was by the smell?

Bill Young 27:22

No, I don't. I don't recollect. I'm sure it would've been very comforting. You open the door, you smell something cooking—we got something to eat.

Kris Kritscher 27:37

Yeah. Were there times, were there times when you didn't have something to eat?

Bill Young 27:42

No. Mama and Papa was very good. No, we always had—

Kris Kritscher 27:46

Always had food. Good. You said your grandma used to live with you?

Bill Young 27:52

Yes. My grandmother. We're the product of—we—I don't know my grandfather. I hear that he was a merchant in San Francisco Chinatown. That's how my dad came over. My dad was a son of a merchant. And my grandmother was the second wife. Back in the old days, I think they're allowed to have four wives. So we're the product of my grandfather's second wife. But from what I've seen or heard, my grandfather was fairly tall man. But my grand-, grandmother number two, she was less than five foot tall. So we have Mutt and Jeff. [laughter]

Kris Kritscher 28:11

Yes. So your grandmother came over from China?

Bill Young 28:53

Oh, yes. I'm sure that my grandfather either sent for or he just went over there and got one. I think a lot of people in Chinatown still do it. They can't find somebody that they like, or from their village, or speak their same language or dialect, they'll go back to China and there's plenty of them willing to come.

Kris Kritscher 29:22

You mentioned same dialect. You said that when you were learning Mandarin, there was, like, a problem with the teachers?

Bill Young 29:34

No, all the teachers we have at the University of California they spoke English.

Kris Kritscher 29:39

Yeah.

Bill Young 29:41

And during the day, we'll probably have two hours was the general class and the rest of the day to five. We have at least four or five different teachers. They might be teaching you the same sentence, the same words for their inflection coming out of the throat, it's a little bit different. So, UC wanted us to learn how to hear the same word with different inflections. They're speaking English, down south do you say y'all? You don't say that in the west.

Kris Kritscher 30:32

No, but it's still English.

Bill Young 30:34

It's still English.

Kris Kritscher 30:35

Just like that is still Mandarin.

Bill Young 30:37

We had quite an intensive course to figure out. There's one teacher for every six students. They wanted us to know how to speak Mandarin. If the war kept on, as the Emperor of Japan said "we'll fight that last last person," we would've been caught in a real bad war. If we ever had to invade all the islands of Japan. And they were figuring they'd probably need part of the chain Chinese army, then our ally, to help with the invasion. That's why we were studying Mandarin to go in with a—connected somehow with a Chinese drumming

Kris Kritscher 31:23

That's what you thought was going to happen?

Bill Young 31:26

Yeah. We figured that was gonna happen. The war was still going strong. That's before the atomic bomb came. After the atomic bomb, everything was cool. Everyone says "we give up." It would have been entirely a different world like it is now. You wouldn't have all the good Japanese cars.

Kris Kritscher 31:54

You said something before about the younger generation in the Chinatowns.

Bill Young 32:05

Back in the old days before the war, there's in Chinatown here, you have quite a few restaurants, family houses, houses of ill repute. But the people, the young people in town then could find something to do. Then we had a district attorney here in town, his name is Brazil. He closed them all up. So there wasn't any jobs around here, but came the war, the draft. A lot of the people got drafted. So they had a chance, within a few—couple of years, with the draft—drafting of all these people here in Chinatown,

they're occupying—they're going to all the other states in the United States, pretty soon—well, we never thought—the people living here never thought that there'll be stationed in Oklahoma or down in Texas or up in Wyoming. All of a sudden, Uncle Sam got ahold of them. They're all over United States. And the people here in the United States finally got to meet a Chinese. Look at him. Talk to him. Evaluate him. I know the first— when I got out of officer school as a lieutenant, I was stationed down in Texas. The first platoon I got was about sixty guys, most of them was from Minnesota. They have never seen a Chinese before. And I've seen—all of a sudden I've got sixty guys I've got to train. I was 20 years old. What the hell did I know? But we got along alright.

Kris Kritscher 34:05

You said that this that that dispersing was good for the Chinese

Bill Young 34:09

Yes, it was. But as far as it is right now, when all the young people grow up, go to high school, go to college, it's pretty hard for them to stay in Salinas. There's not much—there's not much opportunity. If you're in a in a technical trade of any time type, both my—my son and my grandson— uh, computer—they can do anything with a computer. So they have to leave town to go to a bigger town or where there are jobs available. Not today, it isn't, but a few years ago. Right now for a young person to try to go out and find a job. It's just about impossible. Nobody's hiring. The economy—at this stage of the game?

Kris Kritscher 35:07

Yeah.

Bill Young 35:08

It's lousy.

Kris Kritscher 35:09

Yeah. We—no, you were talking about—similar to what you said of the people coming into contact with the Chinese how that was good for the, for Chinatown, the dispersing it or it was good for the Chinese communities

Bill Young 35:25

Yes, it is. Before, when there was just Chinese around Chinatown or in San Francisco or LA, nobody in a town know about any Chinese. They might go to the restaurant and have Chinese food—terrific—but they don't get to meet them and know them as individuals; their likes and dislikes; what their belief is; whether they vote for McCain or Obama. We have thoughts. Most of the Chinese, even nowadays, they keep fairly well to themselves. They don't go and volunteer like I do. When you have a chance, I got some scrapbooks there. What we're—have been talking about is just a small portion of what I've done. The scrapbook would tell you that I'm quite involved with the United States Marines. 'Cause my son was Marine, and he fought over in Vietnam with the First Marine Division. My son was going through DL—DLI, the school in Monterey, learning how to speak Vietnamese. So before he went, shipped out, he asked my mother, mother and myself, he said there are a lot of Marines over there studying Vietnamese, they got no place to go at night, no place to go over the weekend, why don't you invite them to the house? So, we did that for about a year and a half. On the average weekend, we'll have

two to four Marines staying over at our house. During the year—the year and a half we did that, we got over 100 Marine that stayed over at our house. When they come Saturday night, we'll have dinner with—for them. So they stayed overnight in our house. Then my wife and I take them out to San Francisco. What a lot of them want to do is ride the cable car because they're from all over. So, so I'll drop them off on Market Street, where the turntable is. And I—so I tell them "we'll meet you at Fisherman's Wharf " the cable car goes up, and ends up at Fisherman's Wharf. That's where the round table—the turn-around is. So that album, over there, will show a picture of a lot of marines. We've had one, I think, info from my wife, he was decorated with our second highest decoration. The highest decoration is the Congressional Medal of Honor. If you're in the Navy, the next medal, it's a Navy Cross. He got that.

Kris Kritscher 38:44

Wow.

Bill Young 38:46

We got one that was killed. We got a couple who was injured. And we tried to get a pardon for one that was caught killing five Vietnamese. That little project, we tried to get him a pardon, and that took over a year. Thank goodness for my wife. She corrected all my spelling—spelling, all my grammar, things like that. It'd be very interesting, I think. That's what I've—we've had to contribute as far as taking care of the people that's taking care of us.

Kris Kritscher 39:35

I think you've made a lot of great contributions. Would you like me to bring the scrapbooks over and we can—

Bill Young 39:41

Why don't you just take a look at it and see whether it's worthwhile or not.

Kris Kritscher 39:45

Alright, well, we gotta pause. Let's get the script. [Recording stops]

Bill Young 39:45

[Recording starts mid-sentence]—editor. I invited families—

Kris Kritscher 39:59

[Speaking to other person in the room about recording equipment]

Bill Young 40:10

I invited families to invite the Marines over for Christmas. A public forum. I put an ad—article asking people to invite the Marines over for Christmas, because they got no place else to go, please call me at the Salinas Drive-In, so they did. For that Christmas, we had 68 families that invited the Marines. But I can only—I didn't get more than 100, about 120 Marines, from Monterey from the Defense Language School. And this picture right here, you'll see me in the center at the Salinas Drive-In, with the Marines.

Kris Kritscher 41:08

Is that you?

Bill Young 41:09

Yeah.

Kris Kritscher 41:10

Can you zoom in on that? So this is—this is Mr. Young.

Bill Young 41:14

Yeah, I was—the Marines were getting off the, uh, the bus—the first bus. All the Marines were standing in line, as I wanted 'em to—them to, I was talking to them. And on this side is part of the picture of the families that called in that they would like to invite Marines over. So it worked out very, very nice. It was 68 families inviting about 100 and—I imagine 120 or so Marines. And they were supposed to pick up the Marines at nine o'clock after they finished dinner. But very, very few families brought the Marines back to take them home. They drove them home themselves.

Kris Kritscher 41:20

Oh, wow.

Bill Young 41:39

So, it worked out very good. I did this because a month before that. I did the same thing. Inviting the Marines over for Thanksgiving. That worked out very well too. So I thought I'll expand it for Christmas and it worked out very, very well.

Kris Kritscher 42:24

Very generous.

Bill Young 42:27

And these are pictures of the Marines that came over the house.

Kris Kritscher 42:44

[to camera operator] Might want to get a close up of that one.

Bill Young 42:58

This is when we had Japanese dinner. I don't remember where this is. With the Marines in Chinatown.

Kris Kritscher 43:09

So that was a Japanese dinner. At a restaurant you don't remember.

Bill Young 43:13

I don't remember what this is another day. Another group, I think.

Kris Kritscher 43:19

Alright.

Bill Young 43:20

And this is the guy that had won the Navy Cross, the nation second highest award.

Kris Kritscher 43:25

Oh wow. Indecent Dickie?

Bill Young 43:32

Hmm?

Kris Kritscher 43:33

Indecent Dickie?

Bill Young 43:35

Indecent?

Kris Kritscher 43:35

Yeah, is that what he was called? So, it's written on the bottom. Indecent Dickie.

Bill Young 43:36

[laughs] Oh, yeah.

Kris Kritscher 43:44

Marine humor? Marine humor? [laughs]

Bill Young 43:56

Sorry it's all burnt.

Kris Kritscher 43:59

If I may ask, how did it get burnt?

Bill Young 44:06

Smoking a cigarette.

Kris Kritscher 44:07

Oh.

Bill Young 44:07

It got down on the couch.

Kris Kritscher 44:09

All right.

Bill Young 44:14

I was volunteering in the hospital. And then pretty soon the nurse came up to me and said "Bill, go home. Don't ask any questions. Go home." So I went home. It seems my wife just got home. The dog was barking. Smoke was coming out of the house. [Unclear] our neighbor across the street, he said, "I'll call 911." So when I got there, the fire truck was there, everything [unclear] was just one room. But this was in the room. Let me show you the picture of the fellow that got caught in—the killing of five—Belknap, right here. He's gone. [unclear] Belknap. He was one of the seven that was caught killing five Vietnamese, and this is what we tried to do for him. We tried to launch a campaign for him. This worked out alright. I have a book—a steno pad that these guys sign—sign in when they come to the house. Put their name, rank, and their home address. It worked out very, very well.

Kris Kritscher 45:54

Very nice.

Bill Young 46:02

Out from this group comes this.

Kris Kritscher 46:09

So this, this one here? What's this one?

Bill Young 46:24

I even wrote a book on how they can help.

Kris Kritscher 46:58

So please explain?

Bill Young 47:07

What year was that 1968? Yes, when whenever you save work that the fellow that I've stayed in our house several times. He was being court martialed, with six other marines, for the killing of five Vietnamese laborers. When we heard that from Belknap's mother, I thought we got to do something, what can we do? So I start writing letters to all the families of all the other Marines that I had addresses for asking their parents to try—it's an effort to get this Marine a lesser sentence. And it worked out alright.

Kris Kritscher 48:11

Okay.

Bill Young 48:12

But in order to have all the people do it at the right time, at the same time, I came up with a pamphlet on how I want this act of kindness—that I call it—to work. So I wrote: what's the purpose of this project; who are the participants and why; how it's to be done; target date for action; anticipated results; costs; the list of Senators and Congressmen; the purpose of this article; participants, I put in everything, even the addresses of the parents of the Marines being tried, from how it is to be done—in a newspaper, through your congressman, public personalities, ideals, ideas, list of the congressmen [unclear] most of

the states. Even wrote form letters on how they can write their congressman or write the newsletter—paper. So it worked out fairly well. It turned out—the Marine, his name is Allen. They got—they caught five Vietnamese going through the area. They captured that five. They shot four of them. And one, they took to—inside of a hut, put a rope around the rafter and tried to hang him, but the rope broke and the man landed on the ground. So Allen went out and got his knife and cut the man's throat. I think he got 20 years. And Belknap, that's the one that we're interested in, he got two years a dishonorable—

Kris Kritscher 50:56

A dishonorable discharge.

Bill Young 50:59

Hmm?

Kris Kritscher 50:59

Dishonorable discharge.

Bill Young 51:01

Yep. And two years. The thing that really is troubling is one of the Marines went back home and a civilian attorney got ahold of him and he got off scot free.

Kris Kritscher 51:25

Wow.

Bill Young 51:31

Oh, well. [unclear] review Allen's war record and things like that, but [unclear] got 20 years. At least—at least he didn't—We met one—with one of the families of one of the Marines. My wife and I, I had three Marines staying with us that weekend. We drove up and saw the parents of one of the Marines.

Kris Kritscher 52:14

Oh wow. Did you want to take a look at your family's personal contributions now. You want to take a look at these and point out the important parts, which should be all of them.

Bill Young 52:39

Sons of Young family. Number two son Francis, the First Lieutenant in the field artillery. Number three son, brother Albert, went through India, Burma, and China. He's in the [unclear] signal corps, he set up telephone line between India, Burma and into the back door of China. Number four son—that's me. That picture was taken in Korea. You see the snow and things like that. I was in command of the mortar platoon. After that I was in command of the machine gun platoon. I was recon officer and second in command of the company. This one, number five son, he retired as a master sergeant. He served with the 25th infantry and was a member of MacArthur's staff.

Kris Kritscher 54:03

We'll shift the focus to you for now, since the interviews on you. Since the interviews on you, we'll shift the focus to you and then come to the next generation.

Bill Young 54:14

This is during the Korean War. This is a picture of my company—of the company commander at Fort Ord, California. That is a picture of me holding a submachine gun that was made in China. And this is in front of one of the bunkers that we— we sleep in it, underground. Oh, there's a picture of my wife and I, 1946. We just got married and just before I went overseas the first time. Another picture of me sitting right in front of the bunker. You see there's a walkie talkie and next to me is my radio operator. Like this fellow right here, his name is Green. He took over after I—after I lost my other operator, whose name is Eisenhardt. He didn't make it back. This one is the last inspection we had before going back to the hills. This is the best picture of them all: home at last. Home at last.

Kris Kritscher 56:01

Very true, very true. Best of them all. Now, we can move to the next generation. The next generation, the Young family.

Bill Young 56:16

Number six son, my brother Ben, is a sergeant in the Air Force. Come to next generation. The coming generation. My son, Terry. He's in Marine Corps. He fought over in Vietnam, was the First Marine Division. There's Wayne, he's the son of the Air Force man. Right now he is the ranking officer—ranking dental officer aboard the USS aircraft carrier, Abraham Lincoln. He's the ranking—he's full commander. The next one is Ryan, my grandson. That's a picture of him, taken when he was in Iraq. He's back home, but he's scheduled to go to Iraq again, sometime this month, for a second tour. A picture of my— one of my sister's husband, Bob Law. He's intelligence during—in Burma, long time ago.

Kris Kritscher 57:52

Mr. Young, I want to thank you, not only for your—no—I want to thank you for taking the time to [unclear] and also thank you for your contributions.

Bill Young 58:00

It's a lot of bullshit.

Kris Kritscher 58:02

No, it's not a lot of bullshit. You've done a lot. And I want to thank you.

Bill Young 58:07

You're quite welcome.

Kris Kritscher 58:07

Alright. Thank you.

Bill Young 58:09

Now I don't have to think about it and I can go to sleep at night and not think about it. [Laughs] Alright. Thank you.