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Oral History Interview  
**TAPE LOG**

*Please note that this is not a literal transcript. Many of the questions and answers are paraphrased and/or abridged.*

**Interviewee:** Dr. Donald Moreland, Class of 1949

**Interviewer:** Anna Dahlstein

**Date:** September 10, 2003

**Location:** NCSU Libraries, Room 3133

**Length:** 30 min.

*[Dr. Moreland's own corrections and amendments are italicized, along with the text they are intended to replace, if any.]*

000 Introductory information (same as above)

015 Basic biographical questions: Date of birth, place of birth?

Oct. 12, 1919 in Enfield, Connecticut

022 Parents' names and places of birth?

My father was Albert Sinclair Moreland and my mother was Ruth Cowan. Both were from the Boston, MA area.

030 Parents' education and occupations?

*My mother was a graduate of a teacher's college, I think in Framingham, MA. My father was a mechanical-electrical engineer.*

*[Mother attended Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA, for two years, then transferred to and graduated from Salem State College, Salem, MA, where she majored in English. My father was a tool and die maker.]*

041 You had one brother and one sister?

Yes – My sister was three years younger than me and my brother five years younger.

047 You lost your father in your childhood?

Yes, about the time I was 14 years old.

051 Nevertheless, you successfully completed high school?

*Yes, high school was no problem.*

*[Yes, in 1937. While in high school, I had two newspaper routes that kept me busy afternoons, but provided money for school expenses, clothing, etc.]*

055 When did you begin to think about attending college?

I went to a college preparatory high school, Classical High in Springfield, but with the Depression and the limitations on finances it was out of the question. I had an interest in photography at that time and was able to obtain employment at a very minimum wage with a photographic studio [Brown's Studio] in Springfield. I worked there for three years, saving some money to start college and came to NC State [*in Sept. 1940*] because it was the most inexpensive accredited forestry school on the East Coast.

072 That's quite a jump, from photography to forestry. Could you please explain how your interest in forestry emerged?

I got interested in forestry primarily through scouting, hiking, camping – did some backpacking during the summers on the Long Trail that runs from the MA-VT border to the Canadian-VT border.

084 So you graduated from high school in 1937, worked for three years and entered NC State in 1940, is that right?

That's right. So if I had gone directly from high school to college, I would have graduated in 1941. But entering NC State [*in 1940*], I was in the class of 1944. And ended up graduating in the class of '49.

094 Were you the first member of your extended family to attend college?

I don't know about my father, though I believe he had some form of college education. Most of my mother's people (brothers or sisters) were gifted artists or musicians and she went to a teacher's college and taught high school English in various cities in the western part of MA before her marriage.

*[Note: See information added to 030 in this tape log.]*

103 When you moved to Raleigh, NC, did your family remain in MA?

Yes, because both my brother and sister were still in school.

106 Did they end up going to college themselves?

No, neither of them did. Part of this was that we had a commitment to help our mother out financially and this had a real impact on everything that we undertook. All three of us felt that we had a very real obligation to Mother.

115 Did you work during your freshman year of college, to supplement your income?

I tried to but there were not many *[part-time]* jobs available. I came down here with a one-way train ticket and \$200 to cover tuition and board. The government had a New Deal program called NYA, National Youth Administration, where they provided some work to qualified *people [students]*. But I don't believe I got into that program until *the third [the second]* quarter.

130 Did any form of financial aid exist for college students at the time?

(Laughs.) Well, this was during the Depression and jobs were few and far between. I did pick up some odd jobs at the school based on my photography experience. One was developing the portraits taken for the Registration cards. In I think it was the winter quarter, I was able to get into the NYA program. I think that paid 30 an hour and we could *work 10 hours a week [earn up to \$15 a month]*. That provided a little food money.

146 You mentioned that you were “drafted by Uncle Sam” only one or two months into your Sophomore year, in October of 1941?

Right. During the fall quarter of 1940, because of the situation in England and Europe, Congress passed a Selective Service Act *[Selective Training and Service Act on Sept. 16, 1940]* – the details are written in my memoirs – and I think it was on Oct. 16, 1940 that people between the ages of *21 and 45 [21 and 36]* were required to register. I had turned 21 on Oct. 12 so four days later I registered. The initial term of service was 12 months.

*[This included only males living in the continental U.S. The second registration held July 1, 1941 included those living in U.S. Territories – Puerto Rico, Alaska, Hawaiian Islands. Subsequent registrations (four) were held after the U.S. entered the War, and eventually extended the age coverage to 18-65.]*

*Early on, was called up to participate in military training and had student deferments through to the end of the spring quarter. Then I went into the Army on Oct. 8, 1941, expecting to serve one year, instead serving almost five years.*

*[In March 1941, I was called up to participate in military training but received a student deferment through to July 1, 1941. The local and appeal boards declined to extend the student deferment for my Sophomore year (1941-42). So I went into*

*the Army on Oct. 8, 1941, two months prior to Pearl Harbor, expecting to serve one year, but instead served almost five years.]*

- 172 Were you a “machine records officer” in the Southwest Pacific Theater? Do you have any idea why you were recruited for that position?

(Laughs) I was assigned to the Signal Corps for basic training and advanced training, I guess because of my photography background, but they didn’t have any openings there so they put me into teletype maintenance and installation training. This was a reduced course, something like four months. My first orders were to Washington D.C. to join the Second Signal Service *Battalion [Company]*, which eventually became Signal Intelligence Service. We were trained on the installation, maintenance and operation of an enciphering-deciphering machine called the SIGABA, which is an ultra-secret system that was never broken into by the enemy forces. Then we were shipped down to Australia to form the nucleus of General McArthur’s Signal Intelligence Service.

I went down in late May 1942 and arrived around July 3, 1942. We set up the first message center for McArthur (in Melbourne) that had the SIGABA machines in them. We were there about four months and moved up to Brisbane. It was there that I was introduced to card-punch IBM equipment. During the war we did not have MOS’s (Military Occupation Specialties) so the closest thing that the clerks could come up with was “machine records officer,” number 2401, and I knew nothing about [that].

- 217 So it was actually an incorrect term?

Yes -- during the war overseas, in Australia, the islands and the Philippines, we did not have an MOS number but we had to be assigned one when the war was over and we returned to the U.S. so the closest specialty they could come up with were “machine records officers” – These people were originally assigned to the Adjutant General’s Department and maintained the strengths of the troops in the field. When I went to Fort Devens for separation, they came across my 2401 specialty and this was in short supply and I was forced to stay in [the Army] for an additional six months because of that, and spent that time at Fort Bragg at First Army Headquarters.

- 233 How ironic – you had to remain in the service for a job that you hadn’t actually carried out.

Right -- I knew nothing about the operation of machine records units, though I knew the machines. So it was a rather simple transfer. But instead of getting out in December 1945 or January of 1946, I didn’t get out until August 18, 1946.

- 240 That’s very interesting – that the work you had carried out was so confidential that a term did not even exist for it.

Right. *That work [The Signal Intelligence Service] eventually became the Army Security Agency and then the National Security Agency.*

- 242 Thank you for that summary of your military service. We are now going to return to your educational career. What were your thoughts when you were separated – was your goal to go right back to college?

Well, the war ended so abruptly. While we were in the Philippines, stationed north of Manila in a town called San Miguel, we were regrouping and getting ready for the approaching invasion of the Japanese mainland. But then the atomic bombs were dropped. The war ended so rapidly that we never had the chance to regroup because parts of the unit were still on their way from Brisbane to Luzon and others were scattered along the New Guinea positions. Many of the people stayed on in the Army Security Agency, but my main goal was to try to finish my education and get a bachelor's degree.

- 261 What was your rank at the time you were separated?

I had gone through the enlisted ranks, got a field commission as a Second Lieutenant, and I was separated from service on August 19, 1946 as a First Lieutenant. But then I stayed in the Reserves with the feeling that with my background, if an emergency arose, I would be called right back in and I didn't want to start over again as an enlisted man. I stayed in the Reserves and completed 37 years of service and retired when I reached the age of 59 [60 in *October 1979*] at the rank of full colonel.

- 272 You have written extensively about your GI Bill benefits and specified that your allowance was raised to \$90 a month because your mother was officially a dependent.

Right, I believe the pay without dependency was \$60 a month, and with the dependency allowance \$90 a month.

- 279 Was this income sufficient to cover your living expenses?

The GI Bill covered out-of-state tuition for all students, even in-state students, to help the universities out. All of the books and school supplies were provided under the terms of the Act.

- 286 Did you need to work to supplement your income anyway?

Well, I needed to work to help Mother out financially.

- 289 Could you please describe what jobs you held in your sophomore, junior and senior years?

I worked for various members of the Botany Dept., did some of the graphic work for them, making slides and enlargements. I was a dormitory assistant for most of that time except for the first two quarters in 1946-47. I got some part-time work with companies downtown operating IBM machines. And I taught a laboratory course in the first Zoology course. So I stayed busy.

- 301 How did the GI Bill influence your education, in your interpretation? Do you think it enabled you to return to college, or did it simply allow you to complete college faster than you would have otherwise? From your perspective, what was its impact?

I'm afraid that if it had not been for the GI Bill, I would probably never have been able to get a college degree of any sort. I was fortunate that in the beginning of my senior year, the Forestry Dept. came up with an opening for a teaching assistantship which provided an opportunity to obtain the Master's degree under an accelerated program. With the teaching assistantship and the GI Bill I was able to send half of the money home to Mother. This continued and led into an opportunity for obtaining a doctoral degree. I needed financial assistance for the doctoral degree and I was able to get an Atomic Energy Commission pre-doctoral fellowship. So I was able not only to obtain tuition support and living expenses but also to continue contributions to Mother.

- 324 What was your first position after completing your Ph.D.?

I joined a research team at the College of Forestry in Syracuse, New York. This was doing contract research supported by pulp and paper companies. The school hoped to maintain the research team but ran out of money and we had to look for other work and that's when I joined the [U.S.] Dept. of Agriculture and was stationed on the NCSU campus.

- 333 And you remained in Raleigh, NC, for the rest of your career?

Yes.

- 335 Going back to the 1940s: In your memoirs, you describe the general housing situation on campus as well as the overcrowded classrooms. Each dorm room had double bunkbeds but only two small desks. Where in the world did people go to study?

(Laughs) On their beds, because there weren't many classrooms open at night, and the library was used very extensively, and that's when it was in what is now Brooks Hall. It was crowded but it was a lot better than being in the military. The closet space was limited but nobody had any civilian clothes anyway. Most everyone wore parts of their military uniforms.

349 Did you know any fellow veterans who lived in Vetville?

Yes, quite a few that had trailers in Vetville. Most of these were married. There were a few single veterans, and these trailers were parked in the back of Alexander and Turlington dorms.

354 Was that the area known as Trailwood? Did it have a specific name?

I'm not sure. We would need to go back to the Agromecks. They had temporary buildings right along Hillsborough where D.H. Hill Library is now and these were occupied mainly by faculty members.

367 Did you visit your friends in Vetville; did you spend any time there?

I went to school with them and went out on picnics with some of them and their wives but I don't recall [visiting Vetville].

372 It seems that you were fortunate to get a dorm room, given the overcrowding. Did you win a lottery or was there some form of sign-up sheet?

I just applied for readmittance to the university and filled out an application for a dorm room and was assigned one with two other Forestry sophomores.

379 Could you tell us a little more about life on campus in the late 1940s? Specifically: Were the veterans very different from the younger students, and if so, how? Did the two crowds mix at all?

The veterans were obviously more mature and I was told by some of the professors long afterwards that they had to change their approaches to teaching so as not to talk under the level of experience of the veterans. It was rather hectic at times. There were still a lot of veterans suffering of shellshock [because they] had been through very traumatic experiences. If there was any sudden noise in the dormitories for that first couple of years, it had a traumatic effect on some of the students. The veterans I think were a more dedicated group of people; they came to school with the objective of getting a degree and they worked hard at it.

395 I have heard what you said earlier echoed by many veterans: They had the feeling that they were a few years behind, that they wanted to catch up on the time they had lost.

That's right: I had lost five years in the military service and three years to the Depression ... so I had eight years to make up for.

399 In closing, I wanted to ask you: Do you have any thoughts or opinions about how useful a policy the GI Bill continues to be?

I certainly think the policy should be extended. In recent years, I have talked to a number of soldiers who have indicated that one of the reasons they went into the service for a three- or four-year enlistment was to be able to “cash in” on the educational benefits. But I’m not familiar with the details of the benefits available now.

411 End