

2015-07-12 SIDE B

Luncheon with Ronald Jobe, Mike Wallace

January 20, 1992

Tallahassee, Florida

Lael Morgan

Series: Lael Morgan Collection interviews

Colonel Ronald Jobe talked about military providing him a way of life. He said they have spent time in Europe and he has made a good living. He talked about our country winning the Cold War. He said they paved the way for him.

Professor James Eaton thanked Colonel Jobe.

Captain Audrey Smith talked about it is an honor to be there for the Black Corps of Engineers. She said she is representing the naval ROTC at Florida University. She said their battalion is experiencing growth in excellence. She wanted to ensure the viability of their unit. She said hearing about their accomplishments gives her something else to challenge her men and women with. She said with challenges they will succeed in a competitive world. She said the engineers' challenges were much greater. She wanted to thank them on behalf of her battalion.

Mike Wallace said he brought greetings from the entire command of the Army reserve officer training corps. He is proud to be part of the commemoration. He said history books failed to include the information about the Black soldiers on the Alaska Highway, but today they begin to set the record straight. He thanks the men in the Black Corps of Engineers.

James Eaton talked about Master Sergeant Hayward Oubre. He introduced Benjamin L. Curry who served as president of the university and was also a Corps of Engineers member.

Benjamin Curry said he wanted to tell the people who were there that he was an improviser. He talked about his experiences in WWII. He slept in a tent while he built barracks for others. He understood what the veterans went through.

James Eaton asked the veterans to stand. He asked to hear from Nehemiah Atkinson.

Nehemiah Atkinson said it a great pleasure to be there. Fifty years ago he was a young boy of twenty-two. It was a frightening thing to be in Alaska. They were able to brace the cold weather and get the Alcan built. When the Japanese struck the Aleutian Islands they were isolated. He was in the medical unit attached to the 97th. He took care of medical problems. They used

Sulphur drugs. He thanked them for the recognition. He had wondered why they had to wait so long for recognition.

Walter Dubrow served in the 93rd. He thanked them for providing this opportunity. He said these men did a great job on the Alaskan Highway. He said they worked out of Tagish. They did not have barracks and slept in tents. They all ate at the same kitchen. He said it was a green outfit. He enjoyed working with the 93rd. A lot of people were from the south. Many of them did not have an opportunity for a good education and they taught some of them to read and write. He told a story that came from someone in their outfit. They had to censor mail. One of the soldiers wrote that they had just come to Alaska and wrote about getting Carcross back. After he got home on his first leave there was an article about him in his newspaper about him building the Alaska Highway.

Reginald Beverly was in the 95th. Reginald Beverly said he came to the 95th in the spring of 1942 and was a surveyor. They traveled by train to Edmonton Alberta. He described the bridges and traveling on the train. They got to Dawson Creek and they discovered after moving around that it was already 11:30 at night and the sun was still up. They gradually got used to the cold weather. They all worked together and were successful in doing a good job on the highway. Some of the other troops were in huts, they were in tents. The frost kept them insulated. After the highway was built the 95th went over to Europe. They went on to earn five battle stars.

Frank Brehon was in the 388th. He said it was an honor to be there. He hopes they continue with their work.

James Eaton recognized the Friends of the Black Archives and others.

Cecil B. King closed the program. He talked about being proud to be an American just like in 1942. He had been attending Tuskegee. He said this is the first reunion he has seen showing some kind of recognition. He said he is proud that the history of this great group is being made known. He said this has given him a good feeling because they are being recognized for their work and sacrifice. He hopes the world opens its eyes and sees.

James Eaton took care of business. 34:30