

## **Transcription: Milton Kizer**

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*Today is September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012. My name is James Crabtree and this afternoon I have the honor of interviewing Mr. Milton Kizer. This interview is taking place at his home in Lakeway, Texas, and it's being conducted in support of the Texas Veterans Land Board Voices of Veterans Oral History Program. Sir, thank you very much for taking the time to chat with me today. The first question, sir, I always start off with in these interviews is just tell us a little bit about your childhood and your life before you went in the Marine Corps.*

**Milton Kizer:** Well, my childhood was really bad. My mother and my dad separated back in 1936. He was a drunkard, sorry bastard, well I'll say it. All the other kids come with her but I stayed with him.

*Where were you born?*

**Milton Kizer:** Burleson County.

*So you stayed with your dad when your parents split up.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, and all he did was beat on me and everything. Every time he'd go to Deanbow, and when he come home I'd have to go run down in a bottom somewhere in the pasture because he'd beat the hell out of me. So he come in and see he couldn't find me, he'd go get his shotgun or his rifle and start shootin' just about where he thinks I'm at. So then I run off from there.

*How old were you when you ran away?*

**Milton Kizer:** 14. We was out in a field choppin' and I couldn't keep up with him so he made a turn on a turn, and coming back up towards going the other way, and he said you better catch up with me and he took his whole hand and just beat the heck out of me, and so, then we went on choppin' this way and he went that way. Well he got over kind of a little hill in the field, he got over here and I couldn't see him and he couldn't see me, I threw that hoe down and I took off.

*Where did you go?*

**Milton Kizer:** Well, I run through our place to the Barton place to the Peya place through the Skabye place and then to my grandpa's place and I went to my grandfather. And then about two hours later here he come wanting me to go back, and my grandfather said oh no, he didn't think I wanted to go back. He said well let him come out here. I was in the house and they was out on the porch. He said well let him come out here and make up his own mind. So my grandpa called me out and I went out there and he says he wants you to go back, you want to go back? I said no grandpa, I'm not going back. I said I'll kill myself before I go back. I said if I don't, he will. So then I come up to the house. And back in them days, we planned a trip and he had an old gray car, and the next day we planned a trip, put an extra tire out up on the back and water and something to eat, and we left about 8 o'clock in the morning and we go to Austin about 4:00 in the afternoon. All dirt roads and stuff. We come to Austin and then I stayed there with my mother and my stepdad. Well he was real good.

*And they lived in Austin?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, they was on the municipal golf course. Only house there. He was in charge of it. He was a superintendent there. But I worked all the time. I caddied all the time and during the day, well I'd get up and I'd milk the cow first about 6 o'clock. Then I'd come in and eat breakfast, white gravy and biscuits, and then I'd run up into the clubhouse and try to get a job caddying and then caddy, come home and eat dinner, and go back up and get another job.

*Did you go to Austin High?*

**Milton Kizer:** I went to Alan Junior High. That's as far as I got.

*When was it that you joined the Marine Corps?*

**Milton Kizer:** March 4, 1943.

*What made you go into the Marines? Were you drafted or was that something you chose?*

**Milton Kizer:** I'd just turned 17, and I thought my mother would sign for me but it took me a month. I turned 17 the 5<sup>th</sup> of February and 4<sup>th</sup> of March I went in the Marines. I joined the Marine Corps and then went to – well when I went to boot camp, everybody in boot camp signed up for the Raiders, the Marine Raiders first, then the paratrooper was next. Then a third choice. Well, everybody, only one guy got the Raiders and one guy got the paratroopers, and all the rest of them went infantry. Then I went into Miramar, and then I went from Miramar to Alto, California.

*So were you in the Air Wing then?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, I was in the Air Wing then. I was a mechanic at first. I had an airplane, I was assigned an airplane. Then Lindbergh come and he flew with us twice, and he flew my airplane two times.

*Wow, I want to get to that story, but to go back real quick, what was it that made you choose the Marine Corps out of the other branches of service?*

**Milton Kizer:** I don't know, I just seen a movie and that's the one I wanted to go to. I seen a movie of, oh, he made one, a congressional medal of honor, and one of the main streets in Camp Pendleton and everything at the end, the main road going through. I can't think of his name. But anyhow -

*Bastion, no? I'd have to look it up. I can't remember either.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, anyhow they just interviewed his wife about two years ago and asked her wife, and he got married and said she was a beautiful woman. Said why didn't you get married again? She said after you had the best, you would never want anything else, never want anybody else again.

*So when you got to boot camp, was it what you expected, or was it completely different?*

**Milton Kizer:** I don't know, when I got to boot camp, I loved boot camp. That was the easiest life I ever had, so to me it was a real easy thing, lot of fun.

*What was it that you liked the best about it?*

**Milton Kizer:** About boot camp? I don't know, I just liked it. When I first went in, and I went to the mess hall, I never seen so much food in my life, so boy, I pigged out.

*You got three good meals a day that way.*

**Milton Kizer:** Oh yeah, and we had a guy there, he was drafted, not in our platoon but it was a platoon in front of us, he was drafted and he took a lot of butter, he didn't like butter, he wouldn't eat it. He took about a half a pound of butter and he took it and he went out and he was going to throw it in a GI can, and one of the GI's said where are you going with that butter? He says I'm gonna throw it in a GI can. He said no you're not, you're going to eat it. So he said no, I don't like it. It makes me sick. He said well why'd you take it? Just for spite, you know. So the GI looked over and called another GI over and says eat it, and they made him eat it.

*Yeah, I can believe that.*

**Milton Kizer:** And he didn't get the last bite down, man he headed for that trash can and he threw up everything he ate for two or three days, but he never took no more butter. But we had a guy in the platoon named Moore, he was one of these Charles Atlas guys. He built up muscles for two or three years before he come in, and we had this little guy, he was sickly in the outfit. He was from Ohio. Myself and Bates and this sickly was the three runts. We was a lot of us runts so we was in the back in our platoon. Well anyhow, this sickly and the Moore got in some kind of argument, so they're goin' out behind the gas tap room suddenly, so asked him when you see somebody headed out there you know what's goin' on. Everybody run in and old Moore had all these muscles and the sickly beat him just unbelievable, and finally Moore said I had enough, I had enough. They shook hands and that was it. But then we found out this sickly was a lightweight champion of Ohio, a boxer.

*So the looks were deceiving in his case.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, so he had to go every Friday night we had fights, so then he'd have to fight every Friday night. There was a guy in the platoon in front of us from Dallas, Texas, he was a heavyweight, and this sickly was a lightweight. Well this guy from Dallas, nobody ever made a sucker out of him. He knocked him out. He'd smile all the time, get mad, and then he'd just cold cock him. But man I tell you. An old GI called me in and says you think you can stay up with all these here big guys, weighing 200 or 180 and 195? I says I'll be runnin' when they're all on the ground. He said well we'll find out. Well the next day, we went and done about an hour of exercise and then went and ate, come back to the barracks, and he was over the night before to pack all our packs up with certain things, and we come back from the mess hall, and he was a big guy sittin' there with two corps men in it, and he says OK, let's go. So we all fell out and we started runnin' and run two hard run, through the Navy grinder and oh, that's the time tellin' about the little guy, he run out all through the boondocks.

*This was in San Diego?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, and we run and we run up along the beach, but he wouldn't let us get close to the water because the ground was \_\_\_\_, we had to run through all the cockle barrels and stuff, and we run through the officer course, and we run the officer course three times, and we started

back for the mess hall. We had been runnin' for two hours solid, and we started back for the mess hall and he told us, says if any of you pass out, you better be out because I'm going to kick the hell of 'em. So we started back to the mess hall and I guess we got a couple hundred yards, first guy fell out. He fell down and he went over and kicked the heck out of him and made sure he wasn't fakin' it, and he told the corps man OK, pick him up, and then we went on maybe another three or four hundred yards and the second one fell out. Well he went over and kicked the heck out of him, and made sure he wasn't fakin' it. So then he had a corps man pick him up and we went on to the mess hall and we stacked our rifles and packs and everything together and went in and they had one guard on it, and then the first guy out, he had to guard it. Well he come up and he said well, I see you made it. I said yeah, I told you I'd still be runnin', and I started to tell him I could go out back and run all the way back to the officer course and run it again, but I knew he'd make me do it.

*Exactly, you don't want to say that to a drill instructor.*

**Milton Kizer:** But the biggest surprise at boot camp, I couldn't believe it, we all marched over to the swimming pool, it was 1 o'clock in the afternoon, and the old DI says all non-swimmers fall out over here. Well a third of the platoon fell out. A lot of people from up north couldn't swim. Boy, they learned how to swim. All of us, we had to dive in and swim all the way across the Olympic pool underwater and then come back, and you set there for 45 minutes in a \_\_\_ water, just treading water. Well then I qualified, and we got out. The only reason I would swim is they made 'em jump in and then they would try to get to the other side where these guys were at. The DI's had stakes like with a blunt end on 'em and it pushed 'em back out, and they wouldn't get 'em out until they went under three times. When they went under the third time, well they would pull them out. But every day after that we would come in and announce somewheres we'd have to go to the swimming pool and swim until 11 o'clock at night until they learned how, because if they didn't learn how to swim, they had to go back into Kaiser Company and pick up a new platoon, another platoon, and go through boot camp again.

*That's the same way today. You still have to be able to swim or you're not gonna make it through just like the rifle range or some of those other required events.*

**Milton Kizer:** Was you in the Marine Corps?

*Yes sir, I still am. I'm in the Reserves now. When I was enlisted I went to San Diego, so I went to MCRD San Diego, same place you went to boot camp. That's why I was curious what you remembered about it because I imagine it's probably pretty much the same. Those buildings were built in the 1920s, so I'm sure the general look of the depot is probably about the same.*

**Milton Kizer:** Just one continued building.

*The huge parade deck and kind of stucco with the Spanish tile roofs and everything, palm trees.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, that's right. Well when I was there, they made two movies. I marched in two movies. They made Tell it to the Marines, and Marine Raiders. All we did was just when you see the movies they start off with all these Marines marching. Well what they did, they put up a bobtail truck there and it had the cameras on it and you marched, right flank and left flank, you go around and then come back together. So I marched in two movies.

*That's pretty neat, that's pretty cool.*

**Milton Kizer:** But then I went to El Toro.

*How did you get the MOS of being in the air wing? You said you were an air mechanic?*

**Milton Kizer:** No, I don't know how, well I knew mechanics, by the aptitude test they give you. And so that's how I got in the air wing. But I liked it and I changed from a mechanic to flight equipment things, and then in 1945 when they lost 6,007 men on Iwo Jima, the commandant of the Marine Corps said everybody who has not been overseas, regardless of what's your MOS or anything else, says you will go to Camp Pendleton for combat training to go overseas to join the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> Division. So we went to Pendleton and I'll tell you, in our company we had four like platoons, but only 60 men about in each platoon. It was a real big thing. Well we had a 90-day wonder.

*That was your second lieutenant?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, he was a second lieutenant. Sorriest bastard ever walked this earth. And we'd go out in the field every day and every day he was going to man up in the morning and then the afternoon, every day, and he'd tell all the other ones, I'm going to make a name for myself, he says, and so the other ones tried to tell him hey, man, says you better quit that. They'll get you. And he said you all don't know what you're talking about. And here the first platoon had a regular lieutenant in there I went through, I was there two years, and he made one landing, and the other two was enlisted men. They made officer. They made two landings, and they took over when an officer got killed, they took over then. And so they made it. And then here we had this old slob, he weighed at least 220-230 lbs., just a damn slob, and well come Thursday, it was about time to get men up, so as soon as we all stepped off to march to go to the ground in the field, he got on me. He said you don't know how to march and everything, and here I'd been marching. Well we went out in the field and went through all of these things, and come back to the ground and we come back to the bay field and we'd do one hour of exercises, then we'd come in. Well, we come back to the one there and he, while we were doing exercises, we were doing pushups, and he says you're not doing the pushups right. And he come over and put his foot on my back. When he did that, I jumped up and I said lieutenant, you get down there and show me how to do pushups. Says for every one you do, I'll do five, because I knew he couldn't do three. Sorry bastard.

*Did he do it?*

**Milton Kizer:** Hell no. So then he says, that made him mad, so he says OK, you run around the play field while we finish up doing the exercises. So I was running around and every time they would come by our platoon, they would holler at you and everything, so by the third time around, I stopped and they hollered out, the men, and if I was getting tired, and I said no, I'm not getting tired. I said all I'm doing is running around. Ya'll are still doing exercises. Boy, that made him madder than heck. So there was a rock about this big laying there. He says you pick that up and put it above your head and run. When he said that, I went up and I got right in his face and I called him everything but a white man. I mean I cussed him up one side and down the other. I was trying to get him to take a swing at me, but he wouldn't do it because I knew I could get in there and punch him five or six times. First thing I done is kick him, and when he bent over, I'd rather work him over. And he took off, he told our platoon sergeant, he said you finish giving exercise and you bring 'em in then. So we finished up the exercises, went in, and he was standing up by the third step there at Pendleton, and they got a 15 area, and as soon as we got

there he says Kizer you come on in. He says I put you on report. I said well, what else is new? So we went in to the company commander. He was a first lieutenant, and all the rest second lieutenants, and we went in there and he told his side of the story, and then the company commander says you get out of here. I want to talk to him by hisself. So we had a good long conversation, and he says you know, you can't cuss an officer. Well I said sir, I said he is not an officer. I said he's just a fat slob. And so we talked on a little bit more and I said sir, I don't know if I should tell you this, I said I was in on it before, but I'm in on it with 100 percent now. I says when we go in there Tuesday, we was getting the board strip and go, I says whenever we go overseas, I says if we catch him up top side at night, he's going overboard. And then you never hear so much singing and telling jokes and everything, so nobody could hear him holler man overboard, man overboard. And we would've, I don't know, I think somebody did catch him up there, one of the officers by there, threw him over. We never seen him get off that ship. He didn't go to the 5<sup>th</sup> Division, and he did not go to the 4<sup>th</sup> Division.

*Really?*

**Milton Kizer:** I was in the 5<sup>th</sup> Division and every time we'd see somebody, have you seen him? No, no. Then I went to 4<sup>th</sup> Division, we had a softball team, and I was on the team, in my 5<sup>th</sup> Division, so we went over and played the 4<sup>th</sup> Division. On my way we was on Hilo and they was on Maui. Well everybody kind of said have you seen lieutenant? No, no. Said we'll he's not in the 4<sup>th</sup> Division. And I know he wasn't in the 5<sup>th</sup> Division.

*You think he was pushed off a ship?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, if we'd have caught him up there.

*But do you think that's what actually happened?*

**Milton Kizer:** Well I hope so.

*But you never looked it up later to see if something like that happened?*

**Milton Kizer:** We didn't have no way of checking on it. I guarantee you if everybody knew that somebody had threw him over, and whoever it was, I guarantee you still today I'd go shake his hand and thank him.

*Yeah, he was pretty despised.*

**Milton Kizer:** Oh man, he was hated more than anything I've ever seen in my life.

*Wow.*

**Milton Kizer:** Well I know what I felt as far as 7<sup>th</sup> Marines, and we was loading ship to go make a landing on Nakuska, Japan. When we got aboard ship, we went aboard ship, the only time that I seen him up top side was when we had an abandon ship drill in case a torpedo hit it. Well he come up, but he never got that far away from the hole to run right back down in there as soon as they secured it. When they said abandon ship, boom-boom, he was back down in there.

*Yeah, that's not good. Tell me sir, you mentioned earlier that you'd had a chance to fly with Charles Lindbergh or he came out and flew with your unit?*

**Milton Kizer:** He flew with our squadron and a Major Kirk, he was a CO, he was a real good guy. He'd been in the hospital for years. He got shot right through here like this. He lost half of his arm and half of that and he was in the hospital for a long time. Well they done the best they could on plastic surgery but back then they couldn't do good. So he was real scarred.

*And this was at El Toro?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, and him and Lindbergh went up and then put on a show, dog fight, and it was really good, but we could tell every night we'd fly all day long and what it was, the Army Air Force had a base in Santa Ana and then also at Nine Bob, apart, out where the Orange County fairground is, where the Army Air Force used to be. Well they'd come up and they'd dog fight all day long to try to get ready for combat, and then about every other day they'd take all off them with all the airplanes and take 'em over. I says this is what you done wrong, and this is what you done wrong, and do this to get shot down. Well then I got into flight equipment and I went in flight equipment and I liked it.

*What type of airplanes were they that you worked on?*

**Milton Kizer:** F4U's. Well, we started out with F4F's.

*Was that the Corsair?*

**Milton Kizer:** No, well yeah, F4U is a Corsair, and then we started off with F4F's coming back from overseas. They had anywhere from one Jap flag to seven flags on the side after it was shot down. Well they didn't last long because all the pilots was used to flying and landing with S&J's with their gear way out here, real wide, and there wasn't no problem. Well the old F4F, you had a 4-foot landing gear and you had to crank it up and down by hand. You could tell when it was taking off when they was cranking it up because the plane would go like that.

*That's interesting.*

**Milton Kizer:** Boy I tell you, they didn't take 'em long to crash all of them and then we got the F4U, and when we got the F4U, we had to keep the tail tied down when we run 'em up in the mornings because they had those big old 4800 engines in 'em and we was afraid they would jump and run over the shocks out. Well after a while, we knew what to do with the shocks and everything. Then I went into flight equipment, and then I went to, when General Vannick wrapped us up, he was -

*He was a very famous Marine.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, he was, and he said OK, everybody go to Pendleton for training. That's when I went down there.

*When they finally shipped you out, I think you mentioned you went to Hawaii first, is that right?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, I went to Hilo, Hawaii.

*And then where did you go from there?*

**Milton Kizer:** I just stayed there.

*Stayed there until the war ended?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah. Thank God we was on the ship to go and make a landing in Ukruusa, and the atomic bomb -

*Do you remember that day that you learned that the first bomb had been dropped?*

**Milton Kizer:** Oh yeah.

*What was that like? Did they announce it over the speakers or did you hear about it word of mouth?*

**Milton Kizer:** I don't remember. I think it was over radio, I don't really remember when I knew.

*And then not much longer after that, Japan surrendered, so I'm sure that was a big celebration for you and all the Marines when you learned that the war was done.*

**Milton Kizer:** It was, I don't know, it wasn't long, maybe a month.

*Sure, yeah it was a matter of days or weeks, but I imagine it was a big celebration.*

**Milton Kizer:** Oh Lord, yeah. Everybody was happy. I went to Hilo and we'd load ship to make the landing and the war ended. Thank goodness, or I probably wouldn't be here today. But I had a good buddy, he and I run around in Hawaii together, of course he didn't drink or smoke, and I didn't drink or smoke, so we run around together. But it was a little old café over had a bunch of real good looking girls as waiters, and the grilled cheese I think cost about 15 cents. We ate a heck of a lot of grilled cheese. But we never did get a date with any of them because they was all taken up. But then we had, this is after the war, when we took and we had to take and dump everything in the ocean. We hauled ammunition for a good three or four months and dumped it in the ocean, and we dumped jeeps, trucks, caterpillars, caterpillars that had only maybe 20-30 minutes on 'em.

*That's too bad. Yeah, I've heard those stories. There just wasn't space for all the gear.*

**Milton Kizer:** Well no, there wasn't. I said why don't you take it back and sell it to the farmers there. They said no, we don't want to do that. That would ruin the economy. And so here we dumped all these caterpillars out and we had two little bitty ones. They stood about this high and about this wide. And it was like a caterpillar but a little bitty thing. They made those for going down in the tunnels, rooting out Japanese, because some of the tunnels you would go in and you would trip a wire or something and here all this stuff would come down on you and kill you, so they made some of these little tractors, little things.

*When the war ended, you stayed on in the Marine Corps, right?*

**Milton Kizer:** Well, I got out for a while. I got out for a while and stayed in the Reserves. They say it's funny how things happen. I was in the Reserves and there was a captain in charge of the Reserves, and everybody was getting promoted but me. He was made because I served in

World War II and he didn't. And so I went up and asked him, I asked why wasn't I getting promoted? He says long as you're in my outfit, you will never get promoted he told me.

*What was your rank at that time?*

**Milton Kizer:** I was a corporal. So it went on, and next time I seen him was a K16 in Korea, and he was coming to eat in our mess hall. He seen me and he says, and I made sergeant, he said well I see you made a rank. I said yes sir. I said they can't keep a good man down, and went on. And then years later, I retired, and I come back to Austin, and he retired here at Austin, and well I met up there at Lakeway, I knew everybody up there at one time. I saw the ex, he had made two landings, Jackson had made two landings, and another guy, he didn't make no landing, but he went in afterwards, and then I had a Lou Williams, XO, he -

*That's pretty amazing.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, he went through flight training as a corporal and when he graduated he made sergeant, and he went on, but anyhow he was really – well this guy that told me, says you'll never make rank, he was at this, we had a Marine Corps ball, and I told all of them I was going to bring a special guest and I told them who it was, so I had him write up a little note what all they landed and how long they was in and everything, and they got up and they says, we got a special table right up front, says Sergeant Kizer's friends are gonna be here with us. Says all of them were World War II people, and this was a captain – he retired a lieutenant colonel – he was sitting way in the back kind of by hisself with a few people, and he wanted to talk to them so bad, he went and got the commandant of the Reserves and says do you think I can talk to them? He said I don't know, I'll go check with Kizer. So he come over and asked me if he could come over and talk to him. I said sure, bring him over. So brought him over and boy, and he said well I'm gonna go back. I said no, I said you set down here by my wife, and I says, you get all you want to know. And boy he was in hog heaven there talking to all of them, and it was real funny when I was in the Reserves, that one of us would come over, some of them would come over, well my wife come over, and he come out there and he says who is that girl there? He said I'd like to date her. They said that's Kizer's wife. And his wife looked like she had been hit by a freight train or something.

*What Reserve unit were you in? Were you in a unit here in Austin?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah.

*What was the name of the unit? Do you remember what you were?*

**Milton Kizer:** 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion I think. It was 13 or 15<sup>th</sup>.

*Where did you have your monthly meetings?*

**Milton Kizer:** The meetings, on Barton Springs Road where that, when you come up Barton Springs Road just before you hit Lamar. It's a building on the right hand side.

*The old municipal auditorium over in that area?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, but it's this way. It's a building just before you get to, at that little golf course. But before that we met at Camp Mabry.

*When I was in the Reserves, when I was first in the Reserves during college, that's where my unit was and they're still there, Weapons Company 123 is at Camp Mabry.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, well we met there, but then they called me back in.

*During the Korean War?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah. And we was going overseas and they didn't, spent no times, here everybody went overseas. Well aboard ship they says well, we need you to make an air wing more than we need you in line, so they put 'em back in the air wing. And I was in there and it was oh, colder than heck, I mean real cold. But real funny, when the Chinese jumped in, Colonel McLain come down. He was our group seal, he come down and he says men, he says the Chinese jumped in last night and about 20 divisions trying to wipe out our 1<sup>st</sup> Division, and he said we've been dropping ammo all night and things to 'em. And I had a brother up there, my little brother was up there, and he was a machine gunner, and they'd set up and put their stakes on both sides so they wouldn't swing and hit the wrong people and things. So what they did, this bunch would move back and these would cover 'em and then this bunch would move back, and then it come time, well he had moved back and they would cover him. Well when he was moving back, he got hit and it was real cold.

*Sure, he was at the Chosen Reservoir.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, it was 30-40 degrees below zero.

*That's very famous especially in Marine Corps history. We still learn about that today, the Frozen Chosen.*

**Milton Kizer:** Oh yeah, and my brother got hit and he jumped in a foxhole and when he did, he lost his helmet, and his helmet come off. He said the last thing I remember is trying to get that helmet before I passed out. I said what did you want that helmet for so bad? He said well, he says you kept all your important papers between your helmet and your head because they would stay dry, and he said I had a picture of my girlfriend in there and he says if I was going to die, I wanted to be talking to her, how much I love her. And he come back and he got married. But she kind of got crazy. She was from a real rich family and he lived up there, he started working, he helped build the Mardfern Golf Course and then he went to the Austin Country Club. They hired him away from there, and it was real funny there. They was gonna, they worked six or seven greens there, redoing them, and he went there to Billy Pin, and Billy Pin was a real good guy. He went to Billy Pin and told him, said look, I can rebuild those for less than, very few dollars compared to theirs. Their bid was 30 to 40 thousand dollars a green. He says I can do them for 5000 a green. So he went before the board and told them, so they said OK, said tell him how about it? So he took and rebuilt them, and they turned out perfect. So then they had a convention here in Austin of all the greens and he won the green \_\_\_ of the year because all of what he done.

*Why did he go in the Marine Corps? Was it because you had gone in the Marine Corps?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, I had him and Joe, and Joe was another one. He had a real rough time.

*Another brother?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah. And Emil, where there were 7 boys, 6 of us went in the Marine Corps.

*6 of the 7. Why was there one that didn't go?*

**Milton Kizer:** The youngest one.

*Too young?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, he wasn't old enough or he probably would've went in, too. But I tell you, we had so much fun.

*Were you the oldest of the brothers?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah.

*So I guess they all could ask you about what you had done, and they had some idea then of what the Marine Corps was going to be like when they enlisted?*

**Milton Kizer:** Oh yeah. And let's see, where was I -

*Let me ask you, when you got back from Korea, did you go back in the Reserves again or did you stay on active duty?*

**Milton Kizer:** Well that's another story. I come out and I stayed in the Reserves and I was working for the gas company.

*Here in Austin?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, and we had a guy by the name of Scarborough. He was a big superintendent of the gas company thing, and I asked him for a raise. Everybody got a raise while I was gone. And I asked him for a raise and he said no, you don't deserve a raise. So I set down and I wrote a letter to the president who was up in Dallas, and explained the whole thing, and boy, they must've really got on him and they gave me a 50-cent an hour raise, and he come flying down there, boy, he was really after me and things. Finally I told him, well Scarborough, I said I'm going back in the Marine Corps. I'm gonna go in and stay in. I was only out about two months. And he was raising all kind of heck, and I says look, I says if you don't shut up, says I'm going to set down and write another letter. And zip! Because he knew I would do it.

*So you went back in and then you served all the way up until when you retired in the 70s, is that right? Retired as a gunney, gunnery sergeant?*

**Milton Kizer:** No, I didn't make gunney sarge until years later.

*Oh OK, I thought you had retired as a – I'm saying you retired as a gunnery sergeant.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, oh yeah. Well then I went to Churrey Point and they was reopening a Marine air station up in Florida, and they was reopening it, sending a lot of people. Well there was about a thousand of us and they'd call off a whole bunch of names to go to Florida.

*Where in Florida was it?*

**Milton Kizer:** It's a big city, I can't -

*Jacksonville?*

**Milton Kizer:** No, it wasn't Jacksonville.

*Pensacola?*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, Pensacola, Miami – I think it was Miami, yeah. And they called off a bunch of them for Florida that didn't want to stay there, and they called a bunch of them off and then for Florida, and one for Churry Point. I said well, my name was coming up, and I said well, I'll go to Florida. And they called one through three, Kizer, you stay here. So I stayed there. I was a buck sergeant and I stayed there in BMJ, a photo outfit. BMJ-1 or 2, BMJ-2. And stayed there and they had, we had an old captain come. He was inspecting all the flight equipment people and he come there and boy, he was madder than a wet setting hen when he come there. I found out later why. But he says, he asked who was in charge, and I told him I was. And he said who all worked for you? So I pointed them out. He said I want you to set there, you there, you there, and you there, and said I don't want you talking to each other. So he said you get your, let's go take a regulator out of an airplane. So I said OK. So I went and got the tools. He wanted to see if I knew what tools I needed. I went and got the tools, went out and crawled up there in the wheel well and disconnected a bottle and got out and took a regulator, and he said now what do you do with it? I said well, I'll show you. It was, went there it was a Walter Kiddie machine sitting there on the corner, and no one knew what the heck it was or how to use it. Well I did. I took and I got it and I cleaned it up and fixed it up and laid the bottle on it and pump it up every night and then go out and set it on the ramp and as the airplane come through the bladder for refueling, they would pull up and we'd fill 'em up with oxygen. So all the other flight crew wasn't doing nothing. So he made me stop doing that. He said now I know why nobody knows nothing. So he made me stop doing that. So anyhow we went in and I run into all the task scene and showed 'em exactly what happened and why and everything and I explained it to them. So OK, you go over and set down. Then he called another one of the guys and said OK, what do you do with this? So the kid, he set him down and he'd set down and run the regulator on the test then and explain it to them. And he said OK, I want you to put it back in the airplane. And he went through every one of them like that. We got through about 3 o'clock and he said OK, come on down and let's go in and never got off, so I thought man, I'm going to catch it now. So we went down there and he said, walked in there and he says lieutenant, Lieutenant Orkanaw was in there, an officer, he was an enlisted man but made officer. And he said I want you to know, says you got the best flight equipment guy on this base and he says he's the lowest rank. He says I'm going to make him, I'm going to give him staff sergeant. He said I'm going to recommend him for staff sergeant right away, and he said I'm gonna take every time I need two or three men to go overseas, says I'm gonna take 'em from your outfit and send 'em overseas because I know they're trained. And I'll send him three or four or five more men to throw in.

*That had to have made you feel good.*

**Milton Kizer:** Oh yeah, and so I hadn't been to school yet. I'd been to flight equipment school. Well he says if I was you, I'd send him over there and make him a TAD because he said it's a permanent change of station. Sent him to TAD so you get him back. So I made staff sergeant

right after I made staff sergeant, I got orders to go to New Jersey and I went up there to school and went to the flight school, regular school just before, about a month before we got up there. It was a kid in the Marine Corps. He jumped and he didn't pull the rip cord. He committed suicide. He left a real long letter. His parents would never let him do anything. They give him everything and he wanted \_\_\_\_\_, and he told 'em in the letter, he says I never could get on my own because ya'll wouldn't let me. He says, here was a good example, he said I just up here and I haven't been here two weeks and ya'll come up with a big, brand new sports car, a Porsche or something like that, and so he said this is the only way I can get away from you. And he committed suicide. Well I went to the school and by the way this Navy lieutenant come up and he said Kizer, you're gonna have to walk the pulse tonight. Said I'm gonna put you on guard. I said sir, I says you can't do that to staff. We don't walk the post. I says the lower \_\_\_\_\_ men walk the post. He said well I don't care, you're walking it. So I told the senior Mo – Mo something – anyhow I told him about it and he went and got on the phone to headquarters of Marine Corps in DC, and here come this full colonel. He got an airplane and come up there and got the CO of the base and let him know right quick who was what and what, so they called this lieutenant in and they chewed him a new one, and so the lieutenant after that, he'd see me and see him coming down the hall, and he'd see me and he'd duck in a \_\_\_\_\_ to keep from, because if we passed, I said you having a good day, lieutenant? He got that over with.

*Did you do a tour in Vietnam at the end of your career?*

**Milton Kizer:** Two.

*Where were you in Vietnam?*

**Milton Kizer:** I was in Danang and well the second time I was there, I was stationed in Japan, but I'd fly over and give 'em my report every other month, they'd have me come over at the last of the month and go over the first of the month so I'd get through.

*Yeah, I've heard those stories, yeah, get the two tax-free combat pay months. What type of aircraft were you working with then in Vietnam?*

**Milton Kizer:** F4's and A6's.

*So quite a jump from working at the corps centers during World War II to the F4's and the A6's in Vietnam in terms of going from propeller to jet.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, well the A6, they fire, you couldn't put enough ordinance on 'em to keep 'em on the ground. They would fly. And boy we'd load 'em up. Like one that I used to go, I don't know how in the devil I'd go over and get on a helicopter and go out, and this is the dumbest thing I ever, you could fly and you could see 'em shooting at you, but you couldn't shoot back at them until you got permission. You'd have to call and get permission. By the time you get permission, you're 20 miles away for Christ sakes, so you couldn't shoot at them, they could shoot at you though. But anyhow, all those Marines they had up on a mountain top, I was in a TV and we was going up there hauling gas about three or four pilots of gas, 55-gallon drums, taking it up there to 'em, and as we was coming in out of the clouds and we was looking for a hole to go down in on them. Well as the copilot seen a 105 come up like this and go over and go down, and they called and said what the hell are you doin' there? I said we're trying to bring you a load of gas. They says get the hell out of there right now. So we're fighting for our

life. He says call in a bunch of planes, bombers. So when we was going on the way back, here come the A6's, F4, and everything coming.

*What type of plane were you in?*

**Milton Kizer:** I was in a TV, transporter plane. Then another thing, we was on a base there. Well there was a little old village just outside the base there and the Communists sneaked in there one day and tried to kill everybody in there, but this one woman got away. She was out getting something to eat and so she realized, she run to the base and told them, and so they launched a bunch of aircraft and they called a bunch of them and killed them. But then they come back in, all of the F4's and the A6's and everything and they landed, and when they landed, what was left they grouped up and they were gonna go across the river and go, but the river wasn't about waist deep, but it was real wide. When the planes landed, they sent off the G-Wee. They called it the Gatlin ghost because it had Gatlin guns in her, and they could cover every foot of a football field in a minute, and they caught 'em going across this river, and they got every one of them. Not a one got away.

*That's good. Let me ask you sir, going back to your time in Korea, I know you were with a Reserve unit here in Austin, and I believe there was a Marine that was a Reservist from Austin that was killed in Korea and received the medal of honor, and his name was Mooreland. Did you ever know him or meet him? Whit Mooreland?*

**Milton Kizer:** No, I can't. If I did, I don't remember.

*I was just curious being from Austin at that same time because I know he was a Reservist from Austin and was killed in Korea and received the medal of honor. I didn't know if you might've known him. I'd read about him before being from Austin.*

**Milton Kizer:** Well it's funny, I went overseas a couple of times and I know this guy requested me through headquarters Marine Corps. I've been in Air FMF flight section for '56, '57, '58, '59, '60 and '61, and I was in the Air FMF flight with a VIP outfit. We only flew big shops and things and we did a lot of other stuff. We had an R5D, R4Y, R48, two beach crafts and two jets, two seated jets. Well, I was in, had my shop and everything and I had a pretty good reputation, and anyhow, on about a parachute opening in the boxes. Well I called and they said well, all of the active squadrons got priority over you. I said OK, I understand that because they could be deployed in a couple of hours. And so they got all of the things. Well one year later I picked up the fault, and I called all the squadrons and all of them had 'em, so I called the Navy supply and I talked to them to find out what warehouse they was in and everything, and I said when you gonna issue them? Well, whenever we get ready. So next morning I come in and I grabbed my auto buttoned down to the Navy supply I went and I walked in there and I knew it was a guy in charge and he thought he was king. He had his desk back here and then the two girls, his personal secretary spent half his debt, and another good looking girl spent the other half. Then they went down like this and then you come up here and start over again, and then the girls went down like this, and he walked up through all the girls, like a big king. I walked in there and I said I come to get some, these automatic parachute opening device. Well he wasn't there, but his personal secretary was. She said we can't issue nothing without his permission, says nothing. I said where is he at? She says I don't know, maybe I can get him on the phone. So she got him on the phone and first thing he did, he started giving me hell for being in with his girls, and so one after another, and I said well are you gonna issue them, and he said I'll issue them when I get good and ready. I said well who's in charge of this Navy supply? He said well he's the

commander, he's up at so and so. You can't go see him. I says you know what, he's too little of a fish in a barrel. I said I'm going to see the commanding general, and I hung up the phone and I went out of there and I went back and Captain Williams was the first one in line, and he was in charge of material, and I said Captain, I said I'm requesting \_\_ with the commanding general, and I says you're the first one in the chain of command. So he took his auto book and looked and seen that they wasn't received. So he called up, just got this new colonel in for CO, and he called him up and told him that I had a request to ask for the commanding general. He had already talked to him, he said it was OK with him. He said you want him to come up and see you? He said no, guys want to go through the command, so they know he got a good excuse. And so then he called the chief of staff and the chief of staff was a real good guy. He rode a bicycle everywhere he went to stay in shape, and he took it to the general and the general said well you and CW West, West for the CWO4, and they got a lot of pull. So said just tell him to stand by. So after about 15 minutes they called and says CW West gonna be there with a staff car, says you get into it and you all go down and get those things. Well, we got in it and I went down there, meet us at this other certain dock. This dock was up about this high. Well they couldn't see who was in the car until we got out, or they leaned way down and looked, and they had these things sitting there on the dock. We pull up there and it was Beard and Hollensack, both of them, so they was in charge of them warehouses. Hollensack, when he seen me, he done like this and went scooting off. He said Kizer, goddam you, really shook up this Navy supply. He says so and so said we chewed him out. You had already. And so they got my side of it and they said he's really gonna get a chewing now. I said well break up that damn thing. He got in there all them girls. They said we'll take care of that, too.

*That's a good story.*

**Milton Kizer:** They said we might fire him over this. But they didn't fire him. But the reason I knew them so good, I used to go down to Salvation and go through it and see everything down there. That's a spot I'd use, I'd get it and get back and get it put on the inventory so if they go looking for it, they know where it's at.

*Well sir, I want to thank you for sharing some of your stories and your memories with us today and as I mentioned before we started, we're saving these interviews for posterity for generations to come hopefully. With that in mind, is there anything you'd want to say to somebody listening to this interview maybe even years from now about your time in the Marine Corps or anything in general?*

**Milton Kizer:** Well let me tell you another story about West, and I picked up these units and brought them back, and I took right away and I put mine on a test and ordered six of them, and I put them on test, and they were set for 9,000 feet, and I raised them up to 12,000 feet. Then I took them over to the base to the physiological training unit, and took 'em over there and run 'em and bounce 'em up and down and make sure they was right. Then I brought 'em back and the kids took and I got the parachutes ready under my supervision in the seats, got everything ready for automatic opening device, and we installed them. The next day we had one of our jets had to go to Salt Lake City to take somebody there, and on the way back when he broke to come around the field to land, we don't know what happened, but anyhow fireworks way out like a plane had come through and hit a fuel line or \_\_\_\_, and the guy says well I think I can make it in. They said no, we want you to punch out, says you don't try to land. If you land and blow up on a runway, then we have to close the base. You punch out. So he punched out and we had just put those automatic devices in there, and he said he was feeling for his rip cord, and said about the time he felt to find his rip cord, he said he felt a jerk on his parachute and he says he swung this

way and when he come he hit the rack. He said if I didn't have them automatic parachutes in there, he says I'd be in the morgue today. And he come next day he had to come in and fill out all those reports, and he got down and he come down to my side 11 o'clock in the morning, he come to my side. He says I know I'm supposed to give you a fifth of booze for that. He says you can have anything you want within reason, he says anything, you just name it and you got it. He says wouldn't be for you, sir, I'd be in the morgue right now. So I told him well you don't owe nothing. I said that's our job. We're just doing our job. So he went down to the commissary and bought all kinds of stuff for us to go over to the picnic area and have a picnic. So then he come back and brought us all this stuff, and Gunner Mills was our engineer officer and I went down to him and I says Gunner, Tabito brought us, I mean Major O'Neil brought us all this, I says you need to, I need to take all the men over to the picnic area and we'll have a picnic. He says OK, that's good. I says here's the keys to the shop. He said well just leave it open. I says I can't do that. I says you can have 'em or you give 'em to the leading chief. I said because I got too many good stuff in there. All the guys said I got flyjacks in there, I got -

*Yeah, you can't leave that unsecured.*

**Milton Kizer:** Yeah, and I said I probably wouldn't have nothing tomorrow. And so OK, so he took care of it and give it to Windell, the leading chief. But I had a good job and when I come back from overseas in '52, or in '62, in '62 I walked into Romaine's office. He always assigned us. I says Romaine, don't tell me somebody requested me because every time I go overseas, I'll be requested. He says why is that? He said because I have never done a tour in helicopters and I won't do a tour in a helicopter. He said I got just the spot for you. So I went over and I was over about a year and we had this CO, he was a lieutenant colonel, and he was a very good guy. He was a prisoner of war during World War II for a long time. He sent the guy that I replaced, he sent him and had him dried out one time for drinking, and it was an NAP he sent. He sent Forrester to dry him out. He told him I ain't sending you no more. You get drunk on a job, he says you're gone. So I went up to the office for something, it was way up high, it was one of them great big hangars. It was a blimp base before. I was coming down and here come an SNAP drunker than a skunk, and the CO right behind me, and he seen him. He grabbed him and took him in the office, and said give him a bad conduct discharge, and he did. And if he just kept his nose clean just six months, he could've retired, but he didn't do it. Then we had another guy when I was in Aero 5, he come and joined us and then he had 30 years in, and he went over the hill, went over the hill with 30 years. Just put in another 30 days you could be out by then.

*Well sir again, I want to thank you. I know that you don't have all that much time and I've got to get going. I know your wife had said there was somebody coming here to see you.*

**Milton Kizer:** Well that doesn't matter, we can wait on that.

*Again, I want to thank you for the interview and like I said, we're going to be sending you copies of this interview soon, so thank you very, very much.*

*[End of recording]*