

## **Transcript: Fred Rogers**

---

*Good morning. Today is Thursday, March 22, 2012. My name is James Crabtree, and today I'll be interviewing Mr. Fred Rogers. This interview is being conducted by telephone. I'm in the General Land Office building in Austin, Texas, and Mr. Rogers is at his home in Katy, Texas. This interview is 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 talk today. It's an honor for us to be able to record your story.*

**Fred Rogers:** Okay.

*Sir, the first question I always like to start with is please tell us a little bit about your childhood and your life before you went into the military.*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, I was born in 1930 in Dallas, Texas. I grew up there and graduated from Forest High School. After I graduated, well, I joined the Marine Corps pretty shortly thereafter.

*What was it that had attracted you to the Marine Corps?*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, my sister, Billie, was married to a Marine when I was in high school, and I just admired him, and I guess that's why I joined.

*Did you talk to your brother-in-law a lot about being a Marine?*

**Fred Rogers:** No, I didn't. I just saw him and we went fishing together a couple of times, but soon after that, they got a divorce.

*Okay. And so, he still had made a strong impression upon you though, about the Marine Corps.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah. He looked so good in the dress blues. "I want to be like that."

*Yes sir. So, shortly after high school, you went into a recruiter's office there, I guess in Dallas, and told them you wanted to go. Where did they send you to next? Did you go to Paris Island or San Diego?*

**Fred Rogers:** No. I went to San Diego. And they had this program where you could join for a year active duty and then you'd have six years in the Reserves. So I joined that and I served one year and I got out. And within one year, I was back in when the Korean deal broke out.

*The Korean War. Tell us what your memories were of boot camp. When was this? About 1949? So shortly after World War II but before everything had ramped up in Korea. What are some of your memories of MCRD San Diego?*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, what I remember is that you had to get up early and stay up late. And the way to get along was just do what you was told. I mean, it was an interesting experience. They taught me how to fire a weapon. I was a city boy and I never did much huntin' or anything, and I was amazed at how they could get you in a position with that sling on and hold your breath and squeeze the trigger and you hit that target at 500 yards. I mean it was amazing.

*That's right. Marine Corps marksmanship. I'm sure you had other men in your platoon. Were they all pretty much young like yourself and from all over the west?*

**Fred Rogers:** We were all a bunch of young guys. When I got out there I went to Oceanside as an MP on the back gate.

*So that was your specialty then? They made you a military police officer?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*Tell us a little bit about that.*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, we were stationed on the back gate out there. They had a small barracks and it was about, seemed like there was eight or 10 of us out there. They would rotate, taking care of the guys coming in and out. It was a good life out there. We had good food. I enjoyed it. I really did.

*So when your year was up, though, you were committed to, or bound to have to come back to Texas, I guess?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, I came back to Texas and I got a job as a telephone lineman. And I had worked for about, oh, I don't know, six or eight months. And somehow they had a union dispute in Dallas and they sent us to Houston to work. And that's where I got my letter. I couldn't believe I got a letter, be back in that quick.

*I know you were in the Reserves. Were you a Reservist who would go in one weekend a month and drill, or were you completely in the inactive?*

**Fred Rogers:** I was completely inactive. We didn't have to meet or anything.

*Okay. So you got a letter when you were in Houston. What did the letter say to you?*

**Fred Rogers:** It said that I had to report in Dallas there, to get my train ticket and everything to go to San Diego again. No, it was Oceanside I went to that time.

*How much time did they give you between the receipt of that letter and your having to report in?*

**Fred Rogers:** I think it was three weeks or a month.

*And at that point, did you know that you probably were going to be going to Korea?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yes, and I didn't even know where Korea was. I had no idea. I found out pretty quick.

*So you arrived in California. And you'd been an MP but somehow you get put into the ordnance battalion. Is that correct?*

**Fred Rogers:** I don't know whether it was right there or whether it was when we got to Japan. They put us in different outfits.

*Where they needed you, I guess.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah. But I did end up in Ammo Company, Ordnance Battalion.

*So when you arrived back in California, this was 1950 at this point?*

**Fred Rogers:** No. Let me think. It was before that. It was a couple of months before the end of the year, in '49.

*Okay. So it's very late '49. So before, really. Everybody kind of thinks of Korea being from '50 to '53. So you get there. What do they tell you? Do they tell you why you've been called back up, or how long you're going to be there? That sort of thing?*

**Fred Rogers:** No, they didn't tell us much about that. It just . . . We had a brief training about cold weather. And then we were aboard a ship right away, to go to Korea.

*How long did that take?*

**Fred Rogers:** It took about month, I think, because it seemed like they said they were zigzagging, to not get torpedoed. Now I didn't have any idea. We didn't see any of that so I guess they were just being precautionous.

*Sure. And I know it can take a long time just to cross the ocean on one of those slow moving vessels. Where did you disembark in Korea?*

**Fred Rogers:** At Kobe. That was the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, 1950. And it was just right after the "Frozen Chosin."

*So it was 1950. Okay. Right after the "Frozen Chosin," the famous battle in which the Marines had to fight their way out in that horrible, cold, frigid, sub-zero type conditions.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, I'm glad I missed that one.

*So when you get there, it's been kind of a rough time up to that point for the Marines and the U.S. forces. It was definitely a rough war. But that was kind of the low point. What was it like when you arrived then? What were you put to work doing? What was the morale like? That sort of thing.*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, the morale was pretty high. Some of the guys, when we joined, they had been at the "Frozen Chosin," but they were in good spirits about it. What our job was to set up ammo dumps for the infantry, you know. That's mainly our main job. What we did was mostly physical work. Handling those boxes. We didn't have any kind of a tow boat or anything like that. You had to do it all by hand, and if it was too heavy to lift, you got some help, and that's it.

*Yeah, it is a tough job, and I'm sure you handled just tons and tons of ammunition when you think about the number of men that were over there and the amount of rounds that were needed. Tell us a little bit about these ordnance dumps that you would position at various places for the infantry. How big were they, and how long did they take to set up?*

**Fred Rogers:** It seemed like there were about 30 of us that would set up a dump. The trucks would come in, we'd unload 'em and stack it certain areas. At night, we'd go and sleep in about a 12-man tent that had an oil stove. And it was the coldest place in the world, I tell you.

*I'll bet.*

**Fred Rogers:** But the government was so good about trying to get us warm clothes and everything. They did a good job, I think.

*So you got better winter gear? Cold weather gear to wear?*

**Fred Rogers:** Oh yeah. We had some snow packs that really would keep your feet warm. Some of the guys, their feet would sweat and then they'd have frostbite. But I didn't get any of that.

*You're lucky.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*How often would set up an ammo dump?*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, it's according to how the war was going. I think we had a spring offensive. And we were on the move for three days and three nights trying to catch up to 'em. Other than that, I don't really know.

*Did you have a pretty good sense of where you were and what all was going on, or you were so focused on doing your job that you couldn't really tell what the rest of the big picture was?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, that's right. I really don't know any of the names of those towns we went through or anything. But some of my buddies, you know, the ones that I guess were a little more alert, they can tell you where we went. And I just never did. I heard the names but it didn't stick with me.

*Sure. And they're pretty difficult names, I'm sure. And the last thing you're doing at that point is worrying about writing them down or memorizing them. Did you see many of the local Koreans during that time?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, I did. You know, we'd be going through a town and we'd see 'em. It was a sad looking bunch, I tell you. They had rags, looked like rags, tied around their feet. I know they were freezing to death. I think they ate garlic to keep warm or something, 'cause they stunk pretty bad, you know, when you get around 'em. But they were trying to get warm.

*Very tough life for the villagers or peasants, I guess, that you saw a lot of.*

**Fred Rogers:** Oh yeah, it was.

*I guess you were almost in direct support of the infantry unit. So as they would move up, you were saying that you'd try to move with them in order to bring in more ammunition and ordnance.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*Were you ever close enough to could hear kind of what was going on at the front lines in terms of bombardments and that sort of thing?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, occasionally we were close enough we could hear incoming mortar and stuff like that, but we were not like the infantry.

*Yeah, the last thing they'd want to do is have you so close that you were in danger of being overrun and losing all of the ammunition.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*Were you able to get letters from home very well during that time?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, they were pretty good about getting us mail. Also, I think around Christmas time, they had a bunch of packages that, you know, had candy in it and different stuff. Cookies. They were real good to us.

*I didn't ask you earlier. What did your parents think of you going into the Marine Corps?*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, my mother was all for it. I don't remember what my dad said about it. I'm sure he was for it too. He was all for it.

*Did they write to you while you were in Korea?*

**Fred Rogers:** Oh yeah. Some of the kids at school wrote to me and things like that.

*That's great.*

**Fred Rogers:** It was quite a few of them high school guys was over there with me.

*Tell us, sir, about some of the men in your unit and maybe some of the leadership. Any of your sergeants or lieutenants, that sort of thing. Do you remember any of them?*

**Fred Rogers:** Oh yeah. There was a gunnery sergeant, Monk. He was older than us. He'd been in World War II. He really took care of us. He'd tell us what to do and when not to do it, and things like that. Then there was three guys that we stayed real close together. It seemed like we were always on the same work unit. One of them was Bernard Rabbit, who lived in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. And there was this Cajun, John Richard, that lives in Lake Charles now. And Joe Romano, who lives in Orange. Four of us were real close. I think Rabbit's passed on now. Joe and John and I will go to a Marine Corps reunion in San Antonio in May, and I'm looking forward to that. We always have a good time.

*That's great. So you didn't know each other before you joined the Marine Corps . . .*

**Fred Rogers:** No.

*But you met and have stayed in touch all these years.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*That's great.*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, we were out of touch for about 40 years, I think. And then, his daughter got on the Internet and found us, and we've been together ever since.

*That's great. That makes the story even better in some ways. That she was able to track you down like that.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*So how long, sir, did you end up spending there in Korea?*

**Fred Rogers:** I stayed from the 16<sup>th</sup> of December '50 to 18<sup>th</sup> of January '52.

*So you were there a pretty good while.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, it was a whole year of '51.

*Did you get any time off at all during that time in terms of like an R&R time in Seoul?*

**Fred Rogers:** No, we didn't get any but we were told that we were gonna get some but somehow it didn't work out.

*Never happened.*

**Fred Rogers:** No.

*During that entire time you were there in Korea, was it pretty much constant that you were moving and setting up ammo dumps and that sort of thing or did they change your mission at all over time?*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, after a while I got to be the Jeep driver, and I would drive the sergeant around wherever he went. And we went a lot of places over there but I don't know what his business was. He might have been just visiting.

*Sure. I'm sure there were other Marines from your unit that were scattered around to the various other ammo dumps because you mentioned there were about 30 of you that would set up a dump, is that right?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, uh-huh.

*So I would think out of your company and then especially your battalion, there were probably Marines scattered all over the place.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, I'm sure there was.

*What was it like driving over there? Were you on paved roads or dirt roads?*

**Fred Rogers:** No, it was dirt roads, mountains, and that was pretty scary, some of them pretty narrow. And it's a long way down.

*And you're driving a Jeep around in that sort of stuff.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, but when we would move up ammo, it would be in one of the flatbed trucks, and some of the drivers were not very careful about it.

*Yeah, I would imagine that could be a little hair-raising at times, carrying that much ammo on some of those old dirt-type path roads.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah. Were you in the Marine Corps?

*Yes sir, I still am.*

**Fred Rogers:** Oh, you still are.

*Yeah, I am. I'm in the Reserves now, so I've got about, I guess, 12 years total in terms of time in the Reserves and active duty.*

**Fred Rogers:** Were you in Vietnam?

*No sir, I'm not that old but I was in Iraq, so I've been to Iraq and . . .*

**Fred Rogers:** You're a young man.

*Yes, well, I guess. I'm 35. But I started off enlisted and now I'm an officer.*

**Fred Rogers:** Oh, great.

*So I've done a little bit of both. Yes sir. And, in fact, our Reserve unit is based up . . . I work in Austin and live in the Austin area but my Reserve unit is in the Dallas area in Grand Prairie over at the old naval airfield there in Grand Prairie. I know I've certainly read a lot about Korea and all Marines, you know, are taught greatly about Marine Corps history and Korea, and the Chosin Reservoir and Chesty Puller and those sort of things. It seems like the Korean War, though, is the one war that a lot of people forget. It seems like it hasn't been talked about enough or studied very much. Did you ever find that to be true when you got back home? People didn't really know what the Korean War was?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, I think I did. They didn't seem to . . . Well, we were welcomed back but, of course, the family welcomes you but nobody else said anything about it. I didn't think much about it either. I didn't think they should say anything about it.

*Tell us then about what it was like when you finally got to come home. Did you know in advance that you were getting shipped back?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, we knew about a month ahead of time, and it was really a long month, waiting. I was so anxious. And we got aboard a ship and came in at San Francisco. And I saw Alcatraz for the first time and it was really interesting.

*That is interesting. I assume you came under the Golden Gate Bridge on your way in?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, and then we went to Camp Lejeune, and that's where I got discharged.

*So they sent you all the way to the East Coast.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*That's a bit of a ways. They put you on a train?*

**Fred Rogers:** No, I got leave and then I had to report into Lejeune over there. I think I caught the bus from California to Texas, and then I had a car and I drove over.

*Why did they have you go to Lejeune?*

**Fred Rogers:** I have no idea.

*Because that's where you were getting out, right, at that point?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*How long did you end up having to spend there at Camp Lejeune?*

**Fred Rogers:** It seemed like it was about six months.

*Okay. Doing more ordnance work?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, uh-huh.

*What all did they have you doing there? I'm trying to picture an average day working in ordnance.*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, it's kinda hard to remember. It seemed like all I can remember is the inspections they had. It seemed like every day, you know, you had to put the junk on the bunk and all that, and that was one of the things I didn't like about the Marine Corps. Everything else I loved it.

*In fact, they got rid of the junk on the bunk inspections a few years back.*

**Fred Rogers:** Oh, did they?

*I think probably rightly so. The commandant at the time decided that it was a waste of time and money because what was going on was Marines, especially young junior Marines, were going out and spending a lot of money to buy an entire extra set of whatever that was going to be inspected so they would always have this pristine gear for an inspection but they would never use it. So they would have, you know, the web belts and the canteens and all these things that were for display purposes basically only. They never used them, and it was just a real waste of time and money, and he decided, "That's just silly. We're gonna stop that." We're gonna inspect what you actually use. You're not gonna have a junk on the bunk inspection of stuff that you just buy and put in a locker just for an inspection.*

**Fred Rogers:** Really. That was a good thing.

*I think so. I think it was good common sense. We also, though, have camouflage uniforms now that you don't have to iron, you just wash and dry them and they're ready to wear. And then our boots are kind of the suede side out boots. They're much more practical and tactical, but they're not black. You don't polish them. So that was a change in about 2002. The Marine Corps went to the new, they call them, digital because they're little pixel, kind of digital pixels on the camis. They went to the pixelated camis, went to the suede side out, kind of the brown desert-style boots, and I thought that was a great change too. It works better. It's more comfortable. It's more practical, but it's definitely a change, you know. Because I remember going through boot camp,*

*and you shined your boots for hours, and I guess they have them doing other things instead. I'm sure the drill instructors can think of things for them to do but you don't shine the boots anymore, and you don't have to press and starch your camis anymore.*

**Fred Rogers:** You know, when I was in the Marine Corps, we had this M1 rifle.

*The Garand?*

**Fred Rogers:** I thought they can't do any better than this. This is the greatest thing. And then when Iraq, you know, broke out and I saw all the troops gathering, the mustering of the troops, every one of them had an automatic weapon. They have such better equipment now. But we had good equipment back then.

*It's true. The weapons they have now, especially since the war in Iraq had started, it's amazing the quality of. . . Like the M4, which is a carbine. They all have these sights which are called an ACOG. It's a special type of sight that goes on your weapon that. . . They're really amazing sights, and they're meant to be fired with both eyes open, and they have a little red dot or reticle that you can put on the target and you can use them at night incredibly well with night vision goggles, and they're just amazing.*

**Fred Rogers:** Amazing, isn't it?

*Yes sir, amazing gear. But speaking of that, I was going to ask you about the Garand because that's still a great rifle and very highly thought of. Tell us a little bit about your memories of the M1 Garand.*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, it just seemed like the M1 was the rifle that would work. The carbine, sometimes they didn't work too good. And a pistol, you know, I couldn't hit the side of a barn with a pistol.

*Yeah, and you're not going to stop a lot with a pistol either.*

**Fred Rogers:** But the M1, boy, I'm telling ya, I loved that thing. And when we would take it with us everywhere we went. It was part of us.

*Absolutely. I was going to ask you too, sir, going back to Korea again for a second. When they sent you back home, you came back, I guess, as a unit or did they send you back as individuals?*

**Fred Rogers:** It was individuals.

*Okay.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, they don't do that now, do they?

*No, they don't. They send you over as a unit and you come back as a unit which is probably better for overall cohesion, so you don't have guys, you know, getting stuck behind or that sort of thing. Did they use kind of a point system, or how did they determine when you were coming back?*

**Fred Rogers:** I think it was seniority deal.

*Okay. So they basically had a list, I guess, within your unit, and they told me about a month out, "Hey, it looks like you're gonna be going home now."*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah. Well, the war had stopped. When we got 'em to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, we was just sitting there, you know. Neither side was . . . So I was glad to come home.

*Sure. When that had happened and the stalemate, which is the cease-fire, which is still in effect to this day, I don't think people realize that the war never really ended, they just did the ceasefire.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*At that point did your unit stop moving around and pretty much just stationary?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah. The guys over there were . . . They were really sharp about . . . There was one guy set up a tournament for softball players, and Ammo Company won the whole division. And I was playing on that. That was really fun.

*And that was in 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*That's a pretty big tournament then, to win that.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, it was.

*That's great. Did you see any USO shows while you were over there?*

**Fred Rogers:** I did see one but I can't remember who it was. It was somebody real popular.

*Tell us a little bit about that.*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, I wish I could think who that was. It was Bob Hope or somebody real famous.

*Might have been. He did a lot of USO shows.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, but it was fun, and it got you wanting to come home but it was fun at the time too.

*That's great.*

**Fred Rogers:** But, you know, the Korean War, I think it was horrible but it was necessary, I think. I mean, I just, you know, we can't just let 'em take over everything.

*Oh, absolutely. Look at the difference today between North and South Korea, and how South Koreans are free and prosperous and have a great economy. They make all sorts of cars and electronics and things. And then you look at North Korea where they're incredibly oppressed and the life expectancy is very short, and they live under tyranny. I don't know, sir, if you've ever seen any of the satellite images they've taken at night of the Korean Peninsula but it makes South Korea look like an island because South Korea is all lit up because they've got electricity like all*

*the rest of the world. But North Korea is pretty much completely black. They have almost no electricity. It's like they're in the stone ages. And so at night when they take a satellite view of the Korean Peninsula, South Korea looks like an island because the North Korean part is so dark that it's almost like the ocean that surrounds it.*

**Fred Rogers:** I'd like to go back over there sometime, but I don't imagine I ever will.

*I think it would be interesting. I'm sure all over South Korea you would be able to travel and see certain things. But North Korea, no one can go there, so it's a bad, bad spot. So, sir, when you got back home and you finally got discharged at Camp Lejeune, were you finally done with the Marine Corps at that point or were you still in the \_?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, the only thing that I do now is this reunion with . . . The Marine Corps reunion of Ammo Company. Yeah, that's all I do with 'em. I'm still proud to be a Marine.

*Oh, absolutely. Once a Marine, always a Marine. That's the truth.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*So I guess you came back home to Texas then? Got married and . . .*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, I got married, and that's the best thing that ever happened to me. We've been married, I think, 57 years now.

*That's great.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, and I got a job as . . . I worked in a printing place. We made printing plates. And then after so long, I moved up to northeast Texas, and I went to work for Trane. We made air conditioners.

*Oh, sure. That's a big company.*

**Fred Rogers:** And then I came back after I retired. The kids wanted us to come back closer to them, and I'm glad I did. I thought I was in heaven up there in northeast Texas around Tyler, but actually, Katy is better. I mean . . .

*That's great. So you're close to your . . .*

**Fred Rogers:** I live in Katy. I'm retired and I get bored sometimes but I do have a job at two golf courses. I'm a starter marshal at both of 'em. I work about three days a week.

*That's good. It gives you something . . .*

**Fred Rogers:** I play once, at least once a week.

*That's great. That gives you something to look forward to too, I think. There's a lot of studies that say that people that retire and don't do anything, they can kind of wither away. But if you stay active and keep doing things, it makes life a lot better for you.*

**Fred Rogers:** Oh, yeah.

*And you're close, you said, sir, your kids are in the area then?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, all my kids live pretty close.

*That's great. Do you have grandkids?*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, I have five grandkids.

*That's great. That's a blessing to be close to family like that.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah.

*Do they ever ask you . . . Well, I guess your daughter must have asked you some about your service in the Marine Corps because that's kind of how she got to looking to find some of the men you served with, is that right?*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, it was my sister actually. My kids has always asked me about, you know, Korea, but I never did say much 'cause there wasn't much to say, I didn't think. You know, I couldn't tell 'em sea stories but when we have that reunion, I mean, the lies get bigger and bigger. But I didn't wanna be like that so . . .

*That's funny. Did you keep anything from your time in the Marine Corps? Do you have any of your old pictures or uniforms?*

**Fred Rogers:** I got about two pictures, two snapshots. Everything else is gone. I used to have a picture of me in dress blues and it's gone. And I don't have anything else.

*You didn't keep your uniforms?*

**Fred Rogers:** No, uh-uh.

*Well, that's great you have a couple pictures. We'd love, if possible, to get some copies of those to put on our website and add to your interview. I think people always like that.*

**Fred Rogers:** How would I do that?

*What I'll do, sir, in about a week or so when I send you copies of this interview on CDs, I'll put my card in there with it, and you can either email copies to me if you have a way of doing that, or you can just send me a copy and we can scan it and send the original back to you or send the copy back to you.*

**Fred Rogers:** Oh, well I can probably send it on email.

*Yes sir, that would be perfect. If you can email it, that would be real easy, and then we can use it.*

**Fred Rogers:** If it hadn't got any from me. I don't know where they are but . . .

*Yes sir. We always like to get pictures if we can. It always adds to the story I think. People like being able to see a photograph.*

**Fred Rogers:** As I said before, I appreciate you doing this.

*Yes sir. But honestly, we appreciate you. This program is about honoring our veterans and trying to preserve these stories. One thing I didn't ask you, sir, is how did you come to find out about our program?*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, I didn't. My sister did, and I don't know how she did it other than just on the Internet.

*Okay, well good. We don't have really an advertising budget at all, and we're part of the General Land Office which is a state agency. But the way we promote this program is a lot of it is through word of mouth. It's through veterans organizations, and I would say probably 95% of the interviews we do are because somebody contacts us and says, "You should interview my dad, or my brother. Or "You should talk to my neighbor." That sort of thing. That's how we find most of the folks.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, the Veterans Land Board financed a little farm I bought up there in Murchison, Texas, around Tyler.

*Oh, good.*

**Fred Rogers:** It was so good of 'em to do that because I bought that land for nothing down and just very low payments over a long period of time but, of course, I was able to pay it off.

*You can't beat that, and that's why it's still to this day called the Veterans Land Board. You know, they do everything now. They have home loans, home improvement loans, and nursing homes and cemeteries and everything. But it's still called the Land Board because that's how they started and they still do those. Boy, you can't beat it when you look at the . . .*

**Fred Rogers:** I never would have been able to buy land without their help.

*Yeah, you look at the amount of money, how little it costs comparatively. It really is a great benefit for our veterans. I think Texas does a pretty good job of taking care of their veterans.*

**Fred Rogers:** I do too.

*That's good. I'm glad you were able to use that. You know, you're always eligible to use it again too if you wanted to finance another piece of land or a home or whatever. I think a lot of people think they can only use it one time but the Veterans Land Board, if you use it, you've paid it off, then you can do it again.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, but at 81, I probably will stay right here.

*Yes sir. I understand but I'm just saying, you never know. If you wanted to buy another house or whatever, you always have that option.*

**Fred Rogers:** Yeah, I sure am proud of that, I'll tell ya.

*Well, sir, I really appreciate you taking the time to chat with us today a little bit about your service in the Marine Corps. Commissioner Patterson is a Marine veteran himself. He served in Vietnam. And we've got a lot of veterans here that work at the Land Office. But everybody here, sir, appreciates you for your service to our country.*

**Fred Rogers:** Well, thank you.

*Yes sir. So this is just one small way of saying thanks. You know, here at the Land Office we have archives that go back to the 1700s. We have Stephen F. Austin's original register that has the settlers that came to Texas. And we have the land grant that David Crockett's widow received after he was killed at the Alamo. And our goal is to add these interviews to the archives so that potentially hundreds of years from now, people can listen to these interviews and maybe learn a little something from them. Because every veteran has something that's unique to them. So with that in mind, sir, is there anything that you would want to say to somebody listening to this interview years and years from now?*

**Fred Rogers:** Just that I've been very blessed in the Lord, and I give everything that I've done good, I give him the credit for it.

*Absolutely. Well, sir, I really appreciate your service, and also just thank you for taking the time to record a little interview with us.*

**Fred Rogers:** You're welcome.

*Like I mentioned, sir, probably in about a week or so, we'll be sending the package to you and it will have the CDs in it along with a letter and certificate signed by Commissioner Patterson, and those come in a commemorative binder. I'll have my card in there, so give me a call when you get that. And then also if you need or want more than the four CDs that we're going to send you, let me know and we can always make more free copies for you too.*

**Fred Rogers:** Hey, I sure appreciate it.

*Yes sir. Again, thank you very much, sir, and we'll be in touch again soon.*

**Fred Rogers:** Okay.

*All right, sir, take care.*

**Fred Rogers:** Bye bye.

*Bye bye.*