Jesse J. Mayes oral history interview

Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army
World War II – Cold War

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Abstract: Jesse Mayes discusses his experiences in the Second World War and subsequent contributions to military modernization computer programs. Mayes recalls his regrets regarding his medical disqualification from the Air Force enrollment and training as a military private and parachutist for the 82nd Airborne. He talks about Jim Crow policies at the time and their impact on his military service during World War II. Mayes credits General Gavin for facilitating residential and combat opportunities for his unit, despite internal backlash. He explains air deployment drills and the army's nascent technology schooling programs. After serving as a radar repair operator in Korea, Mayes talks about earning a master's degree in computer science and teaching at Washington Technical Institute. Mayes explains his continued support for his former colleagues in the 555th Parachute Infantry decades after leaving the Army in 1964.

Transcript Notes:

Transcriber:	Cinebar Productions
Abstract by:	Aaron Rodriguez, VWM Volunteer

Interview Transcript:

Interviewer: First of all, I want you to spell your name for us.

Mayes: Jesse, J-E-S-S-E, middle initial J, last name M-A-Y-E-S.

Interviewer: What branch of service were you in and what was your rank?

Mayes: I was in infantry, and I started first in artillery and then, reverted to infantry later, when I joined, when I became a paratrooper. But before then I graduated artillery, second lieutenant. I went to OCS.

Interviewer: When did you where did you enlist and when did you enlist?

Mayes: I didn't enlist. I volunteered. At the time, they were, I was trying to get into the, the Air, the Air Force. And I was sent to have an examination at Pope Field. And I had an astigmatism in my right eye, and didn't make it. So, I volunteered to, to come in, and as a private. And I started from a buck private. And in artillery I came up to. to the rank of sergeant. And then, I went to OCS, became a second lieutenant. And from then on there was no way but up.

Interviewer: Well, step back a little bit. When you, when you joined up, why did you join up?

Mayes: Well, at the time, I knew I was going to get drafted, so… and I was interested in. Some kind of a technical area. So, I volunteered and went into the artillery, and they sent me to the radar school. And I finished the radar school and became a radar repairman. And then after that, I decided to go in the airborne and, and I went to the jump school and ended up a master parachutist.

Interviewer: Did you did you go to Fort Bragg? Okay. Did, what did you, what did you have your jump training?

Mayes: At Fort Bragg.

Interviewer: And what did that entail? What did you have to do there?

Mayes: Well, you had to, you know, learn how to, to jump, and how to handle the chutes, and how to, how to make a landing, and how to carry equipment with you and that type of thing.

Interviewer: What kind of plane did you jump out of?

Mayes: C-47. Never will forget it.

Interviewer: What kind of a plane was it?

Mayes: What do you mean, what kind?

Interviewer: Well, I mean, was it a, was it a good play to jump out of? Was it easy to jump out of?

Mayes: Oh, yeah. That's probably one of the best planes for jumping that they ever made, C-47. The C-46 had two doors and C-47 had one door.

Interviewer: C-46 was a much bigger plane.

Mayes: It was a little larger. You could go out of both doors.

Interviewer: Now after jump school, what did you do?

Mayes: After jump school? I. let's see, we were assigned to, I was assigned to the 82nd Division. Not initially, but it was after the, after the war was over, when we were assigned to the 82nd and I was in the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, and we became the Third Battalion of the 505th Regiment of the 82nd. That was the first time black troops had ever been recognized as a Regular Army. That was before Truman signed the, the discrimination thing. So, we, we that's why I brought this to show that what General Gavin and Colin Powell thought of what we had to go through.

Interviewer: When, what did the 555th do?

Mayes: We were training to become a part of the 82nd and, and I think we did so well that General Gavin put his stars on the line and brought us into the 82nd as a part of regular, of the regular unit, you know. Made us, we became the Third Battalion, 505th Regiment of the 82nd. So, that made us an integral part of it. And after that, we had I think we had two black officers commanded the 82nd. So, that was progress.

Interviewer: Where, where did you, where did you go after your training?

Mayes: After, after, after the training? You mean after I left the 82nd? I became, I was assigned to, first, I was assigned to a ARADCOM on the, on, on the general staff of an anti-aircraft defense. And after that I was assigned to Virginia State as a professor of military science. And that's where I made Lieutenant Colonel.

Interviewer: What did you do, when you were in the 82nd or tied in with the 82nd? What did you do then?

Mayes: Principally training, and we became smokejumpers, instead of going with the 82nd. None of the generals over there would accept us. They said it would be two wars if we came with them. So, we didn't join them until after the war was over. When they came back. We marched with them down the in New York on Fifth Avenue. And after that, when General Gavin... this explains, you know, what General Gavin did, because I think he lost the star when he made us part of the division. Too bad., he was a fine general.

Interviewer: What was a smoke jumper? What were your duties there?

Mayes: The duties of smoke jumpers, we had to go out and find the bombs, the balloon bombs that the Japanese sent over... that killed a lot of people out there, you know, and, and deactivate them and put out fires. And then, after, after we finished that, they then assigned us to the 82nd.

Interviewer: Well, now I'm going to get back a little bit in the beginning of, of, of your training, because we didn't talk about it very much. You obviously, because you

told us your age were not necessarily a kid when you when you joined up. Your parents have anything to say about it? Were they opposed to it or...

Mayes: No, they, they... I had there were five of us brothers in the Army at the same time. And of course, I went up faster than the rest of them, thanks goodness. But we were all for, you know, we love our country. And if right now, if they call me back at 87, I'd go, and I would jump.

Interviewer: Where did you where did you join up? Were you here locally in Richmond or Petersburg?

Mayes: I was living in Emporia, at the time, Emporia, Virginia.

Interviewer: And where did you go from Emporia?

Mayes: You mean living?

Interviewer: Well, when you joined the Army?

Mayes: Oh, when I joined the Army. Let's see, it was Fort Bragg. From there to Korea. And from Korea back to be smokejumpers, and from there to the 82nd. And then, I got out was professor of military science at Virginia State. And then I retired, I retired in ‘64 and became the professor. I became head of the computer center there. In fact, I set up the computer center, started the computing courses, wrote the curriculum at Virginia State. And then, I left there and went to Washington, to Washington Technical Institute, and started the computing environment there. And then several of the schools there merged into the University of the District of Columbia. And I did that. We merged the facilities, the computing aspect of it.

Interviewer: When, when you were a smokejumper, did you ever see any of the Japanese balloons and the bombs and all that stuff?

Mayes: Funny thing about the majority of my time at smokejumper, they assigned me and put me in charge of the military police. So, really, I didn't have to go out on those calls.

Interviewer: What, so, what did you do with the military police?

Mayes: Well, I was in charge of that area. That was a real peculiar area, because they weren't used to black troops in that area. And, and so, we had to make certain that when they went into town that they didn't get into trouble. So, that was my job.

Interviewer: Where were you stationed in, obviously the Pacific Northwest?

Mayes: Pendleton... Pendleton, Oregon.

Interviewer: Pendleton. What was, what was Pendleton like?

Mayes: Well, it, it took us a while to get quarters, so those who had families to come. But other than that, I liked it out there, the rodeo and. After that, we was sent back to the 82nd and Fort Bragg. And that's where the fun started.

Interviewer: Tell us about the fun.

Mayes: Well, the fun was, when we went back, they put us in an area that that pigs wouldn't... it was a real nasty area, swamp area, old barracks. And so, we had to soldier our way out of that situation. And we did. And General Gavin saw to it that we got better quarters and, and that we got better assignments, and we really became integrated. And I think the story here that I have a letter from General Gavin and, and a letter from Colin Powell that tells the story better than I could.

Interviewer: Oh, but we want you to tell it.

Mayes: Well, we went through some, some tough situations. And but, but, after General Gavin got command, things changed and we got good barracks, we got good training, and we were just another one of the airborne, which is probably one of the finest organizations in the United States Army. And as I'm sure you know, anytime something happens, who goes first? 82nd. And they're still a fine organization. If they called me back right now, I would be glad to go back to the 82nd... and jump.

Interviewer: What was the last time you jumped?

Mayes: A long time ago, long time ago.

Interviewer: Did, what were you good experiences with the 82nd?

Mayes: Well, the training, you know, we went to good schools. I was always off in some school, and I learned all the electronics that I learned were there in the Army. And at that time, computers weren't very popular. They became popular later. But I got that training being I was in charge of the, the training, in general, in the, in my outfit. So, the computing part I picked up there early. The best thing that ever happened to me, because when, when I retired, I knew the DOS system and, and I learned it in the military. So, that at Virginia State some of the Ph. Ds became upset, because I, as the director of the computer center, was reporting directly to the president and some there were four ladies, all four of them were Ph.Ds. And I just got my master's as, when I was professor of military science, and they didn't like that. So, they wanted the president to have me to report to this little group as a committee, and then, the committee would tell me what to do. And I don't think either one of them knew the difference between a bit and a byte. But they wanted they, they were they didn't like it, because, you know, I only had a master's degree, and yet I had more power than they had, see, reporting directly to the president.

And it appeared that the president was going along with him when one day a fellow, by the name of Dr. Bill Crump, knocked on the door in the computer center. and I went to the door and let him in. Told me who he was, said he was president of Washington Technical Institute, and he had heard the progress that we were making at Virginia State, and that he would like to know if I would like to come there and, and set up same thing I had there at Virginia State. So, I told him that I was doing very well there. But if I left and come to Washington Tech, how much would he pay? He said, “Twice as much as you're getting now.” Well, that floored me. And I asked him, I said, “Well, when, when, when would I start?” He said, “As soon as you can get there.” And so, I talked it over with my wife and, and I resigned at Virginia State and went up there. And sure enough,

they made me a full professor. I only had a master's degree in it, and made me a full professor with tenure, and double my salary. And that was the best thing that ever happened to me. Because right now, if that, if I had retired at Virginia State, I would have been, my Social Security would be half of what it is. So, the, the technical knowledge that I learned at Virginia at 82nd was, is responsible for my progress.

Interviewer: What was your what did your training involve with this? I mean, besides going to jump school then you had classes in computer science...

Mayes: Yeah. I went to all. In fact, the General told me one day he said you spent more time in school since you said you need to stay here and go to work. I applied to go to another school, so I went to every school. I took electronics and the air defense, all of that. And I was, I was a guided missile specialists and repairman. So, I had the technical part of it. So, picking up the computing was, was easy.

Interviewer: Did you ever do any missile repair?

Mayes: Oh, yeah, sure.

Interviewer: Where did you go to do that?

Mayes: Well, when we had these, these radar search systems, you know, when they went down, I'd have to go get them back and, because that's, we were air defense, you know.

Interviewer: Where did your travels take you? Did you ever get to go anywhere?

Mayes: Well, I, whenever, whenever systems went down, I would have to go to the site. In fact, when they were selecting sites, I was on the committee, you know, air defense sites for the radars. I would travel all over the country.

Interviewer: Did you go, did you go up to Alaska or Hawaii or any place like that?

Mayes: No, I never did go to Alaska. We went through there, but I was never assigned there. All of it was at Fort Bragg, Korea and places where the unit was.

Interviewer: So, what was your time like in Korea? Did you spend much time there?

Mayes: I spent about a year there. It was, it was a cruel place.

Interviewer: What were your duties in Korea?

Mayes: There, I was a radar officer. And I had to keep the radars going. That was my main job, repairs and supervision.

Interviewer: And then, after, after Korea. What was the next stage?

Mayes: After Korea. I came back and they assigned me to the school at Fort Bliss, Fort Bliss, Texas. Right.

Interviewer: What did you do there?

Mayes: Well, there I had to keep the radars... you know, we had a school going and I had to keep the radars going. And I was, I was... we had ten radars on that site there at the school. That was my responsibility.

Interviewer: Just to keep them going.

Mayes: Keep them going, right. And I had to keep up with the... I was a bookkeeper also responsible for...

Interviewer: All the money that it took to keep it maintained and everything.

Mayes: Well, the, the repair costs and all that. Yes.

Interviewer: Did you, has there been much, or did you see much difference from when you first got in in the radar and the electronics they use to, you know, when you retired and so forth? Was there a big change and all that stuff, all the equipment?

Mayes: Well, the basic electronics didn't change. You know, the basic electronics didn't change. And then, merged into that, computing was just coming in, you know, and learning the bits and the bytes. It was easy.

Interviewer: So, you really liked your computer experience?

Mayes: Oh, yes. Yes. In fact, I wrote the first curriculum over at Virginia State and put in the first computers.

Interviewer: Well, tell us about that. Although did you have a lot of problems getting the funding and getting kids and everything?

Mayes: It was it was initially, initially, yes, because the people in charge of the money could care less about computers at that time, because, you know, they were just coming in to the military. But it's the best thing that ever happen to me, because after that, getting jobs was easy. I had to turn down jobs. I mean, high paying jobs, if you know the electronics and the computing. And that gave me the advantage when I went up to Washington, because I was the director of the computer center and chairman of the computer science department. And there were Ph.Ds. involved. See, I only had a master's degree, but they were working for me, because I knew the bits and the bytes. They didn't. So, that gave me a leg up there.

Interviewer: And can you trace all that back to your experience in your Army. Now, were you still in the Army when you were teaching at Virginia State?

Mayes: Well, I came to Virginia State in the military, see, professor of military science. But then when I retired from the Army, I went to work as director of director of the computer center. See? And I was in charge of the computing classes. In fact, I wrote the curriculum.

Interviewer: Has the curriculum changed from when you first…

Mayes: Oh, it has gone from that. See, when DOS, I was good in DOS. But today, with Windows and going, you can't even run the programs that I mastered, in Windows. So, it's a different world.

Interviewer: So. And how long were you in the military?

Mayes: 22.5 years.

Interviewer: So, you were in from the end of World War Two, sort of. That would be in the 60s, I guess, huh?

Mayes: Yeah, I retired in the 60s, ‘64.

Interviewer: Do you have any favorite military stories?

Mayes: Not, not really. It was it was one of the best things I ever happened to me, was to be in the Army, because I learned more electronics and technical stuff that has helped me since.

Interviewer: So, it was a good experience for you.

Mayes: It was the best training. I don't believe the schools outside were any better than the schools, military. And I took all of the courses, radar course, the whole bit.

Interviewer: And then you've, you've continued with education outside of, outside the military and outside of Virginia State.

Mayes: Well, right. See, I was, I was at ARADCOM. I was on the general staff where we sited the, set up the computer sets all over the in defense. And I was a part of that. In fact, I was in charge.

Interviewer: Tell us now, what is RADCOM? I'm not familiar with that term.

Mayes: Let's see, air defense out in Colorado. And I think all of this satellite business came out of ARADCOM. I think the reason why we got satellites up there now doing what they're doing all started at ARADCOM.

Interviewer: Did you have anything to do with any of the satellite electronics or...

Mayes: No. My, my, my, my problem was, at the time, siting radars, you know, for defense. That was my primary problem. My assignment. I was wearing general staff stars.

Interviewer: And what did you do in the general staff?

Mayes: Well, I was you know, I was designated as a staff member, and on the general staff. And the emblem is a star. I always like to come back on visits to show my star.

Interviewer: And then, what after, after, after that, what did you do?

Mayes: After that. Let's see. I was with Virginia State. I left there, went to Washington Technical Institute and set up the computing environment there. And when the, when the three schools merged to become the University of DC, that was one of my primary. one of the primary things I did.

Interviewer: When, when University of DC got together, what did you what did you what were your responsibilities there?

Mayes: I became, I became the dean of the computer science division.

Interviewer: Is that, is that, did have a lot of students up there.

Mayes: Oh, yes. It's. It's pretty sized university now.

Interviewer: What other activities you've been involved with since you retired?

Mayes: Since I retired, principally, I guess, I went into politics. Went into politics. I'm the only black guy living or dead who has ever been elected in Chesterfield County, Matoaka District. I was a supervisor at the Matoaka District, and the Matoaka District is one of the richest districts in the country. That bridge. I don't know whether you know, the bridge you cross coming up here. That bridge, they wanted to name it after me, but they say you have to be dead. So, I had it named after the unit 5, 555th. If you go across there, you'll see the sign, 555th Parachute Infantry Memorial Bridge. So, I was pretty good in politics in my district where I was promoted, where I was elected, twice, is 80% white and 20% black. I thought that was a pretty good feat.

Interviewer: Now, was the was the 555th, was that, was that an all black unit? Is that why...

Mayes: An all black unit, right.

Interviewer: How many how many guys were in your unit? How many guys were in the unit?

Mayes: Oh, we started off with a test platoon of 20, and it looked like there was an attempt there to make certain that they failed. But the 20... I wasn't in the 20, but I came after that and joined it. And it went from, I think, about 20 soldiers up to, let's see, I think we had 600, I believe. There was 600 in the in the battalion… maybe, maybe 800. But I think this when you read that, you see how the unit grew, and what General Gavin thought of it, and what General Powell thought of it.

Interviewer: Did, did you have any… was when they made your smoke jumper, did you have any other combat experience, or was it until Korea that you did you know.

Mayes: The, the closest combat experience I had was in Korea. I didn't get the Purple Heart or anything like that.

Interviewer: What did you do in Korea?

Mayes: Well, same thing. I was air defense, and I was in charge of the of the radars do and communicate communication.

Interviewer: I see you guys, you've got 555 tie on. Do you keep in good contact with with the others?

Mayes: Oh, yeah. We have we have over 1,000 members now in 36 states, and we have a convention every year. Year before it was in Las Vegas. And this last one, not too many weeks ago, was in Louisiana.

Interviewer: And was, did, I guess, once you got started? In the 555th, you think things improve for you as conditions improved?

Mayes: Oh, yes. In fact, I think the 555 played a part in the progress that Martin Luther King made in integration, because there were other troops, like the Buffalo Soldiers, but they were all segregated units. And it wasn't until we became a part of the 82nd that the integration started.

Interviewer: And what did, what was that like when you, when you integrated? I mean, was it I think it, it wasn't a very smooth, smooth deal cost General Gavin, a star you said.

Mayes: I think it cost him a star. But so far as the men were concerned, it was much better than I thought. Maybe, maybe they're trying... (Camera cut)

Interviewer: What did, did you have a nickname for the 555 or...

Mayes: No, it was just, it was just “Triple nickel,” yes, Triple nickel. That was the nickname.

Interviewer: When did when did that did that come about? As soon as it started?

Mayes: You know, I don't know when it came about, but all of a sudden it was Triple Nickel, all of a sudden.

Interviewer: And then, and then, just continue to grow.

Mayes: Just continue to grow.

Interviewer: Was it did it get to be a big unit while you were still in it? Were there 6 or 800?

Mayes: No. Well, when I started, you know, right after the test platoon/ And the, the accomplishments of that test platoon is what we refer to now, let's see. How do we call it? We had a cute name for them. I think about it. I think of it after a while. But it is, it is, it is what they did, the example of what they did is what, what inspires the triple nickel today, because they were designed to fail and they were being servants, you know, and serving tables and cleaning up, scrubbing. And that's all they were doing, see. And they weren't training to be paratroopers initially, you see. And but, to satisfy some of the politicians, I think it was Mrs. Roosevelt, to satisfy her, they started to treat us a little different. And the, the Tuskegee Airmen had the same problem, you know. And it was Mrs. Roosevelt that that took the cover off of them, you know. And it was her insistence that gave us a break as paratroopers.

Interviewer: Did, were the conditions bad barracks and all that when you were there?

Mayes: Oh, sure.

Interviewer: So, you were old World War Two or older than World War One.

Mayes: I was in World War Two. We were we were in those old barracks at Fort Bragg where the drainage wasn't taken care of, where the barracks were falling apart. That's where we had to live in, initially, but things came around. When General, General Gavin became the, the division commander. things changed, things changed.

Interviewer: And did they put you in new quarters or did they...

Mayes: After that, we got we got new quarters and improved quarters. And, and we got mingled and assignments, you know. There were several sergeant majors. And then, after that, it wasn't too long after that before a Black became the commanding general of the division. In fact, there has been two.

Interviewer: Now, did you serve under General Gavin?

Mayes: Oh yes. Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Wonderful general.

Interviewer: Well, tell us about General Gavin.

Mayes: General Gavin, you could talk... even as a little soldier like I was, you could talk to General Gavin. He got to know you by name, and that made a lot of difference. And assignments, and when we went out on parades, we tried to be the sharpest outfit out there, and it just changed the morale. And it got to the point where there was no friction between the soldiers white and black. There was no friction.

Interviewer: That was the way it was supposed to work out.

Mayes: That was the way it was supposed to work. And that's the way it worked. And I think that was good for the country. I really do.

Interviewer: Well, you've seen a big change in, in the military, in the Army in particular, I guess.

Mayes: Absolutely. From what it was then and what it is now. Right.

Interviewer: Would you, would you encourage young, young kids to join the military?

Mayes: I sure would, because it's the best thing that ever happened to me. If I hadn't gone in the military, I'd probably been in jail someplace.

Interviewer: So, it gave you a lot of a lot of opportunities.

Mayes: A lot of opportunities… and schools. The schools were tops.

Interviewer: What would you say to today's young kids about why, why you, why you joined the military, why your generation did what you did?

Mayes: Well, it was, it was something that needed to be done. It was something that needed to be done. And that's why we always look at the first 17 as jewels, because you see, if they had rioted, you know, and screwed the thing up, there wouldn't have been no Triple Nickel. And the Army wouldn't be what it is today. And so we always look back at those 17 guys and we say, you know, they laid the foundation because if they hadn't done what they did, we would have never been integrated. And we wouldn't have accomplished what we have. And we try to, when we lecture to the kids, we tell them about those 17 guys. We do that now. And the learning center was started on that basis.

Interviewer: Now, what do you, what do you talk about with, with the original 17 guys? What do you tell the kids about?

Mayes: We tell them that what they had to do, what they had to endure and, and put it behind them and look at the success. And that's you know, that's what you have to do in life. And that's the principle behind starting this learning center, is that we want to influence the churches, specifically the black churches, because the white churches are already doing it. Set up learning centers where you can teach kids about the new technology that will enable them to get these jobs that are there, because proof that they are there. they bring in thousands of foreigners every year to take those jobs. And if our kids were qualified to take them, they could get them, because they'd have first preference. But that's an uphill fight. I told you about my pastor, made me take, take the learning center out that I gave him. In fact, I made the contribution to those computers that we have here. That's why they named the Learning Center after me. I think of what would have happened if every church had a learning center, and was turning out at least five or six young men or women every year. The difference that they would make in the workforce. And the difference it would make in the community, because you've got a good job, you can feed the family and clothe the family. If you don't have a good job, you can't do that. It's as simple as that. And that's why we started a chapter and named it after the Bridge to do just that. And the name of the chapter is the Memorial Bridge Chapter. And we are supporting the Learning Center.

Interviewer: So, that's this building here. And, and you have computer classes here.

Mayes: Right. We have that little room there. I tried to, when they were building the building, I wanted to make it larger, but I was overruled.

Interviewer: So, how many classes do they have here?

Mayes: Well, the classes right now are irregular. It is not going like I would like to see it go, but I think we'll get there, because I'll keep pushing.

Interviewer: Do any of the other guys in the Triple Nickel do? Are they doing anything like this?

Mayes: Well, the chapter that we have started is, has dedicated themselves to making that thing run. Well, that's, that's, that's our prime objective.

Interviewer: That's a heck of a legacy for, for Triple Nickel.

Mayes: I think we're going to get it done, because as soon as we can get one church to turn out kids like that and get some publicity on the jobs of what it has done for them, then the other churches are going to look bad if they don't do it.

Interviewer: Absolutely.

Mayes: So, that would be the legacy for, for the chapter. And we're trying, I'm trying to get all the chapters. We got 20, we got 20, 20, 26 chapters, and with members in 36 states. And if we had a chapter in every state doing that, it would have an impact on the community. Each community that, where these chapters are located. And that would make a difference, because right now you've got more young black men in jail than you have in college. And that would change that.

Interviewer: Well, that's, that's quite a legacy.

Mayes: Well, we're going to try it. I hope I live long enough to see Learning Center and every black church.

Interviewer: You've made a big start. Is there anything that we haven't kind of talked about that you'd like to talk about with regard to your experiences in the military and, and where you are now?

Mayes: Well, I think we've just about covered it. What I would like to do is to send you my resume so that some things that I may have missed or got wrong will be right in that, because my memory is not any good anymore.

Interviewer: Well, you've, you've been doing this a long time.

Mayes: 87 years.

Interviewer: And now, are you still active in the, in the airborne chapter?

Mayes: I'm the national secretary of the association.

Interviewer: How many, how many folks are in that?

Mayes: Well, we have over 1,000 members. with members in 36 states. We have 26 chapters.

Interviewer: They, how long was the Triple Nickel in an active organization or is it still part of the 82nd?

Mayes: No way. This is association. Yeah, and we are not a part of the 82nd we have. We are an independent association. Yeah. And even though the president of the association is also an officer in the 82nd Association. But we, the Triple Nickel is separate and distinct. And we are the only chapter with a bridge named after them. Yeah.

Interviewer: You think that, is that one of your biggest accomplishments?

Mayes: I think so. I think so. That people right now know me by the bridge, and I run into people, you know, they know me, and I don't know them. And they tell me that every time, they say every time they cross the bridge, they think about me,

because when I was a supervisor, I fought for that bridge, and it has opened up the southern end of the county. There was a time when property on River Road you could... cheap as dirt, but now you've got to be rich to buy some of that property along River Road. Yeah. And that bridge opened up River Road. There were times when you had people cars were stacked up there and the train, freight going by and it took him an hour to, you know, get across. And when I was supervisor, I think, the person died there, because we were waiting to get across and didn't make it, the ambulance. And so, that was one of my major projects and we got it through. And a lot of people said naming after him. And but the board said, the rules are you have to be dead.

Interviewer: It's not a very good alternative.

Mayes: That's right. So, I said, and I think saying, let's name it after the outfit. And they did. And that's the only bridge named after an outfit.

Interviewer: It was quite an accomplishment.

Mayes: Well, it looks that way, doesn't it? Yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to put into your interview that.

Mayes: No, I think I've told it all, but I'd like to send my resume, so that you can, you know.

Interviewer: We can give that to Bob.

Mayes: Okay.

Interviewer: And we'll go from there.

Mayes: Okay.

Interviewer: So, we'll, we'll let you get out from under the spotlight.

Mayes: Okay. I really appreciate this. And I think... well, it was a pleasure. Good, Good.