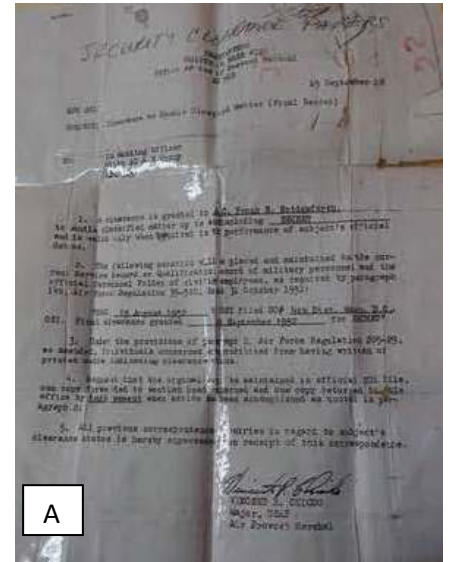


# So Secret Even He Didn't Know

In 1945, Frank Bridgeforth went through U.S. Navy basic training and was assigned as a cook and 20mm gun handler on the USS Filmore APA 83 (attack transport) during the closing days of World War II. He transferred into the Army Air Corps and became a heavy equipment operator (bulldozer). He then transferred to the Army Engineer Corps and as he was moving between radar sites prior to and during the Korean Conflict he was also given classified documents to deliver. He had been given secret and final secret clearance without his knowledge (as he said, "The Army got two jobs for the price of one.")



Bridgeforth served mainly in nonintegrated units (except on ship). Prior to shipping out to Korea, in 1953 he was stationed in Texas. He was a sergeant at the time and one evening he, and another sergeant (who was white), went to the NCO club. Bridgeforth was told that because he was black, he could not enter the facility. Both he and the white sergeant (who refused to enter without Bridgeforth) left. The following week the colonel in charge of the base called



a meeting for all the black units. The colonel told them that "some of you people" had been trying to enter the NCO club, and that the club was strictly "whites only." Bridgeforth stood up and questioned this. The colonel became angry and told Bridgeforth that "he would like to see him hanged from a sycamore tree." Several of Bridgeforth's fellow soldiers left the meeting and went to the unit commander and told him what was happening. Fearing for Bridgeforth's safety, the unit commander immediately sent a Jeep to pick up Bridgeforth. He put him on a plane to get him off the base, took him to another base in New York with instructions not to stop anywhere until he was safe.



Bridgeforth later deployed to Korea until the end of the conflict.

Included are a) The letter of security clearance for Bridgeforth that was given to him after he had spent months delivering classified documents; b) Photograph, group photo of the Army Engineer Unit 838 (Korea era) and c) Photograph, group photo of the U.S. Naval Training class (WWII era).