

John E. Barker Interview

Company E, 319th Inf Reg

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Charnell Spears, Jacqueline Holland, Tiyona Wortham)

(MS Word Audio Transcript [NOT edited, just transcribed])

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Today is February 16th, 2011. We are in Germantown. We are interviewing John E Barker, who was one on.

00:00:13 Speaker 1

On April 9th, 1925, Middleport OH.

00:00:19 Speaker 1

The names of the people who are attending the interview are Tiana Wortham and John Barker.

00:00:26 Speaker 1

The organization we are working with is diverse school for the Arts veteran history project.

00:00:34 Speaker 1

John Barker served in World War 2 European theater.

00:00:40 Speaker 1

His highest rank was Sergeant, and he served in Europe.

00:00:47 Speaker 1

Were you drafted or did you enlist?

00:00:50 Speaker 2

And list them.

00:00:53 Speaker 1

What year?

00:00:56 Speaker 1

What do you need to deal with?

00:00:58 Speaker 2

In 1943.

00:01:01 Speaker 1

Where were you living at the time?

00:01:07 Speaker 2

I joined the I joined the Army because I wanted to be an engineer.

00:01:14 Speaker 2

Middleport OH.

00:01:16 Speaker 1

Why did you join in? Why?

00:01:20 Speaker 3

You already answered that. Gone to the next one.

00:01:23 Speaker 1

Do you recall the first days in service?

00:01:26 Speaker 2

With my basic training.

00:01:28 Speaker 2

At Fort McClellan, AL.

00:01:32 Speaker 2

Which was infantry basic training.

00:01:36 Speaker 1

What did it feel?

00:01:37 Speaker 2

Like it was a totally new experience.

00:01:43 Speaker 1

Tell me about your boot camps bias training experiences.

00:01:47 Speaker 2

Fort McClellan, AL, which in the summer time.

00:01:51 Speaker 2

And it was extremely hot. And to finish up after three months.

00:01:57 Speaker 2

We took a 20 mile hike.

00:02:00 Speaker 2

Over a very high mountain spent the night in a 20 mile hike back the next day.

00:02:05 Speaker 2

That was the end of basic training.

00:02:10 Speaker 1

Do you remember your instructors?

00:02:13 Speaker 2

They were.

00:02:15 Speaker 2

Instructors were all originally part of the National Guard unit in Illinois.

00:02:21 Speaker 2

And they had been in the cavalry before, but now they were instructors in the infantry.

00:02:30 Speaker 1

How did you get through the boot camp?

00:02:33 Speaker 2

Fine. I was young and healthy and ambitious.

00:02:41 Speaker 1

Which war did you say?

00:02:43 Speaker 2

World War 2.

00:02:48 Speaker 1

What years did you say?

00:02:50 Speaker 2

I went in the army in the June of 1943.

00:02:54 Speaker 2

And got out in January of 1946.

00:02:59

Where?

00:03:00 Speaker 1

Exactly. Did you go?

00:03:04 Speaker 2

We started at boot camp in Alabama.

00:03:07 Speaker 2

Then I went to.

00:03:09 Speaker 2

A special training program called the ASTP.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

Army specialized training program.

00:03:16 Speaker 2

Which was to train engineers.

00:03:18 Speaker 2

And I went to Fargo, ND.

00:03:22 Speaker 2

What was called North Dakota Agricultural College?

00:03:25 Speaker 2

To train for be an engineer.

00:03:29 Speaker 3

And then after that, where did you go?

00:03:32 Speaker 2

And after one semester.

00:03:34 Speaker 2

At college.

00:03:36 Speaker 2

They decided they needed more replacements in the infantry and they did engineers.

00:03:41 Speaker 2

So I got shipped out to the 76th Division at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin.

00:03:48 Speaker 2

And the CAP 76 Division was just preparing to go on.

00:03:52 Speaker 2

Winter maneuvers in Upper Upper Peninsula, Michigan.

00:03:57 Speaker 2

In the winter time in February.

00:03:59 Speaker 2

So I went in the 76th.

00:04:03 Speaker 2

Was there were two days and two days later I'm in Michigan with all kinds of gear. I have no idea what it was all about.

00:04:11 Speaker 2

And we trained to be ski troops.

00:04:14 Speaker 2

And we played war games in Michigan for six weeks in the snow in February.

00:04:22 Speaker 1

Do you remember arriving overseas and what was it like?

00:04:30 Speaker 2

The boat, like we hit, we went over on the.

00:04:33 Speaker 2

The Queen Mary, which was a luxury liner.

00:04:36 Speaker 2

From New York to Scotland and we went over in five days. The ship was fast enough. It did not have to go in convoy.

00:04:45 Speaker 2

It could zig and zag and avoid the submarines, and so we made A5.

00:04:50 Speaker 2

Day trip.

00:04:51 Speaker 2

Which was amazingly fast.

00:04:54 Speaker 2

To get there.

00:04:57 Speaker 1

What was your job assignment?

00:04:59 Speaker 2

Well, at that time I was a.

00:05:01 Speaker 2

Private.

00:05:02 Speaker 2

And a rifle platoon.

00:05:07 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:05:10 Speaker 2

I was in the 80th Division, which was part of patent army.

00:05:14 Speaker 2

We went to France on August the 6th.

00:05:18 Speaker 2

And.

00:05:20 Speaker 2

That was after they broke through with St. Low. We were waiting in England for the breakthrough.

00:05:25 Speaker 2

And then we were committed.

00:05:27 Speaker 2

And as soon as we got there with.

00:05:30 Speaker 2

The.

00:05:30 Speaker 2

Donation was committed to.

00:05:33 Speaker 2

The battle at Felice Gap.

00:05:36 Speaker 2

And that was a very critical battle.

00:05:38 Speaker 2

Fortunately, my regiment was not involved, but division was.

00:05:46 Speaker 1

Were there many, many casually matinees in your unit?

00:05:54 Speaker 2

Well, I remember 1 particular battle, which was in a little town called Pompeii, France.

00:06:00 Speaker 2

And.

00:06:03 Speaker 2

We have been told that it was, quote, a few Germans.

00:06:06 Speaker 2

Holding a high ground behind the town of Pompeii.

00:06:10 Speaker 2

And we were given instructions to go clean out the few Germans.

00:06:15 Speaker 2

So we went with just two rifle platoons, which is about 80 people.

00:06:22 Speaker 2

It turned out counterintelligence was not very good because it was a couple 100 Germans in the woods, and that one day's battle.

00:06:32 Speaker 2

We had 12 people killed, including one Lieutenant.

00:06:36 Speaker 2

Five non commissioned officers.

00:06:39 Speaker 2

A total of 30 people wounded.

00:06:41 Speaker 2

So out of 80 total we had.

00:06:44 Speaker 2

50% casualties that one day.

00:06:50 Speaker 1

Tell me about a couple of your most memorable experiences.

00:06:55 Speaker 2

And the thing I remember most about the war.

00:06:59 Speaker 2

In France.

00:07:01 Speaker 2

The normal rainfall was about typical. If you're in the Miami Valley.

00:07:06 Speaker 2

About 2 1/2 inches per month.

00:07:09 Speaker 2

While we were there in September, October and November.

00:07:14 Speaker 2

The rainfall for those three months was three times and normal.

00:07:18 Speaker 2

And I thought, well, that's just my memory. That's fooling me.

00:07:22 Speaker 2

I came back after the war and I was reading the official history.

00:07:26 Speaker 2

Of Lorraine campaign and one of the footnotes says that.

00:07:30 Speaker 2

Nancy France, which is on the Moselle river.

00:07:33 Speaker 2

In the month of November, had 7 1/2 inches of rainfall.

00:07:39 Speaker 2

So what I remember most is rain and mud and rain and mud.

00:07:48 Speaker 1

Where you a prisoner of war?

00:07:50 Speaker 2

No.

00:07:52 Speaker 1

Were you awarded any medals for?

00:07:57 Speaker 1

Citations.

00:08:00 Speaker 2

No, I was not a prisoner of war.

00:08:02 Speaker 2

I received 2 purple hearts.

00:08:06 Speaker 2

During my short time and the war was fairly short for me, I.

00:08:13 Speaker 2

As I said earlier, I went to France on August the 6th and the end of November. I'm on my way back.

00:08:20 Speaker 2

To the hospital chain to England and I spent the rest of the war in England, in the hospital.

00:08:25 Speaker 3

Can you tell us about your injuries?

00:08:28 Speaker 2

Had a.

00:08:30 Speaker 2

Badge shrapnel wound in my left leg.

00:08:33 Speaker 2

And it's what soldiers call and \$1,000,000 rule because.

00:08:38 Speaker 2

I spent the winter in England when the rest of my division, including Wilbur, was in the Battle of the Bulge and.

00:08:44 Speaker 2

I missed it.

00:08:46 Speaker 2

But I I did not know. I had trench foot and when I got to the hospital.

00:08:51 Speaker 2

They cut my boots off, my feet went poop.

00:08:55 Speaker 2

And turned as black as your jacket like a marshmallow when you hold it over the fire.

00:09:01 Speaker 2

And I spent four months in the hospital with my feet up in the air on strops.

00:09:07 Speaker 2

Doing the circulation back very, very slowly.

00:09:11 Speaker 2

So that's \$1,000,000 wound.

00:09:14 Speaker 3

Purple Heart.

00:09:15 Speaker 2

You know.

00:09:16 Speaker 2

The first was the battle at Pompeii. I told you about that.

00:09:19 Speaker 2

In the woods and I got my.

00:09:22 Speaker 2

A helmet blown off with a.

00:09:24 Speaker 2

German hand grenade of my helmet off. It rang my bell for about an.

00:09:29 Speaker 2

And I got a few powder burns on my face and.

00:09:34 Speaker 2

Still got a couple little pieces of shrapnel stuck in my face from that.

00:09:38 Speaker 2

First initial encounter with the Germans.

00:09:42 Speaker 3

So did you lose any time with your first wound, or did you just did they just?

00:09:46 Speaker 3

Treat you there and.

00:09:47 Speaker 3

Then keep you out in the field.

00:09:49 Speaker 2

Well, the the Purple Heart, it was the first one was.

00:09:53 Speaker 2

Small enough, they just the medics and the company.

00:09:57 Speaker 2

The company medics took care of Maine.

00:10:00 Speaker 2

The second one was I I got this shrapnel wound in my leg.

00:10:04 Speaker 2

They sent me to a field hospital.

00:10:06 Speaker 2

The field hospital sent me to another hospital in Nancy, France.

00:10:11 Speaker 2

That's when they cut my boots off.

00:10:14 Speaker 2

And that's when they found out I had trench foot.

00:10:17 Speaker 2

So they shipped me back from there.

00:10:19 Speaker 2

To Paris, to a General Hospital.

00:10:22 Speaker 2

And from Paris to England, and I spent the rest of the war in the hospital in England.

00:10:41 Speaker 1

How did you stay in touch with your family?

00:10:45 Speaker 2

Well.

00:10:50 Speaker 2

Stay in touch with your family by by e-mail, not emails by air mails.

00:10:57 Speaker 2

And of course, everything went through censorship. So you had to be very careful what you wrote.

00:11:03 Speaker 2

But the mail service was pretty good.

00:11:07 Speaker 2

What was the flu like? Well, it varied.

00:11:13 Speaker 2

Most in the infantry you had what was called C rations, which were canned food.

00:11:19 Speaker 2

And you got you had that cold and if you had an opportunity.

00:11:23 Speaker 2

You can warm it up, but you could eat it cold once in a while, you'd get a K ration, which was like a.

00:11:29 Speaker 2

A cracker black box, which is a little bit different.

00:11:33 Speaker 2

But sometimes you were really lucky and you could scavenge.

00:11:37 Speaker 2

From the little villages you were in, fresh eggs or fresh potatoes.

00:11:44 Speaker 2

Sometimes even a chicken.

00:11:47 Speaker 3

How is the food once you get back to the hospital? How is the food in the hospital?

00:11:50 Speaker 2

Hmm.

00:11:51 Speaker 2

Food the hospital was good.

00:11:56 Speaker 1

Did you have plenty of supplies?

00:12:01 Speaker 2

The question.

00:12:02 Speaker 1

Did you have plenty of supplies?

00:12:07 Speaker 2

Oh yes.

00:12:09 Speaker 2

I personally did.

00:12:11 Speaker 2

The one thing in the war that was.

00:12:14 Speaker 2

Was continuously short of, of course, was gasoline.

00:12:18 Speaker 2

To move the tanks forward and to bring up the ammunition so.

00:12:23 Speaker 2

Sometimes we'd be in a position of not having artillery support because the artillery ammunition didn't get there.

00:12:30 Speaker 2

But as far as our own personal supplies, yes, it was OK.

00:12:38 Speaker 1

Did you feel pressure or stress?

00:12:42 Speaker 2

I think the answer to that is pretty obvious, yes.

00:12:46 Speaker 3

How did you deal with that?

00:12:47 Speaker 3

I mean, what did you do to?

00:12:51 Speaker 2

Well, at my age I was 19.

00:12:56 Speaker 2

You can shake it off.

00:12:59 Speaker 2

Some people couldn't handle it. That was what was called battle fatigue. People couldn't handle the stress.

00:13:06 Speaker 2

I was fortunate I got through OK.

00:13:11 Speaker 1

Well, there's something specially big regular.

00:13:14 Speaker 2

No, I'm a nourishment. Good luck comes to me naturally.

00:13:21 Speaker 1

Having people into entertain themselves.

00:13:26 Speaker 2

Well, if you had time, some people would play cards.

00:13:31 Speaker 2

Read you'd get the stars and Stripes magazine.

00:13:35 Speaker 2

As an example, you read it cover to cover.

00:13:38 Speaker 2

To.

00:13:40 Speaker 2

You were always so busy, you didn't have a whole lot of time to worry about entertainment.

00:13:49 Speaker 1

Were there any tenants?

00:13:52 Speaker 2

I didn't have any leave except when I was in the hospital.

00:13:55 Speaker 3

Did you get to see any USO shows or entertainers? Come to see you in the hospital.

00:14:00 Speaker 2

The what?

00:14:01 Speaker 3

Did any entertainers come to see you in the hospital or go to a USO show?

00:14:06 Speaker 2

No, I were entertainers, but none came to the particular hospital I was in, OK.

00:14:12 Speaker 3

What did you do to help pass the time in the hospital since you were?

00:14:15 Speaker 3

There for so long.

00:14:20 Speaker 2

Conversation mostly, as I told you, my feet were up in the.

00:14:23 Speaker 2

Air on stirrups.

00:14:25 Speaker 2

And I would talk to the fellow across the hall from being the next.

00:14:29 Speaker 2

Bit.

00:14:30 Speaker 2

I never ever saw his face.

00:14:36 Speaker 1

What did you do when on leave?

00:14:41 Speaker 2

On leave.

00:14:43 Speaker 2

Didn't have any leave.

00:14:45 Speaker 2

When I was, when I got to the point in the hospital.

00:14:49 Speaker 2

Being able to get my feet down and back to walk on my feet.

00:14:53 Speaker 2

They had what they called ambulatory service and they would take you out of a hospital for a week.

00:15:00 Speaker 2

And you go and meet a private family and you stay with that private family in their home and you go to the university for a week.

00:15:09 Speaker 2

That was very interesting.

00:15:11 Speaker 3

What was? What was the families like that you stayed with? Did you stay with different families each?

00:15:15 Speaker 2

Time only had one tour family that I stayed with.

00:15:22 Speaker 2

They had two sons that were in the.

00:15:24 Speaker 2

Service in the British Army and they had a younger daughter at home.

00:15:29 Speaker 2

And I became very close with them.

00:15:32 Speaker 2

And we kept in correspondence for years with Christmas cards back and forth.

00:15:39 Speaker 2

So they were a delightful family.

00:15:41 Speaker 2

Had a great time with.

00:15:42 Speaker 2

Them.

00:15:43

When?

00:15:43 Speaker 3

Where in England, like outside of London or north or.

00:15:48 Speaker 2

I was up in what they call the Midlands and.

00:15:54 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:15:57 Speaker 2

I can't think of the name of the town of this moment will come back to me, but was up in the Midlands.

00:16:06 Speaker 1

Where did you travel while in the phase?

00:16:15 Speaker 2

Where while I was in France.

00:16:19 Speaker 2

And then after the war.

00:16:21 Speaker 2

I ended up in southern Germany with my division.

00:16:25 Speaker 2

And then after the war.

00:16:27 Speaker 2

We ended up in occupational duty in Czechoslovakia on the border between the Russian zone and the American zone. We did guard duty on the border. Two Americans and two Russians.

00:16:42 Speaker 2

So that's where we ended up.

00:16:43 Speaker 3

So when you got well out of the hospital, you returned to your regiment. Was that after the war, then? Or near real close to the end?

00:16:48 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:16:52 Speaker 2

No, that was after the war. The war had just ended.

00:16:55 Speaker 3

In Europe or in Japan?

00:16:57 Speaker 2

No, in Europe.

00:16:58 Speaker 2

In Europe.

00:16:59 Speaker 2

I ended up back with my division in Southern Germany.

00:17:04 Speaker 2

And then we went from there to Czechoslovakia.

00:17:07 Speaker 2

The war had ended for occupational duty.

00:17:11 Speaker 3

And can you explain your occupational duty, what that entailed?

00:17:16 Speaker 2

Well, the occupational duty, like I say, was the common zone between the the American zone of.

00:17:23 Speaker 2

Influence in the Russian zone.

00:17:26 Speaker 2

And so we share guard duty on the borderline. So people, this was in Czechoslovakia, they could not cross that border. They might have relatives that live a mile away.

00:17:37 Speaker 2

But.

00:17:38 Speaker 2

They could not move without special permission.

00:17:42 Speaker 2

And we were there to make sure that people didn't.

00:17:44 Speaker 2

Violate that.

00:17:46 Speaker 3

Did you have any contact with the Russians?

00:17:49 Speaker 2

Every day.

00:17:52 Speaker 2

We we shared duty at the outpost.

00:17:57 Speaker 3

So your thoughts on the Russians, I mean, because you're right at the beginning of the Cold War.

00:18:03 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:18:04 Speaker 3

It's it's right there.

00:18:06 Speaker 2

Well, we didn't. We didn't know about the Cold War yet.

00:18:09 Speaker 3

Right.

00:18:10 Speaker 2

But you know.

00:18:12 Speaker 3

Good people. I mean suspicious people. And what were your thoughts about?

00:18:17 Speaker 2

Well, we got along quite well. We had no problem, but we, like I say, we'd have two Americans and two Russians sharing guard duty at the outpost on on a road that led from one part of the American zone over into the Russian zone and back.

00:18:34 Speaker 2

And we along pretty good.

00:18:36 Speaker 2

We didn't have any trouble, but the Cold War hadn't started yet.

00:18:42 Speaker 1

Do you recall any particularly humorist or and individual events?

00:18:54 Speaker 2

Many humorous or unusual events.

00:18:59 Speaker 2

Well.

00:19:01 Speaker 2

Unusual. Yes. Humorous, no.

00:19:05 Speaker 2

We we had.

00:19:07 Speaker 2

We had crossed the Moselle river, which is much like the Ohio River Big Wide River, with ranges of hills on both sides.

00:19:16 Speaker 2

And we crossed the Moselle river and we're back.

00:19:19 Speaker 2

3 or 4 ridges beyond the.

00:19:22 Speaker 2

The river itself.

00:19:24 Speaker 2

At the end of October.

00:19:27 Speaker 2

And we were in a great big massive forest.

00:19:31 Speaker 2

There was a big open area of about a mile wide.

00:19:35 Speaker 2

The Germans were in a big forest on the other side of this.

00:19:40 Speaker 2

Area about a mile wide.

00:19:42 Speaker 2

And the war seemed to slow down temporarily.

00:19:46 Speaker 2

And people said, oh, we're going to dig in, we're going to be here for the winter.

00:19:52 Speaker 2

This is very late in October.

00:19:55 Speaker 2

Last few days of October early November.

00:19:59 Speaker 2

I'm only 19 years old, but I'm not stupid. I said. Hey, fellas, don't believe we're going to be here for the winter. Everybody said well again, we're going to stay here for the winter.

00:20:10 Speaker 2

I said think what's going on back in the United States.

00:20:14 Speaker 2

It's presidential election time.

00:20:17 Speaker 2

And I said they don't want a whole lot of casualties right now.

00:20:22 Speaker 2

So they put a temporary hold on the war for a few days.

00:20:27 Speaker 2

I said the day after Election Day, words going to come down and.

00:20:30 Speaker 2

Say move out.

00:20:32 Speaker 2

And guess what? Day after Election Day, move out.

00:20:37

Wow.

00:20:39 Speaker 3

You're very bright.

00:20:46 Speaker 1

What were some of the pranks that you or others would?

00:20:52 Speaker 2

Oh, I can I pass on that one?

00:21:00 Speaker 1

Do you have photographs?

00:21:03 Speaker 2

Very, very few. I have one which is here in the museum.

00:21:09 Speaker 2

Where I was on guard duty and on the zone with the Russians.

00:21:13 Speaker 2

Of course.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

Most people did not have a camera, of course, in the infantry they didn't carry anything unnecessarily, but you couldn't have gotten film anyhow.

00:21:23 Speaker 2

So no, I don't have any particular photographs except the one.

00:21:31 Speaker 1

What do you think of the officers or fellow soldiers?

00:21:36 Speaker 2

Oh, they were first class.

00:21:38 Speaker 2

All were first class.

00:21:41 Speaker 2

The officers, of course, had been training together.

00:21:44 Speaker 2

And I joined the division late at Fort Dix.

00:21:47 Speaker 2

Just before it went overseas. So I was new.

00:21:50 Speaker 2

But they had trained together for about 2 1/2 years.

00:21:54 Speaker 2

So they were.

00:21:55 Speaker 2

They were first class soldiers.

00:22:00 Speaker 1

Did you keep a personal diary?

00:22:04 Speaker 2

No, I wish I had.

00:22:07 Speaker 3

We hear that a.

00:22:08 Speaker 3

Lot.

00:22:08 Speaker 3

Hear a lot from.

00:22:10 Speaker 3

Veterans, they wish they had kept a diary, but.

00:22:17 Speaker 1

Do you recall the day your service ended ended?

00:22:22 Speaker 2

Well, I came back to Indiantown Gap, PA which was.

00:22:27 Speaker 2

A.

00:22:27 Speaker 2

Debarcation center.

00:22:30 Speaker 2

And got out of the army and got on the train and.

00:22:33 Speaker 2

Rejoined my family in Lima. OH, they had moved during the war.

00:22:38 Speaker 2

I never lived there myself, but they been living in Lima.

00:22:44 Speaker 1

What did you do in the days and weeks after your service ended?

00:22:51 Speaker 2

You know, everybody was coming home at the same time.

00:22:55 Speaker 2

And I was looking for a job of any kind.

00:22:58 Speaker 2

And they had a unemployment clause called the 5220 club.

00:23:02 Speaker 2

You get \$20 a week for 52 weeks.

00:23:06 Speaker 2

Unemployment.

00:23:08 Speaker 2

And I'm looking for a job and I.

00:23:11 Speaker 2

They had an opening at Montgomery Ward.

00:23:14 Speaker 2

In the appliance department, small appliances and I.

00:23:17 Speaker 2

Thought.

00:23:18 Speaker 2

I could sell small appliances, toasters and waffle arms and that sort of thing, and I got there the.

00:23:24 Speaker 2

Job it didn't fill.

00:23:26 Speaker 2

The store manager said, well, I'm sorry, that job is filled.

00:23:31 Speaker 2

Would you be interested in taking a job in the farm store?

00:23:34 Speaker 2

I grew up in a very, very small town, but I never lived on a farm.

00:23:39 Speaker 2

I said, well, I don't know a thing about farming you said well.

00:23:43 Speaker 2

Let's go over to the farm store and you meet the farm store manager.

00:23:47 Speaker 2

See what he says.

00:23:49 Speaker 2

We went over the farm store.

00:23:52 Speaker 2

Standing in the middle of.

00:23:53 Speaker 2

The store.

00:23:55 Speaker 2

Leaning up against what I thought was a wagon.

00:23:58 Speaker 2

In the farm store reminder said to me, he said.

00:24:01 Speaker 2

Marker. Do you know what a manures better is? And I thought he was pulling my leg because there was a whole lot of pitchforks hanging on the wall and I said, well, yeah, there's a whole bunch of them hanging on the wall.

00:24:14 Speaker 2

With this thing that we're leaning on, I thought was a wagon, bushing, mechanical or North spreader.

00:24:21 Speaker 2

Well, I guess he thought that was funny. Therefore, I got the job, so I spent.

00:24:26 Speaker 2

That summer, working in the farm store and that was quite an experience. I learned a lot.

00:24:32 Speaker 2

Then in the fall I went.

00:24:33 Speaker 2

To college.

00:24:36 Speaker 1

What is your education supported by?

00:24:42 Speaker 2

I went to Ohio University.

00:24:45 Speaker 2

In Athens, OH, which was down in southeastern Ohio, where I grew up.

00:24:51 Speaker 2

And I worked.

00:24:52 Speaker 2

And the Bachelor of Arts program, Bachelor of Science program, I'm sorry.

00:24:58 Speaker 2

Majored in chemistry. And I got.

00:25:00 Speaker 2

My degree with a BS and a major in chemistry.

00:25:04 Speaker 2

And I had enough credits for my service in the AST pre program.

00:25:09 Speaker 2

Plus what I could do from my experience in the army that I got through my undergraduate in three years.

00:25:18 Speaker 2

I finished up with Ohio you, and then I went to Ohio.

00:25:20 Speaker 2

State.

00:25:21 Speaker 2

Got my masters in chemical engineering.

00:25:24 Speaker 2

So I accomplished what my goal was to become an engineer, which just a couple of years later.

00:25:31 Speaker 3

Is the GI bill?

00:25:32 Speaker 2

Oh yes.

00:25:34 Speaker 2

What made it possible for me to do that? I probably couldn't have done it otherwise.

00:25:41 Speaker 1

Did you make any close friendships while in the service?

00:25:49 Speaker 2

Well, as I as I said earlier when?

00:25:52 Speaker 2

Reason I I volunteer is my very best friend.

00:25:56 Speaker 2

From the first day of the 1st.

00:25:58 Speaker 2

Grade of school.

00:25:59 Speaker 2

All the way through high school, we were good friends.

00:26:03 Speaker 2

And we had taken the exam in high school.

00:26:06 Speaker 2

For the ASTP book and the Army Specialized training program.

00:26:10 Speaker 2

And we both qualified for that training program.

00:26:14 Speaker 2

So I knew he was going to win and when he was going to go before I was because he was older.

00:26:20 Speaker 2

His birthday was in January and mine was in April.

00:26:23 Speaker 2

So we.

00:26:25 Speaker 2

I went volunteered and we went in.

00:26:27 Speaker 2

The same pool.

00:26:29 Speaker 2

We went through undergraduate, I mean basic training together.

00:26:34 Speaker 2

Went to North Dakota for the Agricultural College together.

00:26:38 Speaker 2

They shipped us both out to the 76 division.

00:26:42 Speaker 2

And after the war games in.

00:26:45 Speaker 2

Michigan in the winter.

00:26:47 Speaker 2

They shipped everybody out of there as rifle replacements.

00:26:50 Speaker 2

To the 80th Division so he and I were together.

00:26:54 Speaker 2

Day one and school all the way till we got to southern England before we went to France.

00:27:04 Speaker 2

He was in a different regiment. I was in the 319th Infantry. He was in the 317th.

00:27:10 Speaker 2

So we sold one another the last night we were in Southampton.

00:27:15 Speaker 2

And.

00:27:18 Speaker 2

Ten days after we landed in France, he had been killed.

00:27:21 Speaker 2

In the battle of Organ 10 for lease camp.

00:27:25 Speaker 2

So.

00:27:26 Speaker 2

I lost my very best friend's lifetime friend.

00:27:30 Speaker 2

But I made other good friends.

00:27:35 Speaker 1

Did you continue any of those relationships?

00:27:42 Speaker 2

Well, no, not not with the ones I made the service because.

00:27:47 Speaker 2

Now I'm from my part of the country.

00:27:54 Speaker 1

Did you join a veterans organization?

00:28:00 Speaker 2

Well.

00:28:02 Speaker 2

I kept corresponding to my.

00:28:05 Speaker 2

The Sergeant was a squad leader in my rifle squad in the 8th, 80th Division and we did that for several years.

00:28:13 Speaker 2

After the war.

00:28:14 Speaker 2

Not very often, but.

00:28:17 Speaker 2

Occasionally we'd exchange a letter or Christmas card.

00:28:21 Speaker 3

Did you join the veterans organization?

00:28:23 Speaker 2

No, I was like, so many people coming home. I.

00:28:28 Speaker 2

I felt like I was behind the times because.

00:28:32 Speaker 2

I've been in the service for two years and six months and six days.

00:28:36 Speaker 2

So I was in a hurry to catch up.

00:28:38 Speaker 2

So I went to college and stuck my nose in a book and.

00:28:43 Speaker 2

Didn't join a veterans organization.

00:28:51 Speaker 1

What did you go on to do as a career at the war?

00:28:57 Speaker 2

We will have to I graduate from Ohio State Chemical engineering.

00:29:02 Speaker 2

I did my masters thesis on an environmental problem.

00:29:05 Speaker 2

I had a professor that specialized in environmental work.

00:29:09 Speaker 2

And I.

00:29:11 Speaker 2

And interviewed various chemical companies.

00:29:14 Speaker 2

One of the people that I had not interviewed on the campus as a matter of fact, they didn't come with campus for an interview.

00:29:21 Speaker 2

Chairman the department called me in and he said Barker.

00:29:25 Speaker 2

He said you seem to like this locking around in dirty water, he said. Armco Steel was looking for an environmental engineer.

00:29:34 Speaker 2

Except the word environmental engineer was not very popular those days. It was pollution control engineer.

00:29:42 Speaker 2

He said. Would you liked it?

00:29:45 Speaker 2

Go for an interview with Armco Steel and I said.

00:29:49 Speaker 2

Whose arm? Go steal, he told me. I said, who are they? And he said Middletown. OH.

00:29:55 Speaker 2

I said, where's that? And he told me. I said well, no.

00:29:58 Speaker 2

So I went for an interview and I met the people.

00:30:02 Speaker 2

At Armco that I eventually would work with.

00:30:06 Speaker 2

And I was just terribly impressed with it.

00:30:08 Speaker 2

Equality people.

00:30:10 Speaker 2

I had three job offers. I had a job offer from Armco. Steel had a job offer from Colgate Palmolive paint.

00:30:19 Speaker 2

Had a job offer from DuPont.

00:30:22 Speaker 2

At DuPont.

00:30:23 Speaker 2

Typically paid the highest salary of any chemical engineer coming out of school.

00:30:29 Speaker 2

Colgate Palmolive peoples next.

00:30:32 Speaker 2

Our goal was the lowest.

00:30:35 Speaker 2

And I went home and I married him. In the meantime, I went home and told my wife, I said.

00:30:42 Speaker 2

I've got 3 offers.

00:30:44 Speaker 2

I said Armco is the lowest, but I want to go to work for Armco.

00:30:48 Speaker 2

But it will be a little bit of a sacrifice and.

00:30:51 Speaker 2

She.

00:30:51 Speaker 2

Said. Well, that's your decision to make.

00:30:54 Speaker 2

So I called up the personnel man, adorn. Go and I told him what I've just told you.

00:31:01 Speaker 2

I said I've got three job offers and yours is the lowest.

00:31:04 Speaker 2

He said what are the other two that I told him?

00:31:07 Speaker 2

They said, well, I can't match.

00:31:10 Speaker 2

DuPont, but he said.

00:31:11 Speaker 2

Let me call you back.

00:31:13 Speaker 2

He called me back and he said.

00:31:16 Speaker 2

I'll match.

00:31:17 Speaker 2

They're all from Colgate Palmolive. Pete I said.

00:31:20 Speaker 2

You've heard me.

00:31:22 Speaker 2

And I went to work for Armco, and I spent 39 years there.

00:31:26 Speaker 2

Never regretted it.

00:31:32 Speaker 1

Did your military experiences influence your thinking about war, or about the military in general?

00:31:42 Speaker 2

I've had enough.

00:31:52 Speaker 2

Veterans organization, the only one I really joined was.

00:31:56 Speaker 2

The Alumni Association for the 80th Division.

00:32:00 Speaker 2

And.

00:32:02 Speaker 2

David asked me if I've ever gone back to a union and went back to one.

00:32:07 Speaker 2

That was about 10 years ago.

00:32:11 Speaker 1

How did your service and experiences respect your life?

00:32:16 Speaker 2

Well, as I said earlier, it gave me the opportunity to go to college, which I probably would never.

00:32:20 Speaker 2

Have had.

00:32:22 Speaker 2

It gave me the opportunity to go to Graduate School.

00:32:25 Speaker 2

Get a masters degree.

00:32:27 Speaker 2

That put me on the path to my eventual career.

00:32:32 Speaker 2

So I.

00:32:33 Speaker 2

I count it all as a very fortunate experience.

00:32:38 Speaker 2

Said how do you add it up?

00:32:40 Speaker 2

It gave me opportunities I wouldn't have had.

00:32:42 Speaker 2

Other ones.

00:32:46 Speaker 3

Is there anything else you'd like to add that?

00:32:49 Speaker 3

We haven't covered.

00:32:51 Speaker 2

I think you've covered it very well, but you've given me a chance to.

00:32:55 Speaker 2

To say the things I wanted.

00:32:58 Speaker 2

The things I remember most is.

00:33:00 Speaker 2

Is the misery of the rain and the snow and the mud.

00:33:05 Speaker 2

I don't. I don't have any.

00:33:08 Speaker 2

Nightmares about the war.

00:33:11 Speaker 2

I have bad memories.

00:33:14 Speaker 2

About losing my friends, but.

00:33:17 Speaker 2

It was a job we had to do. We did it.

00:33:26 Speaker 2

Well, thank you. I've enjoyed it.

