

Oneal Brewton

Company B, 318th Inf Reg

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Jerry M. Bacon, Steve Morrow)

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

Speaker 1

Today is September 12th, 2003. We're at Tyler Junior College, Tyler, TX. Our veteran interview is with Mr. O'Neill Bruton.

00:00:19

Speaker 1

He was born on July 22nd, 1924.

00:00:23

Speaker 1

His address is Route 2, box 323 B Crockett, TX.

00:00:30

Speaker 1

Those attending are the veteran Mr. O'Neill Bruton.

00:00:37

Speaker 1

Videographer is Steve Mora and my name is Jerry Bacon.

00:00:45

Speaker 1

Mr. O'Neill, what?

00:00:46

Speaker 1

Branch of the service. Did you serve?

00:00:49

Speaker 2

That was in the army.

00:00:52

Speaker 2

You have to say something mean.

00:00:54

Speaker 1

What rank did?

00:00:57

Speaker 1

You end your service with private first class.

00:01:04

Speaker 1

What wars were you in World War 2?

00:01:11

Speaker 2

OK.

00:01:14

Speaker 1

What would you like to tell us about to begin with, something about your military career?

00:01:20

Speaker 2

Well, at the big beginning, my, my career.

00:01:26

Speaker 2

Was sent up to Shepherd Field, Texas and taken.

00:01:32

Speaker 2

I think it was three months training up there, just basic training.

00:01:38

Speaker 2

Field trips and all that kind of stuff.

00:01:41

Speaker 2

And after that was over, I was sent to.

00:01:45

Speaker 2

To Kelly Field, Texas.

00:01:48

Speaker 2

Has a.

00:01:49

Speaker 2

A guard? A patrolman.

00:01:52

Speaker 2

What we did there was we patrolled around.

00:01:57

Speaker 2

The field.

00:01:59

Speaker 2

And outside the field that we had a couple of hospitals that we've seen after.

00:02:05

Speaker 2

And.

00:02:06

Speaker 2

That was my duty at Kelly Field, Texas.

00:02:10

Speaker 1

OK, after you left Kelly Field.

00:02:13

Speaker 1

Where did you go?

00:02:15

Speaker 2

When I left Kelly Field, I went from.

00:02:18

Speaker 2

Their up to.

00:02:22

Speaker 2

Camp House, Texas.

00:02:26

Speaker 2

I take the six weeks training at Camp House.

00:02:31

Speaker 2

And then I went to.

00:02:33

Speaker 2

Boston, MA.

00:02:35

Speaker 2

And got on the USS America.

00:02:39

Speaker 2

Right.

00:02:41

Speaker

To.

00:02:43

Speaker 2

Lahar branch.

00:02:46

Speaker 2

And.

00:02:47

Speaker 2

From lahar.

00:02:49

Speaker 2

All went.

00:02:53

Speaker 2

To the 80th efforts division.

00:02:56

Speaker 2

Which was at that time.

00:02:59

Speaker 2

Was.

00:03:02

Speaker 2

Right.

00:03:04

Speaker 2

Had just beginning to go into the.

00:03:08

Speaker 2

Germany.

00:03:10

Speaker 2

And then push across the.

00:03:12

Speaker 2

Branch and germ.

00:03:15

Speaker 2

And then I.

00:03:17

Speaker 2

I stayed with them till.

00:03:20

Speaker 2

The war ended.

00:03:22

Speaker

So.

00:03:25

Speaker 2

And then that was when.

00:03:27

Speaker 2

Went over into Jekyll floppy with the people in the.

00:03:34

Speaker 2

Set up the canteen there for GI's that was moving through checklist, Slovakia back into Germany.

00:03:44

Speaker 2

After that.

00:03:47

Speaker 2

Went to military.

00:03:50

Speaker 1

Can you tell?

00:03:50

Speaker 2

Us a little bit about uh, Czechoslovakia. Some of the interesting things you did or saw while you were in Czechoslovakia, well, there wasn't. Wasn't too much of interest. Well, what we work most of the time there, we have them ladies with that with that business they had set up there that.

00:04:09

Speaker 2

Canteen vendors, and there wasn't too much to do there because we knew that.

00:04:17

Speaker 2

The Russians will go and take over and that we was going to have to leave. So we.

00:04:23

Speaker 2

We got.

00:04:25

Speaker 2

After they came in, we moved out.

00:04:30

Speaker 2

Coming back to German.

00:04:33

Speaker 1

OK, tell us a little bit about I know the Nuremberg trials were real famous, and I think it's interesting that you were there during that time. So tell us a little bit about the trial. Yeah, I was. I worked in a.

00:04:49

Speaker 2

A library there with the lady that ran that library from.

00:04:54

Speaker 2

From.

00:04:56

Speaker 2

Alabama. She was the sweetest person to have seen.

00:05:00

Speaker 2

And they had all kind of law.

00:05:04

Speaker 2

Book.

00:05:05

Speaker 2

All kind of documents and stuff in this library.

00:05:09

Speaker 2

That the.

00:05:11

Speaker 2

The lawyers would come down the the libraries on the bottom floor and then the and the the trial was up on the third floor.

00:05:22

Speaker 2

And they're poured out.

00:05:25

Speaker 2

So.

00:05:27

Speaker 2

They would, if they needed something, they would come down there to library to get a book or whatever they needed in their trials.

00:05:36

Speaker 2

And I've got.

00:05:38

Speaker 2

We all, all of us that was there.

00:05:41

Speaker 2

Got to go up with to go up anytime we wanted to and watch the trials that they were as they was being put on.

00:05:49

Speaker 2

And we did that as long as all of us did. It was six of us as long as three of us stayed there, and the other three can do what they want to anytime during the day. We wanted to go.

00:05:59

Speaker

Yeah.

00:06:01

Speaker 2

And.

00:06:03

Speaker 2

That was about it.

00:06:04

Speaker 1

OK. Tell me. Uh, and talking earlier tell me how you got picked to go to Nuremberg. I think that was interesting.

00:06:11

Speaker 2

All right.

00:06:13

Speaker 2

We were just, we were in limbo because I I didn't have enough points at that time to come home.

00:06:21

Speaker 2

So.

00:06:22

Speaker 2

We were just.

00:06:23

Speaker 2

Sitting around there in the little German barracks and.

00:06:29

Speaker 2

This captain, a major world of what he wanted, came by and said.

00:06:36

Speaker 2

Hey, would y'all like to go to?

00:06:38

Speaker 2

Lundbergs and had worked in the trials and we all said yeah.

00:06:43

Speaker 2

Oh.

00:06:45

Speaker 2

We'd like to go. So that's how we got to do it.

00:06:49

Speaker 2

To work with that trial, so you voluntarily volunteered, yeah.

00:06:53

Speaker 1

OK.

00:06:54

Speaker 1

You you mentioned something that I'd like for you to give us a little more information on too. Is that the point system that kept you from coming home? Yeah.

00:07:04

Speaker 2

All right. They had a point system.

00:07:07

Speaker 2

And if I'm not mistaken, my memory is not that good. I think it originally you had to have.

00:07:16

Speaker 2

At least 25 points to come home.

00:07:20

Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:07:20

Speaker 2

That was to come home with the division. Yes. And I don't think I didn't have about 12 hold again.

00:07:30

Speaker 2

So that was the reason that.

00:07:32

Speaker 2

I made the rounds that I made to get back to Nurnberg and then back back to.

00:07:41

Speaker 2

Sad news down at San Antonio.

00:07:44

Speaker

OK.

00:07:48

Speaker 1

OK, tell us about coming home. I know you had a one just like it would be today. You didn't get to leave Germany and come straight to Crockett, TX. Let's get you out of how you came back on. I came from.

00:08:03

Speaker 2

From uh.

00:08:04

Speaker 2

Germany.

00:08:06

Speaker 2

To New York, while New Jersey, NJ is where we got off ship at.

00:08:12

Speaker 2

OK.

00:08:14

Speaker 2

Two days later.

00:08:16

Speaker 2

We got on a troop train.

00:08:20

Speaker 2

In New Jersey.

00:08:22

Speaker 2

And came down to where we are sitting right now at Tyler, TX.

00:08:27

Speaker 2

And.

00:08:29

Speaker 2

Somehow another we changed trains here.

00:08:33

Speaker 2

And went to Palestine, TX.

00:08:36

Speaker 2

OK, from Palestine, TX, we went to Fort Sam Houston.

00:08:41

Speaker 2

And that's where I was discharged.

00:08:49

Speaker 1

OK. Is there anything else about the military that you'd like to tell us that was interesting while you were serving or since you got?

00:08:58

Speaker 2

Out. Yes, I'd like to tell you about.

00:09:02

Speaker 2

An incident happened in combat.

00:09:08

Speaker 2

We were going and I can't remember the name of the.

00:09:11

Speaker 2

Town it was.

00:09:12

Speaker 2

The little old country town. I guess it may have been.

00:09:16

Speaker 2

3 or 4000 people in that time.

00:09:20

Speaker 2

We were going in there and I had.

00:09:23

Speaker 2

They roadblocks they had logs set up.

00:09:29

Speaker 2

And the roads going in there, you know where tanks and stuff couldn't get to.

00:09:35

Speaker 2

Well, we got down in that town and we got kind of pinned down.

00:09:41

Speaker 2

On the counter, we've been getting our tanks up there and.

00:09:46

Speaker 2

They would be curled up there with us and.

00:09:50

Speaker 2

Finally, after about 1520 minutes, he told us that.

00:09:54

Speaker 2

We've got to get down in there because we had machine guns shooting in front of them, tanks and all pull from machine gun nests on a Ridge that was a little bit above us.

00:10:08

Speaker 2

And he said, we've got to get down and and and knock the machine and the machine guns out. Well, we're not going to now. We're getting to that time.

00:10:17

Speaker 2

So here we go. Take note and what is Steve Hill going down there?

00:10:23

Speaker 2

And so.

00:10:25

Speaker 2

This boy was from Missouri. It was right behind me.

00:10:30

Speaker 2

And when we went down and we went down his back. So we, you know, we rolled and slid off a lot of the way down the hill.

00:10:39

Speaker 2

And run it to.

00:10:40

Speaker 2

Bottom left Hill was up.

00:10:43

Speaker 2

Was an entrance to a big old building with a big built and the door was then set about all four five feet back in there.

00:10:53

Speaker 2

And machine gun bullets were flying all around her head there, so we just dove.

00:10:59

Speaker 2

In that thing.

00:11:01

Speaker 2

And.

00:11:03

Speaker 2

And it wasn't all it wasn't 32nd.

00:11:07

Speaker 2

That he turned around and Mandy said.

00:11:10

Speaker 2

Look here at tax.

00:11:12

Speaker 2

And he had his examination belt like this.

00:11:18

Speaker 2

That's good. What in the world have?

00:11:20

Speaker

So.

00:11:21

Speaker 2

Said I don't know. I told them. I sure it was cold. I said pull. You feel Jack it up and let me look. And I looked and that ***** ** that old and will lamination belt, you know, they come together like this in the back. They shot that thing.

00:11:40

Speaker 2

Off of his back and there was a little red place about that long.

00:11:44

Speaker 2

On his back.

00:11:47

Speaker 2

I said, man.

00:11:50

Speaker 2

You are lucky.

00:11:53

Speaker 2

And then I turned around and mud outside of where we were standing.

00:11:58

Speaker 2

Squad leader was laying out there and he was shot dead. I mean bad and.

00:12:07

Speaker 2

So when when we got his stuff back together, good, what we take long because you can't. You can't hesitate, you get get shot all up to you. So. So we taking off and just we taking off on our tanks came in another St. down there when they tore everything up in there when they got in there.

00:12:29

Speaker 2

We were alright, but I don't know till yet whether my squad leave lived or not.

00:12:35

Speaker 2

He didn't look to me like he was alive when we were dying.

00:12:40

Speaker 2

So.

00:12:41

Speaker 2

That was the. That was the deal that happened there.

00:12:46

Speaker 1

Would you have anything else you'd like to tell?

00:12:57

Speaker 2

Anything else should happen.

00:13:04

Speaker 2

I think that's about it. I think that's.

00:13:06

Speaker 1

OK. How do you feel like the military have achieved?

00:13:11

Speaker 2

It happened man number plays.

00:13:15

Speaker 2

One thing you know, when I went in the military, I was.

00:13:20

Speaker 2

Uh.

00:13:23

Speaker 2

You know, I'll get the kid. Yes, I didn't.

00:13:26

Speaker 2

I didn't know I were raised in the country, didn't really know what was, what was really going on the rest of the world, you know.

00:13:35

Speaker 2

And.

00:13:37

Speaker 2

I grew up by I grew up by.

00:13:41

Speaker 2

Had it helped?

00:13:42

Speaker 2

It had me in a lot of ways.

00:13:45

Speaker 2

Goes when I came out.

00:13:48

Speaker 2

I pay him out.

00:13:50

Speaker 2

I met my wife and.

00:13:53

Speaker 2

So.

00:13:56

Speaker 2

The first job interview that I went to.

00:14:03

Speaker 2

With all.

00:14:07

Speaker 2

I went through all this stuff and then.

00:14:10

Speaker 2

And they hired me.

00:14:12

Speaker 2

And I stayed that 39 years.

00:14:15

Speaker 2

OK.

00:14:19

Speaker 2

That's, that's about it. OK, well, thank you, Mr. Burton. We sure appreciate it. I did raise three kids. Beautiful kids got. I've got 13 grandkids, and they all, well, flying around. Well, that that's great. And I I did meet your wife.

00:14:37

Speaker 1

She's a real sweet person to tell you.

00:14:39

Speaker 2

Thank you. Thank.

00:14:40

Speaker 1

You we sure appreciate the time you spent in the military serving our country and you know it's people like you that make it.

00:14:51

Speaker 1

The United States, the great nation that it is.

00:14:54

Speaker 2

Well, I appreciate that, appreciate.

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