

## **Ralph Chapman Interview**

Company E, 318th Inf Reg

*(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Bonita Callahan)*

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

00:00:04 Speaker 1

This is Bonita Callahan. I am interviewing Ralph P Chapman.

00:00:11 Speaker 1

In a activity room in the.

00:00:14 Speaker 1

Peabody retirement community.

00:00:17 Speaker 1

I am a member of the DAR of the Francis Slocum chapter of Wabash. IN Ralph, you were born in Tennessee.

00:00:30 Speaker 2

Yes, what?

00:00:31 Speaker 1

And when you were just a child, you moved to Indiana. Your father was a farmer, and you spent your childhood and youth in near Fulton County.

00:00:44 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:00:46 Speaker 1

You were drafted.

00:00:49 Speaker 1

And in 42.

00:00:53 Speaker 1

And.

00:00:54 Speaker 1

Went to Fort Benjamin Harrison. You need to talk.

00:00:57 Speaker 2

Yeah. Yes.

00:01:00 Speaker 1

And you went to Fort Benjamin Harris, but you then were sent to.

00:01:07 Speaker 1

Let's see. Your first place was in Tennessee again.

00:01:11 Speaker 2

Yeah, the camp force, yeah.

00:01:12 Speaker 1

And you had your basic there, but you had a chance during your basic to have a furlough and you came home and got married.

00:01:17

Mm-hmm.

00:01:20 Speaker 2

Right.

00:01:21 Speaker 1

Your wife was in School of Nursing and was at South Bend, Gary, Gary and Gary. You went back and finished your basic and then both of you were able to move into Kansas at a camp there and there you were there for a short time. Or how long?

00:01:34 Speaker 2

Right.

00:01:38 Speaker 2

It's a short time, like it wouldn't can't tell you how long it was there.

00:01:42 Speaker 1

Your wife was able to be with you and worked in a hospital there you later were transferred to Arizona. Was that for very long?

00:01:50 Speaker 2

Right.

00:01:53 Speaker 2

No, that was in the winter time. I think we just stayed there in the winter.

00:01:58 Speaker 1

For maneuvers.

00:01:59 Speaker 2

All maneuvers there, yeah.

00:02:00 Speaker 1

You were on maneuvers there, OK. And then when you were finished there, you went to New Jersey. And were you there very long before you shipped out?

00:02:07 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:02:11 Speaker 2

No, didn't seem like very long.

00:02:13 Speaker 2

Now just just a short while, yeah.

00:02:15 Speaker 1

Just a short while, and then you sail to England and you were on the Queen Mary.

00:02:20 Speaker 2

That's yes.

00:02:21 Speaker 1

And fortunately, you did not suffer any seasickness.

00:02:25 Speaker 2

No, I didn't.

00:02:27 Speaker 1

And you had no difficulty. You tolerated the food well and you got along with your sergeants, OK?

00:02:34 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:02:35 Speaker 1

All right. You landed in England.

00:02:38 Speaker 1

And that were you there very long before you transferred to France?

00:02:42 Speaker 2

No.

00:02:44 Speaker 2

Just kind of collect these things sometimes.

00:02:46 Speaker 1

OK.

00:02:48 Speaker 1

And from France, she went on. And you were.

00:02:53 Speaker 1

With a third army.

00:02:56 Speaker 1

You never saw Patton, though.

00:02:58 Speaker 2

No, I never did see.

00:02:59 Speaker 2

Him.

00:03:00 Speaker 1

Uh.

00:03:00 Speaker 2

He he died around someplace.

00:03:04 Speaker 1

You had your activity there, but however.

00:03:10 Speaker 1

You did see a USO show and you thought it was Nina Shore. That was your vocalist there.

00:03:14 Speaker 2

Yeah, sure. That was yes.

00:03:18 Speaker 1

Now you were wounded twice with shrapnel. The first time you went to England for recovery and you were there. How long?

00:03:31 Speaker 1

Couple of weeks.

00:03:32 Speaker 2

No longer than that. I I suppose. There I probably maybe a.

00:03:34 Speaker 1

Ohh yeah.

00:03:38 Speaker 2

Next year, month, since no, just just several weeks. The biggest share, yes.

00:03:40 Speaker 1

Several months, OK, several weeks, several weeks. And then you return back to Europe and Belgium and you were with your same group of young men.

00:03:51 Speaker 2

OK.

00:03:56 Speaker 1

Then you were also wounded again, but then you were left at the field hospital for a short time. You were fortunate you were able to receive your mail regularly.

00:04:01 Speaker 3

Yes.

00:04:02 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:04:13 Speaker 2

We got the letter.

00:04:13 Speaker 1

You would like to have it more often.

00:04:18 Speaker 1

Now it was in 45 that you with the point system you were returned to the states for discharge.

00:04:26 Speaker 2

Yeah. Yeah, that's right.

00:04:30 Speaker 1

And you landed someplace on the East Coast. You were on a boat or the LSTS you said. And it took longer to get to the states.

00:04:40 Speaker 2

They were as merchant marine ships what they were.

00:04:43 Speaker 1

OK. And so it took you about 3 weeks to get home?

00:04:46 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:04:47 Speaker 1

And you.

00:04:49 Speaker 1

Went by bus and train to Camp Atterbury. There you were discharged.

00:04:53 Speaker 2

That's right.

00:04:57 Speaker 1

And your brother met you.

00:05:00 Speaker 1

And did he take you to Fulton County or on up to Gary?

00:05:04 Speaker 2

Well, he took Fulton County. Guess it was, wasn't it?

00:05:09 Speaker 2

Yeah, I think, right.

00:05:09 Speaker 1

And and then, but your wife at this time was still working in Gary. She'd return to Gary. OK, now from Gary, you had been a farmer, but.

00:05:13 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:05:18 Speaker 3

Hmm.

00:05:20 Speaker 1

You didn't think you wanted to do that, and so you worked in a Creamery at Bourbon.

00:05:26 Speaker 2

Yes, right. Yeah. Myers creeper.

00:05:29 Speaker 1

Uh-huh. You were there a short time and then went to Layton right here in Wabash County.

00:05:36 Speaker 1

And worked in that Creamery.

00:05:38 Speaker 1

From 51 to 68, that's when the Creamery closed. Now, why did it close? Wasn't there enough business or?

00:05:44 Speaker 2

Well.

00:05:45 Speaker 2

Wasn't enough business and you had to. And they got so strict you had to have all stainless steel and it just didn't have enough stuff to.

00:05:52 Speaker 1

Oh.

00:05:54 Speaker 2

Keep the running.

00:05:55 Speaker 2

Good.

00:05:56 Speaker 1

So they felt it was more feasible just and at that time you went to a church furniture factory at Warsaw and you were there until 84 when you retired right now. In the meantime, you had two children.

00:05:58 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:06:03 Speaker 2

And.

00:06:04 Speaker 3

Yes, right. That's right.

00:06:14 Speaker 1

And you now have two grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

00:06:20 Speaker 1

None of your your son nor your grandsons were ever in the service.

00:06:28 Speaker 1

Now you joined numerous, your wife said numerous vet organizations. You enjoyed that. Did you?

00:06:37 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:06:39 Speaker 2

Well, I I didn't go back.

00:06:41 Speaker 1

All he did was pay his students fine.

00:06:42 Speaker 2

But the meetings like it should.

00:06:45 Speaker 1

But at least you were active. You wouldn't join, OK. And now you did keep in contact with some of the young men you were.

00:06:47 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:06:52 Speaker 1

With.

00:06:53 Speaker 1

And you visited them and they visited you at this present time they have all expired.

00:06:59 Speaker 3

Yes, yes.

00:07:02 Speaker 1

Now in, when did we decide that was in the 80s that you went to England?

00:07:08 Speaker 1

70s in the 70 / 73 or 7073 you went with friends to England and then went on over to Germany and Belgium where you had been and had it changed considerably.



00:07:09 Speaker 2

7676 yeah.

00:07:23 Speaker 2

Yes, what?

00:07:25 Speaker 1

Now, did you meet anybody that you had seen before or did you see any sights you had?

00:07:30 Speaker 2

Well, we've seen some.

00:07:32 Speaker 2

Hey Drew is I mean, what's in there? Yeah, but.

00:07:34 Speaker 1

So you recognize some of them?

00:07:37 Speaker 2

Other than that, way the roads, big roads been built in there and never looked the same, but we didn't.

00:07:43 Speaker 1

They can't remember what cemetery you went to. The military cemetery can't remember.

00:07:43 Speaker 2

Have much of the road.

00:07:47 Speaker 1

Went to a military.

00:07:49 Speaker 1

Was it that? No. Was that in France or Belgium?

00:07:53 Speaker 1

It seems to me like it was in Belgium.

00:07:56 Speaker 1

In Belgium, so you visited that at the present time.

00:08:00 Speaker 1

You would have moved out of your home and you were living in a retirement home at Peabody. Both of you have fairly good health and you have Parkinson's, but you are doing really well with it. You use a Walker for your balance. You seem to walk all.

00:08:08 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:08:13 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:08:16 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:08:17 Speaker 1

Right, you know.

00:08:18 Speaker 2

Yeah, the only might get off balance or something, you know.

00:08:21 Speaker 1

Well, that's for your own good. Yeah. OK. Well, I thank you for your time and for your effort. It was enjoyable.

00:08:25 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:08:28 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:08:29 Speaker 2

Rather than.

00:08:33 Speaker 1

This is Bonita Callahan. I am interviewing Ted M Hill in the North Manchester Library. I am a member of the Francis slogan chapter of the DAR the station that is placed in Wabash IN Mr. Hill. You were born in.

00:08:52 Speaker 1

North Manchester and you spent your childhood here.

00:08:53 Speaker 4

Yes.

00:08:56 Speaker 4

Yes.

00:08:57 Speaker 1

And graduated from was that North Manchester Central High School in 1952, right you.

00:09:00 Speaker 4

Central High School.

00:09:08 Speaker 1

Went to but you already had joined the.

00:09:12 Speaker 1

Or soon after you joined the guards. And can you tell me what you met once a week? And what did you do?

00:09:19 Speaker 4

While it was on the Wabash, it was a heavy mortar company.

00:09:23 Speaker 1

And.

00:09:24 Speaker 1

You also worked part time for your uncle at Pyramid Oil and attended Manchester College.

00:09:29 Speaker 4

Right.

00:09:32 Speaker 4

Right.

00:09:34 Speaker 1

All righty. Now in 53 you had a chance to go to.

00:09:40 Speaker 1

Georgia, Fort Benning, GA for a weapons.

00:09:44 Speaker 4

School I was 53.

00:09:46 Speaker 1

53, OK.

00:09:49 Speaker 1

And you.

00:09:50 Speaker 1

Attended that as a guard, as an Indiana Guard. OK. Now how long did that last?

00:09:53 Speaker 4

Yes.

00:09:57 Speaker 4

That last.

00:10:00 Speaker 4

I bought.

00:10:02 Speaker 4

10 or 12 weeks, I believe.

00:10:03 Speaker 1

OK. OK. And then was that at the same time that you went to Ranger School?

00:10:10 Speaker 4

Well, no. I went to Ranger School after that and then jumped school.

00:10:13 Speaker 1

And then jump school all at Fort Benning.

00:10:15 Speaker 4

All at Fort.

00:10:16 Speaker 1

Benning, as an Indiana National Guard now, at one time they thought that.

00:10:18 Speaker 4

Right.

00:10:23 Speaker 1

Was it Michigan, Ohio and Indiana would have a an Indiana race.

00:10:28 Speaker 4

You're going to have reserve Ranger combat unit and it never, never, no, it didn't develop.

00:10:31 Speaker 1

But the nothing because it didn't, it didn't develop.

00:10:36 Speaker 1

OK. And then you enlisted or or?

00:10:44 Speaker 1

The army, the.

00:10:45 Speaker 4

I volunteered for the draft.

00:10:47 Speaker 1

The dollar share for the draft at Wabash, you went to Indianapolis for one day and then Horn did you go?

00:10:49 Speaker 4

Right.

00:10:54 Speaker 4

400 Wood, Missouri.

00:10:55 Speaker 1

Now, did you go by train or bus? You went by bus?

00:11:00 Speaker 1

And you had six weeks or eight weeks of basic there and.

00:11:05 Speaker 4

Yes, well, actually, 1616 weeks had eight weeks of primary basis.

00:11:11 Speaker 4

And then eight weeks of engineer basic.

00:11:15 Speaker 1

Now during your basic you got along OK with the Sergeant and you thought the food was just fair. And what was it you complained about?

00:11:19 Speaker 4

Yes.

00:11:22 Speaker 4

Fair yes.

00:11:27 Speaker 4

Everything and anything.

00:11:29 Speaker 1

It just wasn't mother's cooking. OK, so you had the last eight weeks was basic engineering and.

00:11:31 Speaker 4

Right.

00:11:40 Speaker 1

Earth moving vehicles and.

00:11:42 Speaker 4

Right.

00:11:44 Speaker 1

You had. Then you went to someplace in Virginia.

00:11:49 Speaker 4

Fort Belvoir, VA.

00:11:51 Speaker 1

And there are you again. You were there for 12 weeks for more training.

00:11:56 Speaker 4

Engineer foreman.

00:11:56 Speaker 1

Cars, right. And then you were flowing. Did you have a a furlough after that?

00:12:03 Speaker 4

No.

00:12:03 Speaker 1

You didn't, and then you flew to California and.

00:12:06

Right.

00:12:09 Speaker 1

Did you fly on to Guam also?

00:12:11 Speaker 4

No, we had six or seven days, California.

00:12:14 Speaker 1

And then went on to.

00:12:16 Speaker 4

Went on to Guam, who flew?

00:12:18 Speaker 1

Guam, he flew.

00:12:20 Speaker 4

By the way of Hawaii.

00:12:22 Speaker 1

And you went into Hawaii just a short time, and then you ended up in Guam. And actually that's where you spent most of your service time. And can you tell what you did?

00:12:24 Speaker 4

It's a short time, yeah.

00:12:30 Speaker 4

Yes, that was mine.

00:12:34 Speaker 4

I was heavy equipment operator mostly. I well, I run a greater mostly also run a scraper and also a dozer.

00:12:36 Speaker 1

OK.

00:12:43 Speaker 1

But you were connected with the Air Force.

00:12:45 Speaker 4

While we are attached to Air Force, it was called a scar wall Special category Army with Air Force.

00:12:47 Speaker 3

OK.

00:12:52

OK.

00:12:53 Speaker 1

And you.

00:12:56 Speaker 1

We're building or repairing Anderson Field.

00:12:59 Speaker 4

We rebuilt Anderson Air Force Base.

00:13:02 Speaker 1

And your working hours were quite long, 12 hours sometimes.

00:13:06 Speaker 4

Yeah.

00:13:07 Speaker 4

We work our shift for 12 hours a day, seven days a week, and then our whole outfit worked 24 hours a day. But every week we change shifts.

00:13:11 Speaker 1

And sometimes.

00:13:18 Speaker 4

One week, we'll.

00:13:19 Speaker 4

Be working tonight, Jeff. Next week be working day shift.

00:13:22 Speaker 1

Now, did that begin at 8:00 or when?

00:13:25 Speaker 1

Six. So then you had to.

00:13:27 Speaker 1

Get up early.

00:13:29 Speaker 1

And she had that. So it was a rather boring. Now you did have a typhoon that came through.

00:13:34 Speaker 4

Yes, we had one or.



00:13:35 Speaker 4

Two siblings that came through.

00:13:37 Speaker 4

Just about they didn't come directly on the Guam, but they missed Guam.

00:13:42 Speaker 1

And you really didn't have any time you would go into a little village there sometimes.

00:13:47 Speaker 4

On the village. Yeah, yeah.

00:13:49 Speaker 1

So it was a rather boring time other than working.

00:13:51 Speaker 4

Right, yeah.

00:13:54 Speaker 1

And when you did, you know when you were coming home that you were going to be discharged.

00:14:01 Speaker 4

Well, I wasn't discharged, Jen I.

00:14:03 Speaker 4

Know I was just released.

00:14:05 Speaker 1

OK.

00:14:06 Speaker 4

And I took a I spent a year in the active reserves.

00:14:10 Speaker 1

OK. But you came home on a by a ship. What was the name of the ship?

00:14:15 Speaker 1

Daniel something.

00:14:15 Speaker 4

Daniel Sutton.

00:14:17 Speaker 1

And it took you 8 days to get.

00:14:19 Speaker 4

I think 7 or 8 days, yes.

00:14:21 Speaker 1

And you had just one period of homesick of a seasickness.

00:14:24

Right.

00:14:25 Speaker 1

All right. You landed in San Francisco.

00:14:27 Speaker 1

Go and from there you flew to Fort Sheridan, IL, where you were released into into the reserves you say. Alrighty, now you're back in.

00:14:31 Speaker 4

Right.

00:14:38 Speaker 4

Away into the active reserve.

00:14:42 Speaker 1

Now, where did you meet after? Would you still meet?

00:14:44 Speaker 1

At Wabash you met at.

00:14:45 Speaker 1

Wabash. You did this for about a year, you said.

00:14:49 Speaker 4

Did that for a year.

00:14:50 Speaker 1

OK.

00:14:50 Speaker 1

Now you were married soon after you came back, and that was in August of 1956. You worked again for Pyramid Oil.

00:14:53 Speaker 4

Right.

00:14:58 Speaker 4

Right.

00:15:03 Speaker 1

But you that fall, then you went to Fort Wayne and for business college that was under the GI Bill. And how long did it last?

00:15:14 Speaker 4

For two years.

00:15:15 Speaker 1

Two years you drove.

00:15:16 Speaker 1

And forth. Or do you live and flow?

00:15:18 Speaker 4

I drove back and forth, yes.

00:15:20 Speaker 1

Now your wife at this time was teaching.

00:15:22 Speaker 4

She taught the first year ever. You're married.

00:15:25 Speaker 4

And then she got pregnant. And the second year she laid off of teaching. But then after the third year of marriage, she went back to teaching.

00:15:33 Speaker 1

Uh-huh.

00:15:35 Speaker 1

And was she teaching locally?

00:15:39 Speaker 4

Her first year, she taught not become by Columbia City, and then she taught, taught here for 10 years, right.

00:15:45 Speaker 1

In our high school.

00:15:48 Speaker 1

OK.

00:15:49 Speaker 1

Now after that you went to South with let's say you went to South Whitley and the manufacturing plant and you were there for.

00:15:56 Speaker 1

Ten years, right?

00:15:58 Speaker 1

Alrighty. And then let's see, was it in 1980 that you had your own store in Orland?

00:16:05 Speaker 4

No, I left.

00:16:08 Speaker 1

South Whitley.

00:16:08 Speaker 4

All that South Whitley in 1976.

00:16:12 Speaker 1

OK.

00:16:13 Speaker 4

And then I bought that.

00:16:15 Speaker 4

Package liquor store in Orlando.

00:16:17 Speaker 1

All right.

00:16:18 Speaker 4

And I got and I sold it approximately 79 or 80.

00:16:22 Speaker 1

All right.

00:16:23 Speaker 1

And then you ended up in Texas. Now your family was with you at the time.

00:16:25 Speaker 4

Brownsville, TX, yes.

00:16:28 Speaker 4

Or just my wife. The kids are gone. They were gone.

00:16:31 Speaker 1

All right. And you were there.

00:16:36 Speaker 1

For a short time, when you said they were manufacturing razors.

00:16:41 Speaker 4

Ray.

00:16:42 Speaker 4

And cheap shares.

00:16:44 Speaker 1

What a combination anyways and then you.

00:16:49 Speaker 1

Left that and went to George.

00:16:52 Speaker 1

And we're there just a short time.

00:16:54 Speaker 4

Just lower six months.

00:16:56 Speaker 1

And then.

00:16:58 Speaker 1

You ended up in Goshen IN right? In a. Was it a rubber plant or?

00:17:03 Speaker 4

Right. Rubber bowling plants.

00:17:06 Speaker 1

But it wasn't very long. Then you went back to Texas and you were there for several times for some time and under sales at Sears.

00:17:10 Speaker 4

Back back.

00:17:16 Speaker 4

Yeah.

00:17:17 Speaker 1

But unfortunately some stock fell and injured your and injured your back.

00:17:21 Speaker 4

I got hurt at work, yes.

00:17:26 Speaker 1

Then basically, you're retired at that time. Now that was in 961996.

00:17:28 Speaker 4

Right.

00:17:32 Speaker 4

91 I retired.

00:17:34 Speaker 1

Ohh OK.

00:17:35 Speaker 4

We moved back to Manchester in 96.

00:17:37 Speaker 1

Ohh that's fine. OK.

00:17:38 Speaker 4

How come my wife retired?

00:17:40 Speaker 1

OK. Had she been teaching all this time?

00:17:43 Speaker 4

All that time.

00:17:47 Speaker 1

Now you got interested in reserving or preserving airplanes.

00:17:53 Speaker 4

World War 2 aircraft.

00:17:54 Speaker 1

Now can you tell what they did or they put them in museums or what?

00:17:58 Speaker 4

Well, most of them are in flying. We put them back in flying condition.

00:18:04 Speaker 4

When I joined the then it was Confederate Air Force. They had right around 11 or 12,000 members.

00:18:12 Speaker 4

And but they dwelled down to about 7-6 or 7000.

00:18:17 Speaker 4

Members, but they've got about 140 some planes.

00:18:24 Speaker 4

Over half of them are flying and flying condition. The rest of them are being restored or are in.

00:18:30 Speaker 4

Museums as.

00:18:34 Speaker 1

Now any of them here in Indiana that.

00:18:38 Speaker 4

There's only one unit of the CAF in Indiana, and that's down in Indianapolis. They've got one plane. I can't tell you what plane that is.

00:18:45 Speaker 1

Uh-huh.

00:18:49 Speaker 1

Now you said you worked on the B20 sixes.

00:18:52 Speaker 4

Worked on the Martin B26.

00:18:54 Speaker 1

OK, now since you've retired, you play golf.

00:18:58 Speaker 4

I don't play anymore because I've.

00:19:02 Speaker 1

Your. Yeah. Do you do belong to the American Legion?

00:19:02 Speaker 4

Healthwise.

00:19:08 Speaker 1

And you will still keep in contact by phone from some of the buddies that you worked with. Did you know if they ever had any reunions in your group?

00:19:14 Speaker 4

Yes.

00:19:18 Speaker 4

No.

00:19:19 Speaker 1

No heaven.

00:19:19 Speaker 4

They never have.

00:19:20 Speaker 1

And you have visited some of them. Have they visited you?

00:19:22 Speaker 4

Yes.

00:19:25 Speaker 1

No, you just go see them. All right, now you have a.

00:19:30 Speaker 1

Two children, a boy and a girl. And you have 3 grandchildren? No great grandchildren. OK, alright. OK. Now, what did you really think of your time in the service?

00:19:34 Speaker 4

Yes, no. Great grandchildren.



00:19:36 Speaker 4

There are no of.

00:19:44 Speaker 4

What I really thought.

00:19:47 Speaker 4

Well, at the time, I particularly didn't care for it.

00:19:50 Speaker 4

Because we were the place that well, it's kind of off.

00:19:55 Speaker 4

But S at that time.

00:19:58 Speaker 4

We didn't have any extra activities for us to do. They just strictly work.

00:20:04 Speaker 4

But like I told you before, if I do it over again and.

00:20:10 Speaker 4

Back end with now.

00:20:12 Speaker 4

And know what I know. Now I just stay there in a minute.

00:20:15 Speaker 1

Grew out of it. Yeah, well, hindsight is always better. Is.

00:20:18 Speaker 1

That right?

00:20:18

All.

00:20:19 Speaker 1

Thank you for your time, I've appreciated it.

00:20:21

What?