

## **Paul Chmar Interview**

Company E, 318th Inf Reg

*(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Jason Armstrong Hailey)*

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

00:01:23 Speaker 1

I'm Jason Haley.

00:01:26 Speaker 1

And I served in the World War 2.

00:01:30 Speaker 1

In the Navy from 1943 to 1946, I was a Navy photographer.

00:01:37 Speaker 1

And we're here in in Highlands, NC.

00:01:42 Speaker 1

With Paul Smarr, and we'll be hearing his story about his wonderful career in the United States Army.

00:01:51 Speaker 2

My name is Paul Smarr.

00:01:54 Speaker 2

I currently live in Highlands NC.

00:01:58 Speaker 2

I was born in Baltimore, MD.

00:02:02 Speaker 2

1922.

00:02:04 Speaker 2

The age of five, I moved to.

00:02:07 Speaker 2

Rockville, MD.

00:02:11 Speaker 2

About 40 miles from Baltimore and grew up there.

00:02:16 Speaker 2

I went to high school to regular school high school there.

00:02:22 Speaker 2

And then.

00:02:24 Speaker 2

Went to the University of Maryland, was in the.

00:02:30 Speaker 2

ROTC.

00:02:32 Speaker 2

At the university.

00:02:34 Speaker 2

And then.

00:02:38 Speaker 2

Went into the army after graduation.

00:02:44 Speaker 2

Graduated in February 43 and my group of ROTC companions and I went to Fort Benning, GA.

00:03:00 Speaker 2

We had to take a three month course.

00:03:03 Speaker 2

Upon graduation and commissioning at Fort Benning.

00:03:09 Speaker 2

I was sent to the.

00:03:11 Speaker 2

80th Infantry Division.

00:03:14 Speaker 2

Act in Murphy's which was on maneuvers conducted by US 2nd Army.

00:03:22 Speaker 2

In Tennessee, we spent approximately.

00:03:24 Speaker 1

MHM.

00:03:30 Speaker 2

A month or more on these maneuvers, these were division type maneuvers.

00:03:38 Speaker 2

And.

00:03:40 Speaker 2

Upon completing them.

00:03:44 Speaker 2

We.

00:03:46 Speaker 2

We went to, I believe, Camp Forrest, Tennessee.

00:03:55 Speaker 2

These maneuvers were for preparation for going overseas.

00:04:01 Speaker 2

And the division.

00:04:05 Speaker 2

Went through.

00:04:08 Speaker 2

1st we went to California to go on desert maneuvers.

00:04:16 Speaker 2

To condition us for that. And we came back to Salina, KS where we qualified with all our weapons and then we.

00:04:29 Speaker 2

Went to.

00:04:32 Speaker 2

To the embarkation point.

00:04:35 Speaker 2

In New Jersey, they're for \*\*\*\*\*.

00:04:40 Speaker 2

And from there.

00:04:44 Speaker 2

We prepared to move.

00:04:48 Speaker 2

To join the US Army in Europe, sail from the United States on the four, it's about the 6th or 7th of July.

00:05:00 Speaker 2

We.

00:05:01 Speaker 2

The whole division.

00:05:03 Speaker 2

Was sent aboard the Queen Mary.

00:05:07 Speaker 2

And 15,000 troops.

00:05:11 Speaker 2

Hey.

00:05:11 Speaker 2

Half.

00:05:12 Speaker 2

Of them had to be on deck in half, used the bunks and rotated around every 8 to 12 hours.

00:05:16

Hmm.

00:05:23 Speaker 2

Then we lack arrived in.

00:05:26 Speaker 2

Scotland.

00:05:29 Speaker 2

After it, it only took us about four days to go.

00:05:34 Speaker 2

Across the Atlantic.

00:05:36 Speaker 2

And then move South into England into barracks, sire.

00:05:42 Speaker 2

Preparing to move.

00:05:46 Speaker 2

To France, that's.

00:05:48 Speaker 2

The invasion had already taken place on the 6th of June.

00:05:54 Speaker 2

The.

00:05:57 Speaker 2

We did some training in the United Kingdom.

00:06:02 Speaker 2

And then.

00:06:04 Speaker 2

Got on.

00:06:06 Speaker 2

Small boats.

00:06:08 Speaker 2

To.

00:06:12 Speaker 2

And were ferried across to.

00:06:17 Speaker 2

Normandy, where we unloaded and then moved out.

00:06:29 Speaker 2

Moved out into the countryside and we became part of Pattons 3rd Army.

00:06:38 Speaker 2

Defining as.

00:06:40 Speaker 2

Part I think was 12 quarts of time.

00:06:44 Speaker 2

Moved out from Normandy and edit.

00:06:50 Speaker 2

Into France we our first encounter.

00:06:59 Speaker 2

Was near Argentine, France. That is my unit, the 300 and 1850 regiment.

00:07:09 Speaker 2

And then there they were, trying to close the valet gap and bottle up the.

00:07:17 Speaker 2

A German army.

00:07:20 Speaker 2

And.

00:07:23 Speaker 2

We went into Argen town.

00:07:26 Speaker 2

And they're linked up with British forces, which?

00:07:30 Speaker 2

However.

00:07:32 Speaker 2

What I've read in history afterwards is that the Germans did. Many of them got out before they could close.

00:07:42 Speaker 2

The vice around.

00:07:44 Speaker 2

Moved east from Argentina all this time. I was just a platoon leader and I I didn't didn't know the big picture for sure, but we continued east.

00:08:00 Speaker 2

And went to Commercy, France. We went around Paris.

00:08:08 Speaker 2

And then move towards the Moselle river.

00:08:13 Speaker 2

The during that time, regrettably, my company commander was wounded and I became the company commander of E Company 300 and 18th Infantry.

00:08:27 Speaker 2

And we were moving towards the Moselle river as part of patents, 3rd Army.

00:08:35 Speaker 2

The.

00:08:39 Speaker 2

We came near the mosaic across the mosaic.

00:08:47 Speaker 2

And then.

00:08:51 Speaker 2

Were held up by a counterattack.

00:08:56 Speaker 2

And I.

00:08:58 Speaker 2

Unluckily, a mortar round.

00:09:02 Speaker 2

Landed nearby and.

00:09:06 Speaker 2

I received some fragments in the leg the.

00:09:11 Speaker 2

But not serious enough to be evacuated. I stayed with my company and then went back one night and had them remove.

00:09:19 Speaker 2

The shrapnel from my thigh.

00:09:25 Speaker 2

After crossing Moselle, we were held up by a shortage of gasoline for approximately 2 weeks and we.

00:09:38 Speaker 2

Stopped.

00:09:40 Speaker 2

And reorganize, I guess and.

00:09:45 Speaker 2

And then get prepared to move on when.

00:09:50 Speaker 2

General Patton got his gasoline for his tanks. We were in conjunction with the 4th Armored Division.

00:09:59 Speaker 2

Which had a pretty famous history in in France.

00:10:05 Speaker 2

And then we came to we while we were there, we were heavy rains.

00:10:13 Speaker 2

And we were had to cross another tributary of the Moselle, called the Seal River, and while.

00:10:27 Speaker 2

We waiting to get across the heavy rains.

00:10:33 Speaker 2

Increase the size of the width of it from.

00:10:38 Speaker 2

About 20 feet to about 200 feet we then.

00:10:43 Speaker 1

You wish.

00:10:46 Speaker 2

When we decided that we received orders to attack.

00:10:51 Speaker 2

Towards nominee Francis, a town on the east side.

00:10:57 Speaker 2

Of the.

00:11:00 Speaker 2



Of the Seal River and we jumped off and for the first time used rubber rafts.

00:11:10 Speaker 2

To cross early one morning before daylight.

00:11:18 Speaker 2

We.

00:11:19 Speaker 2

Across the river.

00:11:22 Speaker 2

In darkness and then entered the town.

00:11:24 Speaker 2

Of.

00:11:25 Speaker 2

Nominee.

00:11:27 Speaker 2

And.

00:11:29 Speaker 2

Ours was the only company to get across. They had decided to bring the rest of the battalion across by building.

00:11:36 Speaker 2

A. A footbridge.

00:11:39 Speaker 2

So we continued into the town and there I.

00:11:45 Speaker 2

And had the misfortune, I guess about 6:00 in the morning. I was shot in the knee.

00:11:54 Speaker 2

But we kept on moving and kept on fighting in the town.

00:11:59 Speaker 2

Then about 9:00, I got shot in the thigh in the other leg, so.

00:12:05 Speaker 2

Good.

00:12:09 Speaker 2

I managed to make it till two. It almost captured the town but not quite.

00:12:15 Speaker 2

And then.

00:12:17 Speaker 2

Was told to go back to the an aid station.

00:12:21 Speaker 2

And I was then evacuated to England. I was evacuated to a hospital in England and remained there from about the 4th of November till.

00:12:40 Speaker 2

The end of February.

00:12:43 Speaker 2

Ah.

00:12:45 Speaker 2

Aye, that time because of.

00:12:51 Speaker 2

Being in the hospital, I regretfully regretted that I did miss the battle of the Bulge because my unit was one of the first ones to break through to the.

00:13:03 Speaker 2

101st Airborne and Bastone.

00:13:08 Speaker 2

But.

00:13:11 Speaker 2

Goodnight.

00:13:13 Speaker 2

State in England till.

00:13:16 Speaker 2

In February.

00:13:18 Speaker 2

Then return to.

00:13:20 Speaker 2

France.

00:13:22 Speaker 2

And.

00:13:24 Speaker 2

Ended up in the same regiment and commanding the same company.

00:13:31 Speaker 2

Just West of Luxembourg.

00:13:36 Speaker 2

And we.

00:13:39 Speaker 2

I joined the company again, took over again as company commander and we continued moving through Luxembourg and into Germany. As I mentioned, I have rejoined my.

00:13:54 Speaker 2

Company.

00:13:55 Speaker 2

And we.

00:13:59 Speaker 2

Continue to move.

00:14:01 Speaker 2

Through Luxembourg into Germany, we.

00:14:07 Speaker 2

Hit a fair amount of resistance.

00:14:11 Speaker 2

Once we enter Germany and.

00:14:16 Speaker 2

Just kept on fighting to moving to the east.

00:14:21 Speaker 1

What year was this? What that?

00:14:22 Speaker 2

This was this was March of 45.

00:14:28 Speaker 2

February, March 45.

00:14:29 Speaker 1

To March.

00:14:33 Speaker 2

We continue moving east.

00:14:36 Speaker 2

March the 14th we were.

00:14:43 Speaker 2

Making attack towards a town in Germany called vice Curfew.

00:14:49 Speaker 2

And.

00:14:52 Speaker 2

I think it was near Saarburg.

00:14:57 Speaker 2

And we broke through the enemy lines.

00:15:04 Speaker 2

Towards the town, which was about 6 miles from where the front lines were.

00:15:11 Speaker 2

And.

00:15:13 Speaker 2

The.

00:15:16 Speaker 2

Attacking and moving mostly at night and attack.

00:15:20 Speaker 2

Checking.

00:15:22 Speaker 2

We ran into artillery positions which we managed to destroy.

00:15:28 Speaker 2

And all kinds of.

00:15:32 Speaker 2

Various types of units in the back, in the rear of the front lines, get into the edge of least careful or vice careful.

00:15:45 Speaker 2

And going down the road, I happen to be in the front of the company.

00:15:54 Speaker 2

And we ran into a German patrol that.

00:16:00 Speaker 2

We met them, they met us and there was the first hand to hand combat that I had ever been in.

00:16:07 Speaker 1

Wow.

00:16:08 Speaker 2

And.

00:16:09 Speaker 2

During that fight.

00:16:13 Speaker 2

Was shot in the chest.

00:16:16 Speaker 2

And I fell into a ditch.

00:16:18 Speaker 2

And but the troops kept on moving.

00:16:21 Speaker 2

And.

00:16:21 Speaker 2

Took the town edge of the town.

00:16:25 Speaker 2

And they loaded me on a.

00:16:28 Speaker 2

Jeep and just tossed me in the back and drove into town. Found the house.

00:16:36 Speaker 2

And we got in the house and I was. I had what they call a sucking chest wound.

00:16:42 Speaker 1

Hmm.

00:16:42 Speaker 2

And they.

00:16:45 Speaker 2

And put me on the bed in the living room upstairs.

00:16:50 Speaker 2

And.

00:16:52 Speaker 2

Then the.

00:16:55 Speaker 2

Fortunately, I had a very good aid man. He probably saved my life because the with the second chest wound, the hair would just come out of my back and he found the German hot water bottle.

00:17:13 Speaker 2

And put it on on the whole fire and blocked it and that's probably what saved my life.

00:17:23 Speaker 2

I do have one asset. We were a battalion and we were cut off from the our main forces and the only contact we had with them was we had one tank destroyer with us and we couldn't manage to get through on their radio on occasion.

00:17:42 Speaker 2

To.

00:17:44 Speaker 2

To tell her we were still there, we had gotten to our objective.

00:17:49 Speaker 2

But then, after I was wounded, the artillery fire got pretty bad in the area, so they moved me down.

00:18:01 Speaker 2

To the seller.

00:18:03 Speaker 2

Basement of this house and along with the there's a old lady there. German occupant, as far as I can remember, and we stayed in the. I stayed down there for three days.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

Finally, the 10th Armored Division.

00:18:24 Speaker 2

Broke through the German lines.

00:18:27 Speaker 2

And.

00:18:28 Speaker 2

Got to us.

00:18:30 Speaker 2

And then I was evacuated there from there back to.

00:18:35 Speaker 2

Again, back to England, to a hospital there.

00:18:40 Speaker 2

I was evacuated from back to England and then from hospital there.

00:18:47 Speaker 2

Sent back on a liberty ship that had a a medical area on it for and evacuated, returned to the States and I went through various hospitals for about a year and a limited duty and.

00:19:07 Speaker 2

The best one I ran into was White Sulphur Springs, WV.

00:19:14 Speaker 2

The Greenbrier, which?

00:19:17 Speaker 2

Can't afford to stay there now, but at that time with about 10 officers per room or 10 and personnel per room, it was a army hospital for paraplegics. The reason I sat there, I had a my gunshot wound came out over my spine.

00:19:36 Speaker 2

And they were worried whether there's going to be a paraplegic or not. Well, fortunately, I wasn't.

00:19:44 Speaker 2

And.

00:19:47 Speaker 2

I pulled limited tours of duty of various places and spent.

00:19:55 Speaker 2

A lot of time in various army hospitals in Memphis, TN and and the Greenbrier and.

00:20:03 Speaker 2

And then finally.

00:20:06 Speaker 2

I recovered.

00:20:08 Speaker 2

And.

00:20:09 Speaker 2

In 46.

00:20:13 Speaker 2

I was able to pass an army physical and join the regular army during my wartime assignments. I received the.

00:20:27 Speaker 2

Distinguished Service cross, the Silver Star, the Bronze star with V for valor.

00:20:38 Speaker 2

3.

00:20:41 Speaker 2

I want 3-4 purple hearts.

00:20:46 Speaker 2

Or a Purple Heart with three oak leaf clusters and.



00:20:55 Speaker 2

Other.

00:20:57 Speaker 2

That's about it for Europe. The whatever medals they gave, it came with it.

00:21:04 Speaker 2

And.

00:21:06 Speaker 2

But I do want to point out.

00:21:09 Speaker 2

In receiving these, you do fight a war to get a medal.

00:21:16 Speaker 2

That's the last thing. What would you think about? You don't even think.

00:21:19 Speaker 2

Got it. You just do your job and try to do it the best you can. I do want to say that I.

00:21:28 Speaker 2

In the in the.

00:21:30 Speaker 2

Later wars. Why?

00:21:33 Speaker 2

Was mixed up in there was chance for rest and recreation and so forth, but during World War 2, I guess there were USO shows, but we were spent most of our time and in frontline combat situations.

00:21:54 Speaker 2

That I never had the opportunity to see one after joining, becoming a member.

00:22:01 Speaker 2

Of the regular army.

00:22:03 Speaker 2

I spent.

00:22:07 Speaker 2

Three years with the American Embassy in Poland.

00:22:11 Speaker 2

As an assistant military attache.

00:22:15 Speaker 2

Aye.

00:22:16 Speaker 2

Numerous assignment throughout the states, and I also served in Germany again with the US Army in Europe.

00:22:26 Speaker 2

And then, Sir, the Pentagon on three or four occasions went to.

00:22:38 Speaker 2

Korea served a tour there.

00:22:41 Speaker 2

And then my.

00:22:44 Speaker 2

Return states then went back to Vietnam and served a tour there with a airborne brigade.

00:22:56 Speaker 2

The One airborne brigade there and with the.

00:23:01 Speaker 2

As an advisor to a Korean Tiger division that was stationed in Korea.

00:23:09 Speaker 2

I then came back this.

00:23:14 Speaker 2

To the states served another tour in the Pentagon then.

00:23:19 Speaker 2

Was commandant of a Army language school at Fort Bliss, Texas, and retired there after the 30 year service. My wife and I.

00:23:33 Speaker 2

Came.

00:23:34 Speaker 2

To Highlands.

00:23:37 Speaker 2

To live.

00:23:39 Speaker 2

And I went into the real estate and insurance business and have been here ever since, enjoyed all 30 years of my service for the most part, they.

00:23:56 Speaker 2

I think.

00:23:59 Speaker 2

Each individual should serve his country in some way or other and.

00:24:10 Speaker 2

It makes you realize how fragile your life is when you get into.

00:24:16 Speaker 2

Combat situations.

00:24:23 Speaker 2

I felt.

00:24:25 Speaker 2

A duty to do that, to serve him.

00:24:30 Speaker 2

In during the war and then and liked it so much, I stayed in after the war and.

00:24:40 Speaker 2

I.

00:24:40 Speaker 2

Think.

00:24:43 Speaker 2

It made a better person than me and will many others who serve.

00:24:49 Speaker 2

To me is a place.

00:24:52 Speaker 2

Where you find.

00:24:55 Speaker 2

Honestly, integrity.

00:24:59 Speaker 2

And.

00:25:01 Speaker 2

And understanding.

00:25:03 Speaker 2

Of.

00:25:06 Speaker 2

Wife.

00:25:07 Speaker 2

And service and enjoy the great country that we are.