

Don Davis Interview

Company K, 319th Inf Reg

(Aug 2001, interviewed by COL(ret) Grant Porter)

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

00:00:14 Speaker 1

My name is Don Davis. I was in the.

00:00:20 Speaker 1

Our company, OK.

00:00:23 Speaker 1

319 infantry.

00:00:25

Could you say start?

00:00:26

Over again, because I think it was indexing, it might not have got.

00:00:28 Speaker 1

OK. My name is Don Davis. I was in the in company K 319 infantry for a very short time. Actually I was an advance party into Germany as a POW.

00:00:29

It all.

00:00:47 Speaker 1

In September, before the main army arrived after the first of the year, actually I joined the outfit as a replacement. I really shouldn't have been in the infantry. I'm 6 foot seven, too damn tall to be an infantry.

00:01:06 Speaker 1

Die because I make too much of A target. Actually, the night I arrived as a replacement, which was about the 20th of September, it was after dark.

00:01:20 Speaker 1

Our Tillery started pretty shortly thereafter. Those 80 eights were coming in and half an hour after I was on the line. I was in this foxhole which was covered with branches.

00:01:35 Speaker 1

I got into it very easily because of that shell, but it actually been built by a guy who must have been minimum height because after the shelling was over, I couldn't possibly get out of that foxhole they had to.

00:01:55 Speaker 1

Draw me out because I was cramped in there and it wasn't suited for me at all. But I was captured on September 27th. So you see, I wasn't on the line very long. Just like all of the guys here. I'm very happy.

00:02:15 Speaker 1

To be here, I think that possibly, but I hadn't been captured, I probably would have been.

00:02:22 Speaker 1

Not been here at all because we had very high casualties during the during the war, I was actually.

00:02:32 Speaker 1

At a.

00:02:34 Speaker 1

We were kind of a forward post when the army ran out of petroleum products in the middle of September. They kept the outposts out, so we were actually about a mile and a half ahead of the main lines. And our job was to.

00:02:55 Speaker 1

Observed this same river which was right in front of us. There was a a blown out over bridge right in front of us as the German army came back in. Our job was to notify our headquarters back and get the heck.

00:03:12 Speaker 1

Back.

00:03:13 Speaker 1

It was, it was so dangerous. It was only supposed to be 24 hour duty.

00:03:20 Speaker 1

But they kept this honor another 24 hours, and that spelled our water room.

00:03:28 Speaker 1

Actually.

00:03:30 Speaker 1

At the time I was captured.

00:03:33 Speaker 1

There, there were five of us in this barn and we only had a limited visibility of possibly 70 or 80 yards, 70 or 80°, I should say. While the crowds came in on about the other 270°.

00:03:53 Speaker 1

Well, when the machine gun bullets started coming in on the I was in the corner of a bar and it broke down the the.

00:04:05 Speaker 1

Border and then bricks in front of me. So at the time that I hollered, call Rod.

00:04:13 Speaker 1

The bullets were coming about an inch or two from my belly, and if I hadn't powered comrade and the rest of us right at that time, we would have been computed another 10 seconds since they had a bazooka all set to fire. Now we have fought them for a while.

00:04:33 Speaker 1

So we are again, we are very fortunate to be captured because it was a regular ward mock outfit actually.

00:04:41 Speaker 1

I had shot a fellow in the valley only from about 15 yards away and he was coming out of the first aid station when we were back there at their headquarters and he had his buddy with him and he pointed me out to his buddy.

00:05:02 Speaker 1

And I thought I had met my Waterloo at that time, but generally tenant sent us to the rear right at that time. So I wasn't taken out in the woods and and shot.

00:05:16 Speaker 1

I was at. I was actually at some of the same places that my comrades Angelo and also Eric work was that I was captured right near upon was saw and it was the the name of the village was port.

00:05:35 Speaker 1

Serve Sealy.

00:05:37 Speaker 1

And I so I was at Strasbourg, also at stall at 12A at Limburg and then I ended up the first part of October at the Stalag 7-8. I worked on the German.

00:05:56 Speaker 1

There or I should say I did a little work as I could get by with during the winter of 44 and 40.

00:06:06 Speaker 1

So I I.

00:06:08 Speaker 1

You know, I remember some of the poor funny experiences and.

00:06:15 Speaker 1

Not so many the the bad things. I remember. One thing that was very interesting. We were coming back into the stall log on Christmas Eve and we.

00:06:30 Speaker 1

Arrive actually back at the stall because of the air raids and so forth. We didn't get back there till probably 3:00 Christmas morning.

00:06:40 Speaker 1

And during the way back while we're waiting air rates, I never knew that most of our German our Christmas carols are German and origin and the guards would say, sing that lyrics in German and then we would send them. We would just sing them back in.

00:07:01 Speaker 1

English so that was one of the more interesting experiences. Also you you had to live by your wits. You you trade.

00:07:11 Speaker 1

Good.

00:07:12 Speaker 1

And I got with the surveillance, which was illegal.

00:07:17 Speaker 1

We used one of the favorite things we got in our parcels was English tea. The Germans love tea.

00:07:27 Speaker 1

And we did trade the tea, but only after had had all been utilized when we had a cup of tea. We kept the old tea leaves, and we sprinkled a few.

00:07:41 Speaker 1

Fresh ones on top when we had the tea, when they were thoroughly exhausted, we dried them out. We kept the tea bags and we filled the key tea bags with those exhausted leaves with fresh leaves around them. And then we went after the civilians. How much do?

00:08:01 Speaker 1

Vote for pay and we got tea and and of course it was illegal for them to trade with us too and.

00:08:11 Speaker 1

But we.

00:08:13 Speaker 1

And in October, November, you could do pretty well on, you could get a maybe 5 loaves of bread for one pack of cigarettes, and you could get 10 loaves of bread. Not the kind of bread that saw those.

00:08:33 Speaker 1

Red. But it did fill our valleys a little bit and toward the end.

00:08:39 Speaker 1

In March and April was very interesting.

00:08:44 Speaker 1

Actually, American cigarettes were worth the equivalent of \$5 per cigarettes, \$100 per pack and.

00:08:55 Speaker 1

And and we were liberated by the 99th Division on April 29th. And I'll never forget General Patton showing up the next day. And bear in mind we hadn't had any razor blades and also.

00:09:13 Speaker 1

He came up to, I came in. His high pitched voice and said you men are back in the American army. You will now look and dressed like soldiers and he got booed by 10,000 guys and he walked away.

00:09:31 Speaker 1

And the story.