

Clifford Clinton Fowler Interview

80th Infantry Division

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Barbara L. Reeves)

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

00:00:00 Speaker 1

American Folklife Center in Washington, DC Today is Thursday, July the 27th, 2006, and this is the beginning of an interview with Clifford Fowler at his home in Waxhaw, NC, address 4612.

00:00:20 Speaker 1

Hogarth Rd. ZIP code 28173.

00:00:25 Speaker 1

Mr. Fowler is 80 years old, having been born March the 28th, 1926 in Union County, North Carolina. My name is Barbara Reeves and I'll be the interviewer. Mr. Fowler is a new acquaintance of mine, having just led the 4th of July parade.

00:00:44 Speaker 1

In Waxhaw NC, I read about him in our local paper. Mr. Fowler, could you state for the interview and for the recording what will and branch service?

00:00:56 Speaker 1

You served.

00:00:58 Speaker 2

I served in World War 2 under General Patton's Third Army. I said combat round land centre or.

00:01:02 Speaker 1

Alright.

00:01:05 Speaker 1

All right, Sir.

00:01:07 Speaker 1

And what was your rank? All right and where again?

00:01:09 Speaker 2

Pfc.

00:01:13 Speaker 2

Did you serve all right.

00:01:19 Speaker 1

How long were you in the service?

00:01:22 Speaker 2

Two years.

00:01:23 Speaker 1

All right, I'm going to. Those are the beginning parts of our of our interview, Clifford. And I'm going to go on to just some things that will jog your memory. Were you drafted or did you enlist?

00:01:38

Right.

00:01:38 Speaker 1

Where were you living at the time?

00:01:41 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:01:43 Speaker 2

Union County, Washington.

00:01:45 Speaker 1

I'm like that's in North Carolina. And why did you join?

00:01:51 Speaker 2

18.

00:01:52 Speaker 1

And 18 and why?

00:01:54 Speaker 1

Did you didn't have a choice on guess why.

00:01:56 Speaker 1

Did you pick?

00:01:56 Speaker 1

The branch of service that you did.

00:01:58 Speaker 2

I didn't have a choice.

00:02:00 Speaker 1

Yeah. OK.

00:02:02 Speaker 1

Do you recall the?

00:02:03 Speaker 1

First days of your service tell us about those.

00:02:05 Speaker 2

I did.

00:02:16 Speaker 2

With his fitness and clothes and shoes.

00:02:19 Speaker 2

And and then the China, you know that happened right after we were sworn in and.

00:02:30 Speaker 1

What did it feel like? Yeah.

00:02:35 Speaker 2

18 year old boy.

00:02:39 Speaker 1

Tell me about your boot camp.

00:02:42 Speaker 2

Well, I went from Fort Bragg to Camp Hood, Texas, RTC entrance, replacement training center.

00:02:52 Speaker 2

And suppose it's been 17 weeks and it cut it to 15.

00:02:57 Speaker 2

Only had 13 because they put some of some OK being we missed the first two weeks of training and then they cut it back to 15. So I really got 13 weeks of.

00:03:08 Speaker 2

It.

00:03:09 Speaker 1

And OK, 13 weeks of boot camp.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

RTC.

00:03:14 Speaker 1

OK.

00:03:16 Speaker 1

Where did you leave there for Germany? What did you go beyond Fort Hood in the states anywhere?

00:03:22 Speaker 2

We worked from there.

00:03:25 Speaker 2

Fort Meade, MD. And we shipped out from there to Scotland.

00:03:31 Speaker 1

Right.

00:03:33 Speaker 2

Number go ahead.

00:03:35 Speaker 1

At the at both Fort Bragg and Fort Hood, do you remember any of your instructors?

00:03:41 Speaker 2

I remember someone.

00:03:46 Speaker 2

A Sergeant. Sergeant woosley. I remember him. And I forget the company's name. I don't remember him.

00:03:56 Speaker 1

How did you get through boot camp?

00:03:59 Speaker 2

It was hard.

00:04:00 Speaker 2

It wasn't as hard on me as it was.

00:04:03 Speaker 2

Some of the other ones.

00:04:06 Speaker 2

I was raised working hard and someone.

00:04:12 Speaker 2

Were raised and didn't work that hard like we did, and they had it passed out. Some of them, you know, they they couldn't handle it.

00:04:19 Speaker 3

OK.

00:04:20 Speaker 2

But it was very hard.

00:04:23 Speaker 1

Did you have work at Fort Bragg before you went to Fort Hood, or did you just ship out of Fort Room?

00:04:30 Speaker 2

No, just we went in it showing in it put bag and then after proceeded everything in it shipped to stand at Camp Wood, Texas. Then it's camp right now. Thanks forwarded.

00:04:40 Speaker 1

All right, yes.

00:04:45 Speaker 1

Going on to some of your experiences, Mr. Fowler, some of this will be repetitious. Which war did you serve in?

00:04:54 Speaker 2

The lower cave.

00:04:55 Speaker 1

And where exactly did you go? Beginning with Fort Bragg?

00:05:02 Speaker 2

Went from Fort Bragg to Camp Hood, Texas.

00:05:06 Speaker 2

From there to Fort Meade, MD.

00:05:08 Speaker 2

And from there to Scotland.

00:05:12 Speaker 2

Across the English Channel went into France, into Germany and state in Germany to the war ending trail into combat.

00:05:22 Speaker 1

All right.

00:05:24 Speaker 1

All right.

00:05:26 Speaker 1

Do you remember arriving in Scotland and what it was like?

00:05:32 Speaker 2

Yeah. Yes, ma'am, I.

00:05:33 Speaker 2

Do.

00:05:33 Speaker 1

What was it like there?

00:05:35 Speaker 2

Well, the biggest thing is a ship. I've never won the Queen Mary.

00:05:40 Speaker 2

It was 15,000 troops aboard. It was so big, they parked it out in.

00:05:45 Speaker 2

The ocean and.

00:05:46 Speaker 2

They brought a a flat bed ship out there and put it up again.

00:05:49 Speaker 2

In the.

00:05:49 Speaker 2

Boat and we cleaned down and got on the built by grass roots and made out late and made.

00:05:55 Speaker 2

A ladder out up.

00:05:57 Speaker 2

And it was very cold when we left.

00:06:00 Speaker 2

Here.

00:06:02 Speaker 2

We went there to Fort Meade, MD. There was snow on the ground and you got over there. It got daylight that.

00:06:11 Speaker 2

Morning we could see.

00:06:12 Speaker 2

The pretty green grass around it. Real pretty beautiful country. So after that on that boat, we went out to Scotland there.

00:06:22 Speaker 2

And they had.

00:06:23 Speaker 2

They go 55 gallon barrels and they put canned food in and then heated it up and that's what they gave us to eat and we got there.

00:06:32 Speaker 1

How long were you in Scotland?

00:06:34 Speaker 2

We stayed about about a day.

00:06:38 Speaker 3

Alright.

00:06:38 Speaker 2

And then we.

00:06:40 Speaker 2

Well across the English Channel went to France.

00:06:44 Speaker 1

All right. And continue on with your experiences, Mr. Fowler. As you enter France.

00:06:51 Speaker 2

Well, from France, so went on into Germany.

00:06:56 Speaker 2

And.

00:06:58 Speaker 2

When we left, they had it. We had a great old big duffel bag and it was full of everything you need. So we carried that there.

00:07:06 Speaker 2

After we got into France, we actually got in Germany.

00:07:12 Speaker 2

We got on the truck in the road named in Germany apiece, and then they got off and went in this house. They said light up around the wall and should dump everything in the middle of the floor that you couldn't carry.

00:07:25 Speaker 2

With.

00:07:25 Speaker 2

You.

00:07:26 Speaker 2

So that's what we did.

00:07:29 Speaker 2

And then we got on though.

00:07:31 Speaker 2

A truck.

00:07:33 Speaker 2

And hey, for the front line, when it stopped, we could hear him up a fair fighting. You know, the guns going on the truck went one way. We went towards the enemy.

00:07:47 Speaker 2

And then we.

00:07:49 Speaker 2

Stop there at Ryland.

00:07:53 Speaker 2

And we stayed here overnight.

00:07:56 Speaker 2

And then we cross the Rhine River next day.

00:08:00 Speaker 2

And all the burgers are going to go ahead now the bridges rap and.

00:08:03 Speaker 1

Yes, please continue.

00:08:09 Speaker 2

They put us on their a little boat that had a Jeep on it.

00:08:14 Speaker 2

His fellow mayor from New York, he said they won't hit this boat. And I said, well, this is going to want to hit because you got a coupon.

00:08:24 Speaker 2

So we went and then crossed the river and went on into Germany and.

00:08:34 Speaker 2

From that time we worked well for three days and three nights and was walking across here in the shell over and fall and they said you don't have to worry about as long as you.

00:08:48 Speaker 2

Can hear.

00:08:50 Speaker 2

So I walked along there.

00:08:52 Speaker 2

And going to fail and.

00:08:53 Speaker 2

Buckle him off the apple tree. It didn't ground. It didn't go off and that really scared me. And then they they got dropping, so regular had to get Fox holding it in the group.

00:09:06 Speaker 2

And then when it eased up, we went.

00:09:08 Speaker 2

Left and went father.

00:09:11 Speaker 2

But we did work three walk 3 days and three nights.

00:09:16 Speaker 2

One night we should kept walking and.

00:09:21 Speaker 2

One of the guys says I believe I've been here before.

00:09:24 Speaker 2

So what? Come by little pine tree?

00:09:28 Speaker 2

And we walked. We walked for, I don't know, hour or so. Come back. Same place.

00:09:35 Speaker 3

You know, going in a circle so.

00:09:43 Speaker 2

They come aboard the ship before we got off. All heard with General Patton, someone else said we can't be in the war, which was true. And what they do, they put us in, in places where the enemy was. We should combat and we clear data.

00:10:00 Speaker 2

We go and ship it somewhere else. We stayed in combat. I stayed in combat about four months, just from one place to another. That was our job of being combat all the time and there to warn you and.

00:10:17 Speaker 1

Who was your immediate in superior at that time?

00:10:25 Speaker 2

I don't really remember.

00:10:26 Speaker 1

All right. But his his answering was to General Patton. Yes. Yeah. OK. And you've really answered the. The next question is, did you see combat but continue on from the the months in combat? Mr. Fowler?

00:10:32 Speaker 2

Yeah, there's general tags third line.

00:10:45 Speaker 1

And just tell your.

00:10:46 Speaker 2

Story OK.

00:10:47 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:10:51 Speaker 2

We waited outside of before we crossed her ride river and went in a cave in the ground and the next one we could hear the shells going over, falling and making a noise.

00:11:08 Speaker 2

So after Winter Cross after got on the boat, when it crossed the river.

00:11:14 Speaker 2

It was just.

00:11:16 Speaker 2

We walked everywhere we went. From then on I didn't never ride anything.

00:11:22 Speaker 2

After he got off that truck, I don't think I ever rode in another vehicle for a long time.

00:11:29 Speaker 2

And.

00:11:35 Speaker 2

When it ended there, they went over as a bunch of German soldiers in Scotland, not in Scotland.

00:11:43

Thanks.

00:11:46 Speaker 1

They're in Germany.

00:11:48

Where you are from.

00:11:53 Speaker 2

They were back in the mountains there at the s s Trooper, which was Germany's top men. They were all of them were 6 foot or better.

00:12:01 Speaker 2

And they went over with a helicopter on the PA system and told the war was over to come out and give up.

00:12:11 Speaker 2

And they put me down there. Roadblock.

00:12:15 Speaker 2

Taking their weapon.

00:12:17 Speaker 2

I didn't take many games and would pile them up out there and.

00:12:23 Speaker 2

I was a little short fellow and all these big, tall 6 foot was either one of them could beat his head.

00:12:32 Speaker 2

But.

00:12:34 Speaker 2

Then after that.

00:12:36 Speaker 2

Was over. We went in basic training to be trained to go to Japan.

00:12:43 Speaker 2

Hand to hand combat. close fighting.

00:12:47 Speaker 2

And then.

00:12:50 Speaker 2

It so happened after we finished our training and everything. The war ended, so we didn't have to go.

00:12:58 Speaker 2

And.

00:13:00 Speaker 2

At that time they put me in a military police. It was guard.

00:13:05 Speaker 2

Is what it was.

00:13:05

MHM.

00:13:06 Speaker 2

And staying there till it comes down to me to.

00:13:11 Speaker 2

Go home. Come on.

00:13:13 Speaker 1

All right. Were there many casualties in your unit, Mr. Fowler?

00:13:19 Speaker 2

There was quite a few.

00:13:22 Speaker 2

We.

00:13:25 Speaker 2

Wait for a town one morning.

00:13:29 Speaker 2

We sit down and visit the.

00:13:30 Speaker 2

Mountain.

00:13:32 Speaker 2

And we searched the house. There's only one one server soldier there. I think he must have been on vacation or.

00:13:38 Speaker 2

Something.

00:13:40 Speaker 2

Anyway, we went all through and went into the woods and they come in behind us and cut us off and we were.

00:13:50 Speaker 2

We were trapped in there, couldn't get out. We were surrounded by the Germans, German enemies, enemies, German soldiers.

00:14:01 Speaker 2

And we stayed in woods all day.

00:14:05 Speaker 2

There was quite a few of them that shot.

00:14:08 Speaker 2

One was right beside me is can a walkie-talkie.

00:14:12 Speaker 2

Shot him in the stone and he lay there all day.

00:14:17 Speaker 2

He lived for about 8 hours.

00:14:20 Speaker 2

And they couldn't get into us and.

00:14:29 Speaker 2

One guy, they came at the bank to get to the road and they shot him right in the center of the head.

00:14:34 Speaker 2

And.

00:14:34 Speaker 2

He fell back, but there was quite a few that got going and killed in that day and that night there was big tank coming there. We know where it was.

00:14:44 Speaker 2

Sherman Tank for America guy.

00:14:48 Speaker 2

But anyway they come in.

00:14:49 Speaker 2

And.

00:14:52 Speaker 2

The angle, well, we knew the angles all round, so we could.

00:14:54 Speaker 2

Get.

00:14:54 Speaker 2

Out. So we fought alongside the tank and went back out the way we came in and that town was still burning. It destroyed everything.

00:15:04 Speaker 2

Trying to get to.

00:15:06 Speaker 1

Is that why?

00:15:08 Speaker 1

To me, a couple of your most memorable experiences, Mr. Fallon.

00:15:17 Speaker 2

We'll go off that one.

00:15:24 Speaker 1

That would be.

00:15:33 Speaker 2

What a big relief was that?

00:15:37 Speaker 2

After taking that down.

00:15:41 Speaker 2

And and combat training, the blessing was that toward ending.

00:15:49 Speaker 2

We've been going to Japan. We were already finished our training. We're ready to go and that was what a great relief that it wasn't going.

00:15:55 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:15:56

Yes.

00:16:02 Speaker 2

I don't know of anything else, right?

00:16:04 Speaker 1

When you're ever a prisoner of war.

00:16:07 Speaker 2

No.

00:16:07 Speaker 1

OK.

00:16:08 Speaker 3

We're not taking that back.

00:16:11 Speaker 1

Done.

00:16:13 Speaker 1

I think your wife has reminded you of another experience.

00:16:17 Speaker 2

Yeah, we were fighting in the outside of Germany, in Germany, in the edge of the road.

00:16:25 Speaker 2

They had holes dragging the gram.

00:16:27 Speaker 2

And they can't. This guy can't come up coming up shooting matters and.

00:16:35 Speaker 2

They went up there and just kept shooting down in the fox hole. Didn't kill it, didn't kill him, but he dug a hole in me and dug the hole back into the side of the pot he's hiding back in there.

00:16:48 Speaker 2

But anyway, they finally figured out who and got him out there and this took good thing prisoners.

00:16:54 Speaker 2

Then I went to try to fire my gun. It was been laying in mud.

00:16:59 Speaker 2

It was jammed up with mud, so I took the prisoners back, even though I had no gun. It was shoot.

00:17:05 Speaker 2

And.

00:17:07 Speaker 2

Took him back down to the road and they carried him on and somebody picked, took him on back to the Framingham.

00:17:14 Speaker 2

Went down taking this water as a journal of prayer.

00:17:19 Speaker 3

MHM.

00:17:23 Speaker 1

I'm going to go on now just continuing on a few more of those experiences. Were you awarded any medals or citations?

00:17:32 Speaker 2

I was watered down.

00:17:35 Speaker 2

Combat entry bag.

00:17:39 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:17:41 Speaker 2

I brought 2 Bronze stars.

00:17:46 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:17:52 Speaker 2

Their conduct matter.

00:17:56 Speaker 2

And.

00:18:05 Speaker 1

That's great. How did you get them?

00:18:06 Speaker 3

That's what I'm thinking.

00:18:13 Speaker 2

What? In order to get outcome that entered the badge then you had to be in come back 30 days and they gave it to us and they gave us these other pens like good conduct medal and then we got a medal with two bronze stars.

00:18:20 Speaker 3

All right.

00:18:31 Speaker 2

It's a little male with two stars.

00:18:34 Speaker 2

On it and.

00:18:34

MHM.

00:18:37 Speaker 2

If you want to look like.

00:18:48 Speaker 2

Look like a Purple Heart, but what it would represent the of the the branches of service in that area.

00:18:55 Speaker 2

That look like purple art.

00:18:57 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:18:59 Speaker 1

Concerning that your life in the service, Mr. Fowler, how did you stay in touch with your family during those years?

00:19:09

Oh.

00:19:10 Speaker 2

I want it by mail.

00:19:12 Speaker 1

All right.

00:19:14 Speaker 1

What was the food like?

00:19:17 Speaker 2

The food was KF was.

00:19:28 Speaker 3

What I said was rations or C rations rations.

00:19:31 Speaker 3

Hello.

00:19:37 Speaker 1

All right.

00:19:39 Speaker 2

Most all the time.

00:19:42 Speaker 2

We'll just comment, that's all we had and then we would we'd be traveling or something away. It wouldn't be a lot of fighting going on. They'd bring a kitchen, truck up and service to me.

00:19:44 Speaker 3

Mm-hmm.

00:19:54

MHM.

00:19:56 Speaker 2

But you'll come back. But most thing we had to eat was a.

00:20:01 Speaker 2

Came off cave.

00:20:01 Speaker 1

K rations. Yeah, I think they've got key rations. Yeah. Yeah. Call them something different now, but I think that's what it was in real world too. Did you have plenty of supplies?

00:20:13 Speaker 2

So far as I know, yeah.

00:20:15 Speaker 1

All right. Did you feel any pressure or stress?

00:20:20 Speaker 2

Stress.

00:20:23 Speaker 2

Yes, yes, very much.

00:20:27 Speaker 1

Where you've mentioned the word stared and that that would be yes. Yes. Yeah. How large was the group of men that you were fighting with, Mr. Fowler?

00:20:30 Speaker 2

Yeah, I'm very afraid.

00:20:47 Speaker 2

That was probably less than 20 in that particular group I was in.

00:20:50 Speaker 3

OK.

00:20:53 Speaker 1

All right.

00:20:55 Speaker 1

Was there something special that you did during those years for good luck?

00:21:00 Speaker 2

For good luck.

00:21:10 Speaker 2

I know a lot of praying.

00:21:14 Speaker 1

I've heard that more than once continue.

00:21:16 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:21:19 Speaker 2

Yeah, I did a lot of that. Now I think he is there with.

00:21:24 Speaker 1

Some men carry, you know, special something in their pocket, you know, good luck. Peace, so to speak. Did you have anything of that kind?

00:21:34 Speaker 2

No, I'm thinking a friend of mine sent me.

00:21:36 Speaker 2

A Bible with them.

00:21:39 Speaker 2

I met a plate on one side of it and I carried that for a long time and something happened to it. I.

00:21:44 Speaker 2

Don't.

00:21:44 Speaker 2

Know what? It got misplaced and.

00:21:45 Speaker 1

OK.

00:21:48 Speaker 1

How did people entertain themselves during that time?

00:21:59 Speaker 2

Well, if they could get away with it, would.

00:22:02 Speaker 2

They would go.

00:22:04 Speaker 2

In the town.

00:22:05 Speaker 2

If they could.

00:22:07 Speaker 2

And.

00:22:14 Speaker 2

There wasn't a whole lot of entertainment, especially during come there they, but we'd be in a place for a day or two.

00:22:17 Speaker 3

OK.

00:22:22 Speaker 2

They'd venture off and go into town or someplace where they could, you know, meet with people, they wouldn't. It's kind of day. You should go out by yourself. I mean, they go in.

00:22:28 Speaker 3

Yeah.

00:22:33 Speaker 2

A group.

00:22:34 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:22:37 Speaker 1

Were there any entertainers that came? I think you've sort of answered this already because during combat you wouldn't be going to a UFO show. A CFO show you.

00:22:48 Speaker 2

Or nothing like that.

00:22:48 Speaker 1

Know. Yeah, yeah.

00:22:51 Speaker 1

Where did you go when you were on leave? Did you even have a leave during those days?

00:22:57 Speaker 2

We didn't have a leave till after the war was over.

00:23:00 Speaker 1

All right. Do you recall any particular humorous event?

00:23:10 Speaker 1

Something that was funny, something that was humorous.

00:23:13 Speaker 1

At all during.

00:23:14 Speaker 1

Those years, a humorous event that happened.

00:23:22 Speaker 2

Yeah, we went to.

00:23:25 Speaker 2

Like Chairman Theater, there's a pretty good movie on there I remember.

00:23:31 Speaker 2

But.

00:23:33 Speaker 2

There's a lot of Germans in there watching that movie, too, and they didn't like for us to be in there, you know, where she just.

00:23:41 Speaker 2

I didn't. I didn't know what hard she is saying, but I can know she I knew enough about German language to understand. But she come there and just cursed us out.

00:23:55 Speaker 2

They highly resent you. That's being in that theater there.

00:23:59 Speaker 3

Yeah.

00:24:02 Speaker 1

What were some of the unusual events that you might remember during those times? You think unusual that happened?

00:24:12 Speaker 1

Stays with.

00:24:13

You.

00:24:17 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:24:33 Speaker 1

Those were a little harder times combat men.

00:24:36 Speaker 2

Yeah. Oh.

00:24:39 Speaker 2

I can't think of anything.

00:24:42 Speaker 2

There was one guy. He were several of them.

00:24:46 Speaker 2

They cried a lot.

00:24:50 Speaker 1

That wouldn't be something you.

00:24:51 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:24:51 Speaker 1

Would.

00:24:53 Speaker 1

Have seen you.

00:24:53 Speaker 2

There's a lot of that, but I don't know of any particular thing right now that.

00:25:01 Speaker 1

And again times for you were much harder, but were there pranks that you pulled in service? Many men speak of the pranks or short sheeting beds and that sort of thing. Do you remember any pranks that you pulled during?

00:25:15 Speaker 2

Yeah. One night I went away or went to a little tiny town there in Texas.

00:25:15 Speaker 1

Hey, John.

00:25:22 Speaker 2

And when I come back again, took the springs off of my bed.

00:25:28 Speaker 2

Not yet.

00:25:31 Speaker 2

I had to get all that hooked back up for a.

00:25:32 Speaker 2

Good bed that night.

00:25:35 Speaker 2

But we're supposed to be.

00:25:36 Speaker 2

There working and they're getting.

00:25:39 Speaker 2

Working in the in the barracks, cleaning them up and getting everything in order.

00:25:43 Speaker 2

And all the.

00:25:45 Speaker 2

We slipped off and went away for a.

00:25:46 Speaker 2

Little.

00:25:46 Speaker 2

While mistake.

00:25:50 Speaker 1

Do you have some photographs of those years?

00:25:54 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:25:57 Speaker 2

About the only thing that is these pictures aren't here on the table. We have others throughout. We don't have them out so that we could get to them and we got 3 or 4 big picture on this and that we didn't go for them and pick them.

00:26:09 Speaker 3

All right.

00:26:13 Speaker 1

Up, but you have you have some photographs that from those.

00:26:15 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:26:16 Speaker 1

There's.

00:26:18 Speaker 1

Do you have some group photographs? You know you don't have to bring them out now, but did you have pictures of the men you served with?

00:26:27 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:26:28 Speaker 2

Yeah, not as a group, but individual.

00:26:28 Speaker 3

All right.

00:26:31 Speaker 1

All right. If you saw those photographs and you would maybe remember their names.

00:26:36 Speaker 1

Do you think?

00:26:38 Speaker 2

Not hard. Maybe a few of them. Not many.

00:26:38 Speaker 1

OK, I understand. Yeah.

00:26:44 Speaker 1

What did you think of the officers that you served with, Mr. Fowler?

00:26:49 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:26:51 Speaker 2

The higher rank they had, the nicer the people were. The low rank was the one that they had very little respect for it. They talked to you bad.

00:27:04 Speaker 2

But new tenants and high rating and sergeants and company commanding and stuff like that, they were not.

00:27:13 Speaker 1

OK, what did you think about your fellow soldiers?

00:27:17 Speaker 2

They were very nice, yeah.

00:27:20

Right.

00:27:21 Speaker 1

Most young men like yourself, yes.

00:27:23 Speaker 2

Yes, ma'am.

00:27:26 Speaker 1

Did you keep a personal diary during those years?

00:27:29 Speaker 2

Well, I'm sorry. I sure did.

00:27:30 Speaker 1

OK. And then we'll talk a little about the what you did after the service. Mr. Fowler, do you recall the day your service ended? What did you do?

00:27:39 Speaker 2

Yes, ma'am.

00:27:45 Speaker 2

Well, right before we got got out, they brought a scam to Fort Bragg.

00:27:50

OK.

00:27:52 Speaker 2

And.

00:27:53 Speaker 2

We went down this big room and they fish and anything you want and then they had a meeting. They asked, asked for volunteers to sign up for more.

00:28:06 Speaker 2

And and some few did sign up anywhere. That's where I got released and took on the debt and got on the bus. Just started towards home.

00:28:15

Yeah.

00:28:17 Speaker 1

Take the bus all the way back to north.

00:28:18 Speaker 2

Carolina. Yeah, yeah.

00:28:23 Speaker 2

To show and then I called another bus and came to my room.

00:28:26 Speaker 1

All right.

00:28:27 Speaker 1

On that trip, back before you got out, you backtracked yourself out of Germany. How did you get back to Charlotte?

00:28:39 Speaker 2

Well, we got on a ship in Germany and came back.

00:28:42 Speaker 2

To.

00:28:43 Speaker 2

New York.

00:28:45 Speaker 2

And.

00:28:48 Speaker 2

They move surround by train. I remember going from one place to another emotionally.

00:28:57 Speaker 2

And.

00:29:00 Speaker 2

We run back, back down.

00:29:08 Speaker 2

It was made several stop, but we wound up back down there.

00:29:14 Speaker 2

On Earth, Fort Bragg, we got this shot to make Fort Bragg. That's where I left from.

00:29:18 Speaker 1

All right, all right, all right.

00:29:24 Speaker 1

What did you do in the days and weeks after you?

00:29:27 Speaker 1

Got back home.

00:29:30 Speaker 2

Hello.

00:29:32 Speaker 2

I stayed in my family. Let me go back a long way before I went in service.

00:29:45 Speaker 2

I plant a crop.

00:29:48 Speaker 2

And I've examined the 27th of April, 1944.

00:29:54 Speaker 1

I.

00:29:55 Speaker 2

Went back home, they said. You'll you'll be calling been 30 to 90 days. Well.

00:30:02 Speaker 2

I plan to crop and laid it behind my sisters and the mother horse that my dad had.

00:30:10 Speaker 2

He had a bad severe case of diabetes and he was hardly able to do, but he did the best he could. But anyway I I stayed around the house everything for quite a while and.

00:30:25 Speaker 2

Then I went out and got me a.

00:30:26 Speaker 2

Job.

00:30:27 Speaker 2

And worked for it for a while.

00:30:30 Speaker 3

And.

00:30:31 Speaker 2

Then I went back to school and.

00:30:33

Alright.

00:30:37 Speaker 2

I raised on the phone. I went back to school and got paid to go to school.

00:30:41 Speaker 2

To be.

00:30:42 Speaker 2

A training out closer.

00:30:45 Speaker 1

OK, well, that was one of.

00:30:47 Speaker 1

My questions, did you go to?

00:30:48 Speaker 1

Work at the school and you, buddy.

00:30:50 Speaker 1

Really. Did both.

00:30:51 Speaker 1

Did you take advantage of the GI?

00:30:53 Speaker 3

Bill, I did alright, OK?

00:30:54

Yeah.

00:30:58 Speaker 1

Did you make any close friendships while you were in the service?

00:31:03 Speaker 2

Yes it is.

00:31:06 Speaker 2

One of them is with.

00:31:08 Speaker 2

The person from your sale.

00:31:11 Speaker 2

And we were good friends, we.

00:31:12 Speaker 2

Went around together a lot after we got back home.

00:31:15 Speaker 3

All right.

00:31:16 Speaker 2

And made that I made in addition to the girl he married her and nutritious first cousin, you know, went on, started going flotation. And then when when she was just a little small girl I thought.

00:31:35 Speaker 2

But when I came back.

00:31:41 Speaker 2

Are going but.

00:31:43 Speaker 1

She grown up.

00:31:45

Right.

00:31:49 Speaker 1

Talking about your friendships with your fellow soldiers, so you continued at least one of those relationships after you got home. Did you continue other relationships?

00:32:01 Speaker 1

Why didn't the man or?

00:32:02 Speaker 1

Speak with them after those years in service.

00:32:05 Speaker 2

No, they didn't even have them.

00:32:09 Speaker 2

Living within this area that I knew.

00:32:16 Speaker 2

They shifted around so much.

00:32:20 Speaker 2

It was hard to get to know people very well.

00:32:26 Speaker 1

Did you join a veterans organization?

00:32:30 Speaker 2

I joined American Legion.

00:32:31 Speaker 1

All right. Well, did you join pretty soon after you got back and stay active all these years?

00:32:41 Speaker 2

Wow.

00:32:46 Speaker 2

Our guys have a good while then I've joined. I've been pretty active in there since.

00:32:51 Speaker 1

All right, Deke, do you have a large organization here in this area?

00:32:58 Speaker 2

We do right now, yeah.

00:33:03 Speaker 2

We got a.

00:33:06 Speaker 2

Probably over 100 numbers.

00:33:10 Speaker 2

But we get about 25, maybe 30 the most in the regular meeting.

00:33:14 Speaker 1

All right. And how often do you?

00:33:16 Speaker 3

Meet.

00:33:17 Speaker 2

First Monday of each month.

00:33:18 Speaker 1

All right.

00:33:21 Speaker 1

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

00:33:31 Speaker 2

But I worked in a textile for nine years and then I wouldn't exterminate and been saving it for 35.

00:33:37 Speaker 2

Years.

00:33:37 Speaker 1

All right, textiles. And we know here in this area with springs industries. All right? Was that located down in South Carolina? All right. And then you went on with, I think, a major company in pest control, Terminix, yes, and retired with them.

00:33:43 Speaker 2

Well.

00:33:52 Speaker 2

Germanic.

00:33:55 Speaker 2

Them I would wish three different companies total about 35 years, 24 and retired from Terminix.

00:33:56 Speaker 3

Yes, right.

00:34:00 Speaker 1

All.

00:34:00 Speaker 1

Right.

00:34:03 Speaker 1

OK.

00:34:05 Speaker 1

Did your military experience influence your thinking about war?

00:34:17 Speaker 2

Yeah, I think it did, yeah.

00:34:19 Speaker 1

How? How so?

00:34:21 Speaker 2

Well, I think World War 2 was called for them, but I think some of them are not called for you.

00:34:28 Speaker 2

Know.

00:34:31 Speaker 2

I think that I think we're War 2 was necessary, but I have a question.

00:34:36 Speaker 2

About.

00:34:37 Speaker 2

Some of the.

00:34:37 Speaker 2

Rest.

00:34:38 Speaker 1

All right.

00:34:40 Speaker 1

Thinking about the.

00:34:41 Speaker 1

Military in general.

00:34:45 Speaker 2

Well, I think a lot of them, they couldn't find work.

00:34:56 Speaker 2

John, to get you know, to have a job to do a job and.

00:35:11 Speaker 2

It seemed like so many other young young.

00:35:16 Speaker 2

And there, yeah, I mean.

00:35:19 Speaker 2

Thinking of life, they will realize they don't realize their dangerous situation of being in search and combat special.

00:35:34 Speaker 1

You've stated you're in a veteran's organization and what kind of activities does your post do?

00:35:42 Speaker 2

Well, right now they're trying to make they do have bingo every two years to wait every Tuesday night to make money to support the legion, and they give to different churches organizations which just give.

00:35:59 Speaker 2

To one of our members, son.

00:36:01 Speaker 2

\$1000 he was finished school and going to college and the all time make a donation to help people in need different ways.

00:36:11 Speaker 3

All right.

00:36:13

And.

00:36:16 Speaker 1

Do you all have American flags that you supply?

00:36:27 Speaker 2

I'm not sure they had had one first they they probably, you know, they probably do. Do they they.

00:36:35 Speaker 1

All right.

00:36:40 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, we putting around the cemetery and the flag and you'll have to wait, you know.

00:36:43 Speaker 1

Yes. Yeah. OK.

00:36:47 Speaker 1

Do you attend reunions of your group from that time as in the war? OK, how did your service and the experiences there affect your life?

00:37:05 Speaker 2

It left a bad mark.

00:37:07 Speaker 3

How so?

00:37:09 Speaker 2

You never couldn't get it out of your out of your mind that different things that happen so severely.

00:37:18 Speaker 2

I have never been able to get.

00:37:19 Speaker 1

Yeah, stays with you, yes.

00:37:19 Speaker 2

Rid of it.

00:37:24 Speaker 1

Is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't covered in this interview?

00:37:29 Speaker 1

Just about.

00:37:40 Speaker 2

I'm sorry, but I can't think of anything particularly right now.

00:37:45 Speaker 1

Well, I really appreciate your giving me this time to talk with you and for you to share a little bit that your war experiences. I'm going to turn the recording off now. Thank you.

00:37:56 Speaker 2

Thank you very much.