

## **George E. French Interview**

Headquarters Company, 318th Inf Reg

*(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by James K. Rambin)*

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

00:00:04 Speaker 1

Good morning, everybody.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

Today is Tuesday, June 4th, 2013.

00:00:11 Speaker 1

We're at the Chenault Aviation and Military Museum in Monroe, LA.

00:00:17 Speaker 1

Today we're talking with veteran Mr. George E French junior. Mr. French was born may the 10th, 1925.

00:00:29 Speaker 1

In Jonesboro, AR.

00:00:32 Speaker 1

Mr. French served in the US Army.

00:00:34 Speaker 1

He was at six. I'm sorry. At five. Tech 5, he served during World War 2 between the year October 1943.

00:00:48 Speaker 1

Through February 1946.

00:00:52

To to.

00:00:53 Speaker 1

Bob Potts is handling our audio and video and also with us today is Paul Moore. And my name is James Rambin. Mr. French, we appreciate you coming in today.

00:01:08 Speaker 1

And we invite you to start telling us about when you went into the army.

00:01:12 Speaker 1

Were you doing before you went in and start from there please? Well.

00:01:18 Speaker 2

Ours and.

00:01:21 Speaker 2

When I.

00:01:23 Speaker 2

I started cat in on the golf course when I was 10 years old.

00:01:28 Speaker 2

And then I got up to 15.

00:01:32 Speaker 2

I had two brothers and a 5 and 10 cent store business.

00:01:37 Speaker 2

And so naturally, I thought I had to.

00:01:40 Speaker 2

I got me a.

00:01:41 Speaker 2

Paid me \$5 a week and.

00:01:46 Speaker 2

All I had to do was work or 10:11 every night and.

00:01:52 Speaker 2

Saturdays and.

00:01:55 Speaker 2

I know it didn't.

00:01:56 Speaker 2

Sunday morning we work Sunday afternoon.

00:01:59 Speaker 2

And so.

00:02:03 Speaker 2

But I kept waiting on one.

00:02:06 Speaker 2

You know the not 1A but the call.

00:02:12 Speaker 2

And.

00:02:15 Speaker 2

I wasn't it, you know.

00:02:17 Speaker 2

Was.

00:02:18 Speaker 2

I was not ready to go tell them hell, I'm ready to go.

00:02:23 Speaker 2

And my dad walked in that morning and because I graduated high school one day and got my notice the next day that I was a.

00:02:32 Speaker 2

And that was a round first, you know, them days we went a little bit longer and we go now I want to thank.

00:02:40 Speaker 2

Was probably around the 1st of June that we graduate, and so my dad walked in there that morning, he said.

00:02:49 Speaker 2

Son, you're happy now.

00:02:52 Speaker 2

And hand me paper.

00:02:55 Speaker 2

So it went along well.

00:02:59 Speaker 2

I saw Moy Little Rock.

00:03:04 Speaker 2

And I guess that.

00:03:07 Speaker 2

How I got my start? Oh oh, but working in that dime store. I catted there for.

00:03:17

A.

00:03:17 Speaker 2

Till I was about 15.

00:03:21 Speaker 2

And.

00:03:23 Speaker 2

Time's pretty.

00:03:24 Speaker 2

I made bad as much money as my dad did.

00:03:27 Speaker 2

Not more. Most of the time.

00:03:30 Speaker 2

And.

00:03:33 Speaker 2

We we didn't have any problems and then when I got that good job up there.

00:03:41 Speaker 2

Well, I kept it until they called me.

00:03:45 Speaker 2

And.

00:03:48 Speaker 1

Where did you go for your army training?

00:03:52 Speaker 2

You know.

00:03:59

I.

00:04:02 Speaker 2

I was in El Paso, TX for a while.

00:04:08 Speaker 2

I was in.

00:04:15 Speaker 2

North Carolina.

00:04:18 Speaker 2

For some reason the other.

00:04:22 Speaker 2

Oh, I took most of my basic in San Diego.

00:04:28 Speaker 2

And any aircraft outfit.

00:04:32 Speaker 2

And all of a sudden.

00:04:36 Speaker 2

They said they wanted that that bunch to.

00:04:41 Speaker 2

They sent them.

00:04:44 Speaker 2

Almost everybody in the outfit I was in, they sent most of them to.

00:04:49

Play.

00:04:51 Speaker 2

And they sent me in about 10 or 12.

00:04:56 Speaker 2

To North Carolina to a damn Searchlight school.

00:05:03 Speaker 2

Where you search lights you.

00:05:05 Speaker 2

And we all cussing and raising hell, \*\*\*\*\* I'm, you know.

00:05:11 Speaker 2

Why don't we get why don't we go with the boys?

00:05:14 Speaker 2

Do you teaching us about a Searchlight?

00:05:18 Speaker 2

But So what?

00:05:19 Speaker 2

So we went out there and we stayed there about two months, I guess.

00:05:24 Speaker 2

And and then they called US1 morning and they sent us to El Paso, TX.

00:05:33 Speaker 2

And when we got there, the outfit that was going.

00:05:40 Speaker 2

Was out on maneuvers.

00:05:42 Speaker 2

And and.

00:05:45 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:05:47 Speaker 2

Put there's only one that left me with.

00:05:54 Speaker 2

A mess, Sergeant.

00:05:57 Speaker 2

And.

00:05:59 Speaker 2

Some other kind of Sergeant I can't even remember what. But anyhow, for about a week.

00:06:07 Speaker 2

Right. We just stayed and crossed the border there, drinking that, you know.

00:06:15 Speaker 2

Whatever we could, you know.

00:06:18 Speaker 1

Absolutely.

00:06:18 Speaker 2

And at 18 and and.

00:06:24 Speaker 2

But anyhow.

00:06:27 Speaker 2

Oh, that other one. That was there was a wire Sergeant communication Sergeant.

00:06:35 Speaker 2

And through the day, why he taught me how to make wire splices and do this and do that. And I don't know what all.

00:06:44 Speaker 2

And then they sent us to.

00:06:53 Speaker 2

What's at 10 at that cross at the corner of Texas and Louisiana?

00:07:00 Speaker 1

Texarkana.

00:07:03 Speaker 2

All right, right across the street there across the line. And Texas is a little town that had an Army base.

00:07:12 Speaker 2

And they sent us up there.

00:07:16 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:07:17 Speaker 2

About 4-5 of.

00:07:21 Speaker 2

And.

00:07:24 Speaker 2

What is there?

00:07:26 Speaker 2

4-5 nights and I came in yet. Then we didn't have any passes.

00:07:30 Speaker 2

There. So stayed Uptown pretty good, you know, talking.

00:07:36 Speaker 2

And.

00:07:39 Speaker 2

I got in about 3:00 in the morning and everything was gone out of my bags.

00:07:46 Speaker 2

All of that and.

00:07:49 Speaker 2

I mean, nothing was there.

00:07:52 Speaker 2

And I said, well, what if he were about that time somebody showed up, says grab your stuff, dump it said they ain't getting on the train now. Well, I got.

00:08:04 Speaker 2

He just he had one end of double bag. You know, I dumped my Duff.

00:08:09 Speaker 2

Unbound. My stuff in it, we headed for the train and look off the train.

00:08:16 Speaker 2

So I didn't get put out of the army for that and.

00:08:23 Speaker 2

We went to New Jersey.

00:08:29 Speaker 2

And stayed there about 3 days.

00:08:35 Speaker 2

And.

00:08:37 Speaker 2

Got on a ship?



00:08:41 Speaker 2

And went to.

00:08:45 Speaker 2

Lahar. No, we went.

00:08:48 Speaker 2

We went to some the town in England.

00:08:54 Speaker 2

And it took us off it. The boat put us on train there and took us across England.

00:09:02 Speaker 2

Push on the boat on the other side of England there and took us over to the hog.

00:09:10 Speaker 2

And then they spread us out.

00:09:14 Speaker 2

And.

00:09:16 Speaker 2

I sent part of us up to.

00:09:18 Speaker 2

I don't know where the other boys. Yeah. Mitts. France.

00:09:27 Speaker 2

From Mets by they they.

00:09:33 Speaker 2

They sent us up there to.

00:09:37 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:09:44 Speaker 1

What we all doing up there?

00:09:47 Speaker 2

Trying to get to the front.

00:09:51 Speaker 2

We were going up as replacements.

00:09:54 Speaker 2

And.

00:10:01 Speaker 2

We got up into.

00:10:04 Speaker 2

Georgia's uh.

00:10:08 Speaker 2

The regimental headquarters company where they're going to separate all of us.

00:10:13 Speaker 2

Tell us what outfit we'd be in.

00:10:16 Speaker 2

And it was about 30 of us, I guess on that vehicle.

00:10:23 Speaker 2

And they called my name told me to get off and.

00:10:28 Speaker 2

I got all of them as well. What's this for?

00:10:31 Speaker 2

Well.

00:10:33 Speaker 2

You've got a.

00:10:36 Speaker 2

We, we, our our mailman was.

00:10:41 Speaker 2

A wireman yesterday or day before and said he got so scared.

00:10:48 Speaker 2

That he can't talk.

00:10:50 Speaker 2

And a bombing daily. You know, that was the bullsh were the start of it and all that. And so anyhow, he said that we need a wireman because he was and you've got a spec number.

00:11:05 Speaker 1

You mentioned the name.

00:11:07 Speaker 1

Who are you talking about when you said George?

00:11:15 Speaker 2

Well.

00:11:16 Speaker 2

George Patton. Could he come a little later?

00:11:21 Speaker 2

Good, but anyhow.

00:11:26 Speaker 2

When we.

00:11:31 Speaker 2

As I forgot worldwide. Yeah, they called me.

00:11:32 Speaker 1

They made your wireman.

00:11:36 Speaker 2

He said this boy that had been the wireman Dr. Scared he couldn't talk.

00:11:44 Speaker 2

And his hair turned white overnight.

00:11:46 Speaker 1

What does a wireman do?

00:11:49 Speaker 2

We laid.

00:11:50 Speaker 2

Telephone lines where the boys are coming.

00:11:56 Speaker 2

And I mean that I put and we had a man. There's a little bit.

00:12:04 Speaker 2

Overly, of course. We listen to some of this conversation.

00:12:09 Speaker 2

You know, we be trying to find out where those wires are shot into and all that kind of stuff and put them back together so.

00:12:19 Speaker 2

And he just, like, talk about what happened.

00:12:25 Speaker 2

Last night.

00:12:27 Speaker 2

And he liked to have telephone when he got there.

00:12:31 Speaker 2

So we they call me down there when they said and this guy had his hair turned and he could, but they didn't send him home.

00:12:44 Speaker 2

They made a male clerk out of it.

00:12:47 Speaker 2

That needed a wirement, and that where I'd been training.

00:12:53 Speaker 2

Just listening, you know, just the land, nothing to do.

00:12:57 Speaker 2

But they put it on my card and I had the spec number that I could.

00:13:03 Speaker 2

Handle that job.

00:13:06 Speaker 2

Well, the first job that gave me.

00:13:10 Speaker 2

Was down on sour river.

00:13:13 Speaker 2

And that was the widest spot in the Siegfried Line. I'm sure you know that part of it.

00:13:21 Speaker 2

And we stayed there two or three days.

00:13:26 Speaker 2

And couldn't get out much.

00:13:29 Speaker 2

And.

00:13:33 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:13:36 Speaker 2

After finally they decided we're going to jump.

00:13:43 Speaker 2

So they they call my crew.

00:13:46

And.

00:13:47 Speaker 2

Along the line across the river. So.

00:13:51 Speaker 2

You know that we are on this side now on that side and there seek freedom right behind them.

00:13:58 Speaker 2

Far from here, the other side street.

00:14:02 Speaker 2

But anyhow, we took that.

00:14:05 Speaker 2

We we found a snowboat, put it together and use some of that little bitty wire instead of the big.

00:14:13 Speaker 2

Big wire that we laid most of that.

00:14:16 Speaker 1

When when you said jump, what do you mean by jump?

00:14:19 Speaker 2

They said y'all gonna jump, jump off, take off.

00:14:23 Speaker 2

You know, we call it jump.

00:14:25 Speaker 2

We're jumping this morning. You know, that means we're we're getting out of here, boy.

00:14:31 Speaker 2

Coming on, we're going.

00:14:33 Speaker 2

So.

00:14:36 Speaker 2

Well, we got the we got the line about halfway across the river and that time of year it was up a little bit and both we had to go back and start over.

00:14:50 Speaker 2

And got another man to stand in the middle.

00:14:52 Speaker 2

The boat.

00:14:54 Speaker 2

With the two of us and hold the wire up so it wouldn't get down. We'll get outside to tree on the other side and.

00:15:05 Speaker 2

Kind of got down low and.

00:15:09 Speaker 2

And I'm at.

00:15:12 Speaker 2

Now later here the whole boys come.

00:15:16 Speaker 2

Come across the river.

00:15:19 Speaker 2

I was going up.

00:15:22 Speaker 2

We spent the day there trying to get up here and.

00:15:29 Speaker 2

Got up there pretty dark that night.

00:15:33 Speaker 2

Why would moving around a little bit and the major wanted to line up the top, the hill? And I said, well, major the most.

00:15:44 Speaker 2

Boxes up there, sailor. What they call.

00:15:49 Speaker 2

The Germans.

00:15:52 Speaker 2

Juries, the the concrete boxes, pill boxes, appeal boxes, and I said, can't you got to have a phone?

00:16:02 Speaker 2

Got when I started up here and we took a little bitty wire had a mile.

00:16:08 Speaker 2

On the real about that riding about that big around.

00:16:13 Speaker 2

And.

00:16:15 Speaker 2

Now you want me tell this like it happened.

00:16:21 Speaker 2

When I got almost atop that hill.

00:16:26 Speaker 2

Somebody hollered at me and said get off my foot, you \*\*\* \*\* \* \*\*\*\*\*.

00:16:29 Speaker 2

Half shot off already.

00:16:33 Speaker 2

Rather, read not well. You'd remember it too, but.

00:16:38 Speaker 2

I apologize, naturally.

00:16:40 Speaker 2

Went on about my business when I got discharged.

00:16:46 Speaker 2

John, going back to John Barker going down the street and a guy named Ross Presley.

00:16:52 Speaker 2

Met him in his crib.

00:16:56 Speaker 2

And I said, what happened to you, Ross? He.

00:16:57 Speaker 2

All got my damn foot shut off, I said where he said I'm sorry, river, I said.

00:17:04 Speaker 2

Step on it that.

00:17:05 Speaker 2

Say show did I give?

00:17:07 Speaker 2

I give him a good talking to.

00:17:11 Speaker 2

I graduated high school with him.

00:17:14 Speaker 2

That's a true story outlook. I got goosebumps.

00:17:21 Speaker 1

Story.

00:17:22 Speaker 2

And true, true, true.

00:17:26 Speaker 2



And about a week later, first met her I got from home.

00:17:33 Speaker 2

While I know the boy.

00:17:35 Speaker 2

That I graduated.

00:17:37 Speaker 2

He had a twin brother and Mama wrote me a letter.

00:17:41 Speaker 2

First one I got and he had been killed.

00:17:45 Speaker 2

In that same.

00:17:47 Speaker 2

Deal that we were in there, but we finally got up the hill.

00:17:53 Speaker 2

Cut on the cross.

00:17:57 Speaker 2

And.

00:18:01 Speaker 2

They came all the way across.

00:18:05 Speaker 2

Through the widest part of the Siegfried.

00:18:10 Speaker 2

Went down into.

00:18:13 Speaker 2

Kaiser Slaughter and went into.

00:18:18 Speaker 2

I had the first telephone line in Nuremberg, Germany. I put the first one in there.

00:18:24

Replay.

00:18:26 Speaker 2

And.

00:18:28 Speaker 2

We had.

00:18:33 Speaker 2

We went to Munich.

00:18:37 Speaker 2

Went up to Campton.

00:18:42 Speaker 2

Then we cross the Elb River.

00:18:45 Speaker 2

And major wonder line across there, that's when I got up there in the middle of the town.

00:18:52 Speaker 2

It.

00:18:53 Speaker 2

That guy, says Bogan.

00:18:56 Speaker 2

And I knew it wasn't supposed to be.

00:18:58 Speaker 2

Of that going on that time.

00:19:01 Speaker 2

So we jumped in an old barn there and the barn was full of hay.

00:19:06 Speaker 2

They didn't bail it over there, you know, they just piled it up.

00:19:11 Speaker 2

And so main that old ball we.

00:19:14 Speaker 2

We scooted his follow up in that Bale of haze. We could drop the line out.

00:19:21 Speaker 2

It was rolling off out in the middle of the street and they look for us all night, but they they they came in that barn.

00:19:30 Speaker 2

But they didn't bar it 20 feet in it to see where it's in that we buried 10 feet.

00:19:35 Speaker 1

The Germans came in the barn looking for.

00:19:38 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, and you all were up and up and, well, the the barn. The barn was probably.

00:19:41

Hi.

00:19:46 Speaker 2

30 by 40 big you know, and that's all it did because I did bail it over there. And those days they just piled hay in there.

00:19:59 Speaker 2

You could keep.

00:20:00 Speaker 2

You know, you could go as far as as long as you can still breathe while you.

00:20:05 Speaker 1

How many of you were in there?

00:20:07 Speaker 2

Two way it take one man and carry the real.

00:20:13 Speaker 2

And Irrelanate pull it off.

00:20:16 Speaker 2

So I got another story about that.

00:20:20 Speaker 2

So.

00:20:22

Thank you.

00:20:23 Speaker 2

We stayed there that night. The next day while our boys come across the river and the rest of them got out.

00:20:30 Speaker 2

Then we went down to.

00:20:34 Speaker 2

I guess that's when we went in to Austria.

00:20:42 Speaker 2

Then we went up into Czechoslovakia.

00:20:47 Speaker 2

And.

00:20:49 Speaker 2

Stayed up there.

00:20:52 Speaker 2

Three or four days and they said didn't necessarily went back to Austria.

00:20:58 Speaker 2

And.

00:21:04

OK.

00:21:07 Speaker 2

Who went into Brown Austria.

00:21:11 Speaker 2

Well.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

The war ended.

00:21:18 Speaker 2

You know, Adolf was born and raised in Brown, Austria.

00:21:24 Speaker 2

So we found his house and Natasha, Major, when they signed our, Mr. Sarah signed a thing. The major wanted to be.

00:21:35 Speaker 2

In eight.

00:21:39 Speaker 2

French put me a line in there.

00:21:43 Speaker 2

You know well, it's raining a little bit that day.

00:21:48 Speaker 2

And we went back. We didn't. Didn't have the little wire at that time, so had to use the.

00:21:55 Speaker 2

Regular size. I just had 222 lines inside.

00:22:02 Speaker 2

Anyhow, I was pulling it.

00:22:03 Speaker 2

Back in the Jeep and the guy was running out the window.

00:22:08 Speaker 2

Wire run out on the Jeep on the reel.

00:22:12 Speaker 2

You had to squeeze it so it break between you and the Jeep instead of half mile back there.

00:22:20 Speaker 2

Know. So when I jumped down on it.

00:22:25 Speaker 2

A woman had just hollered at us about 10 minutes before.

00:22:31 Speaker 2

And asked me if.

00:22:32 Speaker 2

If I wanted valency and flashes snobs.

00:22:38 Speaker 2

Layer and I'm sure y'all know what Snoop says. And boy, that was just like, did we wanna?

00:22:45 Speaker 2

Heaven is open the gates and she couldn't get her front door open to give it to me.

00:22:53 Speaker 2

She took a string, tied it around the neck of that Bob, and let it down.

00:23:00 Speaker 2

Me looking up into the rain, you know, let it down that to me, I get it.

00:23:08 Speaker 2

And put in the raincoat pocket.

00:23:13 Speaker 2

Then the Jeep gets on over there. They had.

00:23:17 Speaker 2

Buildings.

00:23:18 Speaker 2

Across.

00:23:20 Speaker 2

The street with you know.

00:23:24 Speaker 2

That you could walk in and they were really.

00:23:28 Speaker 2

Nice things.

00:23:30 Speaker 2

The streets weren't very wide in here, and they didn't have to go far, so, but there's lots of streets, but you had to drive through them.

00:23:42 Speaker 2

Anyhow, to get down that street?

00:23:44 Speaker 2

So when the Jeep ran out of wire, guess where he was.

00:23:51 Speaker 2

Under the.

00:23:53 Speaker 2

Well, I chomped down on the wire, so it break between me and him.

00:23:59 Speaker 2

And knocked it vodka out on the street and all that rain was about 6 inches deep.

00:24:08 Speaker 2

There I am down there with my helmet trying to grab some of that water, you know.

00:24:16 Speaker 2

I'll never forget it.

00:24:18 Speaker 2

But anyhow, we didn't get anything out of it.

00:24:21 Speaker 2

But anyhow, we got on through there and about two blocks later we put the line in the house that he was born in and all that kind of stuff. And I did something in it that I won't tell you.

00:24:32 Speaker 1

But so you put the line in Hitler's house.

00:24:33 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:24:36 Speaker 2

I did.

00:24:38 Speaker 2

And Anna telephone.

00:24:42 Speaker 2

And I major in.

00:24:45 Speaker 2

I.

00:24:46 Speaker 2

Anybody else is with him? Captain, we had a captain and you know it's funny.

00:24:51 Speaker 2

I've tried so many time memories and he's right about Jackson a little bit. When that town up there and I.

00:25:00 Speaker 2

I just.

00:25:01 Speaker 2

Can't it just won't come to. This won't come to me and.

00:25:09 Speaker 2

A man named Albre.

00:25:13 Speaker 2

Was from.

00:25:16 Speaker 2

When you go going to Winnsboro and you go down 15 and hit the thing and turn right, what's that first look community there on the right.

00:25:27 Speaker 2

Backup backup.

00:25:27 Speaker 1

Alto.

00:25:29 Speaker 2

You know, right after you turn, when you hit, when you go 15 and you hit the road that.

00:25:37 Speaker 2

Comes out of Ravel and goes to Winnsboro. When you come up, but you're coming on 15 now. You're not coming from here. And when you get there, you turn right and go down there about a mile or two.

00:25:50 Speaker 2

Little community there.

00:25:53 Speaker 1

Well, that's where he was.

00:25:54 Speaker 2

From that's where my. That's where my Lieutenant was.

00:25:58 Speaker 2



My my wire chief. I guess you call him wire chief.

00:26:03 Speaker 2

And I I was in Dale.

00:26:07 Speaker 2

I'd come to Bell line, put me in a dime store.

00:26:11 Speaker 2

Sam Walton wanted me to come work for.

00:26:13 Speaker 2

I told him no. I just stay where I was.

00:26:18 Speaker 2

Made a mistake.

00:26:20 Speaker 2

So.

00:26:23

Anyhow.

00:26:24 Speaker 2

When he.

00:26:26 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:26:32 Speaker 2

I was at that baseball game one night watching Bill I play.

00:26:38 Speaker 2

I swear when I won that little.

00:26:46 Speaker 2

Anyhow, they were playing baseball that night and they hollered, palm third base.

00:26:54 Speaker 2

My God, they was as my Lieutenant and he had.

00:26:59 Speaker 2

Didn't.

00:27:00 Speaker 2

He didn't like whiskey.

00:27:03 Speaker 2

And he'd bring. He'd bring me every time, you know, they got the rations.

00:27:09 Speaker 2

Didn't get them, he.

00:27:12 Speaker 2

The brass got to and so he he'd bring us his, his.

00:27:20 Speaker 1

Whiskey.

00:27:21 Speaker 2

Ration my little.

00:27:22 Speaker 2

I had three men and me and we had two jeeps and a big truck.

00:27:23

Grill.

00:27:33 Speaker 2

And every time we come to animal castles over there, I had wine Cellars.

00:27:39 Speaker 2

Why we always had 10 or 12 or 15 five gallon cans of gasoline. We wash them out real good, you know.

00:27:49 Speaker 2

Soap. Water.

00:27:53 Speaker 2

Boy and that wine was good, man. He had been there for five years. You know, the more wood barrels.

00:27:59 Speaker 2

Oh man, you thought.

00:28:01 Speaker 2

An old.

00:28:03 Speaker 2

He'd get after me all the time, he'd say.

00:28:05 Speaker 2

Which the hell y'all are sober up over here, so.

00:28:10 Speaker 2

Boy, he was oh man.

00:28:13 Speaker 2

But when they're on the third base, when Bob, me and him had a ball. Oh Lord.

00:28:19 Speaker 1

You mentioned that you went about your experience in the barn hidden in the hay.

00:28:25 Speaker 1

You said you were going to tell us another story, something like that later.

00:28:30 Speaker 1

Do you remember what you were going to tell us?

00:28:34 Speaker 2

Well, we're head.

00:28:37 Speaker 1

Thought maybe there may have been another situation similar.

00:28:41 Speaker 1

The barn where y'all hit you and your man hitting the hay. You said there's something else. You.

00:28:45 Speaker 1

Going to tell us.

00:28:46 Speaker 1

Where?

00:28:49 Speaker 2

The night I got the bomb star.

00:28:52 Speaker 1

Yes, tell us about that.

00:28:54 Speaker 2

We are the major wanted a line.

00:28:59 Speaker 2

As you know, as I said before, so we told him we was in the.

00:29:08 Speaker 2

Widest part of the Siegfried and they had a hill on us too.

00:29:12 Speaker 2

Looking straight down at us, he said.

00:29:15 Speaker 2

Want to line up?

00:29:18 Speaker 2

Aye, here we go.

00:29:21 Speaker 2

Well.

00:29:23 Speaker 2

I guess it was.

00:29:26 Speaker 2

Mama.

00:29:28 Speaker 2

And we got up on that hill pretty good before.

00:29:33 Speaker 2

Let us get that far, you know. So they knew we there.

00:29:40 Speaker 2

And.

00:29:42 Speaker 2

They started at us.

00:29:43 Speaker 2

We dropped everything and started running it.

00:29:49 Speaker 2

I don't know which one of us hit it first. Me and hit the other boy.

00:29:53 Speaker 2

But we built a bar by fence down, and then you scratched from there.

00:29:59 Speaker 2

But we hit it hard enough to break it because we had crawled under it when we went up, so we knew.

00:30:07 Speaker 2

But we finally got back to.

00:30:12 Speaker 2

And you know.

00:30:13 Speaker 2

And and they were pumping those 10 fives at us and.

00:30:21 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:30:23 Speaker 2

They uh.

00:30:26 Speaker 2

We got to a pill box.

00:30:30 Speaker 2

I think it was. See come over in there and the Captain Oasis would in the hell are you boys doing out here?

00:30:39 Speaker 2

In this and I said well.

00:30:41 Speaker 2

Major. So and so wound.

00:30:44 Speaker 2

Line in it and.

00:30:45 Speaker 2

Says, well, I don't really want to get it.

00:30:48 Speaker 2

We've tried. We've run through.

00:30:51 Speaker 2

Everything they've got up there.

00:30:54 Speaker 2

Said. You mean you've been up on that hill?

00:30:56 Speaker 2

Said well.

00:30:58 Speaker 2

About halfway up your cousin and you know, not a piece of that wire was broken and all the shell and they did have it. And he said, well, I tell you what.

00:31:10 Speaker 2

Said you don't have to tell the major, but says you don't wear in that corner.

00:31:16 Speaker 2

One of my boys, let's have a blanket.

00:31:20 Speaker 2

And we spent the night there, me and that boy.

00:31:25 Speaker 2

And about about an hour later.

00:31:29 Speaker 2

After we kind of settle down there a little bit, we heard.

00:31:35 Speaker 2

Couple of shots they had. I don't know if you're familiar the pill box or not, but they have a little hole and you, you go down the side of that box probably 20 feet deep down into the ground.

00:31:49 Speaker 2

And then they got a little hole about four feet, 3 feet 4 feet square.

00:31:56 Speaker 2

You can go into the field bar.

00:31:59 Speaker 2

And they had a guard sitting in here, another 15 year old boy from German got drunk up on the hill.

00:32:08 Speaker 2

That's where he was.

00:32:09 Speaker 2

He was trying to get in and when they hollered stop to him, he didn't stop.

00:32:14 Speaker 2

Bap, bap you know, he stopped in so.

00:32:20 Speaker 2

We jumped up and.

00:32:23 Speaker 2

All got out of there. We were.

00:32:26 Speaker 1

So.

00:32:27 Speaker 1

That's where you earned a Bronze star.

00:32:29 Speaker 2

That's where they thought we had exceeded what we should have done.

00:32:36 Speaker 2

So.

00:32:36 Speaker 1

Who tell us about when?

00:32:38 Speaker 1

Earned a Purple Heart.

00:32:43 Speaker 1

An injury or one.

00:32:44 Speaker 2

I'm really not.

00:32:47 Speaker 2

Too proud of it, yet it happened.

00:32:52 Speaker 2

We were in kazar sludge in Germany.

00:32:58 Speaker 2

And there was one of the biggest wineries in the country.

00:33:04

In that town.

00:33:06 Speaker 2

So I had two or three of my men and.

00:33:12 Speaker 2

We gonna go down there and get a bunch of that wine.

00:33:18 Speaker 2

And honey sollarson.

00:33:22 Speaker 2

Tired pumping artillery, Addison.

00:33:27 Speaker 2

When that started, you always laid down on the ground and got behind something, whatever it was.

00:33:34 Speaker 2

And somehow or other?

00:33:38 Speaker 2

When I laid down, I had my disarm.

00:33:41 Speaker 2

I can't raise it. Show you like it was.

00:33:43 Speaker 2

It's a metal from here to here, and that nothing from that this.

00:33:51 Speaker 2

Going fishing and taking a shower and falling on commode and it broke it and crushed it. And they had to replace about 10 years ago.

00:34:02 Speaker 2

One drinking Berry either.



00:34:05 Speaker 2

Everybody says where you fool the beer, I said.

00:34:07 Speaker 2

Ain't a beer.

00:34:09 Speaker 2

So.

00:34:14 Speaker 2

I don't know, I really.

00:34:17 Speaker 2

I had a.

00:34:20 Speaker 2

There was a bunch of boulders, I mean, big boulders.

00:34:27 Speaker 2

Out in front of us. And I guess when I went down, I had my hand and arm up over those things and I'm down behind them.

00:34:38 Speaker 2

And a piece of shrapnel went right across there and took all them right down to the bone.

00:34:46 Speaker 2

This right right across them.

00:34:49 Speaker 2

And they said it's a miracle.

00:34:51 Speaker 2

That I didn't lose finger and but anyhow.

00:34:59 Speaker 2

Their name's Scott. Good grew back.

00:35:04 Speaker 2

Now they stay pretty white all my life, you know, not just 'cause. I'm 88. But what? They stayed pretty wide.

00:35:12 Speaker 2

I knew.

00:35:14 Speaker 2

I knew.

00:35:15 Speaker 2

Anyhow, naturally they make all them records and all that kind of stuff.

00:35:21 Speaker 2

But I didn't.

00:35:24 Speaker 2

I wasn't too proud of it.

00:35:29 Speaker 1

While you in Europe there did you come across anybody that would be well known?

00:35:37 Speaker 1

Any Major General?

00:35:40 Speaker 2

Down at George.

00:35:42 Speaker 1

Tell us about.

00:35:43 Speaker 1

How did that come about?

00:35:44 Speaker 2

Well, I stand in.

00:35:45 Speaker 2

Did I tell you about that? Is swapping my yeah, one for?

00:35:53 Speaker 2

Carbine there was a our stand on side. The road and the snow was about 8 inches deep 10.

00:36:04 Speaker 2

And a man laying out their boots, this barely showing.

00:36:10 Speaker 2

You know, up through the snow and.

00:36:13 Speaker 2

A rifle stuck up.

00:36:16 Speaker 2

And around with a helmet on it. And I was talking to this old boy and I said, well, that's shame it, I said.

00:36:26 Speaker 2

Ain't got a car being he's got there.

00:36:29 Speaker 2

They'd issued me one him.

00:36:31 Speaker 2

10 LB him ones.

00:36:35 Speaker 2

He said, yeah.

00:36:38 Speaker 2

I see.

00:36:38 Speaker 2

He'd manifest swamp with you.

00:36:42 Speaker 2

So I go over there and I take his rifle.

00:36:47 Speaker 2

But put his helmet on my.

00:36:51 Speaker 2

Stick it in the ground and I put his own.

00:36:54 Speaker 2

Turned around.

00:36:57 Speaker 2

And here comes the Jeep up the road.

00:37:02 Speaker 2

And I said.

00:37:04 Speaker 2

Well, that man is.

00:37:07 Speaker 2

He didn't have no top on it.

00:37:09 Speaker 2

And he was standing up, looking around.

00:37:13 Speaker 2

Eyeball and everything.

00:37:16 Speaker 2

And I said.

00:37:19 Speaker 2

Well, that's why.

00:37:20 Speaker 2

And I looked down there and saw that Pearl hands.

00:37:24 Speaker 2

And I said, I'll be there.

00:37:26 Speaker 1

Who was that?

00:37:28 Speaker 2

George Patton's on the man over there that wore Pearl and a pistol.

00:37:34 Speaker 2

Only man over.

00:37:34 Speaker 2

It was Pearl and pistols.

00:37:37 Speaker 2

So anyhow, he stopped and we chatted a little while, said you boys doing alright.

00:37:43 Speaker 2

We doing pretty good.

00:37:45 Speaker 2

So you think we can handle this?

00:37:47 Speaker 2

That's when they was waiting on.

00:37:49 Speaker 2

The If you remember.

00:37:52 Speaker 2

Reading about it, you're not old enough.

00:37:56 Speaker 2

Yet.

00:37:58 Speaker 2

When they talked about it being real bad and cloud in stormy and everything and we couldn't use the Air Force.

00:38:08 Speaker 2

And.

00:38:10 Speaker 2

It it led up a little bit and.

00:38:14 Speaker 2

Oh, that's where we were when all that was going on.

00:38:20 Speaker 2

So when that's when we getting ready to cross the sour and he he asked us, he said are you reckon we can make it and I said.

00:38:29 Speaker 2

We'll make it. Don't worry about it.

00:38:32 Speaker 2

And he's, I don't know. We he said 3 or 4 little things, which you let it all get away from me.

00:38:41 Speaker 2

Didn't matter.

00:38:42 Speaker 2

Much.

00:38:43 Speaker 1

But you did meet George Patton and did talk with.

00:38:46 Speaker 2

Just as close as I am to you.

00:38:49 Speaker 2

Only he was standing up in the Jeep.

00:38:51 Speaker 2

I'm standing out there in the snow.

00:38:54 Speaker 2

And and this other fella was there too. You know, that was in the outfit when I got there.

00:39:02 Speaker 1

Win the war when?

00:39:03 Speaker 1

War ended. Where were you? In Europe when it ended? Where were you?

00:39:12 Speaker 1

Hitler's house.

00:39:14

Ohio.

00:39:14 Speaker 2

I was in the town when they signed the Armistice.

00:39:18 Speaker 2

Was in his house.

00:39:22 Speaker 2

And of course, there was several others you know.

00:39:28 Speaker 2

And.

00:39:31 Speaker 2

You know, it's funny, I didn't realize.

00:39:36 Speaker 2

All this time now, it's never in my mind till yesterday. Believe this enough.

00:39:45 Speaker 2

Our area code here on our telephone is 318.

00:39:50 Speaker 2

I was in the 318th Infantry.

00:39:56 Speaker 2

And you know that never popped in my mind till last night.

00:40:01 Speaker 2

And how many damn years ago that been?

00:40:06 Speaker 2

Right, right.

00:40:08 Speaker 2

But facts are still.

00:40:11 Speaker 2

It don't, it don't. I got.

00:40:16 Speaker 2

I've got quite a few pictures at the house.

00:40:20 Speaker 2

Of my boys.

00:40:22 Speaker 2

Sign that thing.

00:40:27 Speaker 1

Well, Mr. French, did you say you had some relatives that were in the military during World War 2, brother or sister or OK.

00:40:36 Speaker 2

No. Oh yes, I did.

00:40:41 Speaker 2

I had a brother that was in the Air Force.

00:40:45 Speaker 2

And he was 17 years older than I am.

00:40:50 Speaker 2

And.

00:40:53 Speaker 2

He was in the Air Force and for some reason.

00:40:58 Speaker 2

He had flat.

00:41:00 Speaker 2

Now, what the hell? His flat feet got to do, but it says that on his discharge they discharged him.

00:41:08 Speaker 2

Was.

00:41:08 Speaker 2

He had been in about a year and a half.

00:41:13 Speaker 2

And they discharged.

00:41:18 Speaker 2

He he was a.

00:41:21 Speaker 2

I forget what he did.

00:41:23 Speaker 2

Was.

00:41:23 Speaker 2

He was on an.

00:41:25 Speaker 2

He may be in a gunner.

00:41:26 Speaker 2

Can't.

00:41:27 Speaker 2

I can't say he was 17 years older than I am.



00:41:31

So.

00:41:32 Speaker 1

When did you meet your wife?

00:41:35 Speaker 2

In Dale High in 1940.

00:41:39 Speaker 2

Uh, well, I went there in 46.

00:41:44 Speaker 2

And uh.

00:41:49 Speaker 2

And y'all how she was married at the time.

00:41:54 Speaker 2

But.

00:42:00 Speaker 2

I rented a house.

00:42:04 Speaker 2

Or a room in a house that was next door to where she and her husband live.

00:42:12 Speaker 2

And her husband worked for her daddy.

00:42:16 Speaker 2

And.

00:42:19 Speaker 2

I know her.

00:42:23 Speaker 2

Well, Frank, you know Francis Thompson.

00:42:27 Speaker 2

He lived in the next house and.

00:42:34 Speaker 2

I see her out there playing with Francis.

00:42:37 Speaker 2

You know, he is about like that then and his brother.

00:42:44 Speaker 2

And I don't know.

00:42:47 Speaker 2

What long year or so?

00:42:50 Speaker 2

They couldn't make it and.

00:42:53 Speaker 2

She went to California and stayed out there.

00:42:57 Speaker 2

Couple of years and came back one.

00:43:01 Speaker 2

I asked her one one night, I said.

00:43:04 Speaker 2

Where are you back, huh?

00:43:07 Speaker 2

She said, yeah.

00:43:09 Speaker 2

I see where what's your phone number?

00:43:13 Speaker 2

She says.

00:43:15 Speaker 2

I'm not interested in man.

00:43:18 Speaker 2

And shall not said that.

00:43:21 Speaker 2

I can't perform home and you know.

00:43:26 Speaker 1

You'll have children. We have.

00:43:28 Speaker 2

We.

00:43:29 Speaker 2

She had one when we got married and we've had three.

00:43:35 Speaker 2

We lost one to cancer.

00:43:40 Speaker 1

Am in the military.

00:43:42

But.

00:43:43 Speaker 2

No, everyone of them miss it. When?

00:43:48 Speaker 2

You know.

00:43:49 Speaker 2

Our son would have been, had he not been in college, but he was.

00:43:56 Speaker 2

I don't know what it was. He was not ready to go, you know. But he would work.

00:44:01 Speaker 2

For what was right after World War 2, Korea.

00:44:06 Speaker 2

And he said.

00:44:08 Speaker 2

I just don't feel right about this, I said well.

00:44:11 Speaker 2

You just wait till they call you. Let them.

00:44:15 Speaker 2

And but they wouldn't.

00:44:17 Speaker 2

They never did call.

00:44:20 Speaker 2

So, but that's what I know. They had some kind of law about if he was in college or whatever it was, and he owns a drug store up FarmVille now.

00:44:32 Speaker 2

Northside farms.

00:44:35 Speaker 1

Well, Mr. French, is anything else you'd like to tell us today about your World War 2 experience?

00:44:42 Speaker 2

And I've done pretty good.

00:44:48 Speaker 2

I.

00:44:53 Speaker 2

I'll never.

00:44:56 Speaker 2

I don't know.

00:44:59 Speaker 2

I just kinda.

00:45:01 Speaker 2

I've talked a few of my buddies, naturally.

00:45:05 Speaker 2

But all of a sudden, they all gone.

00:45:12 Speaker 1

We appreciate you coming in today and sharing with us your Army experience during World War 2 between 1943 and 1946, and we thank you for your service and appreciate it.

