

**Virgil K. Leach Interview**

Company I, 318th Inf Reg

*(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by William L. Dunsmore)*

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

00:00:15 Speaker 1

Good.

00:00:15 Speaker 1

This is Monday the 9th of November 2009, with the Northern Arizona VA Medical Center in Prescott, AZ.

00:00:24 Speaker 1

My name is William Dunsmore. I'm the interviewer.

00:00:27 Speaker 1

We also have.

00:00:28

Jane channel horn.

00:00:29 Speaker 1

Camera.

00:00:30 Speaker 1

Gary gift observer.

00:00:32 Speaker 1

Wally Gilbert, observer.

00:00:34 Speaker 1

Bill Morrison monitor.

00:00:36 Speaker 2

Ron Johnson, observer.

00:00:38 Speaker 1

We have the pleasure of interviewing.

00:00:41 Speaker 1

Virgil Leach and Virgil you are in World War 2.

00:00:47 Speaker 1

Over in Europe and where, where and when were you born?

00:00:51 Speaker 3

I was born in Gratiot County, Michigan.

00:00:58 Speaker 3

Ignore.

00:00:58 Speaker 1

Yeah, when we born.

00:01:01 Speaker 3

By date, July 17th, 1926.

00:01:07

Mm.

00:01:09 Speaker 3

Up.

00:01:11 Speaker 1

You're born on a farm.

00:01:12 Speaker 3

Out of five, I was.

00:01:17 Speaker 3

Drafted at 18.

00:01:20

The.

00:01:25 Speaker 3

They let they all walk enough to harvest crowds.

00:01:30 Speaker 3

And.

00:01:31 Speaker 1

What kind of farm did you work on?

00:01:36 Speaker 1

Dairy farmers.

00:01:37 Speaker 3

Everything had.

00:01:41 Speaker 3

The hogs and cattle and.

00:01:46 Speaker 3

Worked with horseshoes.

00:01:51 Speaker 3

No.

00:01:55 Speaker 3

Raised a lot of checks.

00:01:58 Speaker 1

So you had to register for the draft, then they got, then you got a draft notice.

00:02:04 Speaker 3

And I went.

00:02:07 Speaker 3

I went over.

00:02:13 Speaker 3

I went to Fort Sheridan.

00:02:17 Speaker 3

Held it.

00:02:17 Speaker 3

So I had that.

00:02:20 Speaker 1

This is in September of 1944.

00:02:23 Speaker 3

222.

00:02:26 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:02:28 Speaker 3

To have Robinson, Arkansas.

00:02:38 Speaker 3

The Battle of the Bulge got the worst.

00:02:43 Speaker 3

So they.

00:02:46 Speaker 3

They shipped us out earlier.

00:02:50 Speaker 1

Kind of training were you getting?

00:02:55 Speaker 3

We were a dozen of us, was taken the electrical generator.

00:03:04 Speaker 3

Even though it never appeared on my.

00:03:09 Speaker 3

Records.

00:03:12 Speaker 3

It it helped me later.

00:03:23 Speaker 3

I went home for three days.

00:03:30 Speaker 3

That went to New York.

00:03:36 Speaker 3

We went on board the.

00:03:40 Speaker 3

Louis posture.

00:03:45 Speaker 3

It was an old French lighter.

00:03:50 Speaker 3

We went alone.

00:03:54 Speaker 3

Because it was a bigger ship.

00:03:58 Speaker 3

It was faster.

00:04:06 Speaker 3

March, the North Atlantic was.

00:04:11 Speaker 3

Quite a rough.

00:04:12 Speaker 3

Well, they were sure, right.

00:04:15 Speaker 3

That big thing?

00:04:20 Speaker 3

That was awful.

00:04:25 Speaker 3

We were out.

00:04:28 Speaker 3

Off the coast of Scotland.

00:04:34 Speaker 3

And it was at night.

00:04:35 Speaker 3

They shared through a depth charges.

00:04:39 Speaker 3

And a death charge even made that big ship Joe.

00:04:47 Speaker 3

I was so far down in that ship.

00:04:51 Speaker 3

And affair to God hip.

00:04:54 Speaker 3

I don't think I could have got.

00:04:56 Speaker 3

Of there.

00:04:58 Speaker 3

'Cause it was.

00:05:00 Speaker 3

It was an old old ship.

00:05:04 Speaker 3

The stairways were Daryl and there was a lot of bed, all that \*\*\*\*.

00:05:11 Speaker 1

You know how many people were on that ship?

00:05:13 Speaker 1

No idea, OK.

00:05:14 Speaker 3

Dealt with or idea it was made by English crew but.

00:05:21 Speaker 3

They're not the best cooks.

00:05:26 Speaker 3

A.

00:05:31 Speaker 3

The next morning there was.

00:05:34 Speaker 3

There was a half a dozen Davy vehicles were swinging in around us.

00:05:42 Speaker 3

And.

00:05:44 Speaker 3

So that shove lost a bed right there.

00:05:48 Speaker 1

So they're convoy, you end.

00:05:50 Speaker 1

They did a convoy with you in.

00:05:52 Speaker 3

Oh, don't talk, boy. We were alone.

00:05:54 Speaker 1

Yeah, but when in the next morning and the Navy ships came in?

00:05:57 Speaker 3

Well, they were Davey destroyers.

00:06:06 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:06:09 Speaker 3

They were.

00:06:12 Speaker 3

Hello.

00:06:15 Speaker 3

I don't know what some of the Navy ships were, but there was. There was a half a dozen.

00:06:20 Speaker 1

OK.

00:06:23 Speaker 3

That we landed.

00:06:29 Speaker 1

Where did you land?

00:06:31 Speaker 3

Did scoutlet.

00:06:32 Speaker 1

In Scotland, OK.

00:06:34 Speaker 3

And that night.

00:06:39 Speaker 3

Are we that road a tray down to?

00:06:45 Speaker 3

Southampton, England.

00:06:49 Speaker 3

And we borrowed a dog.

00:06:55 Speaker 3

Lci or.

00:06:58 Speaker 3

I don't know. It was one that.

00:07:01 Speaker 3

The ladders in the front let down or the steps.

00:07:08 Speaker 3

And that was in Lahar.

00:07:17 Speaker 3

They are.

00:07:20

Oh.

00:07:24 Speaker 3

Rub the nose the ship right up by the shore.

00:07:29

There.

00:07:30 Speaker 1

Like a landing craft game up there. Yeah, OK.

00:07:32

Yeah.

00:07:38 Speaker 3

Said OK.

00:07:40 Speaker 3

The first guy down.



00:07:44 Speaker 3

He yelled something about it being deep, they said.

00:07:48 Speaker 3

Off he went down and he disappeared.

00:07:52 Speaker 3

He comes back.

00:07:55 Speaker 3

That water was awful.

00:07:59 Speaker 3

And.

00:08:04 Speaker 3

That way marched up that Long Hill out of lahar there.

00:08:10

Yeah.

00:08:12 Speaker 3

Add to a calend.

00:08:16 Speaker 3

They took away part of our.

00:08:23 Speaker 3

We had barracks, bags and.

00:08:27

Uh.

00:08:29 Speaker 3

We had everything.

00:08:32 Speaker 3

Boots. Overcoats.

00:08:33

Yeah.

00:08:35 Speaker 3

Litter. Underwear.

00:08:40 Speaker 3

And.

00:08:42 Speaker 3

The rifle.

00:08:44 Speaker 3

Gave us each of them.

00:08:51 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:08:52 Speaker 3

We were there a couple days.

00:08:57 Speaker 3

Got out of train.

00:09:04 Speaker 3

The second day, at the end of the second day, we were back where we started that morning.

00:09:13

Look.

00:09:21 Speaker 3

We went to bed.

00:09:24 Speaker 1

OK.

00:09:27 Speaker 3

They.

00:09:29 Speaker 3

Magical Li.

00:09:33 Speaker 3

Was just north of bats there.

00:09:38 Speaker 3

A toad called.

00:09:42 Speaker 3

Fiat bill or something like that.

00:09:47 Speaker 3

And we.

00:09:49 Speaker 3

Another guy and I.

00:09:53 Speaker 3

We took off that dust afternoon to see.

00:09:57 Speaker 3

Look over that magical night.

00:10:03 Speaker 3

We found the door that was open. We went down in.

00:10:10 Speaker 3

That our flashlight started to give out.

00:10:16 Speaker 3

So we followed the steps going out, but that door was locked.

00:10:21 Speaker 3

We had to go back down to find our way out. The way we went in.

00:10:30 Speaker 3

It smelled all right down there. It was clean.

00:10:36 Speaker 3

No.

00:10:38 Speaker 3

But it was different, I'll tell you.

00:10:42 Speaker 3

Dead.

00:10:45 Speaker 3

I.

00:10:48 Speaker 3

We went, so we left there after a couple weeks.

00:10:56 Speaker 3

We went down.

00:11:00 Speaker 3

Road trades trucks.

00:11:04 Speaker 3

All the way across Germany.

00:11:08 Speaker 3

Down through Turkey.

00:11:13 Speaker 3

And.

00:11:15 Speaker 3

Enjoyed the idea?

00:11:19 Speaker 3

That was called the Blue Ridge Division.

00:11:22 Speaker 1

That was the 80th Division of the three 18th Regiment I Company I Company, 318th Regiment, 80th Division.

00:11:32 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:11:32 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:11:37 Speaker 3

That we were in Austria.

00:11:42 Speaker 3

Ally.

00:11:44 Speaker 3

Air.

00:11:46 Speaker 3

The army had put barbed wire around it.

00:11:51 Speaker 3

Remnants of the German army was covered in.

00:11:59 Speaker 3

Given up.

00:12:06 Speaker 3

They were mustering out the German army there.

00:12:19 Speaker 3

I was.

00:12:23 Speaker 3

High operated a generator for Todd Dice.

00:12:28 Speaker 3

The.

00:12:33 Speaker 3

That generator had.

00:12:37 Speaker 3

Had.

00:12:39 Speaker 3

A Buick.

00:12:41 Speaker 3

Straight edge.

00:12:44 Speaker 3

Was still painted white blue.

00:12:53 Speaker 3

After the war, I had.

00:12:56 Speaker 3

Old Buick that had that same as.

00:13:01

Oh.

00:13:04 Speaker 1

You're supplying electricity and lighting to to the.

00:13:10 Speaker 3

They had lights around.

00:13:12 Speaker 1

The barbed wire and the yeah.

00:13:20 Speaker 3

Dead.

00:13:22 Speaker 1

Did you encounter any of the Germans at all?

00:13:25 Speaker 1

Any interaction with the prisoners or the.

00:13:30 Speaker 3

Well, they were on the road when I when I.

00:13:35 Speaker 3

I joined the the 80th. The Germans were on the road.

00:13:42 Speaker 3

And.

00:13:45 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:13:48 Speaker 3

We get in or get.

00:13:52 Speaker 3

Deer, cow and.

00:13:54 Speaker 3

If there was one shot fired.

00:13:58 Speaker 3

Well, the takers would take care of that.

00:14:02 Speaker 3

He'd blow that.

00:14:06 Speaker 3

Staple off. That's where the out shoot observation was from.

00:14:15 Speaker 3

And.

00:14:23 Speaker 3

But I walked all day and.

00:14:28 Speaker 3

Did do to the outfit.

00:14:31 Speaker 3

I got the guard duty annoyed.

00:14:36 Speaker 3

Lotteries, IA lot of days. I didn't sleep at all.

00:14:42 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:14:44 Speaker 3

What diet I was on?

00:14:49 Speaker 3

Or.

00:14:50 Speaker 3

Was guarding the.

00:14:53 Speaker 3

Gasoline Dome.

00:14:58 Speaker 3

They had barrels.

00:15:01 Speaker 3

They'd uh.

00:15:05 Speaker 3

The quartermaster would haul up barrels of gas for the.

00:15:12 Speaker 3

Deposit. Tell them they had guards. They had to guard them.

00:15:21 Speaker 3

I was standing by.

00:15:25 Speaker 3

Barrel.

00:15:28 Speaker 3

That was empty.

00:15:30 Speaker 3

Well, the days were warm.

00:15:33 Speaker 3

The nights were cold.

00:15:39 Speaker 3

I was standing there about half asleep and that barrel went boring.

00:15:45 Speaker 3

Like the jump right out of my skin.

00:15:49 Speaker 3

818 years old.

00:15:58 Speaker 3

But it was interesting, rusty.

00:16:06 Speaker 1

Were you involved in any firefighting at all?

00:16:09 Speaker 1

Any.

00:16:09 Speaker 3

Well, I heard shots fired, but.

00:16:13 Speaker 3

There wasn't any.

00:16:14 Speaker 3



To be.

00:16:15

OK.

00:16:15 Speaker 3

I shot some but I don't think I had anybody.

00:16:20 Speaker 3

I hope.

00:16:23

Uh.

00:16:28 Speaker 3

Usually.

00:16:30 Speaker 3

Read. Go ahead one side of town today. They'd go out the other.

00:16:37 Speaker 3

So.

00:16:37 Speaker 1

You're helping clearing the towns and as you move, kept pushing them back.

00:16:43

OK.

00:16:44 Speaker 3

All.

00:16:46 Speaker 3

Dead. We heard that.

00:16:51 Speaker 3

Roosevelt had died.

00:16:56 Speaker 3

And.

00:16:56

Hmm.

00:17:00 Speaker 3

Then we added up and.

00:17:03 Speaker 3

In Austria.

00:17:06 Speaker 1

Where in Austria?

00:17:08 Speaker 1

Remember where in Austria?

00:17:11 Speaker 3

Well, I I I thought I remembered the town.

00:17:16 Speaker 3

But I was back over there.

00:17:22 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:17:23 Speaker 3

Some people from Sperry where I worked.

00:17:28 Speaker 3

And.

00:17:30 Speaker 3

One couple from where we live you.

00:17:34 Speaker 3

I lived in cordless lakes.

00:17:38 Speaker 3

We went back what the European Tour of bus tour.

00:17:45 Speaker 3

And I tried.

00:17:48 Speaker 3

To find that on a map, I thought it was BIOS version.

00:17:55 Speaker 3

But we couldn't find it.

00:18:04 Speaker 3

That's a mistake I made go about the bus tour I did over there and find out that I could.

00:18:12 Speaker 3

I could have gone alone.

00:18:20 Speaker 3

Rented a car. The wet where I wanted.

00:18:26

Uh.

00:18:28 Speaker 3

Lot of interesting places that I wanted to go back to.

00:18:35 Speaker 1

Well, can we go back to 1945 when you're over there?

00:18:39 Speaker 1

And tell me more of your experiences.

00:18:42 Speaker 3

What? We went back.

00:18:44 Speaker 1

The first time when you were in there in the war, right after the war.

00:18:53 Speaker 3

Well, the 80th moved around so.

00:18:57 Speaker 3

We moved.

00:19:03 Speaker 3

It was called the Hitler School.

00:19:07 Speaker 3

In the Ouch.

00:19:11 Speaker 3

Wonderful build.

00:19:14 Speaker 3

Beautiful.

00:19:17 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:19:20 Speaker 3

We were there for.

00:19:24

Oh.

00:19:28 Speaker 3

I'd say better than both.

00:19:29 Speaker 1

You remember where that was at?

00:19:32 Speaker 1

Where?

00:19:42 Speaker 3

Shod hopefully I thought it was.

00:19:49 Speaker 3

That.

00:19:54 Speaker 3

The 80th went to Czechoslovakia.

00:19:59 Speaker 3

The 388 dead.

00:20:03 Speaker 3

The way we're.

00:20:08 Speaker 3

Very Edge key Lorenz.

00:20:13 Speaker 3

And.

00:20:18

We.

00:20:23 Speaker 3

Very bad.

00:20:24 Speaker 3

Like Hot Springs, AR.

00:20:28 Speaker 3

Bad is bad.

00:20:30 Speaker 1

Huh.

00:20:31 Speaker 3

The.

00:20:37 Speaker 3

That the idea of what hold in December.

00:20:42 Speaker 1

Oh 45.

00:20:43 Speaker 3

Of 45, OK.

00:20:48 Speaker 3

But they went home on the point system.

00:20:52 Speaker 3

I didn't have enough. I had.

00:20:57 Speaker 3

17 or 18 something like that.

00:21:02 Speaker 3

Then the.

00:21:06 Speaker 3

I don't remember what they were going home to, but then they transferred to.

00:21:12 Speaker 3

I think it was the 14th.

00:21:17 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:21:21 Speaker 3

The.

00:21:23 Speaker 3

I still had that old generator.

00:21:28 Speaker 3

So they said being another guy out.

00:21:34 Speaker 3

The other guy was a Sergeant that he didn't know anything about generators.

00:21:40 Speaker 1

You're private first class.

00:21:42 Speaker 3

So I was still a Pfc.

00:21:44 Speaker 1

Uh.

00:21:49 Speaker 3

The army was shudding over.

00:21:53 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:21:56 Speaker 3

Troops to give them their.

00:21:59 Speaker 3

Basic training in Germany and set up.

00:22:04 Speaker 3

They were out in camps, so I was out there quite awhile.

00:22:11 Speaker 3

And.

00:22:17 Speaker 3

Then I went from there to a castle where a general was living.

00:22:26 Speaker 3

His grandsons were his guards.

00:22:34 Speaker 3

Lavish weather.

00:22:38

Go on.

00:22:40 Speaker 3

So that loud mouth, Sergeant.

00:22:45 Speaker 3

He didn't know that.

00:22:47 Speaker 3

The guards were the grandsons of the general.

00:22:53 Speaker 3

He shot his mouth off and we lost that job.

00:23:03 Speaker 3

So that.

00:23:07 Speaker 3

Was playing basketball.

00:23:12 Speaker 3

With the.

00:23:15 Speaker 3

Guys from Audra.

00:23:18 Speaker 3

United Relief and rehabilitation.

00:23:24 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:23:27 Speaker 3

So I was with them.

00:23:31 Speaker 3

Well, we played a couple of.

00:23:37 Speaker 3

Couple of teams, black guys from the present.

00:23:41 Speaker 3

So we quit playing basketball.

00:23:45 Speaker 3

Them guys made us look.

00:23:47 Speaker 3

Dollar 98.

00:23:54

So.

00:23:58 Speaker 3

I finally had her dog poached to come home.

00:24:01 Speaker 3

I did.

00:24:04 Speaker 1

Let's go.

00:24:05 Speaker 1

A few your pictures that you have here.

00:24:08 Speaker 1

Point to the first one up there. Review. That's you, right?

00:24:12 Speaker 3

Well, I'm not sure about this one.

00:24:16 Speaker 3

Where that was.

00:24:19 Speaker 3

But I think it was within the 1st.

00:24:27 Speaker 3



Three or four books.

00:24:30 Speaker 3

This was that German Eagle in Dureburg.

00:24:37 Speaker 3

The army.

00:24:39 Speaker 3

Deal with it.

00:24:41 Speaker 3

They die the bider that.

00:24:44

And.

00:24:44 Speaker 1

Had the swastika and the eagle and.

00:24:47 Speaker 3

And.

00:24:49

OK.

00:24:51 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:24:53 Speaker 3

I went to Garvey share.

00:24:57 Speaker 3

To a ski school.

00:25:02 Speaker 3

Well.

00:25:04 Speaker 3

That ward weather set.

00:25:07 Speaker 3

So they call the school of.

00:25:11 Speaker 3

This was the.

00:25:16 Speaker 3

The camp where the German army was given up.

00:25:23 Speaker 3

We were heading out Kay. Russians by the.

00:25:28 Speaker 1

Cases.

00:25:29 Speaker 3

Actual.

00:25:31 Speaker 1

Yeah, they had.

00:25:32 Speaker 1

The barbed wire around it and.

00:25:36 Speaker 3

It.

00:25:39 Speaker 3

Lot of times at night you'd hear rifle shots you would hear.

00:25:45 Speaker 3

Shot, you'd hear 8 and there's some guy yelling.

00:25:50 Speaker 3

Sergeant of the guard.

00:25:54 Speaker 3

They go out, they find a cow reduction warning.

00:25:59

And.

00:26:02 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:26:04 Speaker 1

About the middle pictures there.

00:26:06 Speaker 3

This is the railroad going up to the.

00:26:11 Speaker 3

Peptic it was a card railroad.

00:26:16

Run.

00:26:16 Speaker 3

That was that was up there.

00:26:21 Speaker 3

And.

00:26:28 Speaker 1

Where to get on that railroad going up?

00:26:31 Speaker 1

You ever get on the rail train going up there?

00:26:34 Speaker 3

Yeah, I was out of Detroit, OK.

00:26:35 Speaker 1

OK.

00:26:39 Speaker 3

A part of it was underground.

00:26:42 Speaker 1

Tunnels, yeah.

00:26:46 Speaker 3

But what a beautiful place.

00:26:57 Speaker 3

I came home.

00:27:01 Speaker 3

Went back to school.

00:27:06 Speaker 1

You get out of service, you get out of service.

00:27:11 Speaker 1

That was an August of 46.

00:27:14

And.

00:27:16 Speaker 1

Where'd you go to school?

00:27:19 Speaker 1

Did you go to school?

00:27:20 Speaker 3

So I went to.

00:27:24 Speaker 3

Electrical school.

00:27:28 Speaker 3

At Willow Rd.

00:27:31 Speaker 3

OK.

00:27:31 Speaker 1

OK.

00:27:34 Speaker 3

And I was working at the Pontiac Boulders.

00:27:42 Speaker 3

Try to get.

00:27:45 Speaker 3

I was able to count by.

00:27:49 Speaker 3

Most of my.

00:27:52 Speaker 3

Service time.

00:27:55 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:27:57 Speaker 3

As a.

00:28:02 Speaker 3

Journey with an electric.

00:28:08 Speaker 3

I had.

00:28:09 Speaker 3

I still had to take a lot of years of training, but it helped me.

00:28:16 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:28:21 Speaker 3

Then I worked at our chemical plant as electrician.

00:28:29 Speaker 3

Then I moved.

00:28:32 Speaker 3

Arizona.

00:28:35 Speaker 3

Did 1959.

00:28:42 Speaker 3

Went to work at Sperry Flight systems.

00:28:46 Speaker 3

In May of 60.

00:28:51 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:28:55 Speaker 3

And I went to electronic school.

00:29:01 Speaker 3

And.

00:29:04 Speaker 3

I worked there 27 years.

00:29:06 Speaker 1

What was your job there?

00:29:09 Speaker 3

Maintenance.

00:29:13 Speaker 3

Churches. I was the first editor.

00:29:19 Speaker 3

Still very cold control.

00:29:23 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:29:28 Speaker 3

Back in.

00:29:31

Oh.

00:29:33 Speaker 3

Album sabka bad there for.

00:29:37 Speaker 3

17 years.

00:29:39 Speaker 3

Big, big detectors.

00:29:43 Speaker 3

Active depositions.

00:29:50 Speaker 3

It's everything to do with vacuum.

00:29:54 Speaker 3

A little bit about.

00:29:57 Speaker 3

Bowl.

00:30:02 Speaker 3

Then I retired.

00:30:05 Speaker 3

Did 80 shovel.

00:30:08 Speaker 3

Moved to cordless legs.

00:30:11 Speaker 1

In Arizona, yeah.

00:30:20 Speaker 3

I I've enjoyed time sleeps.

00:30:24 Speaker 3

And I move it right away to.

00:30:28 Speaker 3

Assisted living.

00:30:31 Speaker 3

Here in Prescott.

00:30:32 Speaker 1

OK, we married we ever married.

00:30:35 Speaker 3

I was married.

00:30:36 Speaker 1

How did you meet your wife?

00:30:40 Speaker 3

33 years.

00:30:42 Speaker 1

Wow. What was her name?

00:30:45 Speaker 3

That build redevelopment.

00:30:47 Speaker 1

Meet her.

00:30:49 Speaker 1

How did you meet her?

00:30:50 Speaker 3

How?

00:30:53 Speaker 3

At a dance.

00:30:55 Speaker 3

You've all heard of Little Jimmy Dickens.

00:30:59 Speaker 3

Well, he was. He was at.

00:31:06 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:31:08 Speaker 3

That checked American club.

00:31:12 Speaker 3

Outside of Alba, MI.

00:31:16 Speaker 3

That he was there.

00:31:20 Speaker 3

Actuary that my wife.

00:31:25 Speaker 1

How many children do you have any children?

00:31:26

Who?

00:31:28 Speaker 3



That two. I got a daughter.

00:31:32 Speaker 3

Did did popped wood and what did Chado valley?

00:31:38

OK.

00:31:42 Speaker 3

There.

00:31:44 Speaker 3

Both good hard work and girls. I'm proud of them.

00:32:00 Speaker 3

I still pay support to my wife.

00:32:04 Speaker 3

After 28 years.

00:32:09 Speaker 3

Is.

00:32:14 Speaker 3

But I've been lucky.

00:32:16 Speaker 3

I've been lucky in life.

00:32:20 Speaker 3

The other.

00:32:21 Speaker 3

Other.

00:32:25 Speaker 1

Did you learn? Besides the electrician work over there and working with generators? What else did you do when in the army?

00:32:33 Speaker 3

What did I do?

00:32:38 Speaker 3

Well, I did a lot of Gard.

00:32:40 Speaker 3

Adult.

00:32:42 Speaker 1

Ening.

00:32:43 Speaker 3

OK.

00:32:47 Speaker 3

So.

00:32:49 Speaker 3

But not later years.

00:32:53

Yeah.

00:32:54 Speaker 3

Like in Arkansas.

00:32:57 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:33:00 Speaker 3

Anybody that was in the service knew that.

00:33:04 Speaker 3

You volunteered for.

00:33:09 Speaker 3

KP.

00:33:13 Speaker 3

I was on it the first time.

00:33:18 Speaker 3

And I had worked.

00:33:23 Speaker 3

Dirt by high school years I had worked at a.

00:33:28 Speaker 3

Swift and company.

00:33:32 Speaker 3

Plants in Alba, MI.

00:33:37 Speaker 3

During the war you could get all the time you wanted, but.

00:33:42 Speaker 3

\$0.19 an hour.

00:33:47 Speaker 3

So I.

00:33:50 Speaker 3

I'd go up at work and to play it.

00:33:55 Speaker 3

The.

00:33:58

So.

00:34:01 Speaker 3

What butcher?

00:34:02 Speaker 1

A butchering, OK.

00:34:04 Speaker 3

Butcher a chicken duck.

00:34:11 Speaker 3

Naked butter.

00:34:14 Speaker 3

So what I was down in Arkansas and I went on KP.

00:34:22

Uh.

00:34:25 Speaker 3

They put they are the.

00:34:28 Speaker 3

Garbage detail the first time.

00:34:33 Speaker 3

Well.

00:34:35 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:34:39 Speaker 3

What are the trips I made in back in Ketchu by?

00:34:45 Speaker 3

They had a young kid, well, 18.

00:34:49

Yeah.

00:34:51 Speaker 3

And he cupped up chickens.

00:34:57 Speaker 3

Deb cooks show sure given have the hard time.

00:35:02 Speaker 3

The guy had never.

00:35:05 Speaker 3

Never cut up a chicken or never got a sandwich or.

00:35:11 Speaker 3

Anything you know?

00:35:15 Speaker 3

So all the way out, I happen to grid her smile.

00:35:20 Speaker 3

Did one of the cookie.

00:35:24 Speaker 3

He let out a hell.

00:35:28 Speaker 3

If you think it's so funny, get over here.

00:35:32 Speaker 3

Hey I showed the guys how to cut check out.

00:35:37 Speaker 3

Their their cooks, the Shriner out there.

00:35:43 Speaker 3

And they wanted to know my day.

00:35:46

Yeah, yeah.

00:35:46 Speaker 3

So the rest of the time I was.

00:35:50 Speaker 3

At Arkansas.

00:35:54 Speaker 3

I do what my job of KP was.

00:35:59 Speaker 3

Chip stuff.

00:36:01 Speaker 3

Cutting up turkeys? Ducks.

00:36:06

Check out.

00:36:13 Speaker 3

I don't know.

00:36:13 Speaker 3

I learned a lot of things.

00:36:17 Speaker 3

I think it was good for me. Good.

00:36:28 Speaker 3

No.

00:36:31 Speaker 3

Robbed here and I.

00:36:35 Speaker 3

Rod got an idea and start.

00:36:40 Speaker 3

Collegiate here at Carnegie.

00:36:45 Speaker 1

American Legion.

00:36:49 Speaker 3

I was one of his.

00:36:53

Turn.

00:36:56 Speaker 2

Chicken cut.

00:36:56 Speaker 1

Charlie Cray rippers OK.

00:37:00 Speaker 3

Anyway.

00:37:03 Speaker 3

I can't remember what I held what I was.

00:37:07 Speaker 3

Vaish commanded.

00:37:09 Speaker 3

Something.

00:37:11 Speaker 3

The first.

00:37:12 Speaker 2

1st vice commander.

00:37:14 Speaker 3

And charter member.

00:37:17

Mm.

00:37:18 Speaker 3

Then what I the service officer.

00:37:24 Speaker 3

Was handed out.

00:37:28 Speaker 3

Applications for VA hospital cards.

00:37:34 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:37:36 Speaker 3

I had never been there.

00:37:40 Speaker 3

Of the a hospital.

00:37:43

Or.

00:37:44 Speaker 3

Even though I.

00:37:47 Speaker 3

So.

00:37:51 Speaker 3

I well, I had been here to visit.

00:37:53 Speaker 3

A couple times.

00:37:58 Speaker 3

But I made that application out that was handed me a.

00:38:03 Speaker 3

Gene.

00:38:05 Speaker 3

00:38:09 Speaker 2

Yes, Gene is a service officer.

00:38:11 Speaker 3

Dated out shattered in.

00:38:15 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:38:18 Speaker 3

That's one of the luckiest days, right?

00:38:22 Speaker 2

May I say something? When we first gave him the application to fill out, he says I didn't do nothing to war to deserve that.

00:38:22 Speaker 1

Sure. Please.

00:38:31 Speaker 2

And we had a heck of a time to convince him that.

00:38:35 Speaker 2

You did what you were supposed to.

00:38:38 Speaker 2

And whether it was four years, two years or no years, you still deserved since you were honorably discharged.

00:38:47 Speaker 2

To come to the VA and.

00:38:49 Speaker 2

Take part in their benefits.

00:38:52 Speaker 1

Very good.

00:38:55 Speaker 2



Where Equiton convinced him because he's very stubborn.

00:38:57 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:39:00

Yeah.

00:39:01 Speaker 1

Virgil, where were you at the end of the war when you heard that?

00:39:05 Speaker 1

War was over there in Europe.

00:39:07 Speaker 1

Where were you actually at?

00:39:12 Speaker 3

After the war, no.

00:39:14 Speaker 1

When when you heard the war is over, where were you?

00:39:18 Speaker 3

We were.

00:39:21 Speaker 3

While they were still running that barbed wire around that airfield, when we got there at the war just ended.

00:39:29 Speaker 1

You heard that the war is over, right?

00:39:32 Speaker 1

What was your first impression?

00:39:37 Speaker 3

Well, I don't know. I think we.

00:39:43 Speaker 3

We've been expecting it for quite a while.

00:39:49 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:39:53 Speaker 3

But the way we did.

00:40:01 Speaker 3

We were just glad it was over, that's all.

00:40:04 Speaker 1

Did anybody have a celebration or anything?

00:40:07 Speaker 3

Oh yeah, somebody.

00:40:10 Speaker 3

Raider, the place in town. You got a keg of beers.

00:40:16 Speaker 3

We have celebration.

00:40:17 Speaker 1

And this was in Germany itself, right?

00:40:20 Speaker 1

This was in Germany.

00:40:22 Speaker 3

They'll be Austria.

00:40:23 Speaker 1

In Austria at that time, OK.

00:40:28 Speaker 1

The only bite you're coming home?

00:40:30 Speaker 1

How did you get home from, from, from Czechoslovakia?

00:40:34 Speaker 1

You went went from.

00:40:36 Speaker 1

From Germany into Austria, into Czechoslovakia, you said.

00:40:40 Speaker 1

Then you came home.

00:40:42 Speaker 1

Tell me about your coming home.

00:40:44 Speaker 3

Well, rode a trade up to.

00:40:52 Speaker 3

The sheep are not the nor sheep.

00:41:00 Speaker 3

I can't think.

00:41:01 Speaker 1

OK, Antwerp.

00:41:04 Speaker 1

Antwerp.

00:41:10

Well.

00:41:16 Speaker 3

That we are only there one day will be caught a ship.

00:41:22 Speaker 3

She came home. It was.

00:41:26 Speaker 1

Tell me about that ship.

00:41:27 Speaker 3

It was the victory ship.

00:41:29 Speaker 1

OK.

00:41:31 Speaker 3

I can't remember the day.

00:41:32 Speaker 1

That's OK.

00:41:34 Speaker 1

Remember how many folk? How many?

00:41:37 Speaker 1

U.S. military was.

00:41:38 Speaker 1

It.

00:41:38 Speaker 3

Yeah, the thing was loaded with.

00:41:43 Speaker 3

Military.

00:41:45 Speaker 1

Hundreds. Thousands.

00:41:49 Speaker 3

The party was at least 1000 long.

00:41:53 Speaker 1

So coming back across Atlantic, how long did that take you remember?

00:41:58 Speaker 1

Approximately.

00:41:59 Speaker 3

Well longer than going over.

00:42:03 Speaker 1

We didn't have the submarines, the Wolf Pack, EU boats to contend with this time.

00:42:12 Speaker 3

I I tried to find out after the war what happened to the that.

00:42:20 Speaker 3

Old, old French. Lighter but.

00:42:24 Speaker 3

Even that.

00:42:27 Speaker 3

So.

00:42:29 Speaker 3

That World War Two book.

00:42:33 Speaker 3

I read that cover to cover there was.

00:42:38 Speaker 3

Never said a word about that ship.

00:42:41 Speaker 1

When you came back to the United States, where did you land?

00:42:46 Speaker 3

In New York.

00:42:52 Speaker 3

The Queen Mary.

00:42:56 Speaker 3

Was there?

00:43:00 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:43:02 Speaker 3

And I did say the Queen Mary again till it was over the Long Beach CA.

00:43:11 Speaker 1

When you landed in New York, do they celebrate anything getting home?

00:43:17

No, we.

00:43:20 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:43:27 Speaker 3

I can't remember while we were there.

00:43:32 Speaker 3

A while.

00:43:34 Speaker 3

Couple days anyway.

00:43:37 Speaker 3

Then we caught a trade.

00:43:39 Speaker 1

When you came into the sea into the harbor there, did you get a chance to see the Statue of Liberty?

00:43:44 Speaker 3

Yeah, we see the Statue of Liberty.

00:43:46 Speaker 1

What was your? What was your feelings?

00:43:54 Speaker 3

I was very glad to get home, that's all.

00:43:57

Yeah.

00:43:59 Speaker 1

Get off that ship.

00:44:01 Speaker 3

It was.

00:44:10 Speaker 3

I don't.

00:44:10 Speaker 3

You see a lot of movies.

00:44:14 Speaker 3

I've seen a lot of movies and half the guys have got the towns and submachine gun.

00:44:22 Speaker 3

I never say the tops in shovel.

00:44:28 Speaker 3

I know will I join the idea?

00:44:32 Speaker 3

They took my my brand new air.

00:44:35 Speaker 3

They gave me an old beat up Brownie BIR.

00:44:42 Speaker 3

So glad I that should have very well.

00:44:48 Speaker 3

Could I never shave? Would.

00:44:51 Speaker 3

Call.

00:44:59 Speaker 3

The eye company was very good shape.

00:45:04 Speaker 3

It wasn't very many of them.

00:45:10 Speaker 3

The share yet?

00:45:15 Speaker 3

Call.

00:45:18 Speaker 3

But yet.

00:45:21 Speaker 3

History of World War 2.

00:45:25 Speaker 3

It never gave very much history of.

00:45:29 Speaker 3

Of the idea.

00:45:32 Speaker 3

I don't know why.

00:45:39 Speaker 3

It don't shave right.

00:45:44 Speaker 3

They eliminated that.

00:45:46 Speaker 1

Will you put in your timing over there during the war and you know, while the war was?

00:45:51 Speaker 1

And I.

00:45:52 Speaker 3

Don't.

00:45:56 Speaker 3

Did the VFW.

00:46:00 Speaker 3

Magazine they used to.

00:46:03 Speaker 3

Add the.

00:46:09 Speaker 3

Veterans asking for.

00:46:12 Speaker 3

Information.

00:46:15 Speaker 3

I haven't shaved.

00:46:19 Speaker 3

What word about the idea in recent years?

00:46:23

Yes.

00:46:24

Yeah.

00:46:25 Speaker 3

I've a life member of the VFW.



00:46:29 Speaker 3

The.

00:46:31 Speaker 3

Was it?

00:46:34

The.

00:46:37 Speaker 3

I was the quartermaster the wash.

00:46:43 Speaker 3

It got shown by biggest job was.

00:46:47 Speaker 3

Balaji head.

00:46:50 Speaker 3

Notices of death.

00:46:53 Speaker 3

I have.

00:46:56 Speaker 3

Because everybody there was World War 2.

00:47:01 Speaker 3

And they.

00:47:05 Speaker 3

So we.

00:47:08 Speaker 3

Wet head with black hay and Chevy.

00:47:12 Speaker 3

And that's where I.

00:47:16 Speaker 3

I'm not very active VFW at all.

00:47:21 Speaker 3

Well, I'm not too active with.

00:47:27 Speaker 3

And.

00:47:28 Speaker 1

How did you meet Ron?

00:47:30 Speaker 1

How did you meet him?

00:47:33 Speaker 3

I don't know.

00:47:36 Speaker 3

I had lived there.

00:47:39 Speaker 3

I had lived there since 80.

00:47:42 Speaker 3

Well, I built Daily Show.

00:47:44 Speaker 3

I retired Daily Show.

00:47:49 Speaker 3

And.

00:47:52 Speaker 3

I don't know.

00:47:53 Speaker 2

We met at association meeting.

00:47:57 Speaker 2

You were on the board.

00:47:58 Speaker 2

You were trying to get me to join.

00:48:02 Speaker 2

Association and.

00:48:05 Speaker 2

We became friends there after.

00:48:09 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:48:11 Speaker 3

I don't know.

00:48:14 Speaker 3

Back then.

00:48:17 Speaker 3

They were mostly older.

00:48:20 Speaker 3

They work together now. I think most of them were.

00:48:26 Speaker 3

Most everybody is got kids.

00:48:29 Speaker 3

They're raising families.

00:48:33 Speaker 3

We don't.

00:48:34 Speaker 3

So they don't do what they do.

00:48:38 Speaker 3

So I sold my house.

00:48:43 Speaker 3

Likewise, and I.

00:48:47 Speaker 3

Bought a trailer and I moved up to the.

00:48:52 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:48:56 Speaker 3

That corres Junction RV park.

00:49:01 Speaker 3

And for the lash.

00:49:03 Speaker 3

Year and a half I've lived in the motel room for.

00:49:11 Speaker 3

But the 20th time.

00:49:16 Speaker 3

And the 22nd.

00:49:19 Speaker 3

I'll be moving to Prescott.

00:49:21 Speaker 1

OK. Did you ever receive any medals or accommodations for your work over there?

00:49:30 Speaker 3

No 'cause.

00:49:34 Speaker 3

I did get a Battlestar because I was wasn't actually in a battle.

00:49:41 Speaker 3

They don't give battles for being down in a ship.

00:49:47 Speaker 1

Well, your.

00:49:48 Speaker 1

You were still supporting the whole group and everything.

00:49:51 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:49:53 Speaker 3

As for guarding gasoline Cokes, they don't.

00:49:59 Speaker 1

You ever get to any USO over there?

00:50:05 Speaker 3

One of these pictures has got a USO show in it. I was going to.

00:50:09 Speaker 3

That I forgot what she what it was.

00:50:14 Speaker 3

But I remember flying high, which over there, whether that was yet.

00:50:21 Speaker 3

I don't know.

00:50:28 Speaker 3

I wish another guard at.

00:50:34 Speaker 3

General Patterson.

00:50:38 Speaker 3

Field row.

00:50:41 Speaker 3

But I never saw the.

00:50:45 Speaker 3

The possession.

00:50:47 Speaker 3

Never. So many guys are they were. We were about 3 streets away.

00:50:54 Speaker 3

Where they came up with all the white helmets.

00:51:02 Speaker 3

The white.

00:51:10 Speaker 3

Sam Browning bounce. Is that what they called it?

00:51:13

Sam brown.

00:51:14 Speaker 1

Sam Brown belt.

00:51:17 Speaker 3

Whitewash.

00:51:20 Speaker 3

But.

00:51:24 Speaker 3

But anyway.

00:51:30 Speaker 3

I never did see.

00:51:34 Speaker 3

It must have had 3-4 blocks away.

00:51:38 Speaker 1

You said that you had a they took away your weapon.

00:51:42 Speaker 1

Gave you an old Browning.

00:51:45 Speaker 1

VAR you said.

00:51:47 Speaker 1

You fire that a few times.

00:51:51 Speaker 1

You had to fire that. They're going after the Germans or.

00:51:56 Speaker 3

Well.

00:51:59 Speaker 3

We did some shooting one day at a.

00:52:06 Speaker 3

I really didn't see anything.

00:52:08 Speaker 3

Showed up.

00:52:10 Speaker 3

That I got rid of so bad the addition.

00:52:12 Speaker 1

And.

00:52:15

You.

00:52:18 Speaker 1

See any of the pans or tanks over there.

00:52:22 Speaker 1

Seeing the Panzer tanks.

00:52:26 Speaker 3

You see a lot of them. They used to.

00:52:31 Speaker 3

Knock down tank they used to bury.

00:52:36 Speaker 3

Not very, but.

00:52:39 Speaker 3

They just have to go that far off the ground.

00:52:44 Speaker 1

Put in the, put it in a gully.

00:52:45 Speaker 1

They could be lower.

00:52:47 Speaker 3

About the streets.

00:52:51 Speaker 3

I see the couple of tiger tanks.

00:52:55 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:52:58 Speaker 3

That was amazing.

00:53:01 Speaker 1

You see him fire.

00:53:03 Speaker 1

Did you see them fire?

00:53:05 Speaker 3

No.

00:53:05 Speaker 1

OK.

00:53:09 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:53:11 Speaker 1

You ever get any firefights with the Germans or any nothing?

00:53:17 Speaker 3

Like I say.

00:53:20 Speaker 3

I got there right at the right time.

00:53:22 Speaker 1

OK.

00:53:23 Speaker 3

It's a lucky.

00:53:24 Speaker 1

Time to clean up the mop up.

00:53:29 Speaker 3

Those.

00:53:31

Uh.

00:53:33 Speaker 3

But.



00:53:35 Speaker 3

There was.

00:53:38 Speaker 3

3 or 4 Tikes with us.

00:53:42 Speaker 3

They used to.

00:53:44 Speaker 3

Used to take turns who got church staple?

00:53:54 Speaker 3

I was in.

00:53:57 Speaker 3

Regards bird journey after the war.

00:54:03 Speaker 3

And there was something there that said.

00:54:07 Speaker 3

I always thought if I ever got back to Germany, I wanted to go there. What?

00:54:12 Speaker 1

Was that?

00:54:15 Speaker 3

There was a church.

00:54:17 Speaker 3

That old, old church.

00:54:20 Speaker 3

And it was big.

00:54:24 Speaker 3

And.

00:54:27 Speaker 3

Setting out a corner.

00:54:32 Speaker 3

Across the street.

00:54:38 Speaker 3

And here.

00:54:42 Speaker 3

Plant here was a God plant.

00:54:45 Speaker 3

There was the biggest lathe that I ever seen.

00:54:49 Speaker 3

Was so big that.

00:54:52 Speaker 3

Two bedroomed it.

00:54:54 Speaker 3

They made big duck barrels.

00:54:58

Replay.

00:54:59 Speaker 3

The plant was bobbed out.

00:55:03 Speaker 3

And right across the other side was.

00:55:07 Speaker 3

I don't.

00:55:08 Speaker 3

What they did, because the RV had that.

00:55:13

The.

00:55:14 Speaker 3

Roped off for some reason.

00:55:18 Speaker 3

And that was abolished.

00:55:22 Speaker 3

But that church.

00:55:25 Speaker 3

Stood there like.

00:55:29 Speaker 3

It was never touched just across the street.

00:55:34 Speaker 3

And I thought, oh gosh.

00:55:38 Speaker 3

Wonderful that.

00:55:41 Speaker 3

8 therefore.

00:55:43 Speaker 3

And that's who was bobbing it because.

00:55:48 Speaker 3

A guy named.

00:55:51 Speaker 3

A friend of mine.

00:55:53 Speaker 3

Led to cordless, she built a house.

00:55:58 Speaker 3

Dwayne Gray.

00:56:00 Speaker 3

He was a bobber pilot.

00:56:05 Speaker 3

And I was telling him.

00:56:08 Speaker 3

The next time he came out from Ohio.

00:56:12 Speaker 3

He brought his love book.

00:56:17 Speaker 3

And he handed it there that he had.

00:56:20 Speaker 3

They had Bob Dragonsburg.

00:56:25 Speaker 3

All that.

00:56:27 Speaker 3

In my mind that is being good, but you could.

00:56:34 Speaker 3

No.

00:56:35 Speaker 3

About a building.

00:56:39 Speaker 3

A factory that way.

00:56:42 Speaker 3

Did not do any real damage to that church.

00:56:50 Speaker 3

So I've always ever since I went back to Europe though.

00:56:55 Speaker 3

11-12 years ago.

00:57:00 Speaker 3

I always wish that I had one along.

00:57:05 Speaker 3

Rented a car.

00:57:08 Speaker 3

Rent to places where I wanted to go.

00:57:13 Speaker 3

But I did.

00:57:19 Speaker 1

Well, Virgil, we thank you very much for your story.

00:57:23 Speaker 1

Is there any?

00:57:23 Speaker 1

Last words you like to say to the youngsters coming into the military or graduating from high school.

00:57:31 Speaker 1

You think the military is a good place for them?

00:57:34 Speaker 3

Well, I did graduate.

00:57:39 Speaker 3

They they, they told me they were going to take me.

00:57:45 Speaker 3

But I did.

00:57:47 Speaker 3

I went to.

00:57:52 Speaker 3

Electronic school in Phoenix.

00:57:55 Speaker 3

At the same time, I got my GED.

00:58:00 Speaker 3

And.

00:58:07

Uh.

00:58:09 Speaker 3

Gracia County, Michigan was.

00:58:13 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:58:17 Speaker 3

It was it very much industry.

00:58:21 Speaker 3

As far as.

00:58:24 Speaker 3

There is so many other fire burns.

00:58:30 Speaker 3

Were not.

00:58:34 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:58:38 Speaker 3

They were being deferred for the following.

00:58:44 Speaker 3

Which which I wasn't.

00:58:48 Speaker 3

We didn't have.

00:58:55 Speaker 3

And.

00:58:57 Speaker 3

I would have tried.

00:59:06 Speaker 3

I have no regret. Good.

00:59:10 Speaker 1

Well, we thank you for your service to the Army and to the you're filling in and the service that you did while you're over there in France and Germany and Scotland and Austria and Czechoslovakia saw a lot.

00:59:23 Speaker 1

The.

00:59:24 Speaker 1

You wouldn't.

00:59:25 Speaker 1

Seen if you just been Michigan all this time.

00:59:28 Speaker 3

Lot of people did.

00:59:34 Speaker 3

I guess I I.

00:59:37 Speaker 3

Was aware of beauty more than a lot of them.

00:59:43 Speaker 3

A lot of the guys.

00:59:47 Speaker 3

A lot of those buildings were.

00:59:51 Speaker 3

Just fantastic.

00:59:57 Speaker 1

Well, I'd like to thank shake your hand and say thank you for your service.

01:00:03 Speaker 1

Thank you very much for coming in. Telling your story to us.

01:00:07 Speaker 3

OK.

01:00:07 Speaker 1

Ron, thank you for coming and joining us this morning this afternoon also thank you.