

Luther Leon Lewellen Interview

Company K, 319th Inf Reg

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Patricia H. McClain)

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

00:00:04 Speaker 1

This afternoon we have the pleasure of interviewing Luther, Leon Lewellen, 2911, Pixley Knob Rd. Pekin, IN date of birth, October the 30th, 1924. My name is Pat McClain and I'm on the staff of United States Senator Richard Luger.

00:00:23 Speaker 1

With me is Gertrude Stevenson, the Washington County Veterans History coordinator.

00:00:30 Speaker 1

Also with us is Mrs. Lewellen.

00:00:33 Speaker 1

Mr. Lewellen, did you enlist into the military or were you drafted?

00:00:39 Speaker 2

And then went with the next day.

00:00:43 Speaker 1

And where were you sent?

00:00:45 Speaker 2

I was sent to.

00:00:47 Speaker 2

Fort Thomas, KY.

00:00:50 Speaker 2

Where I stayed a few days.

00:00:52 Speaker 2

And then they transferred me to Fort Sill, OK.

00:00:57 Speaker 2

Where I.

00:00:59 Speaker 2

Spent 17 weeks.

00:01:02 Speaker 2

Truck driving on 105.

00:01:06 Speaker 2

Outer.

00:01:07 Speaker 2

On wheels.

00:01:09

Hmm.

00:01:10 Speaker 2

And that was.

00:01:15 Speaker 2

And then bivouac and.

00:01:18 Speaker 2

Scene Buffalo and the Roman.

00:01:21 Speaker 2

And rattlesnakes in the mountains.

00:01:25 Speaker 2

And.

00:01:27 Speaker 2

Were sent home and by Troop train to Memphis, TN.

00:01:32 Speaker 2

Where?

00:01:34 Speaker 2

I caught a bus from Memphis to Henryville IN from the Greyhound. They lost all my clothes and I was about four to five days before I got any. So you couldn't be out of uniform. So that was a.

00:01:52 Speaker 2

Catastrophe.

00:01:55 Speaker 2

I received my.

00:01:59 Speaker 2

Closed at Fort Thomas, KY, across from Cincinnati.

00:02:03 Speaker 2

Where we got our uniforms.

00:02:05 Speaker 2

And then went on to Fort Sill.

00:02:09 Speaker 2

With and.

00:02:12 Speaker 2

And we left and was transferred.

00:02:16 Speaker 2

To Fort Rucker, AL.

00:02:20 Speaker 2

Road greyhound bus to Fort Rucker.

00:02:24 Speaker 2

And with a 66 infantry division.

00:02:30 Speaker 2

The United States Army now was there a few weeks and they transferred me to Fort Meade, MD.

00:02:38 Speaker 2

Near Baltimore.

00:02:40 Speaker 2

I trained there.

00:02:42 Speaker 2

Just taking training is.

00:02:45 Speaker 2

Marching and stuff until we.

00:02:48 Speaker 2

They transferred me to Fort Jackson, SC.

00:02:52 Speaker 2

A lot of troops that we were from.

00:02:56 Speaker 2

Every branch of the army.

00:02:59 Speaker 2

From six months.

00:03:02 Speaker 2

To 17 years.

00:03:05 Speaker 2

And send us to the infantry to take training.

00:03:09 Speaker 2

There it took six weeks after training and.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

Ford, Jackson.

00:03:15 Speaker 2

And then they sent me my train to Louisville, KY on a 15 day Perlow.

00:03:22 Speaker 2

And.

00:03:25 Speaker 2

I went back to Fort Jackson by train.

00:03:29 Speaker 2

And.

00:03:30 Speaker 2

Stayed there a few days.

00:03:33 Speaker 2

And got motors and we.

00:03:35 Speaker 2

Transferred back to Fort Meade, MD.

00:03:40 Speaker 2

Didn't stay there long. Received my orders.

00:03:43 Speaker 2

To go to Camp Shanks, New York.

00:03:46 Speaker 2

As a port of debarkation.

00:03:49 Speaker 2

Give him orders along with other military personnel and taken by ferry boat.

00:03:56 Speaker 2

To the ship in New York Harbor with approximately 2500 soldiers on board.

00:04:03 Speaker 2

We sat on the board in the harbor for.

00:04:07 Speaker 2

10 days.

00:04:09 Speaker 2

December 1st to December the 10th, 44.

00:04:13 Speaker 2

Loading crews and soldiers and supplies.

00:04:17 Speaker 2

And on the 10?

00:04:19 Speaker 2

Of December 1944, the ships set sail in convoy at 15 ships.

00:04:26 Speaker 2

But we're not told their destination destination.

00:04:30 Speaker 2

As we sailed, some of the ships left convoy and sailed in North Africa.

00:04:36 Speaker 2

And those that were left sailed to the European theater.

00:04:41 Speaker 2

And we.

00:04:43 Speaker 2

As we was going over.

00:04:45 Speaker 2

About 2:00 one morning, about a halfway across the ocean.

00:04:50 Speaker 2

Everything went on the ship.

00:04:53 Speaker 2

We lost all power.

00:04:55 Speaker 2

And they give us orders, putting the game plans down.

00:04:59 Speaker 2

And the ship was rolling back and forth.

00:05:03 Speaker 2

And we may have to abandon ship.

00:05:06 Speaker 2

So we fell out of convoy and we was out there 1 ship alone.

00:05:13 Speaker 2

So we.

00:05:14 Speaker 2

Finally got the motors to going again.

00:05:18 Speaker 2

And then next day at noon.

00:05:21 Speaker 2

The same thing happened and we I was up on the deck that day and the water was coming and the roll and the water was coming over each side.

00:05:32 Speaker 2

So finally they got they got the motors going again, they got power.

00:05:38 Speaker 2

So we sailed on from there to.

00:05:42 Speaker 2

Up the Mediterranean Sea, which the median? You don't roll this way and the Mediterranean Sea.

00:05:49 Speaker 2

Go this way.

00:05:51 Speaker 2

And that that is rougher. That's and it always does it ships that way it nose goes down, the tail comes up, the tail goes down, the nose goes up.

00:06:03 Speaker 2

And that was the nearest I ever got. Seasick was that.

00:06:09 Speaker 2

I carried ration from the.

00:06:12 Speaker 2

Bottom of the boat up through the mess hall.

00:06:16 Speaker 2

Every day.

00:06:18 Speaker 2

And I eat four times a day, gain weight going over.

00:06:23 Speaker 2

And then we landed at Marseille.

00:06:31 Speaker 2

December the 23rd, 1944.

00:06:36 Speaker 2

And we immediately debark and.

00:06:40 Speaker 2

Lived in tent camps about. Oh, I'd say it was 20 miles outside of Marseille.

00:06:51 Speaker 2

So we.

00:06:53 Speaker 2

Stayed there that night.

00:06:56 Speaker 2

They had a bunch of live turkeys for us for Christmas.

00:07:00 Speaker 2

He was out there gobbling, so I caught CQ Christmas Eve.

00:07:07 Speaker 2

And everybody wanted to go to town.

00:07:10 Speaker 2

So I had a commanding officer.

00:07:13 Speaker 2

And I said, what do I do? He said. Write him a pass and sign the sergeants name.

00:07:20 Speaker 2

So I did.

00:07:22 Speaker 2

And I got a call from the front lines.

00:07:26 Speaker 2

And it was for him.

00:07:29 Speaker 2

He took the call and he said when he got off the phone I said, Sir, what was that for?

00:07:35 Speaker 2

Said you're leaving in the morning.

00:07:38 Speaker 2

On planes to Marseille, France.

00:07:41 Speaker 2

I said I want to go to Marseille too.

00:07:44 Speaker 2

Said OK, write you out to pass and go, but be back here by 11:00.

00:07:51 Speaker 2

Oh, me and my buddy went to Marseille, stayed.

00:07:55 Speaker 2

And we thought we'd get the truck back.

00:07:59 Speaker 2

Well, we got orders that the Germans would drop in paratroopers between Marseille.

00:08:04 Speaker 2

And the tents and none of our trucks would pick us up.

00:08:10 Speaker 2

Oh, we hitchhiked and.

00:08:13 Speaker 2

We didn't know where we was at it and.

00:08:17 Speaker 2

Finally I got a big truck to stop, picked us up, took him back to camp.

00:08:22 Speaker 2

Go back to camp about 1:00.

00:08:26 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:08:27 Speaker 2

Colonel said.

00:08:30 Speaker 2

You boys are all late.

00:08:32 Speaker 2

Or the court martial. Everyone of you which said you're leaving at 3:00 by plane to go to the front lines.

00:08:39

Hmm.

00:08:40 Speaker 2

So.

00:08:42 Speaker 2

At 3:00 we.

00:08:45 Speaker 2

Loaded.

00:08:47 Speaker 2

Several planes.

00:08:49 Speaker 2

I don't know.

00:08:50 Speaker 2

How many troops it was several troops.

00:08:53 Speaker 2

And on C47 it only helped 47 people.

00:08:57 Speaker 2

So you imagine how many planes it was.

00:09:01 Speaker 2

We went to.

00:09:04 Speaker 2

Metz, France.

00:09:06 Speaker 2

There was snow on the.

00:09:07 Speaker 2

Ground.

00:09:08 Speaker 2

And the German plane was dog fighting with that stray from the airport and everything. We had no guns on the planes.

00:09:17 Speaker 2

And we circle around and dodge them.

00:09:22 Speaker 2

Till we got down.

00:09:23 Speaker 2

That we got out there on the.

00:09:26 Speaker 2

Airport or grounds and.

00:09:30 Speaker 2

You know what to do.

00:09:32 Speaker 2

Just.

00:09:34 Speaker 2

Find a place to hide the best you could.

00:09:37 Speaker 2

And they finally got us and took us to a French barracks close by.

00:09:43 Speaker 2

Which?

00:09:45 Speaker 2

Was.

00:09:46 Speaker 2

Brick.

00:09:48 Speaker 2

Barracks. We had ammunition dump right outside of the.

00:09:52 Speaker 2

Barracks. Well, first night.

00:09:55 Speaker 2

Here come old bed. Check Charlie over. Half of the plane. The Germans run every night.

00:10:01 Speaker 2

It was time to go to bed.

00:10:03 Speaker 2

He came over.

00:10:05 Speaker 2

And strafe is good with machine gun.

00:10:08 Speaker 2

And he just got out just outside over the the ammunition dump. Was he shot him down.

00:10:16 Speaker 2

And then.

00:10:18 Speaker 2

He jumped out, but he didn't. He didn't make it.

00:10:23 Speaker 2

So then we stayed there three days.

00:10:26 Speaker 2

And we loaded.

00:10:29 Speaker 2

On trucks.

00:10:31 Speaker 2

To leave the Mets.

00:10:34 Speaker 2

And go up through. We're right in northern France.

00:10:38 Speaker 2

Through Belgium, through Bastone, where they hung all the perpetrators, I've seen all of that.

00:10:44 Speaker 2

And up to Luxembourg and in the Germany.

00:10:49 Speaker 2

On.

00:10:51 Speaker 2

The 28th day of December 44.

00:10:56 Speaker 2

And we was on them trucks. We stood up.

00:11:00 Speaker 2

There were no tops on.

00:11:03 Speaker 2

Cold.

00:11:05 Speaker 2

And you didn't dare.

00:11:10 Speaker 2

Yeah, down because you did it, Trump. You did. We would just enter this like cattle.

00:11:17 Speaker 2

We got to the.

00:11:22 Speaker 2

Lines.

00:11:23 Speaker 2

And Germansville, we're on one hillside, we've on another.

00:11:29 Speaker 2

And they unload us from the trucks and said was in.

00:11:34 Speaker 2

Told us what?

00:11:35 Speaker 2

Regimen with our company.

00:11:39 Speaker 2

And we was replacements.

00:11:44 Speaker 2

And some guys lasted hours and some lasted a little long.

00:11:50 Speaker 2

What? Just before I got through there.

00:11:54 Speaker 2

Two brothers in the same outfit.

00:11:57 Speaker 2

And one of them brother was.

00:11:58 Speaker 2

Killed.

00:11:59 Speaker 2

And that was that didn't help that night we I stayed in a.

00:12:06 Speaker 2

House.

00:12:07 Speaker 2

And the basement with the sugar beets. And that's what I slept on.

00:12:12 Speaker 2

And about midnight, once you can just hear them shelling completely.

00:12:17 Speaker 2

All the time and a big old dog come crawling in there and like that scared me to death. So I was the only one down in the basement with that was 3/3 floors and we took and taking the housing over.

00:12:31 Speaker 2

And we stayed there just a few days and.

00:12:35 Speaker 2

Then we would just travel to another little town. Everything there is in.

00:12:40 Speaker 2

Your houses is all together and then you have a.

00:12:46 Speaker 2

Land between them. They they do that.

00:12:49

Fur.

00:12:50 Speaker 2

Their own sake for war.

00:12:54 Speaker 2

And then we we longer Walnut Creek.

00:12:59 Speaker 2

And laid on one side, the Germans on the other, we could see them as they they fire mortar shells at it. We can watch them fire at us.

00:13:08 Speaker 2

And.

00:13:10 Speaker 2

We're down along the Creek.

00:13:14 Speaker 2

They left a bunch of honey in cone.

00:13:17 Speaker 2

Make me higher.

00:13:19 Speaker 2

We all loaded up on honey. I mean honey, but below head came actually had like had.

00:13:25

Hmm.

00:13:30 Speaker 2

And one night, I was just standing guard, and I was on the farthest outpost.

00:13:35 Speaker 2

Me and my buddy.

00:13:37 Speaker 2

And.

00:13:39 Speaker 2

It's the dark. You didn't see your hand in front of you.

00:13:43 Speaker 2

And we hear the Germans walking cracking sticks.

00:13:48 Speaker 2

And my two buddies, that was.

00:13:50 Speaker 2

Closer to the where we come from.

00:13:55 Speaker 2

Got secured and run in.

00:13:57 Speaker 2

So we stayed out there about all night with no relief because.

00:14:02 Speaker 2

They scared to send anybody else out.

00:14:05 Speaker 2

And then one night, a little later, we.

00:14:10 Speaker 2

Got orders that.

00:14:12 Speaker 2

Town of being fired on.

00:14:15 Speaker 2

And for us to?

00:14:17 Speaker 2

Come and see if they we could relieve them of their.

00:14:22 Speaker 2

The German was getting pretty rough.

00:14:25 Speaker 2

So we walked up across the field where they had plowed ground and the snow on the ground. And you know how that?

00:14:32 Speaker 2

Is when you of course do do a lot of breaking anymore, but then they have broke that ground and we're going to walk that furry.

00:14:42 Speaker 2

And that is hard to do overnight.

00:14:45 Speaker 2

But we finally got to the town and we.

00:14:48 Speaker 2

They were just throwing the.

00:14:51 Speaker 2

88.

00:14:53 Speaker 2

Tanker shells in there and they just bowled the fire just coming down the street.

00:14:58 Speaker 2

And we run the Germans upstairs and we took over the house to place sleep and where we stand on guard.

00:15:07 Speaker 2

So we got everything kind of taken over there and got the Germans run out of there.

00:15:14 Speaker 2

And.

00:15:16 Speaker 2

We went to another town.

00:15:19 Speaker 2

So then the.

00:15:23 Speaker 2

We got ready to leave out that morning about two or three o'clock making a.

00:15:27 Speaker 2

We had a.

00:15:27 Speaker 2

Bridge.

00:15:28 Speaker 2

That we afraid the Germans was going to blow up.

00:15:31 Speaker 2

And if they did, we couldn't get across.

00:15:33 Speaker 2

The.

00:15:33 Speaker 2

River so they.

00:15:37 Speaker 2

We started looking for the.

00:15:39 Speaker 2

That Sergeant that his brother was killed and we couldn't find him and he was in charge of my outfit.

00:15:47 Speaker 2

So we.

00:15:49 Speaker 2

Finally decided to go ahead.

00:15:52 Speaker 2

And we were.

00:15:53 Speaker 2

Crossing the field where there was a lot of movie trap.

00:15:57 Speaker 2

And you do pretty good until you come up on some of our shoulders.

00:16:03 Speaker 2

They had been killed, froze.

00:16:08 Speaker 2

So we went on to another town where was coming across there and the German was doing a lot of sniper. They get the tree and.

00:16:19 Speaker 2

Pick out individuals.

00:16:21 Speaker 2

And you just didn't. They had burp gun and now they shot 1300 rounds A.

00:16:26 Speaker 2

Minute.

00:16:27 Speaker 2

And you just have to be very careful.

00:16:30 Speaker 2

Well, we got.

00:16:33 Speaker 2

In the Pines they get. They had taken this pine thicket and cleaned it up about 10 foot high, all the limbs.

00:16:40 Speaker 2

And they were stationed at Pine Tip.

00:16:43 Speaker 2

And we lost one man in there.

00:16:47 Speaker 2

And we went on down to another town.

00:16:50 Speaker 2

And took it over. We was taking it over, but as I come down the hill.

00:16:55 Speaker 2

An 88 shale came over and you could tell an 88 shale tanker.

00:17:00 Speaker 2

Because it had.

00:17:01 Speaker 2

A.

00:17:01 Speaker 2

A burger. No humming noise.

00:17:04 Speaker 2

And that shell landed close enough to me.

00:17:07 Speaker 2

That it piled dirt on me.

00:17:10 Speaker 2

But it was undead.

00:17:14 Speaker 2

I was saving my life up there.

00:17:18 Speaker 2

So we went on downtown.

00:17:20 Speaker 2

And took it over and we run the Germans out.

00:17:24 Speaker 2

And I took over a basement.

00:17:27 Speaker 2

Where the cattle stayed and the people lived upstairs.

00:17:31 Speaker 2

They put the kettle on.

00:17:33 Speaker 2

In the basement.

00:17:34 Speaker 2

The hay in the loft and maybe over here in the in the where the lid.

00:17:42 Speaker 2

So we all got in that cattle barn in the basement.

00:17:45 Speaker 2

We had an old wash tub we built us up far.

00:17:50 Speaker 2

As the whole heat we.

00:17:51 Speaker 2

Had.

00:17:51 Speaker 2

And I went upstairs and the people had.

00:17:56 Speaker 2

Jelly and stuff canned in the old.

00:18:01 Speaker 2

Stone jars with paraffin on top.

00:18:03 Speaker 1

Uh-huh.

00:18:05 Speaker 2

So when he cleaned up on that pretty good. So one day I decided we had chickens around there and we had potatoes.

00:18:13 Speaker 2

One day I decided I'd done some cooking. I decide we cook us up.

00:18:16 Speaker 2

Some Taters and.

00:18:17

Chicken.

00:18:18 Speaker 2

And I did. I cooked it all up.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

We all had a big bunch to eat and.

00:18:26 Speaker 2

All took the GIS that was the end of the cook.

00:18:31 Speaker 2

So.

00:18:34 Speaker 2

The.

00:18:35 Speaker 2

We've been our.

00:18:38 Speaker 2

Lines.

00:18:40 Speaker 2

We didn't have no big guns at all in one big TD gun and he just shoot a lot. And then he said still like we had a lot. And there's 3000 of us, everything in this town.

00:18:53 Speaker 2

So we they're getting some Flack down there.

00:18:56 Speaker 2

Down the holler and it was the train there was about like it is.

00:19:01 Speaker 2

Here you had a lot of hills and hollers.

00:19:05 Speaker 2

And.

00:19:07 Speaker 2

We went down that hill.

00:19:09 Speaker 2

And check to holler all out and didn't find no man. So went on a.

00:19:14 Speaker 2

Day or two?

00:19:15 Speaker 2

And the.

00:19:18 Speaker 2

Our telephone lines was cut. We now know communication.

00:19:23 Speaker 2

So Kay Company went down that holler.

00:19:26 Speaker 2

And we've come to our Rd.

00:19:28 Speaker 2

Hanging a little bridge and we come to that bridge. We captured 23.

00:19:35 Speaker 2

Soldiers.

00:19:37 Speaker 2

And took him to stockade.

00:19:40 Speaker 2

And then we went back to town.

00:19:43 Speaker 2

Stayed there a few days.

00:19:45 Speaker 2

And while we was there.

00:19:48 Speaker 2

1.

00:19:50 Speaker 2

German was up in the church belfry. We couldn't find him and he was, you know, he's shooting all the time. I mean, we couldn't find where he's at after a while, he got scared and he come down there, started running down the street. That's where we left him.

00:20:05 Speaker 2

And I went into these houses.

00:20:07 Speaker 2

To check, see was any Germans or any soldiers in.

00:20:11 Speaker 2

And they had the cook stoves. Everything. Booby trapped. You didn't touch nothing.

00:20:17 Speaker 2

When I come out, one of the houses one evening.

00:20:20 Speaker 2

They're kind of two shoulders down the street.

00:20:23 Speaker 2

Dressed in white, with the sheets on them.

00:20:27 Speaker 2

And they never knowed we had taken it over.

00:20:30 Speaker 2

I walked out there and stopped him and.

00:20:34 Speaker 2

Took everything off away from them.

00:20:37 Speaker 2

Sounds of the stockade. I guess they got there. So we.

00:20:45 Speaker 2

In a few days.

00:20:47 Speaker 2

My commanding officer.

00:20:50 Speaker 2

Called me in around 15th of December.

00:20:52 Speaker 2

And he said I won't make you my assistant squad leader kick company.

00:21:00 Speaker 2

I said, Sir, you know that.

00:21:04 Speaker 2

The non coms is the first to get killed. They know exactly where they're at. They're on the front.

00:21:08 Speaker 2

And they're on their rear.

00:21:10 Speaker 2

Said Robin watching you and I want you to.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

They go.

00:21:16 Speaker 2

I said well, OK.

00:21:18 Speaker 2

Said you take two men.

00:21:20 Speaker 2

It's just about night. Go down, it's holler.

00:21:24 Speaker 2

We got a little trouble down.

00:21:25 Speaker 2

Here.

00:21:26 Speaker 2

And go down there and see what's down.

00:21:29 Speaker 2

So I did and I reported back pretty soon, he said. You've been been down in the back. I said yes, Sir. It would take me long when I on the move.

00:21:40 Speaker 2

You see one other thing.

00:21:43 Speaker 2

We got a shoulder in this outfit.

00:21:47 Speaker 2

That won't worship.

00:21:50 Speaker 2

Would you go to him?

00:21:54 Speaker 2

And tell him.

00:21:56 Speaker 2

Scrub.

00:21:59 Speaker 2

Well, hi, little leery, but I did I.

00:22:03 Speaker 2

When he told him and he took.

00:22:04 Speaker 2

It in good.

00:22:05 Speaker 2

Faith. He cleaned up. And that's one thing that they.

00:22:09 Speaker 2

Always.

00:22:11 Speaker 2

Torus.

00:22:12 Speaker 2

Keep clean shave.

00:22:14 Speaker 2

Cleaned up because you never want to get caught.

00:22:18 Speaker 2

In bad condition because they think they got you on the move.

00:22:23 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:22:25 Speaker 2

Got that day? And he said.

00:22:28 Speaker 2

So.

00:22:30 Speaker 2

Night before we pulled out 17th of December.

00:22:37 Speaker 2

He said we're going to go.

00:22:41 Speaker 2

To the four lane highway to Berlin was.

00:22:43 Speaker 2

Right close to.

00:22:43 Speaker 2

It we're going to dig in on that.

00:22:46 Speaker 2

We're gonna make a surprise attack in the.

00:22:50 Speaker 2

Bill.

00:22:51 Speaker 2

We made a surprise attack, all right.

00:22:55 Speaker 2

We got just not. Oh, I don't know. Half a mile or more from the.

00:22:59 Speaker 2

Town.

00:23:01 Speaker 2

And the Germans opened up with tanker.

00:23:04 Speaker 2

88 Rob guns.

00:23:07 Speaker 2

And they cleaned the house.

00:23:10 Speaker 2

I got wounded, got right arm, nerves all severed the right arm.

00:23:15 Speaker 2

And my BR man was right in front of me. That's an automatic weapon gun.

00:23:24 Speaker 2

So will I drop my rival and then I'll pick it back up and there wasn't nothing to work with it, wouldn't we wouldn't pull the trigger?

00:23:32 Speaker 2

So I'm a commanding officer.

00:23:34 Speaker 2

Came over and he said you you just want go back to first stage stage.

00:23:39 Speaker 2

And take your BR man.

00:23:42 Speaker 2

And he said I got 4 German predators.

00:23:45 Speaker 2

Could you take them back with?

00:23:47 Speaker 2

I said yes. You'll give me a Rifleman.

00:23:50 Speaker 2

Said OK.

00:23:52 Speaker 2

So give me the right one and the medics got my be our man he.

00:23:56 Speaker 2

Was looking in the hip.

00:23:58 Speaker 2

Good walk.

00:23:59 Speaker 2

And.

00:24:01 Speaker 2

They tried to carry him and snow was about, oh, needy.

00:24:06 Speaker 2

20 below 0.

00:24:08 Speaker 2

And they just couldn't do it. They couldn't give they give out.

00:24:12 Speaker 2

I said, well, boys, we're under a tree, I said. We got to get out of here. Tree burst to get it solved.

00:24:18 Speaker 2

So.

00:24:20 Speaker 2

I said I got one good arm. I'll get a hold of that shoulder and one of you medics get him under the right with the right arm and we'll get him.

00:24:27 Speaker 2

Out.

00:24:27 Speaker 2

Of here we went just a little ways and.

00:24:32 Speaker 2

I made them German soldiers.

00:24:36 Speaker 2

Tell them what I wanted done. How you boys carry this solder.

00:24:40 Speaker 2

So they did, they got and they were. They were just bored. We was fighting with the s s troopers, which that was.

00:24:47 Speaker 2

Hitlers.

00:24:49 Speaker 2

Mean men, they didn't give up.

00:24:50

Right.

00:24:52 Speaker 2

And so they knowed what it meant, and they carried him away. One of our Jeeps came along.

00:24:58 Speaker 2

And maybe uh.

00:25:01 Speaker 2

He said. Would you boys want to ride? He said, yeah.

00:25:04 Speaker 2

He said climb on. We climbed on that Jeep and went back to the town where we left from and was going down the street and right on the left was a.

00:25:16 Speaker 2

First stage station, so I told The Rifleman. I said you take your.

00:25:21 Speaker 2

These four players to the stockade.

00:25:24 Speaker 2

And we're going over the first state station. Well, by that time, the numbness had went out of the my buddies leg.

00:25:30 Speaker 2

And we crawled up the bank and went to first aid station in a basement.

00:25:36 Speaker 2

And that's where I stayed till that afternoon.

00:25:40 Speaker 2

They Amherst came and picked me up.

00:25:44 Speaker 2

And took me back to another first aid station.

00:25:50 Speaker 2

Farther from the lines stayed there till about night.

00:25:56 Speaker 2

And that's the first it affected me at.

00:25:58 Speaker 2

All.

00:26:00 Speaker 2

From when I was wounded and I got sicker.

00:26:03 Speaker 2

Than the dog.

00:26:05 Speaker 2

So they.

00:26:07 Speaker 2

Right at night, another ambulance come and pick me up and took me back to Luxembourg.

00:26:12 Speaker 2

To General Hospital.

00:26:16 Speaker 2

And about 2:00 next morning, January the 19th.

00:26:22 Speaker 2

They operated on my arm and took the cloth and everything out of it and disinfected it.

00:26:29 Speaker 2

And started me on penicillin and sulfa drug every four hours.

00:26:36 Speaker 2

The next morning I ran into my commanding officer.

00:26:40 Speaker 2

And he governed and he said.

00:26:45 Speaker 2

We had no man left. OK. Company. There were others killed or wounded.

00:26:52 Speaker 2

So.

00:26:53 Speaker 2

Didn't stay there very long. They put me on a train.

00:26:58 Speaker 2

Send me to Paris at 10 miles an hour.

00:27:01 Speaker 2

And it's good ways from Luxembourg to Paris.

00:27:05 Speaker 2

And the only way I could get relief.

00:27:07 Speaker 2

As I once laid my.

00:27:10 Speaker 2

Head on my arm and just numb it.

00:27:13 Speaker 2

We got to Paris and put him in the hospital there.

00:27:18 Speaker 2

And.

00:27:20 Speaker 2

Just stayed around a week.

00:27:22 Speaker 2

Said, well, there's nothing we can do for you only.

00:27:26 Speaker 2

Send you back. They send me to England. So I got on a plane.

00:27:32 Speaker 2

And.

00:27:33 Speaker 2

We started to cross the channel. It was snowing and a blowing and the of the pilot was his 50th mission across there, he said. It was a rough 1 he had ever made and we thought was going to turn around and go back, but we made it and landed South of London.

00:27:54 Speaker 2

And gonna bus and Rd.

00:27:58 Speaker 2

Chippenham, England.

00:28:00 Speaker 2

To 154th General.

00:28:02 Speaker 2

Hospital.

00:28:03 Speaker 2

Where I was stationed.

00:28:05 Speaker 2

Several days.

00:28:08 Speaker 2

We was close enough.

00:28:10 Speaker 2

That we can hear are the buzz bombs.

00:28:14 Speaker 2

That was.

00:28:16 Speaker 2

The Germans would put a they would have a motor on. They would put so much fuel in.

00:28:22 Speaker 2

And send it in the air and when he come down the.

00:28:26 Speaker 2

Bomb went off.

00:28:27 Speaker 2

It was.

00:28:29 Speaker 2

That way we can hear them go off, but I stayed there a few days and the doctors decided they'd what they would do and they would operate on my arm again.

00:28:42 Speaker 2

So they went in there and.

00:28:47 Speaker 2

28 cut it from 28 stitches.

00:28:52 Speaker 2

And tied that nerve back together.

00:28:55 Speaker 2

And wrap it, wrap it with aluminum foil so it didn't grow to the yarn.

00:29:03 Speaker 2

With novocaine.

00:29:05 Speaker 2

And so they give me six shots and I I was feeling it all. And finally I said they went after the 7th shot. I said boy.

00:29:16 Speaker 2

If you can stand it, I can. Let's get this over.

00:29:21 Speaker 2

So they never got back with the seventh shot.

00:29:24 Speaker 2

And they went on and done that operation.

00:29:28 Speaker 2

And I watched him for a long time. I had they had a big light overhead and I was watching when they caught me and they showed the towel on my face.

00:29:37 Speaker 2

So when they got through.

00:29:39 Speaker 2

With that, I said well, boy, you've done your dirty work. Let me see what you.

00:29:43 Speaker 2

Done. I just called off the table.

00:29:46 Speaker 2

And four hour operation.

00:29:49 Speaker 2

So.

00:29:55 Speaker 2

We I went back to my bed.

00:29:58 Speaker 2

And I had we had a lot of boys there that couldn't help themselves, so I had one arm, I could feed them, do what they was to do. So I.

00:30:08 Speaker 2

I fed soldiers.

00:30:10 Speaker 2

For a few days.

00:30:12 Speaker 2

And.

00:30:16 Speaker 2

Transferred.

00:30:17 Speaker 2

To Bristol, England.

00:30:21 Speaker 2

To.

00:30:22 Speaker 2

Debark.

00:30:24 Speaker 2

To back the statewide said, there was no more they could do for me.

00:30:28 Speaker 2

And it take a long time to ever heal.

00:30:31 Speaker 2

And so.

00:30:33 Speaker 2

Gonna hospital ship?

00:30:36 Speaker 2

And road across there took 15 days to come into Charleston, SC.

00:30:45 Speaker 2

I was been out.

00:30:47 Speaker 2

We was out, if I remember right.

00:30:49 Speaker 2

Three days before Roosevelt died, we were on the scene.

00:30:54 Speaker 2

And.

00:30:56 Speaker 2

Stayed there at Memphis. View a little while and they sent me to Memphis, TN by train.

00:31:05 Speaker 2

To the nerve center.

00:31:07 Speaker 2

And they.

00:31:09 Speaker 2

That's all they do. Mostly is nerve operations.

00:31:15 Speaker 2

So then.

00:31:18 Speaker 2

I went in one day. I had.

00:31:21 Speaker 2

A.

00:31:21 Speaker 2

Kernel air. He looked at my arm and he says, where did they do that at?

00:31:27 Speaker 2

umm

00:31:31 Speaker 2

He said they've done a dirty job.

00:31:33 Speaker 2

He said they did. There's a big scar and he said.

00:31:37 Speaker 2

What about us?

00:31:39 Speaker 2

Cut that open and tighten it up, I said. I'll wear this car, Sir.

00:31:44 Speaker 2

He said OK.

00:31:46 Speaker 2

He said well, them fingers is no good to you.

00:31:50 Speaker 2

The little one and next to it.

00:31:52 Speaker 2

We'll take them all.

00:31:54 Speaker 2

I said, Sir, I'll wear the fingers.

00:31:59 Speaker 2

He said. How would you like to go to Camp Atterbury?

00:32:03 Speaker 2

I said, I sure would. I bet. And I said that. But what I wanted in three day pass, he said what for? And I said my girlfriend's graduating high school and I won't be there.

00:32:17 Speaker 2

He said you think you can make it in three days.

00:32:20 Speaker 2

I said I can get.

00:32:20 Speaker 2

There.

00:32:22 Speaker 2

He said that you couldn't get back, so he said, well, pack your stuff and.

00:32:32 Speaker 2

I had got a uniform. I've been in PJS.

00:32:37 Speaker 2

From England, couldn't get a uniform so.

00:32:41 Speaker 2

They had transferred me on a different.

00:32:44 Speaker 2

Room in the hospital and I had uniform on, the nurse said. You can't stay here in a uniform.

00:32:53 Speaker 2

I said why?

00:32:55 Speaker 2

She said that's orders.

00:32:57 Speaker 2

And I said, well, I will do something because I'm not going to give the uniform.

00:33:03 Speaker 2

So I went back and I said.

00:33:06 Speaker 2

Ma'am.

00:33:09 Speaker 2

I'm transferring.

00:33:10 Speaker 2

To another barrier or ward and I'm not giving up the uniform.

00:33:16 Speaker 2

So we got orders as 52 of us including the.

00:33:22 Speaker 2

Officer, that was over. He was from northern Indiana.

00:33:25 Speaker 2

And we got on a train.

00:33:31 Speaker 2

Just a civilian train.

00:33:33 Speaker 2

And.

00:33:35 Speaker 2

Road to Louisville, about a 2 hour layover.

00:33:40 Speaker 2

So we got there and.

00:33:43 Speaker 2

I told the officer. I said, you know, I just live up the road a little ways.

00:33:48 Speaker 2

Said. Maybe learn. I'll let you off.

00:33:50 Speaker 2

Said you might not come back, I said, Sir.

00:33:54 Speaker 2

I'm not going home.

00:33:56 Speaker 2

I'll be here when this train pulls out.

00:33:59 Speaker 2

And he said, well, boys, we've had a pretty good time.

00:34:04 Speaker 2

On this train.

00:34:06 Speaker 2

But when you get back on.

00:34:09 Speaker 2

They will be nothing brought back on this.

00:34:13 Speaker 2

Train.

00:34:15 Speaker 2

Of drink.

00:34:17 Speaker 2

If it does, it goes down the sink.

00:34:20 Speaker 2

Well, you know, there's always a future.

00:34:23 Speaker 2

So we got, we got on the train and sure enough they some of them had brought something to drink. He just took it, poured down the drain.

00:34:31 Speaker 2

And we got into camp at her at Atterbury, about 4:00 in the morning.

00:34:37 Speaker 2

They hadn't had no sleep.

00:34:40 Speaker 2

They said you boys like to be processed.

00:34:44 Speaker 2

Before you lay down.

00:34:47 Speaker 2

I they.

00:34:50 Speaker 2

Took us out there in the front of the barracks and marched us out there and.

00:34:54 Speaker 2

Sergeant, come over. And he said, what's the matter to you? I said I.

00:34:58 Speaker 2

Got the right arm shot.

00:35:01 Speaker 2

He said you'd be a good one to go to Japan. I said. What do you mean? I can't even pick up a gun.

00:35:09 Speaker 2

So.

00:35:11 Speaker 2

They sent us up to Waken General Hospital.

00:35:14 Speaker 2

And that night, I hitchhiked home for the 1st.

00:35:19 Speaker 2

I've been hearing a good while.

00:35:21 Speaker 2

So then.

00:35:24 Speaker 2

I'd hitchhike home and get back the next morning by 6:00.

00:35:30 Speaker 2

So in the Wakeman General Hospital they.

00:35:34 Speaker 2

Put me in a Whirlpool.

00:35:37 Speaker 2

With water with and then they would take electrical shocker, put on here and try to bring up nerve back.

00:35:46 Speaker 2

And then they put a brace on my hand to try to.

00:35:48 Speaker 2

Straighten the.

00:35:48 Speaker 2

Fingers and I stayed there then.

00:35:52 Speaker 2

A while they give me a.

00:35:55 Speaker 2

Furlough to go home. So there's nothing we can do on. It's just it's just time.

00:36:00

MHM.

00:36:00 Speaker 2

Convalescent fertilizer.

00:36:02 Speaker 2

And.

00:36:04 Speaker 2

October the 22nd.

00:36:07 Speaker 2

I married my sweetheart.

00:36:11 Speaker 2

45.

00:36:14 Speaker 2

And then she stayed with my folks.

00:36:17 Speaker 2

And I went back to Camp Atterbury.

00:36:21 Speaker 2

Took more treatment everything and I was discharged on January the 8th, 1946.

00:36:30 Speaker 2

With 100% disability.

00:36:34 Speaker 2

And.

00:36:37 Speaker 2

He checked home, got my severance pay.

00:36:41 Speaker 2

And.

00:36:43 Speaker 2

Discharge.

00:36:45 Speaker 2

He tracked home for and.

00:36:50 Speaker 2

We stayed with my folks for a while and we built a little home.

00:36:57 Speaker 2

And I've raised tomatoes.

00:37:01 Speaker 2

And grain.

00:37:04 Speaker 2

And drove the trucks on for people.

00:37:09 Speaker 2

So the weather affected me a lot. The arm, I couldn't get a I couldn't get a job where I had used to arm, but it just.

00:37:17 Speaker 2

Wouldn't.

00:37:18 Speaker 2

Do what they would want me to do.

00:37:21 Speaker 2

On 1951.

00:37:23 Speaker 2

Took the family and we went to Haines City, FL.

00:37:27 Speaker 2

And I went down there and picked fruit for a while.

00:37:31 Speaker 2

Whole fruit for a while and then I going semi and whole fruit peeling.

00:37:36 Speaker 2

We make cattle feed out there.

00:37:40 Speaker 2

I worked there for 28 winters, come back in the summer and farm.

00:37:44

Hmm.

00:37:46 Speaker 2

And.

00:37:50 Speaker 2

I'd come up here and farm what I could, and then I would.

00:37:56 Speaker 2

Get truck driving job when that was seeing was slow.

00:38:00 Speaker 2

Anything to make a nickel.

00:38:03 Speaker 2

Because time was tough back then.

00:38:08 Speaker 2

And.

00:38:10 Speaker 2

In 19.

00:38:11 Speaker 2

78.

00:38:13 Speaker 2

We left Haines City.

00:38:15 Speaker 2

Came back.

00:38:16 Speaker 2

Indiana farm.

00:38:18 Speaker 2

And stay.

00:38:22 Speaker 2

And.

00:38:25 Speaker 2

Had been here just there too, to went to work for the Washington County Highway Department.

00:38:31 Speaker 2

And worked there for 14 years and retired from there in 1996.

00:38:37 Speaker 2

And then.

00:38:41 Speaker 2

1999.

00:38:46 Speaker 2

I lost a son.

00:38:48 Speaker 2

I'm 48 years old. Got dead.

00:38:53 Speaker 2

And.

00:38:59 Speaker 2

Last year.

00:39:00 Speaker 2

I lost my daughter, 39 drop dead.

00:39:06 Speaker 2

That's better.

00:39:08 Speaker 2

Badge.

00:39:11 Speaker 2

But we will live over the Lord with us.

00:39:14 Speaker 2

And that's the main thing.

00:39:17 Speaker 2

And we're retired.

00:39:20 Speaker 2

We I can still mow the yards. I got a garden.

00:39:24 Speaker 2

And.

00:39:27 Speaker 2

Lord willing.

00:39:29 Speaker 2

Well.

00:39:30

Thank you.

00:39:32 Speaker 2

Thank you. That's the.

00:39:35

Thank you.

00:39:36 Speaker 2

So many questions.