

Troy Munn Interview #2

Company K, 317th Inf Reg

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Ellen L. George)

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

00:00:27 Speaker 1

With Troy Monroe's gonna ask some follow up questions afterwards and we're just commenting on the fact that Mister Munro is a very large young man over from 200 lbs. When you were in the military at 19 years old and in the picture that's in the shad.

00:00:41 Speaker 1

He's 20.

00:00:44 Speaker 1

You were.

00:00:45 Speaker 1

When he tapes that before about crossing the Rhine, he said.

00:00:49 Speaker 1

Was one of the scariest moments.

00:00:50 Speaker 2

It was.

00:00:52 Speaker 2

Because it was me at this time, I didn't have to see.

00:00:55 Speaker 2

Supposed to have an awesome.

00:00:56 Speaker 2

But officials were made over.

00:01:00 Speaker 2

They they knew them when they chewed and we had very low, almost never had an officer, but I was the one who pushed those young men under that boat. Get in there, hurt, get in there. Back up.

00:01:14 Speaker 2

It gave you kind of a funny feeling, but it just so happened we took from a tumor fire. But we're going over and we didn't run into small ones.

00:01:23 Speaker 2

We're lucky.

00:01:25 Speaker 2

And it bothered.

00:01:26 Speaker 2

Sure it bothered me because I was responsible for that.

00:01:29 Speaker 2

They were in there like sardines. I'm.

00:01:33 Speaker 2

And I.

00:01:35

That.

00:01:36 Speaker 2

Young man, he ruled that boat.

00:01:37 Speaker 2

Suppose he's a Navy.

00:01:38 Speaker 2

I don't know, but he has done good respecting one, had very few words to say, except he said when I let this front down, he said I can't hold this up as too swift.

00:01:48 Speaker 2

He's going to.

00:01:49 Speaker 2

To get out of here and you guys are like okay?

00:01:51 Speaker 2

Yeah, we want to go.

00:01:53 Speaker 1

Was it you?

00:01:54 Speaker 1

Probably because you felt so exposed.

00:01:57 Speaker 2

What? What you going to do with that? Many men only guts or some rifle. That ain't going to help.

00:02:02 Speaker 1

Were you the?

00:02:03 Speaker 1

Elements to cross the Rhine, then.

00:02:05 Speaker 2

Then that's what we were.

00:02:06 Speaker 2

Yes, Ma, I and Z.

00:02:09

Nights.

00:02:12 Speaker 1

I just have a whole series of random questions.

00:02:14

It's OK.

00:02:14 Speaker 1

Not going to follow any particular chronologic order.

00:02:18

I did.

00:02:19 Speaker 1

You encounter any German tanks?

00:02:21

No.

00:02:22 Speaker 1

Never did.

00:02:23 Speaker 2

I've.

00:02:23 Speaker 1

At that point.

00:02:24 Speaker 2

Seen them.

00:02:25 Speaker 2

You know, that's something you learn right quick up there in the Bulls.

00:02:31 Speaker 2

We could see them and they had a bad habit. Their infantry dropped way back behind those tanks.

00:02:38 Speaker 2

And I used to tell them guys if they come our way, let him go through and kill off that infantry called where is.

00:02:45 Speaker 2

Going to go.

00:02:46 Speaker 2

He go off down.

00:02:46 Speaker 2

Someone, somebody will put a bazooka in here? We didn't have one, but I said.

00:02:53 Speaker 2

Where I wouldn't leave a tomato tax with tanks like it's that I walked out of beside that was right up beside that tank and I kept the guys up close to it because it was good protection.

00:03:06 Speaker 2

And but I can.

00:03:06 Speaker 2

I can remember seeing them did not come our.

00:03:09 Speaker 2

Be open next door or something going after a different company and spread out way back to my man that shoot shoot.

00:03:14 Speaker 1

Mm.

00:03:18 Speaker 2

But like I said, I learned it quite a bit up there from the first. When I first went up there, our platoon Sergeant was reading at just a buck sardon in the name of Smith.

00:03:31 Speaker 2

From West Virginia.

00:03:33 Speaker 2

And he was. They call him the quiet man, though he grew out all night on patrol. And they said you couldn't hear him.

00:03:41 Speaker 2

But he's he, one told.

00:03:43 Speaker 2

One little I knew about, you know, and keep your head down.

00:03:47 Speaker 1

To how regularly did you go on patrol?

00:03:50 Speaker 1

How regulated?

00:03:51 Speaker 1

How often do you go on patrol?

00:03:52

Before.

00:03:53 Speaker 2

Well, not all the time, but sometimes we'd be we dig in some of.

00:03:56 Speaker 2

Well, we need to watch out there for 400 yards or down that little Old Town, so.

00:04:02 Speaker 2

Sneak.

00:04:02 Speaker 2

And now they they regimental head of what they call a Tiger patrol.

00:04:08 Speaker 2

All they.

00:04:08 Speaker 2

They proud at night we could hear them go through some nights at about 12.

00:04:10

Hmm.

00:04:14 Speaker 2

And they there's like ghost men. You could hear them, but you didn't realize what they were because we learned what they were.

00:04:20 Speaker 2

Call them the Tiger patrol.

00:04:22 Speaker 2

It be.

00:04:23 Speaker 2

Most of the night.

00:04:25 Speaker 2

It's giving it. Yeah, I'm splitting it.

00:04:25 Speaker 1

You know, Special forces unit that went out there.

00:04:28 Speaker 3

How often did you have to go on patrols to get prisoners?

00:04:32 Speaker 2

Oh, not very often because the 3rd Army moved so fast that the.

00:04:41 Speaker 2

We didn't give him time to really dig in.

00:04:44 Speaker 2

And.

00:04:47 Speaker 2

Say after the bulge, when we patrol with some at night, but any daytime.

00:04:54 Speaker 2

But not.

00:04:54 Speaker 2

A whole lot 'cause they had that place.

00:04:57 Speaker 2

That time pretty well mapped and pretty well had information on it.

00:05:03 Speaker 1

Speaking of the bulge from.

00:05:08 Speaker 1

From a perspective 60 years later.

00:05:11 Speaker 1

The historical perspective we have on the bulges, of course, of Bastogne being surrounded, the Germans breaking out of the Ardennes and your unit would attack the southern flank.

00:05:21 Speaker 1

They always, the historians, always talk about your unit being part of the army that would.

00:05:28 Speaker 1

Come up from the South in bad weather to relieve that sector, but I don't get the impression that you guys just kind of drove up there.

00:05:35 Speaker 1

Had to fight your way there, right?

00:05:36 Speaker 2

And frankly, up there in the sector, you see the 1st Infantry Division and three entry regiments, 317 which I was in the 318th and 319th.

00:05:45 Speaker 2

There was a part of the 18th Regiment went with the 4th Army Division, were the first ones in the Bastogne and they had to fight their way in there.

00:05:55 Speaker 2

Didn't just walk in there, they fought their way in there.

00:05:57 Speaker 2

Were on their right flank.

00:06:00 Speaker 2

It seemed like the 28th Division of Fifth Army was on.

00:06:03 Speaker 2

Left leg but.

00:06:04 Speaker 2

The rest of the ages on their right leg and they they had to fight their way into mastome with their the 4th armored that was patents main weapon.

00:06:14 Speaker 2

And.

00:06:14 Speaker 2

All of those guys were good.

00:06:16 Speaker 2

They had mostly general swimming tanks and.

00:06:19 Speaker 2

They were good.

00:06:21 Speaker 2

And of course they're infantry support. They had amongst themselves and the 318th century went part of it, not the whole regiment.

00:06:28 Speaker 2

Of.

00:06:28 Speaker 2

Went with them, giving some grounds for and.

00:06:32 Speaker 2

We knew.

00:06:33 Speaker 2

Bastone. But we had our hands full.

00:06:37 Speaker 2

There was no little rivers and creeks, we call them. They called them rivers.

00:06:41 Speaker 2

Cold wade and.

00:06:45 Speaker 2

Some guy said I don't know who signed this to us.

00:06:50 Speaker 2

Said man, he's had a vision of hell or something that he's brought us up here.

00:06:54 Speaker 2

Show us wonder something about.

00:06:57 Speaker 2

Little old hills and no little valleys having the little rivers going through there. Well, they named bridges. If they did bloom, we had cross before.

00:07:07 Speaker 2

And that's the worst part about being in the infantry.

00:07:13 Speaker 2

As you're a foot soldier, that's all raised.

00:07:16 Speaker 3

Can you describe the?

00:07:18 Speaker 3

When did you guys use air support?

00:07:20 Speaker 3

You call in air support.

00:07:20 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:07:22 Speaker 2

And we had.

00:07:23 Speaker 2

We.

00:07:24 Speaker 2

They call it the 15th Tactical Air Command.

00:07:26 Speaker 2

They flew with the 3rd Army.

00:07:29 Speaker 1

Did you ever call in support?

00:07:31 Speaker 2

Oh wait, I think I raised on that prune with pram St.

00:07:32 Speaker 1

Can you describe our situation from?

00:07:35 Speaker 2

Where they were.

00:07:36 Speaker 1

Could you describe where you may be used?

00:07:38 Speaker 1

Support to help achieve an objective.

00:07:40 Speaker 3

What's an example given example?

00:07:42 Speaker 2

Well.

00:07:44 Speaker 2

The patient will.

00:07:46 Speaker 1

Well.

00:07:47 Speaker 2

That will, Sir Weaver. I was leading the first platoon in front of the company.

00:07:52 Speaker 2

We're coming.

00:07:53 Speaker 2

There was a field here, this road in this valley down here.

00:07:57 Speaker 2

Going to go up here and go around this hill.

00:07:58 Speaker 2

This town called.

00:08:01 Speaker 2

Well, we got a few certain begin.

00:08:03 Speaker 2

Some machine gun fire.

00:08:06 Speaker 2

Captain Binder, central runner friend, told me to back out of there and go over this hill.

00:08:10 Speaker 2

It's a hall, I said.

00:08:11 Speaker 2

Goes right into town.

00:08:13 Speaker 2

But we did just about time we hit that holler.

00:08:16 Speaker 2

Why you can tell a mortar shell when it hit the way they sound, I thought.

00:08:20 Speaker 2

Go back mortar.

00:08:21 Speaker 2

We can outrun mortar, but it took them time to reset their bases.

00:08:25 Speaker 2

We aren't with mortars down, but they had to 0 it in.

00:08:29 Speaker 2

We got one more mortars into that town of Willowville, but that mortar crew we never did find him, but they left out of there, so went right on across that Little River going up to the little town called pinch.

00:08:41 Speaker 2

That's where the Air Force worked over that army.

00:08:43 Speaker 2

Had up there.

00:08:44 Speaker 2

The people, the P-47's always see them, always see them.

00:08:47 Speaker 2

Yeah, you could see him and smoke coming over machine guns.

00:08:52 Speaker 2

And there's a cemetery there.

00:08:56 Speaker 2

They got 2 smoking areas. They have three full tanks and 1/2.

00:09:00 Speaker 2

Up.

00:09:00 Speaker 2

Well, we went up that road and there's a cemetery on the left there. And we saw two run out of there in their snow suits and take out across that cemetery running well. Two of the guys on the left down, both of them.

00:09:13 Speaker 2

We went on into that town with the Air Force. We worked with that armor up there, but there's not enough.

00:09:20 Speaker 2

Church steeple. So they got them.

00:09:23 Speaker 2

They called.

00:09:24 Speaker 2

Somebody called in our own artillery fire and they were trying to get that church without that, not damaging that church.

00:09:30 Speaker 2

That's harder to do.

00:09:32 Speaker 2

So they said no. We'd have to take him out of there with the infantry so.

00:09:37 Speaker 2

Two of my guys.

00:09:38 Speaker 2

One of them was this guy singer and I love his buddy with all men from Hancock and.

00:09:43 Speaker 2

You want to.

00:09:43 Speaker 2

Get the *****. So they they went.

00:09:45 Speaker 2

Work and we kept hold of.

00:09:48 Speaker 2

Rifle fire where we couldn't.

00:09:49 Speaker 2

They want apparently got him.

00:09:52 Speaker 2

They threw a hand grenade in.

00:09:53 Speaker 2

He coming out there and he's bleeding in both.

00:09:55 Speaker 2

And.

00:09:55 Speaker 2

Boy, that hand grenade really fixed him.

00:09:59 Speaker 3

And So what?

00:09:59 Speaker 2

It was just that one sniper at the Air Force worked with them left.

00:10:03 Speaker 2

Left out there.

00:10:05 Speaker 2

Except that one sniper.

00:10:08 Speaker 1

Well, you mentioned a number of towns where the Burger Meister come.

00:10:10 Speaker 1

And surrender.

00:10:12 Speaker 1

Were there towns that you had to fight house to house to take them?

00:10:15 Speaker 1

Your way.

00:10:16 Speaker 1

Could you describe some of the you?

00:10:18 Speaker 2

Know the there's many of them there.

00:10:21 Speaker 2

She went with small little country villages and then given the barns and getting for cat stuff. You have to go in there and dig them out, leave them a fight, you know, and.

00:10:31 Speaker 2

Oi can go to town, several of them.

00:10:34 Speaker 2

One there called Cayman.

00:10:36 Speaker 2

I don't know if you notice that and pretty good little battle.

00:10:39 Speaker 2

Where the first company commander got hit in there.

00:10:41 Speaker 2

Name was Bob Smith.

00:10:42 Speaker 2

Captain Smith, he got knocked out there to Cayman and this Bishop came on.

00:10:47 Speaker 2

But yeah, yeah, no amount of.

00:10:48 Speaker 2

Was a little time.

00:10:50 Speaker 2

But usually, if that's the was strong enough, he'd run.

00:10:54 Speaker 2

Out of it.

00:10:55 Speaker 1

You guys probably weren't taught how to clear houses or take small towns in boot camp, right?

00:11:02 Speaker 1

So how did you?

00:11:05 Speaker 1

How did you approach that? You were taught that.

00:11:08 Speaker 1

You do.

00:11:10 Speaker 2

Like I say, I hate bands.

00:11:11 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:11:12

Strength.

00:11:13 Speaker 1

Just kind of figure it out or he?

00:11:14 Speaker 2

He looks like go down. Yeah, yeah.

00:11:15 Speaker 1

Some other guy.

00:11:16 Speaker 2

You know you don't just go rushing in there blind 'cause you figure out where they might be in that building over there.

00:11:24 Speaker 2

They're up there close to that crossroads and you kind of look the situation over. You learn.

00:11:30 Speaker 2

And then you hunt them out, and then they they were good, but they weren't even.

00:11:38 Speaker 2

Weren't even better than these guys out there and they'd hunt.

00:11:41 Speaker 2

Out and smoke them out.

00:11:43 Speaker 2

You take a.

00:11:44

Cup you cut.

00:11:45 Speaker 2

You say you get as.

00:11:46 Speaker 2

As three or four in a house.

00:11:48 Speaker 2

And boy, you go to par and say you've got as much as 15 riflemen left there with those.

00:11:54 Speaker 2

Duran rivals Boy, they can't stand.

00:11:56 Speaker 2

That's too much lead flying. They'll come out of it.

00:11:58 Speaker 1

You mentioned the.

00:11:59 Speaker 1

One grand several times it sounds like you have a lot of respect for that weapon.

00:12:02 Speaker 2

And that was the only weapon I.

00:12:04 Speaker 2

It's an exclude until I got across the Rhine or a moving sled.

00:12:07 Speaker 2

Had that grease gun that cured.

00:12:09 Speaker 2

That was my baby that owned him. One absolutely.

00:12:12 Speaker 2

I've seen him just get crusted over with snow and stuff. Where you'd.

00:12:16 Speaker 2

To crawl.

00:12:18 Speaker 2

It still kick him out.

00:12:19 Speaker 1

So you know, he probably reliability and.

00:12:21 Speaker 2

They certainly.

00:12:22

Were.

00:12:23 Speaker 2

They certainly were the.

00:12:25 Speaker 2

You know they'd shoot 8 times and kick that clip.

00:12:28 Speaker 2

And.

00:12:29 Speaker 2

Give it more agent or reload. I carried almost carried a belt for my connection and now when crossed round.

00:12:36 Speaker 2

Later.

00:12:37 Speaker 2

In order to get money of ammunition, I had to bayonet, not see any use using that bayonet. I had some ammunition.

00:12:45 Speaker 1

The question I always wanted to ask is, yeah, a lot of soldiers will have 1 weapon when they start the war and another when they finish.

00:12:53

How do?

00:12:54 Speaker 1

How do you get a grease gun?

00:12:55 Speaker 1

You deserve an armor or do.

00:12:57 Speaker 1

Just pick one.

00:12:57 Speaker 1

And how does that work?

00:12:58 Speaker 2

Yeah. Usually the tankers will happen in the Champlain, really tankers had them in.

00:13:04 Speaker 2

Some of the machine Gunners had them.

00:13:05 Speaker 2

They didn't carry Robin or some of them carried little carbines. Some of them carried machine and I got a whole this and I forget who gave me that.

00:13:13 Speaker 2

That's what them guys called me big boy.

00:13:15 Speaker 2

Don't say that.

00:13:18 Speaker 2

And here take this.

00:13:20 Speaker 2

I forget how many shells it held.

00:13:23 Speaker 2

Pretty good size clip once 16, something I don't remember.

00:13:27 Speaker 2

How AG 4 is level?

00:13:28 Speaker 3

Just to spray lead or was it actually a fairly accurate gun?

00:13:31 Speaker 2

The barrel was about so long on it and.

00:13:35 Speaker 2

And what they were were cheaply made to know they were they were good.

00:13:39 Speaker 2

Worked really well, but I think maybe Motorola made them.

00:13:43

Hmm.

00:13:44 Speaker 2

And they just steal.

00:13:46 Speaker 2

They had.

00:13:46 Speaker 2

Wire thing come out for a stock.

00:13:48 Speaker 2

You want to use a stock.

00:13:50 Speaker 2

But they were fully automatic.

00:13:53 Speaker 2

And reliable, but I didn't use it all that much because I had that old grandma and that was the weapon. And those guys went up to him.

00:14:00 Speaker 1

Really.

00:14:02 Speaker 2

Swear by him, said no. I don't want. I don't want no more carbine. I want this.

00:14:06 Speaker 1

For the most part, your guys latched on to Grandy, used it, then.

00:14:09

We can begin.

00:14:12 Speaker 1

In your view, how did the small arms that the US military stack up to the ones that the Germans used or the ones that you went up against?

00:14:21 Speaker 2

Had some real good.

00:14:22 Speaker 2

Course, the old Mauser you know, was a very reliable boat action smooth boat, but they also had that we call no Burk gun.

00:14:31 Speaker 2

Were a smelter that you hear one go if you didn't hear it?

00:14:36 Speaker 2

Man, he's not.

00:14:37 Speaker 2

That's just the way they sound and.

00:14:42 Speaker 2

The first one this major was done about the first one. Again, that whole building when it first went up, there he was.

00:14:47 Speaker 2

Us about.

00:14:48 Speaker 2

I know you guys heard about these.

00:14:50 Speaker 2

You heard about the burnt down, he said. He said that Burtons.

00:14:56 Speaker 2

Just a lot of talks and spray a lot of.

00:14:58 Speaker 2

Not all that good.

00:14:59 Speaker 2

He left out old Sergeant mission. Let me tell you about the Burt gun said.

00:15:04 Speaker 2

Start your healing coming.

00:15:05 Speaker 2

Your rear end, will you even duck?

00:15:09 Speaker 2

Got it.

00:15:10 Speaker 2

Rush.

00:15:13

I.

00:15:13

He said.

00:15:13 Speaker 2

Don't you doubt?

00:15:14 Speaker 2

Said boy, when they cut loose, he won them things and they'll get several shots on you for.

00:15:21 Speaker 2

And they had that and like, say, their standard represent the old bold action.

00:15:26 Speaker 2

Mountain.

00:15:28 Speaker 1

Well, the.

00:15:29 Speaker 1

How effective was our artillery?

00:15:30 Speaker 2

Or man, you heard about 88's known as the, but that 105 house we had man one of beauty. They could throw anything on the sun at me but that.

00:15:38 Speaker 1

Mm.

00:15:43 Speaker 2

It's worth mortars the arch for.

00:15:45 Speaker 2

Thing at you boy.

00:15:46 Speaker 2

You're a goner.

00:15:47 Speaker 2

That's all there is.

00:15:48

It.

00:15:48 Speaker 2

I thought it was one of the best weapon I've seen him fire him, see him work out there. Were they hit him?

00:15:54 Speaker 2

Now we had the 155, which is a long range and we had the 240 S, which is a huge weapon which 105 how much when they pull around buying another truck stuff.

00:16:05 Speaker 2

It was a vicious whip.

00:16:08 Speaker 2

Vicious weapon.

00:16:11 Speaker 2

Now the 88 that you.

00:16:12 Speaker 2

The 88 was more us a rifle shot.

00:16:17

On top of.

00:16:18 Speaker 1

You did you ever encounter any any aircraft during your time with? No. So they always had that person on the sea at that point.

00:16:24 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, they already had it. I saw one.

00:16:27 Speaker 2

I saw one get shot in but there was 3.

00:16:31 Speaker 2

He kept surfing around, playing what he was.

00:16:33 Speaker 2

Don't know what kind.

00:16:34 Speaker 2

Was determined.

00:16:35 Speaker 2

He kept certain certain, I guess taking pictures and finding these three.

00:16:41 Speaker 2

I guess there were P-47 came into science and.

00:16:44 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:16:45 Speaker 2

Two of them peeled.

00:16:46 Speaker 2

This one went down adding like that and you come up on him and you could see the streaks in.

00:16:51 Speaker 2

Machine guns and.

00:16:53 Speaker 1

That's it.

00:16:53 Speaker 2

That's all what she wrote.

00:16:56 Speaker 2

Off and left, they said you can have him.

00:16:57 Speaker 2

Guess they will see him.

00:17:02 Speaker 2

Just a short burst in them.

00:17:04 Speaker 3

You can see smoke come.

00:17:05 Speaker 2

In them, when they shooting machine gun.

00:17:07 Speaker 3

What about buzz bombs? Buzz bombs?

00:17:10 Speaker 2

We could hear him go over.

00:17:12 Speaker 2

Yeah, they've been pop.

00:17:13 Speaker 2

Know what they.

00:17:15 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:17:17 Speaker 1

I mean, did you do you?

00:17:18 Speaker 1

Have a chance to bring back any photos or did you liberate anything from the German prisoners of interest?

00:17:26 Speaker 2

I've got a few souvenirs in.

00:17:28 Speaker 2

Too.

00:17:29

Would.

00:17:29 Speaker 1

You mind checking us, OK.

00:17:30 Speaker 2

No.

00:17:32 Speaker 1

Let's go and pause the tape.

00:17:33

Thank you.

00:17:34 Speaker 1

OK.

00:17:35 Speaker 1

We got the.

00:17:36 Speaker 1

Pause. So go ahead and take your time.

00:17:40 Speaker 1

Here so it looks like.

00:17:42 Speaker 2

Hey Siri.

00:17:44 Speaker 2

One of their famous.

00:17:46 Speaker 1

Wow.

00:17:49 Speaker 1

So could you hold some of these up and maybe describe maybe?

00:17:51 Speaker 3

How did you get the how acquire them?

00:17:53

Well, we're.

00:17:54 Speaker 2

Actually, for I never took these off.

00:17:56 Speaker 1

OK, OK. So you have a.

00:17:57 Speaker 2

This souvenir that's an arm band like they wore.

00:18:01 Speaker 1

Is it show up OK?

00:18:02 Speaker 3

Oh, yeah, yeah, it's good.

00:18:05 Speaker 3

Now, would that have been from like?

00:18:08 Speaker 2

A s s real property.

00:18:10 Speaker 1

Because a lot of you were fake. After this is real.

00:18:13 Speaker 1

Actually, the maker stamp. That's pretty wow.

00:18:18 Speaker 1

You got that on tape? Yeah, okay.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

Katrina.

00:18:22 Speaker 1

All right.

00:18:23

Yeah.

00:18:24 Speaker 2

There.

00:18:28

I.

00:18:30 Speaker 2

Here's a list of the Dennis patrons gets ahold.

00:18:33 Speaker 2

You probably can't.

00:18:35 Speaker 2

See if we can.

00:18:38 Speaker 1

See if you can maybe.

00:18:42 Speaker 1

Yeah, pop.

00:18:43 Speaker 1

Hey, you got.

00:18:43 Speaker 1

Of them gunner with Michigan Lieutenant Harrison.

00:18:46 Speaker 1

Speed.

00:18:47 Speaker 2

Good please.

00:18:47

Yeah, Liam.

00:18:47 Speaker 1

That's my hometown, Grand Rapids.

00:18:50 Speaker 2

Is there a?

00:18:50 Speaker 1

Yeah, so here's a.

00:18:52 Speaker 2

He talked to me guys about 3 years ago and I would come to meetings over here.

00:18:56 Speaker 2

Founder.

00:18:58

Holy cow so.

00:18:59 Speaker 1

His company has about 150 men.

00:19:03 Speaker 2

Gosh, I.

00:19:04 Speaker 2

At least I guess you know.

00:19:06 Speaker 2

That's not right.

00:19:10 Speaker 1

Private Jack Taylor, Henry Tom Merlin. Jack Taylor.

00:19:14 Speaker 2

Yeah, Jack's with the Hank. More than one guys that you just saw.

00:19:19 Speaker 2

Didn't win any opportunity.

00:19:23 Speaker 1

Well, it's a 10% rule, isn't it?

00:19:28

Yeah.

00:19:28 Speaker 1

And I assume you're in here, right?

00:19:31 Speaker 2

Not even from your net.

00:19:32 Speaker 2

Really cannot.

00:19:33 Speaker 2

I think.

00:19:33 Speaker 2

I think I'll probably pass.

00:19:34 Speaker 2

Another.

00:19:35 Speaker 2

I took a pass to even right from the first sign.

00:19:39 Speaker 2

Got some passive thing if you want.

00:19:43 Speaker 2

Go, I'll go.

00:19:47 Speaker 2

That's a letter I got from a girl that I met in Germany.

00:19:51 Speaker 1

Look at that.

00:19:51 Speaker 2

She.

00:19:52 Speaker 3

With the calligraphy on that.

00:19:53 Speaker 1

Nice.

00:19:55

Wow.

00:19:59 Speaker 2

Right in a Riddle.

00:20:03 Speaker 2

Eastern join me up here.

00:20:08 Speaker 2

There's a map.

00:20:11 Speaker 1

This is this a map of where your unit went or?

00:20:15

Mm.

00:20:18 Speaker 2

Australia.

00:20:19 Speaker 1

Yeah, you go. There's Zurich zoom.

00:20:23 Speaker 3

Dell burn.

00:20:24 Speaker 1

There we go.

00:20:25 Speaker 1

So it's there we go. That's just Switzerland.

00:20:30 Speaker 1

And that's the case for.

00:20:32 Speaker 1

Donna knight.

00:20:34 Speaker 2

That's right. OK.

00:20:36 Speaker 2

Birthday.

00:20:37 Speaker 2

The next one.

00:20:39 Speaker 2

Now got the paper similar. I've had to use these papers.

00:20:42 Speaker 2

The VA.

00:20:43 Speaker 1

OK.

00:20:44 Speaker 2

This is a peer. Some pepper. Go for people somewhere another.

00:20:48 Speaker 1

What did you? Where did you get this from?

00:20:51 Speaker 2

I'm in southern Germany called it navaria.

00:20:54

Please.

00:20:54 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, here's here's the rest of it.

00:20:57 Speaker 1

Nice. So is this what you did when you were living as you called it, smoke your pipe?

00:21:01 Speaker 1

Nice.

00:21:02 Speaker 2

Further, further and that's about all I got here that's working payment.

00:21:05

Thank you for calling.

00:21:09 Speaker 2

Cool this. I think that's why I'm not sure.

00:21:18 Speaker 1

I think it is psalms.

00:21:20 Speaker 1

Got a yeah, see.

00:21:20 Speaker 2

Picked out a wizard.

00:21:23 Speaker 3

Oh yeah.

00:21:24 Speaker 1

And it's uh.

00:21:27 Speaker 3

It's in German.

00:21:28 Speaker 1

No.

00:21:31 Speaker 1

All right.

00:21:33 Speaker 1

Well, thanks for sharing this stuff with us.

00:21:35 Speaker 2

No, that's a.

00:21:36 Speaker 1

Is this a news article?

00:21:37 Speaker 1

You.

00:21:37 Speaker 2

Yeah, I want to read that some portion.

00:21:40 Speaker 2

Attraction.

00:21:42 Speaker 1

The okay if it's a store you want.

00:21:47 Speaker 1

They ask me how it was over there and I hardly knew what to.

00:21:50 Speaker 1

Like a cream puff with a dead spider in it, and they turn the go away.

00:21:54 Speaker 1

Wait a minute. If it's a story you want, though, it will be hard to tell.

00:21:59 Speaker 1

There are so many things which happen. You see, I'm afraid my memory won't gel.

00:22:03 Speaker 1

Let me go.

00:22:04 Speaker 1

With a raincoat as my mattress and the ground is my bed, a field jacket is my pillow to rest my stubborn head.

00:22:12 Speaker 1

The day brought at least sunlight, though death knew no certain hour, but the night foster dark shadows in staccato noises raised my nerves sour.

00:22:23 Speaker 1

At first it was exciting to.

00:22:24 Speaker 1

Fearfully, I watched and crept, but the excitement bluffed into monotony.

00:22:29 Speaker 1

There, hidden in the dark, I wept the din of exploding.

00:22:33 Speaker 1

Aged me.

00:22:35 Speaker 1

No.

00:22:36 Speaker 1

Did they give all memory of home? Left me.

00:22:39 Speaker 1

My one thought was to live and those are highlighted.

00:22:43 Speaker 1

One more that you have highlighted.

00:22:45 Speaker 1

Well, it's easy to say that you're patriotic.

00:22:47 Speaker 1

Both of your are so strong to it's you upon the battlefield.

00:22:50 Speaker 1

Then you change your little song.

00:22:54 Speaker 1

And the last thing that you have highlighted in here, which obviously left impression on you as and our chance to see home again.

00:23:00 Speaker 1

It has a.

00:23:01 Speaker 1

This would have been from 45.

00:23:03 Speaker 2

Yes, we starting structure with.

00:23:04 Speaker 1

43 or.

00:23:08

No.

00:23:14 Speaker 2

Yeah, that's Neil.

00:23:16 Speaker 2

The Purple Heart holders.

00:23:18 Speaker 1

Gidon County alone and be careful with them, man.

00:23:23 Speaker 3

The town of.

00:23:24 Speaker 3

How was that right next to Wiltz, Luxembourg?

00:23:28 Speaker 2

Not very long.

00:23:29 Speaker 2

Far away.

00:23:29 Speaker 3

No, my my wifes grandfather was captured in Wilbur Wilts just.

00:23:34 Speaker 2

A few weeks before.

00:23:35 Speaker 3

You guys pushed back through.

00:23:37

Cortana.

00:23:37 Speaker 3

He was in the combat engineers, 44th combat engineers and they.

00:23:40

Government engine.

00:23:42 Speaker 3

Made a.

00:23:43 Speaker 3

There, with a tank battalion that was actually.

00:23:47 Speaker 3

Damaged tanks, but they couldn't move, so they had those guys kind of be a last ditch effort to stop the Germans as they're pushing through during the bulge and.

00:23:58 Speaker 3

That's pretty interesting that you came through and basically retook that town after, you know, probably.

00:24:04 Speaker 3

Three weeks.

00:24:05 Speaker 3

Four weeks after he was captured.

00:24:07 Speaker 3

As a German pursuit.

00:24:10 Speaker 1

And I think it's pretty amazing how you told us about those two guys, those two guys that got captured.

00:24:17 Speaker 1

Across the northern ground and then the German just left in there, I mean.

00:24:18

I.

00:24:22 Speaker 1

On one hand, you could say it was chivalrous.

00:24:24 Speaker 1

On the other hand, you.

00:24:25 Speaker 1

Say, why were?

00:24:25 Speaker 1

Germans going to do with them.

00:24:26 Speaker 2

Hey, babe, I need you.

00:24:26 Speaker 3

It's just trying to bug out.

00:24:28 Speaker 1

They want to drag these guys around, yeah.

00:24:29 Speaker 3

They.

00:24:29 Speaker 3

They they were just a.

00:24:30 Speaker 3

For that, that's all.

00:24:33

Wow.

00:24:33 Speaker 3

All they held, they got their guns was probably oh man these.

00:24:36 Speaker 3

Are going.

00:24:36 Speaker 3

Give us, you know, they already knew that.

00:24:39 Speaker 1

Exactly.

00:24:40

It's just.

00:24:42 Speaker 2

Tank at night there's a bunch of German prisoners.

00:24:44 Speaker 2

They were coming, I'm sure. In Italy they were still marching.

00:24:48 Speaker 2

Young.

00:24:49 Speaker 2

They speak a little English and he said say is that the general shrimp tank?

00:24:53 Speaker 2

Said yeah, do you know them?

00:24:55 Speaker 2

Yeah, I know them.

00:24:57 Speaker 3

What do you think of the Sherman tank?

00:24:59 Speaker 2

Well, as far I'm concerned, you're a good weapon.

00:25:01 Speaker 2

I understand some.

00:25:02 Speaker 2

The tankers didn't like them, called the British, didn't like them, but.

00:25:06 Speaker 2

My gosh, I thought you were all right.

00:25:08 Speaker 1

Yeah, probably for infantry support and things using for their guns late. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:25:10 Speaker 2

Absolutely. What we used them for, they were great.

00:25:15 Speaker 1

It's just.

00:25:15 Speaker 1

The Germans developed much larger tanks.

00:25:18 Speaker 3

So that would have been really good.

00:25:18 Speaker 2

They are.

00:25:20 Speaker 2

What the mother used them for, they were they did cut the job done. That's all I'm saying. I have seen him back.

00:25:24

Yeah.

00:25:27 Speaker 2

Know he was Lucky Burger doing this and hard to believe, but.

00:25:30 Speaker 2

Steel tracks on those frozen hills. These frozen harness that turn spin they free.

00:25:35 Speaker 1

Really just slide down.

00:25:38 Speaker 2

Up around a much river like cleats on over the hill after they saw it with.

00:25:42 Speaker 2

Own two eyes.

00:25:43 Speaker 1

He.

00:25:43 Speaker 1

He had tracks to pull the tanks over the hill.

00:25:45 Speaker 2

You had rubber tracks that drownded so hard in that stuff that that steel would just.

00:25:52 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:25:53 Speaker 1

Was it that winter 44 was the coldest on record? In like 40 years?

00:25:58 Speaker 1

Yeah. So.

00:26:01 Speaker 2

That's Lee probably tell you they could long time.

00:26:03 Speaker 2

They couldn't fly for another.

00:26:04 Speaker 3

He said weather was frustrating.

00:26:05 Speaker 4

That's right.

00:26:08 Speaker 4

I call the.

00:26:10 Speaker 4

Guy a while back that's in our squadron and.

00:26:14 Speaker 4

He was mentioning something about in in trying to help the guys they were flying with a 200 foot ceiling.

00:26:22 Speaker 3

Wow.

00:26:23 Speaker 2

Wow.

00:26:24 Speaker 3

Yeah, especially in that terrain.

00:26:24 Speaker 1

All trees, yeah.

00:26:27 Speaker 3

You know, it's not flat.

00:26:29 Speaker 4

I did a.

00:26:32 Speaker 4

Shooting.

00:26:34 Speaker 4

I was on instruments by myself.

00:26:38 Speaker 4

And let down.

00:26:41 Speaker 4

And as I did, there was a truck, but.

00:26:44 Speaker 4

Couldn't get on it.

00:26:46 Speaker 4

So I pulled back up into the cloud.

00:26:50 Speaker 4

Made a 180 and guessed at the downwind distance. Turned around this way and started letting down. There it was.

00:26:59 Speaker 1

And truck was like crap.

00:27:02

This guy.

00:27:04 Speaker 1

Oh man.

00:27:05 Speaker 3

Well, Troy, we really appreciate you letting us in your house tonight.

00:27:09 Speaker 3

Let us interview you. And of course, we.

00:27:10 Speaker 2

Right glad to help.

00:27:12 Speaker 3

Is there anything you want to you want to say in closing for anyone who may be viewing this tape in the future?

00:27:18 Speaker 2

It's a it's just a thought. I mean we.

00:27:23 Speaker 2

How fast these guys are dying off World War 2 veterans, and you can tell it. When I used to go back the 80s reunion every year.

00:27:31 Speaker 2

This last year I didn't go coating and feeling like, but they getting fewer and fewer all a while.

00:27:38 Speaker 4

Well, one thing that impresses me every time I think about it is the youngest with a responsibility like.

00:27:46 Speaker 4

Troy.

00:27:48 Speaker 4

19 and a platoon chief whiz.

00:27:48 Speaker 3

Absolutely.

00:27:51 Speaker 1

Well, you were 20 in a pilot.

00:27:53 Speaker 1

I mean it's it blows us away.

00:27:53 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:27:55 Speaker 1

I'm I'm 36, but I I'm a little closer to 20 than you guys are. And I remember it wasn't that long ago what I was doing when I was 20 and it sure as hell wasn't anything.

00:28:07 Speaker 1

Like that so.

00:28:11 Speaker 4

The but the funny things happen.

00:28:11 Speaker 4

Have.

00:28:13 Speaker 4

I wish I could remember more of them. I think some of.

00:28:17 Speaker 4

Were in that tape I let you have.

00:28:19 Speaker 1

Mm.

00:28:20 Speaker 4

Like an advanced training.

00:28:23 Speaker 4

That's the first airplane they.

00:28:24 Speaker 4

Where you could pull your wheels up or let them down and they had a safety device.

00:28:30 Speaker 4

If.

00:28:31 Speaker 4

Pulled your throttle back far enough. The Big Horn would go off telling you your gear wasn't down even at 30,000 feet.

00:28:38 Speaker 4

What it was for?

00:28:40 Speaker 4

Well, some kid came in for a landing.

00:28:43 Speaker 4

And he landed wheels up and the captain says why in the world did you do that?

00:28:49 Speaker 4

Says.

00:28:50 Speaker 4

Didn't you hear me on the radio?

00:28:51 Speaker 4

You that your gear wasn't down.

00:28:55 Speaker 4

He says no, that damn horn was so loud I couldn't hear a thing.

00:29:00 Speaker 2

The damn horn.

00:29:04 Speaker 3

Well, one thing I'd like to say to.

00:29:05 Speaker 3

Of you guys, you know, I.

00:29:08 Speaker 3

A2.

00:29:08 Speaker 3

Old girl. And that's my first.

00:29:11 Speaker 3

And there are a lot of days that I, you know, I see how great a life she has and.

00:29:18 Speaker 3

How great the country has been, due in large part to the four years that you guys spent defending our country. And we went from being.

00:29:27 Speaker 3

A third or fourth or fifth rate military in 1940.

00:29:30 Speaker 3

To.

00:29:31 Speaker 3

World power in 1945 and.

00:29:36 Speaker 3

Uh, the wife that my family has had and the life my little girl has, you know, day goes by or I don't think guys like you who did what you did for those four years, you know. And I I I have a huge debt of gratitude because I.

00:29:49 Speaker 3

More now that I have a child.

00:29:51 Speaker 3

What we have and what she has.

00:29:53 Speaker 3

So I I appreciate it for one.

00:29:54 Speaker 1

So.

00:29:54 Speaker 2

I appreciate you guys doing that and I'll tell you like me, I've raised my five year.

00:30:01 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:30:02 Speaker 2

They have a good, safe place to live and they they've all made it real good and I feel like that I I I gained by it too.

00:30:11 Speaker 2

Had a safe place for.

00:30:12 Speaker 2

My family you have.

00:30:13 Speaker 1

To worry about putting a concentration camp.

00:30:16 Speaker 1

Or, you know, yeah.

00:30:18 Speaker 1

Having to.

00:30:18 Speaker 1

To fight other wars with the Germans later on.

00:30:22

Yeah.

00:30:23 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:30:24 Speaker 2

With the both ways I tell you like it when I had a mother here and two young brothers.

00:30:32 Speaker 2

And I felt like that what I was doing that helped him have a place to survive anyhow.

00:30:39 Speaker 2

And leave the same way he had family.

00:30:41 Speaker 1

Let me ask you another question.

00:30:44 Speaker 1

A lot of times people don't realize how historic something is until much later.

00:30:50 Speaker 1

Did you guys have a sense?

00:30:52 Speaker 2

Where are you?

00:30:53 Speaker 1

When you were fighting, it was like.

00:30:56 Speaker 1

This is huge.

00:30:56 Speaker 2

Later, later on, these years later on, I realized that soon as I watch history in the stores about this, that is won the privilege too, that I fought the greatest army battle that ever fought by an American army.

00:31:09 Speaker 2

I swear to God.

00:31:10

Yeah.

00:31:12 Speaker 2

And that's what they say when even Churchill said.

00:31:15 Speaker 2

Was.

00:31:15 Speaker 2

The greatest battle of the American Army ever fought.

00:31:18

Yeah.

00:31:18 Speaker 2

And I was part of it.

00:31:19 Speaker 2

That's what Patton.

00:31:20 Speaker 2

That of all the game.

00:31:22 Speaker 2

He got out of it and the war was the privilege of.

00:31:25 Speaker 2

Served with you.

00:31:26 Speaker 3

Yeah. Did you ever get to see Patton? You never did.

00:31:28

Money.

00:31:30 Speaker 2

No one ever did. Now never did then.

00:31:33 Speaker 2

So division commander, one time after Warsaw we had a big field out there gained up.

00:31:40 Speaker 2

The whole regiment wasn't the whole division, but he was there.

00:31:43 Speaker 2

General McBride, who started John.

00:31:46 Speaker 2

Mm.

00:31:47 Speaker 2

But I never saw Patton.

00:31:50 Speaker 2

He was.

00:31:52 Speaker 2

He was more than an armored guy, you know.

00:31:56 Speaker 2

And in the 4th Armored Division was his bread and butter.

00:32:00 Speaker 2

And I could see why they were good in.

00:32:04 Speaker 2

My hat's off to.

00:32:05 Speaker 2

They did their job real well on it.

00:32:07 Speaker 2

The better they joined their job, the less money was.

00:32:11 Speaker 1

Bus through and try. Let's do it.

00:32:15 Speaker 1

What about you, Lee?

00:32:16 Speaker 1

When you were over in Europe and you were.

00:32:18 Speaker 1

Know you must have saw this.

00:32:20 Speaker 1

Material that we had that we could project on.

00:32:24 Speaker 1

Germany, did you get a sense that this was something?

00:32:27 Speaker 1

Big even when you were young.

00:32:29 Speaker 4

Well, yes. However, most of the stuff was pre planned somewhere else and then.

00:32:38 Speaker 4

Teletype. Down to our group that what they wanted us to do, and generally they had the targets picked out and the information came in on the teletype and the next morning you were often gone.

00:32:50 Speaker 1

But did you have a sense when you were serving World War 2 that this was a major historic moment?

00:32:58 Speaker 1

Is it more of a day-to-day thing you didn't really pick up on that?

00:33:02 Speaker 4

Well, I knew it was big, but.

00:33:05 Speaker 4

Sort of a. There's not too much I can do about that other than what they asked me to do.

00:33:11 Speaker 1

I.

00:33:11 Speaker 1

Just curious, was it?

00:33:11 Speaker 4

That.

00:33:14 Speaker 1

Because some some people that we spoke to speak with they.

00:33:19 Speaker 1

They would talk about how they understood that, you know, this is something that we talked about.

00:33:26 Speaker 1

Generations to come and other.

00:33:27 Speaker 1

Were like well.

00:33:28 Speaker 1

Was just doing my thing a little too.

00:33:29 Speaker 1

Later that it hit.

00:33:32 Speaker 1

Hey, you know, I was in this.

00:33:34 Speaker 1

Struggle so well.

00:33:35 Speaker 4

I I still figured oh it.

00:33:39 Speaker 4

What I did, compared with the same.

00:33:45 Speaker 4

Type of.

00:33:45 Speaker 4

We had seven different groups that I know of, of P-47 S over.

00:33:50 Speaker 4

So what I was doing was the same as anybody else and the main thing was to get it done.

00:33:57

Mm.

00:33:57 Speaker 4

And that's one reason I qualified with expert on pistol submachine gun air to air and air to ground.

00:34:08 Speaker 1

Interesting.

00:34:10 Speaker 2

I.

00:34:12 Speaker 2

Am I?

00:34:13 Speaker 2

Didn't think too much about it.

00:34:14 Speaker 2

I came home.

00:34:16 Speaker 2

I I just went right and I bought me a tractor rig and I went back to farming and I.

00:34:22 Speaker 2

Didn't think much about none.

00:34:24 Speaker 2

I had this friend of when he was first Sergeant. Call me one time, wrote me a letter. Just put Troy on poor little.

00:34:32 Speaker 2

And he was going around over the country hunting up guys, and he came through to see me 1975 and told me to head these rumors.

00:34:41 Speaker 2

And I said you won't see a lot of people that.

00:34:43 Speaker 2

Know.

00:34:44 Speaker 2

But he said to a good trip for.

00:34:45 Speaker 2

So I got to go into these reunions and I saw several guys.

00:34:48 Speaker 2

Died in good and.

00:34:51 Speaker 2

Some of them was foxhole buddies and.

00:34:54 Speaker 2

And I got to know new people who's in that company.

00:34:57 Speaker 2

Of course, I didn't know him.

00:34:58 Speaker 2

Back in the days.

00:34:59 Speaker 2

Like, say they'd come and go because lots of times you wouldn't even get a chance to get acquainted with them 'cause they didn't get their feet frozen and take a shot in the leg or whatever.

00:35:10 Speaker 2

In a quite a turnover in the Bulls, but they had trouble keeping people I'd be for all these draftees.

00:35:16

Yeah.

00:35:17 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:35:21 Speaker 3

Well, I think that concludes our interviews.

00:35:24 Speaker 2

I'm glad you guys came by.

00:35:25 Speaker 1

Yeah, but we did kill it.

