

## **Charles G. Parker Interview**

Company G, 319th Inf Reg

*(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by William V. Knapp)*

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

00:00:01 Speaker 1

I am William V Knaff, a volunteer interviewer for the Monroe County, Indiana Historical Museum located at 202 E 6th St. in Bloomington. IN the museum has joined in a partnership with the Library of Congress, American Folklife Center for the collection of Veterans Oral history.

00:00:21 Speaker 1

Today is the 21st of October 2004 and I have with me Charles G Parker, a veteran of World War 2.

00:00:31 Speaker 1

Mr. Parker, what do you like to be called? Charles, CC.

00:00:35 Speaker 1

All right, well, fine.

00:00:38 Speaker 1

Charlie, what branch of the service were you in?

00:00:41 Speaker 2

The army.

00:00:42 Speaker 1

And what war World War 2, and what was their highest rank, Charlie Corporal.

00:00:49 Speaker 1

And where did you serve in Europe?

00:00:53 Speaker 1

Yes, all right. Were you drafted or did you enlist?

00:00:58

Uh.

00:00:59 Speaker 2

I was actually drafted. Enlistments were.

00:01:04 Speaker 2

Closed at that time, but I volunteered to go.

00:01:10 Speaker 2

Before the draft board called me.

00:01:13 Speaker 1

OK. And what year was that 1943 and what month, July, July of 1943?

00:01:23 Speaker 1

And where were you living at the time?

00:01:26 Speaker 2

Shreve, Ohio.

00:01:29 Speaker 1

And.

00:01:32 Speaker 1

Did you have the opportunity to pick your branch of service or were you assigned to the Army?

00:01:39 Speaker 2

I was assigned to the army.

00:01:42 Speaker 1

Do you? Do you recall those first days that you were in the army?

00:01:47 Speaker 2

Yes, I do.

00:01:50 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:01:53 Speaker 2

We left on July 3rd for Fort Hayes and.

00:01:59 Speaker 2

Columbus, OH, and it was.

00:02:02 Speaker 2

Probably at least.

00:02:06 Speaker 2

90° outside.

00:02:10 Speaker 2

And when we got off the train in Columbus, they loaded us on a.

00:02:19 Speaker 2

Closed.

00:02:21 Speaker 2

18 Wheeler and transported us to Fort Hayes and it was really hot.

00:02:30 Speaker 2

In that truck.

00:02:31 Speaker 1

What state was Fort Hayes in Ohio, Fort Hayes, Ohio?

00:02:39 Speaker 1

And where did you? What was your destination then? When you got in that truck, it was that four days. That was four days.

00:02:44 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:02:47 Speaker 1

And do you remember anything about your boot camp experience?

00:02:56 Speaker 2

Well, I was transferred from or after we got to Fort Hayes. That's where we received all of our equipment uniforms and then we were sent to.

00:03:15

Yeah.

00:03:16 Speaker 2

El Paso, TX, Fort Bliss at El Paso at El Paso, TX into the 821st Anti Aircraft Artillery battalion.

00:03:33 Speaker 1

After you left the after you left the.

00:03:36 Speaker 1

Basic training and your boot camp training.

00:03:40 Speaker 1

Why don't at this point I just had you start telling me about your experiences, where you went, the units you were in?

00:03:49 Speaker 1

And your experiences throughout your military career.

00:03:52 Speaker 2

OK.

00:03:58 Speaker 2

We got our.

00:04:01 Speaker 2

Basic training at Fort Bliss and we stayed there until.

00:04:08 Speaker 2

January of.

00:04:11 Speaker 2

44.

00:04:14 Speaker 2

At which time we were transferred and to go on maneuvers with the 4th Air Corps in the Mojave Desert in California.

00:04:30 Speaker 2

After we finished maneuvers, we were transferred to.

00:04:38 Speaker 2

Campon, California at Riverside and shortly thereafter.

00:04:49 Speaker 2

In.

00:04:51 Speaker 2

April, I think.

00:04:56 Speaker 2

Most of our battalion was transferred to the infantry.

00:05:01 Speaker 2

And.

00:05:05 Speaker 2

They kept eighteen of us.

00:05:10 Speaker 2

At campon.

00:05:13 Speaker 2

As a cadre and I stayed there.

00:05:17 Speaker 2

As a cadre, the.

00:05:21 Speaker 2

Rest of the Bataan was.

00:05:25 Speaker 2

Transferred to.

00:05:28 Speaker 2

Camp Carson, Colorado, where they got six weeks infantry training and I think.

00:05:35 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:05:37 Speaker 2

They were all used as replacements.

00:05:42 Speaker 2

For D-Day, I stayed there at.

00:05:49 Speaker 2

Campan and we.

00:05:57 Speaker 2

Received.

00:05:59 Speaker 2

Bin that had just finished their basic training and we gave them or made sure that they had all of their requirements.

00:06:09 Speaker 2

To go overseas.

00:06:12 Speaker 2

And while there I was.

00:06:17 Speaker 2

Train to.

00:06:22 Speaker 2

And a course of warfare, Aquatics and.

00:06:27 Speaker 2

Jujitsu.

00:06:30 Speaker 2

And then in.

00:06:34 Speaker 2

October of.

00:06:37 Speaker 2

44.

00:06:40 Speaker 2

We were transferred to the infantry.

00:06:45 Speaker 2

Was sent to Camp House, Texas.

00:06:50 Speaker 2

And.

00:06:54 Speaker 2

We got our ten weeks infantry training.

00:06:58 Speaker 2

We left there and for Fort Meade, MD.

00:07:06 Speaker 2

To go overseas.

00:07:10 Speaker 2

We got into Fort Meade.

00:07:16 Speaker 2

On New Year's Eve of 1945.

00:07:23 Speaker 2

And.

00:07:26 Speaker 2

Got our equipment?

00:07:29 Speaker 2

And we left out of New York City.

00:07:32 Speaker 2

On the Queen Elizabeth.

00:07:36 Speaker 2

January 8.

00:07:39 Speaker 2

Of 1945.

00:07:41 Speaker 2

Five days later.

00:07:45 Speaker 2

We.

00:07:47 Speaker 2

Got to Greenock, Scotland.

00:07:51 Speaker 2

And.

00:07:54 Speaker 2

We were.

00:07:56 Speaker 2

Rode a train from Greenwich, Scotland to Southampton.

00:08:00 Speaker 2

England got on a ship, went across the channel to Lahore.

00:08:07 Speaker 2

And from Maharvi went to Dancy, France by train.

00:08:15 Speaker 2

And then.

00:08:18 Speaker 2

By truck to.

00:08:24 Speaker 2

Well, I just.

00:08:26 Speaker 2

Realized what town it was here recently it was.

00:08:31 Speaker 2

Colmar.

00:08:33 Speaker 2

Luxembourg.

00:08:35 Speaker 2

Was the replacement depot.

00:08:39 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:08:43 Speaker 2

And we stayed a couple nights in the.

00:08:47 Speaker 2

Grand Duke of Luxembourg's castle.

00:08:54 Speaker 2

Until we were assigned into the.

00:08:59 Speaker 2

80th division.

00:09:03 Speaker 2

And that was on.

00:09:07 Speaker 2

January 23rd.

00:09:10 Speaker 2

Of 1945.

00:09:16 Speaker 2



The Battle of the Bulge was.

00:09:21 Speaker 2

Just ending.

00:09:24 Speaker 2

And.

00:09:30 Speaker 2

The company I was in was in Allscheid, Luxembourg.

00:09:38 Speaker 2

And shortly thereafter, we.

00:09:41 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:09:44 Speaker 2

Move from there to hosdb, Luxembourg and then.

00:09:56 Speaker 2

On.

00:09:57 Speaker 2

Well, February the 5th.

00:10:02 Speaker 2

We tried to cross the our river, which was the.

00:10:06 Speaker 2

Boundary between.

00:10:08 Speaker 2

Luxembourg and Germany.

00:10:12 Speaker 2

And.

00:10:14 Speaker 2

We for several reasons we couldn't get across that river. It was at high flood stage.

00:10:23 Speaker 2

There's a lot of debris in the river, a lot of ice.

00:10:27 Speaker 2

And a lot of artillery.

00:10:31 Speaker 2

They called us back. We stayed, we tried the next day.

00:10:36 Speaker 2

And the same thing.

00:10:39 Speaker 2

The engineers couldn't build a bridge across.

00:10:44 Speaker 2

So we had to.

00:10:48 Speaker 2

Go across in assault boats.

00:10:53 Speaker 2

And we finally made that.

00:10:59 Speaker 2

On the 9th of February.

00:11:03

Uh.

00:11:12 Speaker 2

They we had.

00:11:15 Speaker 2

Had a couple practice runs across.

00:11:20 Speaker 2

Another river.

00:11:22 Speaker 2

And everything worked fine. But the night we crossed.

00:11:28 Speaker 2

The our river.

00:11:31 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:11:33 Speaker 2

One of the guys in the front of the boat as we got close to the.

00:11:40 Speaker 2

German side of the river.

00:11:43 Speaker 2

Grabbed the tree branch.

00:11:46 Speaker 2

And when that happened?

00:11:50

Wait for.

00:11:52 Speaker 2

The boat sank.

00:11:56 Speaker 2

Put us all into the water.

00:12:00 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:12:02 Speaker 2

Somebody jumped on my back.

00:12:06 Speaker 2

And.

00:12:10 Speaker 2

We went down.

00:12:13 Speaker 2

I got him off of my back and at which time I lost my helmet glasses.

00:12:24 Speaker 2

And when I came back up.

00:12:28 Speaker 2

Either the same guy or another guy jumped on my back again.

00:12:34 Speaker 2

This time I got him off.

00:12:39 Speaker 2

But I couldn't get back up and I have no idea how far I went down that river underneath the water.

00:12:48

Yeah.

00:12:50 Speaker 2

And a lot of things.

00:12:53 Speaker 2

Went through my mind.

00:12:56 Speaker 2

And I remembered just like it was yesterday.

00:13:02 Speaker 2

I could see.

00:13:05

Right.

00:13:07 Speaker 2

I was just afraid I was going to drowned and I could see those.

00:13:11 Speaker 2

Two or three guys going up to my house giving my parents.

00:13:17 Speaker 2

The telegram.

00:13:21 Speaker 2

I just gave up and when that happened.

00:13:26 Speaker 2

I relaxed.

00:13:28 Speaker 2

And popped right up out of the water.

00:13:32 Speaker 2

I got over to the shore, crawled out on the.

00:13:36 Speaker 2

Bank of the river and I had no idea how long I stayed there.

00:13:41 Speaker 2

But I may have stayed there an hour, I don't know, but.

00:13:49 Speaker 2

Was still dark.

00:13:53 Speaker 2

And.

00:13:54 Speaker 2

I finally was able to.

00:13:59 Speaker 2

Find my company.

00:14:02 Speaker 2

But.

00:14:03 Speaker 2

I'm pretty sure that's when my problem that turned out to be trench foot really started because.

00:14:16 Speaker 2

We were kept on the move all the time.

00:14:20 Speaker 2

I wasn't even able to dump the water out of my boots.

00:14:28 Speaker 2

But.

00:14:31 Speaker 2

We.

00:14:36 Speaker 2

Traveled up.

00:14:40 Speaker 2

At that time, we were in the Siegfried Line and we.

00:14:49 Speaker 2

The first time I.

00:14:50 Speaker 2

Heard.

00:14:50 Speaker 2

First little town I remember is amending then.

00:14:58 Speaker 2

Where I finally started to get my clothes dried out.

00:14:58

Yeah.

00:15:03 Speaker 2

And.

00:15:06 Speaker 2

But I was two or three days before.

00:15:13 Speaker 2

I really got.

00:15:15 Speaker 2

My clothes dried out out. They had to dry on me because there was no supplies there.

00:15:27 Speaker 2

We moved up.

00:15:39 Speaker 2

We took two or three little towns up there and cleared them out. The the thing was.

00:15:47 Speaker 2

If you want to stay inside.

00:15:49 Speaker 2

Get the town cleared out.

00:15:52 Speaker 2

Because they either that or we would be digging a hole.

00:15:56 Speaker 2

To stay in.

00:16:01 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:16:03 Speaker 2

The last.

00:16:06 Speaker 2

Mission that we were sent on, or that I was with, we were sent on.

00:16:14 Speaker 2

Was a little town of Obringer, which they had a.

00:16:22 Speaker 2

Anti tank gun.

00:16:25 Speaker 2

In and had everything stopped.

00:16:29 Speaker 2

And.

00:16:32 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:16:37 Speaker 2

When?

00:16:40 Speaker 2

Well, we got up there close enough. We could see this little town, but there was.

00:16:46 Speaker 2

Some other G's up there that they had got pinned down. They couldn't go any farther.

00:16:53 Speaker 2

And.

00:16:55 Speaker 2

I remember we.

00:16:57 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:17:00 Speaker 2

Tried a different way and.

00:17:03 Speaker 2

The.

00:17:05 Speaker 2

Germans were dug in.

00:17:08 Speaker 2

Edge of this little woods.

00:17:13 Speaker 2

And.

00:17:16 Speaker 2

Where we were at was.

00:17:19 Speaker 2

Well, there was no cover whatsoever and they just let us walk right up close to him before they.

00:17:27 Speaker 2

Opened fire.

00:17:30 Speaker 2

And this was maybe.

00:17:35 Speaker 2

One or two in the afternoon.

00:17:40 Speaker 2

They pinned us all down.

00:17:43 Speaker 2

That's where I got hit in the arm.

00:17:45 Speaker 2

We stayed there to just about dark before the.

00:17:50 Speaker 2

First aid people was able to get up there and they.

00:17:55 Speaker 2



Uh.

00:17:59 Speaker 2

There must have been.

00:18:08 Speaker 2

Six or seven other guys that were in front of me that were wounded, they filled up the.

00:18:20 Speaker 2

Weapons carrier, which was used as an ambulance.

00:18:24 Speaker 2

And I remember I laid across the hood.

00:18:28 Speaker 2

Of that weapons carrier to go back to the evacuation hospital.

00:18:34 Speaker 2

And.

00:18:42 Speaker 2

I also remember getting in that evacuation hospital. The first thing they did was take my.

00:18:50 Speaker 2

Boots off which were.

00:18:55 Speaker 2

Shoe packs rubber bottom with a leather top.

00:19:00 Speaker 2

So somebody else could use them.

00:19:03 Speaker 2

And.

00:19:05 Speaker 2

When I got into warm.

00:19:10 Speaker 2

Tense there.

00:19:12 Speaker 2

My feet really swelled up.

00:19:16 Speaker 2

And.

00:19:18 Speaker 2

While I was there.

00:19:21 Speaker 2

I saw a couple.

00:19:26 Speaker 2

Medics, they came through there.

00:19:30 Speaker 2

At what? I'm had a knife.

00:19:33 Speaker 2

A straight knife.

00:19:36 Speaker 2

And.

00:19:39 Speaker 2

I asked him where he got it.

00:19:42 Speaker 2

He said oh, he said a guy that just went through here a short time ago, gave it to me.

00:19:49 Speaker 2

I said, you know what his name was?

00:19:52 Speaker 2

He said I can find out.

00:19:57 Speaker 2

And so a little while later, he came back.

00:20:02 Speaker 2

And he said his his name was Leonard Wolfe. Well, I recognized that knife because he had bought it.

00:20:11 Speaker 2

And the PX at Fort Meade, MD, and it was made in Mexico and they never made any 2 alike.

00:20:20 Speaker 2

Down there.

00:20:22 Speaker 2

And.

00:20:25 Speaker 2

Leonard Wolfe and I had gone through our basic training. We had been together the whole time. He was signed to another company in the 80th Division.

00:20:36 Speaker 2

But.

00:20:37 Speaker 2

He had lost a leg.

00:20:41 Speaker 2

The day and he had just gone through.

00:20:46 Speaker 2

That evacuation hospital a short time before me.

00:20:50 Speaker 2

I still keep in touch with him.

00:20:54 Speaker 2

And.

00:20:57 Speaker 2

Says we are both wounded on the same day on the 23rd.

00:21:01 Speaker 2

February I always give him a phone call.

00:21:05 Speaker 2

On the 23rd of February.

00:21:13 Speaker 2

I spent some time in the.

00:21:15 Speaker 2

Hospital in England.

00:21:17 Speaker 2

After that I came back over into French, was reassigned.

00:21:23 Speaker 2

To an MP outfit in.

00:21:27 Speaker 2

Luxembourg city.

00:21:31 Speaker 2

I worked there.

00:21:34 Speaker 2

At a transit billets.

00:21:37 Speaker 2

I always said as a parking lot attendant.

00:21:42 Speaker 2

But we stayed there.

00:21:48 Speaker 2

Just a short time, I was reassigned to another MP outfit.

00:21:53 Speaker 2

And because I didn't have enough points to be discharged, we were sent to Marseille, France.

00:22:02 Speaker 2

And.

00:22:04 Speaker 2

In.

00:22:09 Speaker 2

We were on board ship.

00:22:12 Speaker 2

Out into Mediterranean, headed for the South Pacific.

00:22:16 Speaker 2

When they announced that the war in Japan was over was going into New York, this is the middle of August.

00:22:26 Speaker 2

And I came home had 45 days.

00:22:32 Speaker 2

Recuperation leave at home.

00:22:35 Speaker 2

Was.

00:22:37 Speaker 2

Said to camp Claiborne.

00:22:40 Speaker 2

Louisiana.

00:22:42 Speaker 2

And from there was assigned to, sent to.

00:22:47 Speaker 2

Camp Walters, Texas.

00:22:49 Speaker 2

Where I worked in the locator.

00:22:53 Speaker 2

Division of the.

00:22:56 Speaker 2

Post office.

00:22:58 Speaker 2

And.

00:23:01 Speaker 2

That camp was going to close up.

00:23:04 Speaker 2

And we moved.

00:23:06 Speaker 2

Locator division into the main post office in Mineral Wells, TX.

00:23:12 Speaker 2

And I was sent to.

00:23:15 Speaker 2

Tyler, TX. Then at Camp Annan.

00:23:18 Speaker 2

And was discharged.

00:23:21 Speaker 2

1st of February.

00:23:23 Speaker 2

Of 1946 at Camp Fannin, Texas.

00:23:30 Speaker 1

Well, Charlie, that is you've done a very good job in relating to us the history of of your your military service there. Tell me when you, when you were discharged, what did you do then?

00:23:46 Speaker 2

Well.

00:23:48 Speaker 2

I didn't really do anything for a while. I always with and with a lot of other.

00:23:56 Speaker 2

Guys.

00:23:58 Speaker 2

I belong to the 5220 club.

00:24:02 Speaker 2

We got \$20 a week for we were eligible for \$20 a week for 52 weeks.

00:24:10 Speaker 2

And I.

00:24:15 Speaker 2

Got tired of that after.

00:24:17 Speaker 2

Couple month and I.

00:24:24 Speaker 2

Applied for work at the East Ohio Gas Company and was hired there in.

00:24:30 Speaker 2

July of 1946.

00:24:36 Speaker 2

And worked there for 40 years and retired from there in July of 1986.

00:24:45 Speaker 1

Did anything significant happen in your life, Charlie, while you were in the while you were in the military?

00:24:54 Speaker 1

Other than your combat experiences.

00:24:59 Speaker 2

No, not really.

00:25:05 Speaker 1

You want some metals or you were awarded some metals. Do you remember what those metals were, Charlie?

00:25:13 Speaker 2

Well, the ones that are most proud of really.

00:25:19 Speaker 2

Combat infantry badge.

00:25:22 Speaker 2

And along with that.

00:25:26 Speaker 2

Came the Bronze star and the Purple Heart.

00:25:33 Speaker 1

And the good conduct medal, I am sure, yes.

00:25:41 Speaker 1

Well, Charlie, this has been a very good interview. Is there anything that you've left out that you would like to?

00:25:46 Speaker 1

To cover at this time.

00:25:50 Speaker 2

I don't think so.

00:25:51 Speaker 1

All right. Well, Charlie, thank you very much for the interview and I thank you very much for serving our.

00:25:55 Speaker 1

Country.

00:25:57 Speaker 1

And this concludes the interview.