

Walter Joseph Pasciak Interview

Headquarters Company, 319th Infantry Regiment

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Erica Sugar) (MS Word Audio Transcript [NOT edited, just transcribed])

00:00:06 Speaker 2

When my voice stops, I want you to just wait a minute or two and then you can begin talking just because it gives us time to sort of edit out my voice.

00:00:10 Speaker 1

OK.

00:00:15 Speaker 1

Alright.

00:00:17 Speaker 1

Now.

00:00:20 Speaker 1

All right, back in 1943, I was in high school and I know I was.

00:00:26 Speaker 1

We had our.

00:00:29 Speaker 1

Instructor was giving courses so that we could graduate in a hurry. We got out of high school in 3 1/2 years and I was supposed to graduate in June of 1943, but in February.

00:00:45 Speaker 1

I went to Buffalo to enlist in the Marines.

00:00:48 Speaker 1

The Marines wouldn't have me because my cavities in my head.

00:00:53 Speaker 1

And so I went.

00:00:56 Speaker 1

And my dentist fixed me up in one sitting.

00:01:00 Speaker 1

Two weeks later, I went back to Buffalo, went back to the Marines, and they would have me.

00:01:06 Speaker 1

I asked if I would be able to finish high school.

00:01:09 Speaker 1

I told and the Sergeant told me that I could leave that day.

00:01:15 Speaker 1

Or that they would give me 30 days maximum.

00:01:20 Speaker 1

Will not let me finish high school, so I walked over two blocks and joined the army.

00:01:27 Speaker 1

And I asked again if I could graduate from high school.

00:01:33 Speaker 1

The recruiting Sergeant told me that yes, I would.

00:01:38 Speaker 1

And June 23rd I graduated high school on June 25th.

00:01:43 Speaker 1

I was at Fort Dix.

00:01:46 Speaker 1

I left all my friends at the railroad station in North Tonawanda and they were just going to get inducted and I was already in.

00:01:58 Speaker 1

We I went to Fort Dix and from there we took a troop train to Texas where I went to basic training at Camp Fannin, which is outside of Tyler, TX.

00:02:12 Speaker 1

And.

00:02:14 Speaker 1

Oh, I had some different kinds of experiences.

00:02:18 Speaker 1

I remember Patterson, who was one of my bunk mates in the same barracks with me when we were having a grenade throwing grenades. The.

00:02:29 Speaker 1

Instructor was had me.

00:02:32 Speaker 1

In the pit, he told me to duck and.

00:02:36 Speaker 1

Patterson had thrown a grenade and it landed right on our pit. What happened?

00:02:43 Speaker 1

Patterson was kind of a BOLO.

00:02:46 Speaker 1

And he he the.

00:02:51 Speaker 1

Release handle slipped away from him instead of having it toward the palm of his hand.

00:02:56 Speaker 1

Had it between his forefinger and his thumb, and it slipped out.

00:02:59 Speaker 1

So the grenade was live and he threw it in the most convenient manner possible.

00:03:06 Speaker 1

Because underhand right into my pit.

00:03:10 Speaker 1

So fortunately, we, my Sergeant, told me he saw what was going on.

00:03:16 Speaker 1

Didn't know what was going on.

00:03:17 Speaker 1

I just ducked, you know, doubled up and almost hit the ground.

00:03:23 Speaker 1

And that's what it was.

00:03:25 Speaker 1

And from there I went to Texas A and M they had.

00:03:30 Speaker 1

Don't know how come but they.

00:03:33 Speaker 1

I went to Texas A and M and I was supposed to be doing some work on getting my engineering degree.

00:03:41 Speaker 1

Didn't know what for.

00:03:43 Speaker 1

I just went to school there and it was a lovely place.

00:03:47 Speaker 1

God, you know.

00:03:48 Speaker 1

We ate in the kitchen and we have plates on the table.

00:03:53 Speaker 1

You know, it was not army living.

00:03:55 Speaker 1

All it was to it.

00:03:56 Speaker 1

Wake up in the morning.

00:03:59 Speaker 1

At company formation.

00:04:02 Speaker 1

Beautiful music, beautiful country.

00:04:05 Speaker 1

You know, but that's not why I joined the army. You know, I wanted to join the army to fight.

00:04:10 Speaker 1

What I joined for.

00:04:12 Speaker 1

And they had a Colonel come around and, you know, if you wanted to, you know, to talk the guys, some guys wanted out.

00:04:23 Speaker 1

I wanted out.

00:04:24 Speaker 1

You know, I I I did all right at at the school, but.

00:04:28 Speaker 1

I that's not why I joined.

00:04:31 Speaker 1

And so he was talking people into staying at the school.

00:04:37 Speaker 1

But I wanted out and from there I went to the 80th Infantry Division.

00:04:43 Speaker 1

They were in.

00:04:46 Speaker 1

Southern.

00:04:48 Speaker 1

It just off of Yuma, AZ at the California borderline and they were on manoeuvres with the 4th Armored Division.

00:04:58 Speaker 1

I know I.

00:05:00 Speaker 1

I was carrying supplies to the observation post on top of Red Mountain and that was above the clouds.

00:05:07 Speaker 1

Really couldn't see much, but you could on a nice clear day the next day.

00:05:13 Speaker 1

You could see the 4th Armored Division and all the equipment they had in the desert and we were on top of the mountain and I was carrying K&K rations up, you know, for the guys that were on the observation post.

00:05:28 Speaker 1

And that was.

00:05:29 Speaker 1

But then we went from there after a couple weeks, I know going to the desert area where we were encamped, it was outside of Yuma, but it was 40 miles east of Yuma.

00:05:45 Speaker 1

Yuma was a nice.

00:05:46 Speaker 1

So you could see where the irrigation was. You could see the farm lands, things were growing and things were green.

00:05:53 Speaker 1

But we went over a bridge.

00:05:57 Speaker 1

An irrigation over an irrigation channel and there was a sign saying warning you know.

00:06:03 Speaker 1

No food, gas or water for the next 125 miles and we were 40 miles beyond that.

00:06:12 Speaker 1

So that was kind of eerie or I thought it was anyway. From there, of course, we went to Fort Dix and I was on the shipping detail.

00:06:25 Speaker 1

I had to help load the boat.

00:06:27 Speaker 1

We went over on the Queen Mary.

00:06:31 Speaker 1

And this was in.

00:06:35 Speaker 1

June of 44.

00:06:39 Speaker 1

This was during the D-Day, which took place on June 6, if you remember.

00:06:44 Speaker 1

Anyway, we got to England at the near the middle of June.

00:06:50 Speaker 1

We were there just a matter of 10 days and then we went over in.

00:06:55 Speaker 1

We we went over into Normandy on the beach.

00:07:00 Speaker 1

Weren't any.

00:07:01 Speaker 1

It was all cleaned up but.

00:07:05 Speaker 1

Where?

00:07:07 Speaker 1

Engineers had set the Bangalore torpedoes to get up the.

00:07:13 Speaker 1

Para Weld this Cliff.

00:07:16 Speaker 1

They really bang this Cliff off and that's the way we went up the Cliff where they had, you know, if you remember seeing the movie D-Day, you know, there was a squad of guys.

00:07:30 Speaker 1

Took Bangalore torpedoes and.

00:07:36 Speaker 1

Both they made a break into the German lines and that's the way and everybody flowed up there.

00:07:47 Speaker 1

And you know, we were in the bocage country. And boy, I'll tell you, that was really terrible.

00:07:53 Speaker 1

No matter how you went, it was like there was.

00:07:58 Speaker 1

A 10 foot.

00:08:01 Speaker 1

Piece of ground mounted up and it was overgrown with bushes and.

00:08:07 Speaker 1

And they mean, I mean really old.

00:08:12 Speaker 1

And Germans were behind the next one, which is just one field over.

00:08:18 Speaker 1

You pop your head out of the woods or get over that hill and you're dead because they they they had you and the German and the tanks weren't of very much use because if you ran up the road the Germans had that zeroed in too.

00:08:35 Speaker 1

So anyway, we went into, we were in the breakthrough through Saint Louis.

00:08:42 Speaker 1

We had some casualties from our own bombers.

00:08:45 Speaker 1

You recall.

00:08:47 Speaker 1

Because they they were supposed to bomb the hell out of the Germans.

00:08:50 Speaker 1

Supposed to run through when the Germans were reeling from this.

00:08:55 Speaker 1

Well, hell, it was supposed to be an attack with bombs, with the airplanes, and we're supposed to attack too well.

00:09:03 Speaker 1

Sometimes it was too close and we got some casualties from friendly fire.

00:09:08 Speaker 1

And once we got through, boy, we really raced through France.

00:09:13 Speaker 1

We the 1st place we stopped was in Le Mans, France and we were there for two days and we I had some.

00:09:23 Speaker 1

I remember the sensors were in the field reading mail before it went home, you know.

00:09:29 Speaker 1

Hey and I was kind of peeved because Captain Caps are communications captain.

00:09:36 Speaker 1

Was reading mail and he got a chuckle out of something and he packed it on to Captain Bevins.

00:09:43 Speaker 1

Hey, and the Lieutenant, they they passed it around and I was kind of peeved that this was supposed to be confidential mail.

00:09:49 Speaker 1

Know privacy and what have you.

00:09:53 Speaker 1

They assured us of.

00:09:53 Speaker 1

Well, I wrote to my kid brother who was in the, who was in the Navy at the time.

00:10:02 Speaker 1

In the Pacific, and I wrote to him about this episode.

00:10:07 Speaker 1

Hey. Well, I'll tell you 2 weeks later I heard about they came to me and they they threatened me.

00:10:13 Speaker 1

They were really going to whip my ***.

00:10:17 Speaker 1

And send me off to a rifle company because I shouldn't have been beefing but.

00:10:24 Speaker 1

So I learned a lesson in a hurry, you know, and that that made sense to me.

00:10:29 Speaker 1

But I remember in this town of Inchville, France.

00:10:34 Speaker 1

We we were lined up for.

00:10:36 Speaker 1

We were taking the chow. The kitchen was in a a barn, had a lot of hay and animals in it, but that's where our kitchen was.

00:10:47 Speaker 1

Were lined up on the road outside of the barn.

00:10:52 Speaker 1

The Germans saw this and they tasted the hell out of us with their artillery, our telephone lines. I was a.

00:11:01 Speaker 1

For communications that's climbing, telephone poles and trees, and putting up telephone lines.

00:11:09

Yeah.

00:11:09 Speaker 1

And boy, I'll tell you, there was there were they knocked the hell out of all our wires.

00:11:15 Speaker 1

A Scotty who was another guy who was my counterpart on another communications team.

00:11:20 Speaker 1

Scotty and I were up on these damn telephone calls.

00:11:24 Speaker 1

All day, putting the lines back.

00:11:26 Speaker 1

While the shells were still coming down.

00:11:29 Speaker 1

That's that's dumb, but that's what we did. We were young.

00:11:34 Speaker 1

Didn't know any better.

00:11:36 Speaker 1

And I remember another episode.

00:11:40 Speaker 1

In France, we had three.

00:11:45 Speaker 1

Oh, what were they anyway?

00:11:48 Speaker 1

P-47's and they came and there were three of them.

00:11:53 Speaker 1

They came around and they did one big loop heading back and I could see that there was a ball of fire between the wings.

00:12:01 Speaker 1

On the body.

00:12:04 Speaker 1

Hey and then this ball fell out and a parachute opened.

00:12:07 Speaker 1

The pilot had bailed out.

00:12:10 Speaker 1

Hey, just a couple minutes later, a Jeep came with a pilot.

00:12:15 Speaker 1

The parachute was piled up in the back of the Jeep.

00:12:18 Speaker 1

And I was watching this damn plane come down.

00:12:21 Speaker 1

It could have done.

00:12:22 Speaker 1

It could have come right on top of me.

00:12:24 Speaker 1

Was just.

00:12:25 Speaker 1

I just watched it.

00:12:27 Speaker 1

There was a church next to me.

00:12:30 Speaker 1

And the plane crashed just on the other side of the church.

00:12:35 Speaker 1

It sounded like just a big iron wash boiler dropped on the ground.

00:12:40 Speaker 1

That's just what it sounded.

00:12:42 Speaker 1

And the pilot came to see his.

00:12:43 Speaker 1

There was not much left of it and we were busy during the attack.

00:12:49 Speaker 1

And I remember one time we we just took this French town.

00:12:54 Speaker 1

And I'm Polish and I we had a bunch of prisoners in in this building, and just for the hell of it, I stood with the guard and I was whistling the Polish national anthem. And sure enough, a couple of Polish.

00:13:09 Speaker 1

German soldiers.

00:13:10 Speaker 1

Came up and I asked them why they did, why they didn't give up earlier and they said that they, you know, would be shot by the Germans.

00:13:19 Speaker 1

So I, you know, I had quite a bit of Polish experience overseas.

00:13:24 Speaker 1

I came home and this is after the war. I came home and we had the local grocery store, Mrs. Schumineski, and I was telling her how I improved in my Polish.

00:13:36 Speaker 1

That I had all this Polish opportunity and she was laughing at me, she said.

00:13:41 Speaker 1

Pond pasture to move.

00:13:44 Speaker 1

Good talkyak polka ****, you know, talk you.

00:13:47 Speaker 1

Yes, Mr. pasiak. You know, you talk Polish, just like a Polish Polish Jew.

00:13:52 Speaker 1

And that's because they have their own slang, you know, is they have.

00:13:57 Speaker 1

It was a lot of Yiddish in it, but I didn't know any better.

00:14:02 Speaker 1

I know one time I met this Polish girl in France.

00:14:07 Speaker 1

And the Germans?

00:14:10 Speaker 1

Were started to lob over some shells and I had to cover her on the ground because we were in this on this bridge and that was stupid but.

00:14:22 Speaker 1

I was protecting her. What for?

00:14:24 Speaker 1

You know.

00:14:25 Speaker 1

But anyway.

00:14:28 Speaker 1

One time we went.

00:14:31 Speaker 1

We were finally assigned.

00:14:35 Speaker 1

No. At the Siegfried line. We I was supposed to carry the telephone to the forward observation post at the our river.

00:14:46 Speaker 1

And.

00:14:49 Speaker 1

We're supposed to attack at 2:00 in the morning.

00:14:53 Speaker 1

Well, as it so happened.

00:14:56 Speaker 1

Drabak, when we were wiring the line just behind the line where we would take off from.

00:15:03 Speaker 1

Germans were trying to get to a bridge.

00:15:06 Speaker 1

A bridge that was below us in the valley below us.

00:15:11 Speaker 1

And the shells were landing right on top of us. Great back our driver.

00:15:17 Speaker 1

He was laying in a ditch and Charlie was in the ditch.

00:15:19 Speaker 1

Was on the other side of the road.

00:15:23 Speaker 1

The shell hit and drove back.

00:15:26 Speaker 1

There's a short little guy. He got a piece of shrapnel from the shell, went up his back, ripped his field jacket, ripped his shirt and his undershirt.

00:15:38 Speaker 1

Did not a scratch on him.

00:15:40 Speaker 1

He was jumping.

00:15:42 Speaker 1

You know my bleeding and my bleeding.

00:15:44 Speaker 1

He wasn't bleeding, but damn close.

00:15:48 Speaker 1

Anyway.

00:15:50 Speaker 1

We.

00:15:52 Speaker 1

I was.

00:15:55 Speaker 1

Captain Caps called me, saying that I wouldn't have to carry the line forward because I'd be going home because of decorations. That was they call that a 30 day TDY, 30 days temporary duty.

00:16:10 Speaker 1

And you were sent home, supposedly as a hero, you know, and for bomb drives and so forth.

00:16:18 Speaker 1

But we had one guy leave the company before me and he never came back.

00:16:24 Speaker 1

And so because in the mean time Charlie and I, Charlie was.

00:16:31 Speaker 1

The captain was the corporal on our wire team.

00:16:34 Speaker 1

We did the same things and we got the same decorations one time in the city of Athens, France. Our second battalion was surrounded.

00:16:45 Speaker 1

The Germans were between.

00:16:47 Speaker 1

Us and 2nd Battalion we had sent out a messenger on a Jeep through the woods through them.

00:16:55 Speaker 1

And he was supposed to get through the 2nd Battalion.

00:16:59 Speaker 1

And he never got through.

00:17:01 Speaker 1

The next day, Charlie and I, with one Jeep, 2 rifles and a machine gun mounted on the Jeep.

00:17:12 Speaker 1

I went to took 15 meat wagons.

00:17:15 Speaker 1

That's ambulances as a convoy through the woods.

00:17:21 Speaker 1

We found the Jeep that the driver, the messenger went through the night before.

00:17:28 Speaker 1

The radio was still on, but there was blood on the seat, but he obviously had been captured or something, but he got shot and before we left the woods as we got to the outside.

00:17:43 Speaker 1

Other edge of the woods down the Hill 40 Germans gave up to us.

00:17:49 Speaker 1

And when we got out of the woods and went down the hill, the outpost line from second Battalion got out of their fox holes and came to greet us because they were happy to see us.

00:18:03 Speaker 1

And.

00:18:06 Speaker 1

Anyway.

00:18:09 Speaker 1

As a result of that, the we the germ, the second battalion was happy as hell to get the blood from us and we loaded the wagons with all their.

00:18:20 Speaker 1

Patients all of their wounded and came back through the woods in the mean time. Second Battalion didn't want to fool around with the prisoners.

00:18:28 Speaker 1

They had 40 prisoners, so we came back through the woods with 80 prisoners and 15 meat wagons loaded.

00:18:37 Speaker 1

And that was really quite an experience as a result of that we got, I got the Bronze Star.

00:18:43 Speaker 1

And.

00:18:46 Speaker 1

One time when we we were supposed to be on the right hand flank of the 3rd Army and we're supposed to **** up to and we're supposed to take the place of the 11th Armored Division in the 7th Army.

00:19:01

Well.

00:19:02 Speaker 1

We weren't there three hours and they decided to.

00:19:08 Speaker 1

We would have to go back to Luxembourg to go to the left of us.

00:19:15 Speaker 1

And.

00:19:19 Speaker 1

So we as a result of that, the second arm of second battalion was happy as hell to get the blood and they wanted to get rid of their 40 prisoners.

00:19:29 Speaker 1

They gave them to us to take back.

00:19:32 Speaker 1

So we went back through the woods with 80 prisoners.

00:19:36 Speaker 1

With all we had was 2 rifles, 1 Jeep and 15 meat wagons that were loaded with patients that were wounded.

00:19:44 Speaker 1

And as a result of that, we got the Bronze Star together.

00:19:50 Speaker 1

Later on.

00:19:53 Speaker 1

In, well, a couple of weeks later at Ponta Musaun, we were.

00:20:01 Speaker 1

Supposed to attack the Siegfried line.

00:20:05 Speaker 1

At 2:00 in the morning and we knew the details we were supposed to have creeping barrage of 15500 yards for a concentrated barrage of 500 yards. Belt of.

00:20:20 Speaker 1

Nothing. And then another 15 minutes later, we're supposed to. It was supposed to be a creeping barrage.

00:20:26 Speaker 1

And we're supposed to come up behind it and have that barrage cover us during the attack. And we're supposed to attack the scene from the back?

00:20:38 Speaker 1

On the way back.

00:20:40 Speaker 1

And anyway, if we knew that much detail, we figured the Germans knew that much too well.

00:20:46 Speaker 1

That night.

00:20:48 Speaker 1

That we were supposed to attack, they called me off. They said I didn't have to go because I was supposed to go back because of other decorations.

00:20:59 Speaker 1

And I had the Bronze Star and the Silver star.

00:21:03 Speaker 1

And captain Cap said that, you know, stay in the basement or, you know, stay in the barn because I didn't have to go. And Walker took my place.

00:21:12 Speaker 1

Walker, when he took my place.

00:21:16 Speaker 1

Carrying the observation post forward, he got hit and I felt badly about that, but honest to God, you know this is the way you feel in combat.

00:21:26 Speaker 1

I figured if it was me, I'd be dumb enough to be standing up and I'd be dead.

00:21:31 Speaker 1

You know, Walker got hurt.

00:21:33 Speaker 1

And he was hurt pretty bad. But me? I figured I'd have been killed.

00:21:38 Speaker 1

Anyway, I was sent back to Lahore to camp. Lucky strike to wait for a boat.

00:21:46 Speaker 1

Was back in March 12th.

00:21:50 Speaker 1

March of 1940.

00:21:54 Speaker 1

5.

00:21:55 Speaker 1

And we had a wait there for 10 days, and I remember I was bound.

00:22:00 Speaker 1

Man, I I if I if I wasn't going to go to the bathroom, I I don't think I'd have gotten home.

00:22:09 Speaker 1

And I didn't want to report. Fortunately, a friend of mine that we were in the Boy Scouts together as kids. Eddie alexand.

00:22:18 Speaker 1

Was a medic at.

00:22:22 Speaker 1

That camp at Camp Lucky strike, and so he said he could fix me up.

00:22:26 Speaker 1

Looked me.

00:22:26 Speaker 1

He saw me on the roster and he was very surprised, you know, to see that I was going home. But he got me some dynamite pills and that really fixed me up.

00:22:38 Speaker 1

Man, that was a relief. But I came home on a.

00:22:42 Speaker 1

I don't know. Was a troop transport of some kind?

00:22:46 Speaker 1

Don't remember the name I remember.

00:22:49 Speaker 1

I remember we were playing red.

00:22:52 Speaker 1

You know, play cards on the boat on the way home.

00:22:55 Speaker 1

Cost me 40 bucks to learn to play Red Dog and only played at once.

00:23:00 Speaker 1

You know after that anyway.

00:23:04 Speaker 1

I got my Silver star by. We were in Luxembourg.

00:23:09 Speaker 1

We were going to attack the town of Ringo.

00:23:15 Speaker 1

RINGEL well.

00:23:17 Speaker 1

We called for tank support and they sent us light.

00:23:22 Speaker 1

My God, you know, they were toothpicks. But I remember we by the time we got out of the woods at the approach March.

00:23:33 Speaker 1

I was leaning on this tank destroyer and talking to this guy and.

00:23:40 Speaker 1

A tank destroyer was really like a tank, but it had no turret, but it had a big gun.

00:23:48 Speaker 1

And remember that 3.

00:23:54 Speaker 1

P47S were chasing 310 nines right over our head and they shot down all 310.

00:24:01 Speaker 1

You know, off to our right, a the guy, some guys came back with all kinds of souvenirs. One guy had a pistol, another guy had.

00:24:11 Speaker 1

The pilot's jacket, another guy and everybody had a piece of the parachute.

00:24:17 Speaker 1

And.

00:24:19 Speaker 1

Anyway, we called for planes we called for.

00:24:22 Speaker 1

We called for artillery. The first thing we got was a planes.

00:24:26 Speaker 1

That's ironic, I.

00:24:27 Speaker 1

But they apparently were able to hail them in the air, but anyway.

00:24:34 Speaker 1

As a result of that, the Germans got out of their foxholes and they were in the they had tanks behind them. The tanks were turning around.

00:24:43 Speaker 1

The Germans are getting out of the foxhole.

00:24:46 Speaker 1

We were going down the hill.

00:24:47 Speaker 1

Were going up their hill.

00:24:50 Speaker 1

And.

00:24:53 Speaker 1

We took this attack and during the night.

00:25:00 Speaker 1

I was carrying the wire for with this weapons carrier we.

00:25:03 Speaker 1

We were assigned jeeps, but during the combat we had a weapons carrier and we could see this red ball go across the sky and hit on the hillside and it would ricochet and fly off.

00:25:16 Speaker 1

And they finally hit a tank they hit. They were aiming for the tank because the tank had cat eyes on it. You know what cat eyes are, you know, with the lights were all blanked out.

00:25:27 Speaker 1

Were painted over, but they had a little slit just so you could see just about see the light?

00:25:34 Speaker 1

But anyway.

00:25:36 Speaker 1

One guy got out of the tank.

00:25:40 Speaker 1

Charlie and I.

00:25:42 Speaker 1

The tank was on fire. Charlie and I ran up and pulled a couple guys out of the tank.

00:25:47 Speaker 1

And the guy I pulled out was a Lieutenant and he came.

00:25:52 Speaker 1

Was from Buffalo.

00:25:55 Speaker 1

But.

00:25:57 Speaker 1

Because I know we the tank came.

00:25:58 Speaker 1

Had red devil.

00:26:00 Speaker 1

That was their code name.

00:26:02 Speaker 1

We had Red Devil Charlie as the tanks and they were Sherman tanks and he told me that the driver was still in the tank. So I went back to the tank. In the meantime, the Germans kept shelling us.

00:26:16 Speaker 1

And later on I found out where he was, but I opened up the Hatch and the driver was there and.

00:26:22 Speaker 1

I tried to pull him out and the skin came right off of my hand, so I just shut the Hatch and I I think he was dead.

00:26:30 Speaker 1

He must have died.

00:26:33 Speaker 1

And it's a shame to have to leave somebody, but that's I couldn't get him out.

00:26:38 Speaker 1

And anyway.

00:26:40 Speaker 1

And.

00:26:42 Speaker 1

I.

00:26:43 Speaker 1

Hey, we ate from that position.

00:26:46 Speaker 1

Laid between the guys.

00:26:48 Speaker 1

Pulled out.

00:26:49 Speaker 1

I laid between him and the tank to protect him from the shells that were laying.

00:26:54 Speaker 1

Shells were landing so close and it was snow on the ground.

00:26:58 Speaker 1

The the ground around us got black from the blast of the shells.

00:27:03 Speaker 1

How close they were.

00:27:05 Speaker 1

And I remember another time.

00:27:09 Speaker 1

I was policing some wire and I was in this ditch.

00:27:13 Speaker 1

And the Germans were shelling and this was at night and they hit right on the road right next to me.

00:27:20 Speaker 1

But I was in the ditch so that when the cones, you know, the shrapnel flies up in the V form.

00:27:29 Speaker 1

So I was.

00:27:29 Speaker 1

I was quote safe and I remember then. Now my guy was Singapore.

00:27:36 Speaker 1

Then I thought to myself.

00:27:37 Speaker 1

At least my kids won't have to come here.

00:27:40 Speaker 1

And you know, I thought it was ironic that years later I went to visit my son in Germany because he was.

00:27:48 Speaker 1

He was stationed in Germany, but my son was there because I was there and I wasn't even married at the time.

00:27:55 Speaker 1

And I remember thinking that at least my kids won't have to come here.

00:28:00 Speaker 1

But they.

00:28:01 Speaker 1

Because I was there.

00:28:04 Speaker 1

I thought that was ironic.

00:28:19 Speaker 1

OK, so in March of 45 from Camp Lucky Strike, I'll try to laharp.

00:28:25 Speaker 1

I caught the boat and came home and it was landed in Fort Dixon. We were told we would have 30 days at home.

00:28:35 Speaker 1

Don't ask for an.

00:28:36 Speaker 1

You're not going to get one.

00:28:39 Speaker 1

So when I came home, there was a telegram waiting for me.

00:28:44 Speaker 1

I they gave me an extension of 15 days.

00:28:49 Speaker 1

I had 30 days at home.

00:28:52 Speaker 1

And this is all TD.

00:28:53 Speaker 1

It wasn't counted as leave or anything. I had six days travel.

00:28:57 Speaker 1

It only took me hours to get home to Buffalo, NY and I had a 15 day extension so I had 51 days at home.

00:29:07 Speaker 1

All the money that I had saved, I blew it.

00:29:10 Speaker 1

I'd spent.

00:29:11 Speaker 1

I figured it isn't going to do me any good when I'm dead.

00:29:16 Speaker 1

So I spent all my money.

00:29:19 Speaker 1

And from home.

00:29:22 Speaker 1

I from there I was assigned to.

00:29:26 Speaker 1

A rehab camp. Because I was. I had to see a psychiatrist and I was.

00:29:33 Speaker 1

Went.

00:29:34 Speaker 1

I went to this.

00:29:35 Speaker 1

It was supposed to be a replacement camp, but it was camp but outside.

00:29:41 Speaker 1

Of North Carolina and I had a Sergeant came up to me one time and said that I hadn't appointment with Major Frankfurter.

00:29:50 Speaker 1

Everybody knew that major hopdog.

00:29:54 Speaker 1

Was the psychiatrist and I didn't want them to know I was having to see a psychiatrist.

00:30:01 Speaker 1

And he came to me the next day, he said. You didn't keep your appointment.

00:30:04 Speaker 1

Haven't told me another appointment.

00:30:07 Speaker 1

And and I skipped that one.

00:30:09 Speaker 1

I figured I didn't want to see the psychiatrist.

00:30:13 Speaker 1

And they fixed me.

00:30:14 Speaker 1

They put it on a bulletin board.

00:30:17 Speaker 1

That I had an appointment with Major Frankfurter, so I had to see the psychiatrist because I was.

00:30:26 Speaker 1

I really was kind of at wit's.

00:30:28 Speaker 1

I know he gave me some medication and he told me to take it just before bedtime.

00:30:33 Speaker 1

That medication was so strong and he said take it just before bedtime. If you tapped your head.

00:30:41 Speaker 1

The whole head was numb. I could feel my finger coming out the other side.

00:30:48 Speaker 1

And that was the extent of my.

00:30:53 Speaker 1

Rehab.

00:30:55 Speaker 1

I remember we had German Pows.

00:30:59 Speaker 1

And I I remember I was. We had free movies and we were we had plates on the table.

00:31:06 Speaker 1

Know it was almost like.

00:31:09 Speaker 1

Astp program all over again, you know. But when I was at Texas A and M.

00:31:15 Speaker 1

It was, you know, ultra class.

00:31:18 Speaker 1

And now I remember some other episodes from the war. You know, one of the 1st when we had the breakthrough outside of Saint Louis.

00:31:29 Speaker 1

When some of the we I saw a half track that was burned and you could smell the bodies cause the thing was still on fire. And boy, I'll tell you, there's nothing like a a human body burning.

00:31:44 Speaker 1

You'll never forget that it's gotten odor of its own.

00:31:50 Speaker 1

And you can have a a dead.

00:31:52 Speaker 1

You you could have a rotten meat, but nothing smells like a human body burning.

00:31:59 Speaker 1

It's it's got an odor of its own.

00:32:03 Speaker 1

And I remember one time outside of Nancy, France, we during the approach March, the Germans were shelling this culvert that covered the road.

00:32:14 Speaker 1

It was a little culvert, but they had that zeroed in and the guys some guys got killed and blew their helmets off so fast that it took their brains right with the helmet.

00:32:27 Speaker 1

You know, and that that there's not much to see inside the head when they when your brains come out in your helmet.

00:32:35 Speaker 1

And I remember I went by this little farmyard.

00:32:38 Speaker 1

And we had to stop for the approach March.

00:32:42 Speaker 1

And I picked up this guy's.

00:32:44 Speaker 1

It was only from the knee down, but I'll tell you that thing must have weighed about 3035 lbs or more.

00:32:52 Speaker 1

But I I thought boy, that's.

00:32:53 Speaker 1

You know, for just a small part of the body.

00:32:59

Well.

00:33:02 Speaker 1

And is there and I I guess that's about it.

00:33:06 Speaker 1

Are other episodes that are out of place I.

00:33:14 Speaker 1

When I came home.

00:33:17 Speaker 1

They were having blood drives and I lived in North Tonawanda and right across the Erie Canal, the barge Canal was the city of Tonawanda and they had blood drives. And I remember I went, I wanted to donate blood, so I donated blood.

00:33:34 Speaker 1

Hey, and a week later they had a blood drive across the canal in Tonawanda and I told them I gave blood, you know, the week before and they didn't want to take my blood.

00:33:47 Speaker 1

And I remember one time when I was wiring up.

00:33:51 Speaker 1

Installing a telephone in this first aid station.

00:33:55 Speaker 1

My God, there were 100 wounded at the first aid station and there were German wounded as well. But they brought in one guy on a stretcher.

00:34:07 Speaker 1

And the only thing they did to him was given plasma.

00:34:11 Speaker 1

And I said if anything would have saved that guy, it was a plasma.

00:34:14 Speaker 1

And I said by the time I wired, put the phone in and I came out and he was dead, they covered him up.

00:34:22 Speaker 1

I.

00:34:23 Speaker 1

But if anything would have done, it would be the plasma.

00:34:28 Speaker 1

I made him take the blood. They took it.

00:34:33 Speaker 1

And that's about all I remember. There were a lot of other little things I remember one time in Luxembourg.

00:34:45 Speaker 1

I went.

00:34:48 Speaker 1

I learned the song do do leash Mead from Harold Sinner.

00:34:53 Speaker 1

And.

00:34:55

And this.

00:34:56 Speaker 1

Frenchman in Luxembourg, we were singing that as a group, you know, because it was just one night.

00:35:04 Speaker 1

You didn't have much time in combat to fool around for a good time.

00:35:10 Speaker 1

But I remember this one episode. We did have a good time.

00:35:15 Speaker 1

There was nothing then, you know, shooting the breeze.

00:35:19 Speaker 1

And he was telling me how he was picking up German helmets.

00:35:24 Speaker 1

Outside of Hideersheid was my first experience with Leo the Lion.

00:35:32 Speaker 1

These were German rockets that they were battery of six rockets in a circle.

00:35:38 Speaker 1

And I'll tell you, by the time you hear those rockets come in, it's too late.

00:35:44 Speaker 1

Can hear them come off, but by the time they come off, they're at you.

00:35:49 Speaker 1

And I remember another time outside of a little town, I was in this field.

00:35:55 Speaker 1

An knows nothing but snow on the ground and I was the only guy in that field.

00:36:00 Speaker 1

German spotted me and they were they were firing at me with artillery.

00:36:06 Speaker 1

Boy, I'll tell you.

00:36:06 Speaker 1

That's a because and they had.

00:36:10 Speaker 1

These were.

00:36:12 Speaker 1

Mortar shells and you don't hear mortar shells coming in.

00:36:17 Speaker 1

You just hear them when they.

00:36:19 Speaker 1

You can hear a pop because when they come out of the mortar tube, they make a little noise and they were, you know, they're they're they have to be relatively close in order to fire at you apparently.

00:36:33 Speaker 1

They saw me in this field and they were firing.

00:36:36 Speaker 1

But I I made it out of that, all right.

00:36:41

Well.

00:36:43 Speaker 1

There's a there's a lot of things, you know, that you remember, and some episodes are completely out of context and.

00:36:53 Speaker 1

And it was interesting, but I know this I wasn't hit, but I.

00:36:59 Speaker 1

I was shell shocked.

00:37:01 Speaker 1

If you want to call it that battle fatigue.

00:37:05 Speaker 1

I know when we were on the when I was describing the right flank of the 3rd Army.

00:37:12 Speaker 1

Bordering on this 11th.

00:37:18 Speaker 1

Armored division, replacing them and within three hours we had to vacate that place because they were sending us to Luxembourg, you know, for the bulge.

00:37:31 Speaker 1

Hey and we traveled 150 miles.

00:37:35 Speaker 1

In 10-15 hours we were going 10 miles an hour, but we had everything, the artillery, everything was going with us and I remember I was in my fart sack and that's.

00:37:49 Speaker 1

It's it's just like a GI blanket, but had a zipper on it.

00:37:54 Speaker 1

Was like a mummy bag.

00:37:56 Speaker 1

If you want to call it that, well, we called them fart sacks and I was in this 2 1/2 ton truck.

00:38:05 Speaker 1

My God, it was cold as hell.

00:38:07

Yeah.

00:38:08 Speaker 1

And I know we were behind the light line.

00:38:12 Speaker 1

You know, during the war, I kind of envied the Air Force because they were behind the light line.

00:38:20 Speaker 1

Had some good nice place to sleep.

00:38:22 Speaker 1

They had a building to sleep.

00:38:24 Speaker 1

You didn't have to sleep on the ground or on a haystack.

00:38:30 Speaker 1

Remember, one time I had head lice when we when we entered the town of Edelbrook.

00:38:36 Speaker 1

Edelbrook was.

00:38:38 Speaker 1

We hit it so fast that the electricity was still on in town and they had this big round oak table pedestal table.

00:38:47 Speaker 1

And I was writing a letter home, scratching my head.

00:38:50 Speaker 1

And I could see Denver from the table, Dan.

00:38:54 Speaker 1

Hell, if it was creeping Dan Breathe is what it was.

00:38:57 Speaker 1

I had head lice.

00:39:00 Speaker 1

You know, and the meta gave me two boxes of powder that I used up right away.

00:39:07 Speaker 1

You know you.

00:39:07 Speaker 1

You don't have time to take a bath. A lot of guys didn't even change their socks, and those are the guys that had trench foot.

00:39:16 Speaker 1

You know, sometimes when you when you knock off at night, there were a lot of nights you didn't.

00:39:22 Speaker 1

You couldn't take your clothes off. You just slept in what you had. You got up into a corner or on the ground.

00:39:31 Speaker 1

You put something down to so you wouldn't get as cold from the ground, but.

00:39:38 Speaker 1

The guys that didn't do that, they're the guys that had trench foot didn't change their socks.

00:39:44 Speaker 1

Were wet all the time.

00:39:52 Speaker 1

Well, that's about it, I think.

00:39:58 Speaker 1

Yeah. So All in all, I was discharged in December of 1945 and I was lucky because in January of 1946, I was going to Niagara University.

00:40:10 Speaker 1

Was accepted right away.

00:40:12 Speaker 1

And I didn't have to wait long at all.

00:40:16 Speaker 1

And I got out of school in 3 1/2 years, got out of high school in 3 1/2 years and I and I after I graduated. I wanted to do social work.

00:40:27 Speaker 1

And so I went to the School of Social work in Buffalo, NY while I was working at Catholic Charities full time.

00:40:35 Speaker 1

And it took me 4 years to get my master's degree part time.

00:40:40 Speaker 1

But at least I got my master's degree.

00:40:43 Speaker 1

And I was married.

00:40:46 Speaker 1

I had three.

00:40:47 Speaker 1

I know one time one of my field placements was at a mental hospital in Buffalo.

00:40:52 Speaker 1

Was for Alcoholics and mental hospital.

00:40:56 Speaker 1

And I was telling psychiatrists that, you know, I had kids whose ages were 1-2 and three.

00:41:02 Speaker 1

And she had a chuckle out of that, she said.

00:41:05 Speaker 1

Let me know when you have 4-5 and six.

00:41:08 Speaker 1

So when the kids turn 4-5 and six, I thought of her, but I figured the hell I'm not gonna.

00:41:17 Speaker 1

I'm not gonna let her know that it was that significant that I remembered it three years later.

00:41:22 Speaker 1

So I I didn't tell her, but I thought that was funny.

00:41:27 Speaker 1

And since then I went, I've been working all in private agencies.

00:41:32 Speaker 1

Worked for Catholic charities in Buffalo.

00:41:35 Speaker 1

I went to family service travelers aid in Des Moines, IA.

00:41:41 Speaker 1

I work.

00:41:41 Speaker 1

The Red Cross disaster services for 10 years out of Saint Louis.

00:41:47 Speaker 1

I've been all over the country with disasters, floods, tornadoes, you name it.

00:41:55 Speaker 1

And then I worked for the chapter in.

00:41:58 Speaker 1

Louis and I transferred to the chapter in Providence, RI.

00:42:04 Speaker 1

From Providence, I went in Providence. Rather I went to Big Brothers of Rhode Island.

00:42:12 Speaker 1

And then I transferred here from Big Brothers of Rhode Island.

00:42:17 Speaker 1

I came here and this is where I retired. I was director of Big Brothers here in town and and I retired in 1985.

00:42:28 Speaker 1

It's been an interesting life, but and there's not much I would change. But you know, I wouldn't do combat again.

00:42:36 Speaker 1

You know, if you guaranteed me, I wouldn't get hurt, I think I'd go nuts.

00:42:41 Speaker 1

I went half nuts anyway.

00:42:44 Speaker 1

That's about it.