

Roland George Perkins Interview

Company H, 319th Inf Reg

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by John Hursk)

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

00:00:04 Speaker 1

I'm I'm interviewing probably Perkins. He served in the army.

00:00:11 Speaker 2

Yes, I was.

00:00:13 Speaker 2

A part of General Patton's Third Army, the 80th Entry Division, which is called the Blue Ridge Division and shoulder patch with the three Blue Ridge Mountains.

00:00:27 Speaker 2

And.

00:00:28 Speaker 2

Serve there.

00:00:31 Speaker 2

In three main battle areas, the Battle of the Bulge.

00:00:36 Speaker 2

And the Rhineland, central Europe.

00:00:40 Speaker 2

To the close of the war.

00:00:44 Speaker 2

It was in a machine gun squad.

00:00:47 Speaker 2

And.

00:00:48 Speaker 2

As I say, it was drafted actually right whenever.

00:00:56 Speaker 2

Graduated from high school.

00:00:58 Speaker 2

In 1944 and went right into the service then and took training at Camp Blanding on.

00:01:06 Speaker 2

Machine gun, 30 caliber machine gun and also mortar. Although I was not in the mortar squad, but rather the machine gun.

00:01:17 Speaker 2

And.

00:01:19 Speaker 2

Immediately after 17 weeks of basic training went.

00:01:25 Speaker 2

To.

00:01:29 Speaker 2

Camp Landing 17 weeks in Florida.

00:01:33 Speaker 2

And then actually, we were training for the South Pacific, but then the.

00:01:40 Speaker 2

Dean Day came and.

00:01:43 Speaker 2

Even though we were trained through the swamps and everything down there for the South Pacific, well, the need was for replacements in Europe, the European theater, so.

00:01:56 Speaker 2

We went to.

00:02:01 Speaker 2

Immediately overseas went over on the Queen Elizabeth, which was a full load.

00:02:07 Speaker 2

If I'm recalling correctly 22.

00:02:12 Speaker 2

And I never have been quite sure whether it's 2200 or 22,000 awful lot. The way that ship was, the Queen Elizabeth being a British ship next to the Queen Mary, one of the largest. And I went across the ocean and about.

00:02:28 Speaker 2

Very fast. It's exacting all the way across because of the danger of.

00:02:35 Speaker 2

U boats German U boats.

00:02:37 Speaker 2

We didn't have an escort at all because the Queen Elizabeth very fast and everything has changed course every six minutes.

00:02:46 Speaker 2

And the reason?

00:02:49 Speaker 2

As I understand.

00:02:50 Speaker 2

Was because it.

00:02:51 Speaker 2

Took just that amount of time for a new boat to get a torpedo launched, so we made it across. The landed went up through between Ireland and England.

00:03:03 Speaker 2

It was quite a sight to see.

00:03:07 Speaker 2

Ireland and then on up to Greenock.

00:03:10 Speaker 2

Scotland.

00:03:12 Speaker 2

Which is right near.

00:03:15 Speaker 2

Glasgow, Scotland.

00:03:17 Speaker 2

Boarded the.

00:03:19 Speaker 2

Went went on shore. Then I still remember going up the.

00:03:25 Speaker 2

Little embankment there from the ship, the game plank and going up the embankment. The people, the.

00:03:33 Speaker 2

Scottish people were on both sides of the path as we went up.

00:03:39 Speaker 2

Never forget the little Scottish children.

00:03:43 Speaker 2

Greeting us and saying Gordon E gum chum Gordon me.

00:03:47 Speaker 2

I can still hear them.

00:03:48 Speaker 2

Then we boarded the train, went down through England.

00:03:55 Speaker 2

To Southampton and then made leaving up here on the map.

00:04:02 Speaker 2

You can see coming down across to Lahar right here.

00:04:09 Speaker 2

Now D-Day had already taken place, and so our forces, the Battle of the Bulls, was in progress and our troops had been.

00:04:21 Speaker 2

Backed up because the battle of the Bulls into Belgium.

00:04:25 Speaker 2

And we went up into Belgium right here and.

00:04:31 Speaker 2

It was there joined the.

00:04:35 Speaker 2

And 3rd Army, 80th Infantry Division. As I said before.

00:04:42 Speaker 2

I'll never forget when we landed at Lahar here the.

00:04:49 Speaker 2

Lieutenant.

00:04:51 Speaker 2

Saying to us you're you're going to become a part of.

00:04:55 Speaker 2

And 3rd Army General Patton.

00:04:59 Speaker 2

Is the commanding general.

00:05:02 Speaker 2

Now known as said, he's known as Old Blood and guts.

00:05:07 Speaker 2

That we have a way of saying his guts.

00:05:10 Speaker 2

And our blood.

00:05:12 Speaker 2

And so.

00:05:13 Speaker 2

That was my first encounter with what we were starting to get into. We boarded then.

00:05:21 Speaker 2

I believe they were called 40 and 8 box cars, cattle cars and we were just loaded full on those things and went by train up into Belgium which was the backside of the bulge and joined our outfit there. And then came the arrows here.

00:05:40 Speaker 2

Point out pretty much some of those areas of the progress down through this way and across Luxembourg. I think we fought our way all across Luxembourg.

00:05:54 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:05:56 Speaker 2

Walking most of the way and then across into.

00:06:04 Speaker 2

Finally, coming to the Rhine river here.

00:06:08 Speaker 2

And you see the arrow is pointed there, the place called Mines Mainz near Frankfurt, Germany.

00:06:18 Speaker 2

And I remember as we went.

00:06:22 Speaker 2

Through the western side of the Rhine, there in the city, there and.

00:06:31 Speaker 2

Passing something was quite familiar with me and that had to do with the the Gutenberg Bible press was there, and that was interesting to me because of my background from the standpoint.

Remember reading about that in high school.

00:06:49 Speaker 2

And then we that was a key place for.

00:06:53 Speaker 2

Me at mines.

00:06:57 Speaker 2

Where we had a new Lieutenant come up to join our outfit. He had just finished his training and had come over. And I remember the night before we crossed the line, he showed me the.

00:07:13 Speaker 2

Pictures of his wife and two little children.

00:07:17 Speaker 2

A very fine person that he was and then.

00:07:23 Speaker 2

We were scheduled to cross the Rhine. Our scouts went across, came back.

00:07:30 Speaker 2

Uh saying.

00:07:33 Speaker 2

All is ready for our crossing, we.

00:07:38 Speaker 2

We're scheduled to cross the Rhine River at 1:00.

00:07:42 Speaker 2

Which was the.

00:07:45 Speaker 2

We were to board row boats and I remember my particular boat.

00:07:52 Speaker 2

Oh, fourteen men was book #13.

00:07:57 Speaker 2

And.

00:07:58 Speaker 2

So.

00:08:00 Speaker 2

It came time.

00:08:02 Speaker 2

1:00 at night for us to go and before we got started, we were crowds behind an embankment where the main river runs into the Rhine. That's this.

00:08:14 Speaker 2

Tributary right here that runs into.

00:08:17 Speaker 2

The Rhine at mines.

00:08:19 Speaker 2

And uh.

00:08:22 Speaker 2

It's the only time I ever remember if something goes wrong. We were to meet back here at a like a big garage.

00:08:32 Speaker 2

Where?

00:08:33 Speaker 2

And.

00:08:34 Speaker 2

We were together, if anything went wrong, well, it did go wrong.

00:08:41 Speaker 2

The Germans started firing tracer bullets. We could see them coming across. That was while we were still crouched on this side of the river.

00:08:49 Speaker 2

And.

00:08:51 Speaker 2

Behind that concrete.

00:08:55 Speaker 2

And.

00:08:57 Speaker 2

You were waiting for the command to go in at 1:00.

00:09:01 Speaker 2

Lieutenant Hayes said.

00:09:04 Speaker 2

Come on, boys, let's go. I can still hearing and saying hey.

00:09:09 Speaker 2

We boarded our boats and started out across the Rhine River.

00:09:14 Speaker 2

An.

00:09:16 Speaker 2

Then.

00:09:18 Speaker 2

We were probably halfway across maybe 2/3 of the way, and then all of a sudden.

00:09:24 Speaker 2

The.

00:09:27 Speaker 2

Germans put up.

00:09:29 Speaker 2

Flares in the sky.

00:09:32 Speaker 2

That.

00:09:34 Speaker 2

We're on.

00:09:36 Speaker 2

Parachute, you might say, and it just hung there. It seemed like forever, but it lighted the river like day.

00:09:43 Speaker 2

And.

00:09:44 Speaker 2

There we were.

00:09:45 Speaker 2

And then the machine gunfire starting into our boats.

00:09:50 Speaker 2

And men were dying all around.

00:09:53 Speaker 2

Or willing to.

00:09:55 Speaker 2

And it was so in my both.

00:09:57 Speaker 2

I saw the two men in front of me get hit and the man on the side of I still see the tracer bullet that went into his neck and just seemed to hang there.

00:10:10 Speaker 2

We were really driven back there for the moment.

00:10:15 Speaker 2

Even though our slogan in the 80th Infantry was forward, never backward, but we were turned back at that particular point and got back to the shore with under still heavy machine gunfire.

00:10:32 Speaker 2

And.

00:10:34 Speaker 2

Another Betty and I carried the Lieutenant Higgs off the boat. He'd been hit twice through the stoma.

00:10:43 Speaker 2

Carried them all.

00:10:45 Speaker 2

But it was.

00:10:46 Speaker 2

Too late to do anything. He was gone.

00:10:49 Speaker 2

And then.

00:10:53 Speaker 2

Went to the place where we were.

00:10:54 Speaker 2

Supposed to meet?

00:10:56 Speaker 2

And then the next morning, the Navy brought up.

00:11:00 Speaker 2

Ohh I keep forgetting the type of those, the kind that lets down the gangplank in front.

00:11:07 Speaker 2

And started out across in the early morning, then a foggy morning.

00:11:16 Speaker 2

For a moment, got stuck on a sandbar.

00:11:19 Speaker 2

And that was a kind of a frightening thing because we expected any moment for that.

00:11:27 Speaker 2

Maybe to be shelled at that particular point, but we made it across.

00:11:31 Speaker 2

And then found the other side. This line with trenches. And that's where the German machine guns have been.

00:11:39 Speaker 2

In place and then.

00:11:42 Speaker 2

We started out across the valley there and there was one experience that I remember especially and that was a German mother who was running from trench to trench crying out in English. My son, my son. Where's my son?

00:12:01 Speaker 2

And that's something I've never forgot.

00:12:04 Speaker 2

Then.

00:12:06 Speaker 2

Went in.

00:12:09 Speaker 2

A couple 100 yards there at the edge of the city of Maine.

00:12:13 Speaker 2

So it was just.

00:12:13 Speaker 2

Like a bottom ground open land.

00:12:18 Speaker 2

To the edge.

00:12:19 Speaker 2

And got up and the shelling then started of our artillery shells from the German troops and we were.

00:12:31 Speaker 2

There was an open.

00:12:33 Speaker 2

Window as I heard a shell coming in and I dive through that window.

00:12:39 Speaker 2

And there stood a German soldier, a big fella with his gun right on his shoe.

00:12:45 Speaker 2

And I.

00:12:47 Speaker 2

Yelled out come around.

00:12:50 Speaker 2

Which I thought.

00:12:51 Speaker 2

I'd heard a Rifleman using that term a while before and I thought that meant.

00:12:59 Speaker 2

For him to surrender.

00:13:02 Speaker 2

But it really means comrade.

00:13:05 Speaker 2

And maybe it's the best thing.

00:13:09 Speaker 2

I could have said.

00:13:10 Speaker 2

Because he threw down his gun and I took.

00:13:13 Speaker 2

Took him as prisoner.

00:13:15 Speaker 2

Then.

00:13:17 Speaker 2

We started out again, still being shelled and.

00:13:23 Speaker 2

Another shell was coming in and went.

00:13:27 Speaker 2

Starting to dive around the corner in the street there mines.

00:13:32 Speaker 2

But the shell was just ahead of me. Had I gotten around the corner and that just shows you some of the terrible things of war that could happen.

00:13:41 Speaker 2

And some of the miracles that it didn't happen to us, then we went on up through.

00:13:48 Speaker 2

2.

00:13:50 Speaker 2

And you see that top area there being castle and that was the Tiger Oil German tank thing with me and we actually could see.

00:14:00 Speaker 2

A German tank on the assembly line.

00:14:03 Speaker 2

And I was on fire.

00:14:06 Speaker 2

And I still remember that vividly as we came over hilltop, looking over at that Tiger Royal Tank Bank, those tiger Royals were very.

00:14:16 Speaker 2

Dangers. Tanks.

00:14:19 Speaker 2

In my opinion.

00:14:21 Speaker 2

Really better tanks than what we had in some of their weaponry. Then we came down through Erfurt and Weimer.

00:14:30 Speaker 2

Gina, I remember all those places.

00:14:33 Speaker 2

And on down and then backtrack and down through.

00:14:40 Speaker 2

Nuremberg.

00:14:42 Speaker 2

Where the trials were to happen after the war for the German people, the leaders that were on trial, mayor all the way on down through crossing the Danube River. It was a plant at Riggins, Burg and the.

00:15:01 Speaker 2

Danube River was.

00:15:04 Speaker 2

Was at flood stage and we crossed that in pontoon boats.

00:15:11 Speaker 2

And made her way on down through. Oh, by the way, that's where we were able to stay all night.

00:15:17 Speaker 2

And had the.

00:15:18 Speaker 2

First hot bath that had all the time over there.

00:15:24 Speaker 2

It was unbelievable.

00:15:26 Speaker 2

And then on down through to.

00:15:31 Speaker 2

Into Austria.

00:15:33 Speaker 2

And then or may.

00:15:35 Speaker 2

Made our way to Nerlens Austria to the EMS River and that's where we met the Russians. They were coming up from this side and that was in May of 45 May. What was that date? May 6th May 5th.

00:15:53 Speaker 2

But there.

00:15:55

We.

00:15:57 Speaker 2

Regarding the bridge.

00:15:59 Speaker 2

And I remember an s s trooper wanting to get ahead of the Russians to come and be captured by us crossing the bridge.

00:16:07 Speaker 2

And I took his.

00:16:08 Speaker 2

Rifle that's I was able to mail mail home and still have today the German army rifle.

00:16:16 Speaker 2

But anyhow, that was the basically.

00:16:22 Speaker 2

The end of the war, then?

00:16:25 Speaker 2

So.

00:16:26 Speaker 2

I have the three battle stars, the Bulls.

00:16:31 Speaker 2

And battle the Bulls, the Rhineland and central Europe.

00:16:36 Speaker 2

More.

00:16:37 Speaker 2

So that basically is my story of the war.

00:16:42 Speaker 2

And my experience in.

00:16:45 Speaker 1

OK.

00:16:47 Speaker 1

Do you recall? Recall the day that you left the.

00:16:51 Speaker 2

And I went yes, it was July the 4th, 1946. I didn't have enough points. You know, you win by points.

00:17:00 Speaker 2

For each six months, you're overseas and I had three stripes on my soldier shoulder. My arm patch.

00:17:10 Speaker 2

But.

00:17:12 Speaker 2

For being overseas for 18 months. But I didn't have enough points at the end of the war to come home as some of the fellows did, who have been a long time there.

00:17:22 Speaker 2

But.

00:17:24 Speaker 2

So I was stationed them at.

00:17:30 Speaker 2

A little place called from right 2 miles from the Austrian border.

00:17:34 Speaker 2

In the Alps.

00:17:36 Speaker 2

And a wonderful experience there. I really came to appreciate the German people and nothing like we're seeing in Iraq today. We have a grandson in the Marine Corps in Iraq, very dangerous area because.

00:17:55 Speaker 2

The radical element of.

00:17:59 Speaker 2

The Iraqi means.

00:18:01 Speaker 2

But the German people, very nice, we were builded.

00:18:05 Speaker 2

In a a home and.

00:18:10 Speaker 2

We will be on guard duty there.

00:18:15 Speaker 2

Would.

00:18:17 Speaker 2

But then.

00:18:19 Speaker 2

Have to experience, we were training together then to the South Pacific. Thought we'd have to go there.

00:18:27 Speaker 2

And but.

00:18:29 Speaker 2

The war ended.

00:18:30 Speaker 2

Japan as well and how thankful we were for that and I was transferred into a transportation.

00:18:39 Speaker 2

Company for Rail and Air Transportation was located.

00:18:43 Speaker 2

In Munich, Germany, and would you believe it, we're able to stay there with the.

00:18:50 Speaker 2

To protect the abilities that we had in the Rudolf Hess estate, the Rudolf Hess was the number three.

00:19:00 Speaker 2

Let's.

00:19:01 Speaker 2

And as Hitler is number one and then Gory, and then Hess.

00:19:07 Speaker 2

And he's the one that, if.

00:19:08 Speaker 2

You remember your history.

00:19:10 Speaker 2

Perhaps that isn't expressed too much now in history, and he's the one before the war was over, flew out of Germany in a private plane.

00:19:20 Speaker 2

And parachuted out in Scotland.

00:19:23 Speaker 2

And we stayed in his.

00:19:25 Speaker 2

Big beautiful estate along many Saar River that flows through Munich.

00:19:32 Speaker 2

So that then it was July 4th, then of 1946 the.

00:19:37 Speaker 2

I received my Independence Day.

00:19:41 Speaker 2

From the service.

00:19:43 Speaker 1

OK, what did you do in the days and weeks after your service?

00:19:48 Speaker 2

Well.

00:19:52 Speaker 2

The first thing I did in getting home was.

00:19:57 Speaker 2

Just to try to adjust because believe me, there's quite an adjustment to be made after you go through the service. But if I can just give a word here, it's right here and that Ryan River crossing.

00:20:12 Speaker 2

That my life has actually changed.

00:20:16 Speaker 2

I didn't tell the whole story there, but with those flares up above my head, it was just like.

00:20:23 Speaker 2

I felt that the next bullet was gonna be mine.

00:20:26 Speaker 2

Because as I say this.

00:20:29 Speaker 2

The prayer meeting.

00:20:30 Speaker 2

If you please, I'm on the Rhine that night.

00:20:32 Speaker 2

And.

00:20:35 Speaker 2

I was expecting the next moment as I looked.

00:20:38 Speaker 2

Up to the players.

00:20:39 Speaker 2

I expect them to be ushered into the presence of God.

00:20:43 Speaker 2

And I knew I wasn't ready.

00:20:46 Speaker 2

And.

00:20:48 Speaker 2

And so.

00:20:50

The.

00:20:50 Speaker 2

Old Ham came to the line just as I am.

00:20:53 Speaker 2

Without one plea, but that thy.

00:20:54 Speaker 2

Blood in the shed.

00:20:55 Speaker 2

For me and Lamb of God, I can.

00:20:58 Speaker 2

Because I had my mind, there was flares looking up at the sky.

00:21:03 Speaker 2

With those players.

00:21:05 Speaker 2

I had thought.

00:21:07 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:21:09 Speaker 2

That's like the term of God.

00:21:12 Speaker 2

Than I expected.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

Real.

00:21:15 Speaker 2

I thought that was it, but it wasn't.

00:21:18 Speaker 2

And I believe.

00:21:20 Speaker 2

You might call that a real conversion experience for me. And when I came home.

00:21:25 Speaker 2

The thing that I did was to.

00:21:30 Speaker 2

Find out what I should do, because my purpose then originally had been.

00:21:36 Speaker 2

To being raised on a farm just to raise cattle and have that as my life skill.

00:21:43 Speaker 2

But then I thought, well.

00:21:45 Speaker 2

I want to.

00:21:47 Speaker 2

Do what I can now to help.

00:21:50 Speaker 2

Mankind.

00:21:51 Speaker 2

And the thing that impressed me was that the ministry.

00:21:55 Speaker 2

Was the way that I can best do that?

00:21:59 Speaker 2

And so that's why I went in. The ministry started then to school and college and seminary.

00:22:06 Speaker 2

And.

00:22:07 Speaker 2

That took seven years.

00:22:08 Speaker 2

So that was the next stage.

00:22:14 Speaker 1

Did you make any close friendships and did do you continue any of those friendships today?

00:22:20 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:22:23 Speaker 2

Of course we lost.

00:22:26 Speaker 2

So many of our fellows.

00:22:28 Speaker 2

During the war.

00:22:32 Speaker 2

And.

00:22:34 Speaker 2

One of them was Lou winger from Renall, West Virginia.

00:22:40 Speaker 2

Who died just this past year? So he's gone. But I have kept close contact with him.

00:22:47 Speaker 2

And.

00:22:51 Speaker 2

Another couple of my buddies, Columbo and.

00:22:56 Speaker 2

And James?

00:22:58 Speaker 2

Were both killed in the line river crossing or buried at the?

00:23:02 Speaker 2

Cemetery than.

00:23:04 Speaker 2

Military Seminary Cemetery at Luxembourg City.

00:23:10 Speaker 2

I have pictures of that and everything.

00:23:14 Speaker 2

All that row on row crosses.

00:23:17 Speaker 2

And.

00:23:20 Speaker 2

So really.

00:23:22 Speaker 2

I have no other contacts except.

00:23:28 Speaker 2

Walt Spangler from this area.

00:23:32 Speaker 2

Was in my same division that he was in a a different company. I didn't know him at the time at a.

00:23:38 Speaker 2

We're going to be going to Washington this.

00:23:41 Speaker 2

Of starting in the morning at 6:00.

00:23:45 Speaker 2

To the.

00:23:46 Speaker 2

Dedication of the Monument World War 2, monument in Washington, DC.

00:23:51 Speaker 2

And so.

00:23:53 Speaker 2

A few of us are going.

00:23:54 Speaker 2

By van from here.

00:23:58 Speaker 2

This and be there this weekend.

00:24:02 Speaker 1

OK.

00:24:05 Speaker 1

What was your career after the war or and did your wartime career contribute to it?

00:24:11 Speaker 2

Ohh yes, well that's what I just shared a moment ago.

00:24:16 Speaker 2

I'm a retired minister now.

00:24:19 Speaker 2

On the United Methodist Church.

00:24:22 Speaker 2

And really.

00:24:24 Speaker 2

That.

00:24:26 Speaker 2

Stem from right there.

00:24:29 Speaker 2

The crossing of the line. Really my decision.

00:24:34 Speaker 2

To go into something this way.

00:24:37 Speaker 2

And.

00:24:39 Speaker 2

So yes.

00:24:43 Speaker 2

I believe the Lord used that.

00:24:47 Speaker 2

Particular band.

00:24:49 Speaker 2

You know, we think of the horrible things of war.

00:24:53 Speaker 2

But it's like any hard place in our lives. I think it's wonderful if we can get the positive out of something.

00:25:01 Speaker 2

And that was what it was for me.

00:25:04 Speaker 2

And.

00:25:05 Speaker 2

And I still feel that I still feel that calling even in retirement, of keeping going.

00:25:13 Speaker 1

OK. How did your experience contribute to your thinking about war and military service?

00:25:20 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:25:25 Speaker 2

I.

00:25:28 Speaker 2

As far as war is concerned, of course, a terrible thing.

00:25:33 Speaker 2

And yet, I honestly believe that.

00:25:37 Speaker 2

World War 2 especially.

00:25:40 Speaker 2

Because I believe. I honestly believe that it had we not been involved.

00:25:46 Speaker 2

I'm speaking now of America.

00:25:49 Speaker 2

I believe that Hitler's forces.

00:25:51 Speaker 2

Would have overrun.

00:25:53 Speaker 2

Europe completely.

00:25:55 Speaker 2

And we probably would have been the next step because.

00:25:59 Speaker 1

Hitler was.

00:26:02 Speaker 2

Well.

00:26:03 Speaker 2

For these concentration camps.

00:26:06 Speaker 2

What he did to.

00:26:08 Speaker 2

His enemies there.

00:26:11 Speaker 2

And particularly the Jewish people.

00:26:14 Speaker 2

Over 6,000,000 Jews being slaughtered their concentration camps.

00:26:20 Speaker 2

By the way, we.

00:26:22 Speaker 2

Our our unit was the one.

00:26:25 Speaker 2

That.

00:26:28 Speaker 2

And delivered.

00:26:29 Speaker 2

Dachau was the concentration camp that our unit I saw in that House saw the.

00:26:37 Speaker 2

Gas chambers.

00:26:40 Speaker 2

And the Little Bowls had carried the ashes of those that they.

00:26:45 Speaker 2

Killed and then.

00:26:47 Speaker 2

Cremate.

00:26:49 Speaker 2

So.

00:26:51 Speaker 2

The Nazi Racine was.

00:26:53 Speaker 2

Rough.

00:26:56 Speaker 2

I don't think it's bad as what it was in South Pacific with the Japanese.

00:27:03 Speaker 2

The German people were more like us, but they were just under a cruel dictator.

00:27:09 Speaker 2

In the leadership there that they had.

00:27:16 Speaker 1

Are you a member of any veterans or other organizations related to your service?

00:27:22 Speaker 2

No, I've got.

00:27:26 Speaker 2

Of course I go to the VA at Chillicothe.

00:27:31 Speaker 2

For some of the medical treatment and so forth today.

00:27:35 Speaker 2

And.

00:27:37 Speaker 2

I was a part of the American Legion.

00:27:41 Speaker 2

And.

00:27:44 Speaker 2

Try to keep contact in that particular area and just like as I say.

00:27:49 Speaker 2

Going to Washington, DC for the World War 2 dedication of the monument there.

00:27:55 Speaker 2

This this weekend.

00:27:59 Speaker 1

Do you attend any reunions?

00:28:02 Speaker 2

Yes, the 18th century division.

00:28:05 Speaker 2

I've attended some of those.

00:28:08 Speaker 2

And by the way, one.

00:28:10 Speaker 2

Of the fellows going with us is.

00:28:11 Speaker 2

Going to be the head person.

00:28:14 Speaker 2

And wolf Spangler.

00:28:15 Speaker 2

In a couple of years, he's the vice.

00:28:20 Speaker 2

You might say the vice.

00:28:23 Speaker 2

Meeting of that.

00:28:25 Speaker 2

Right now.

00:28:27 Speaker 2

I believe that.

00:28:28 Speaker 2

Next reunion this summer is to be in Pittsburgh.

00:28:33 Speaker 2

And then I.

00:28:34 Speaker 2

Think it's going to be coming to?

00:28:35 Speaker 2

Columbus the year after.

00:28:38 Speaker 2

To be next.

00:28:43 Speaker 2

And wolves will be the chairman, as I understand, for that 80th and through the division reunion.

00:28:46

There.

00:28:50 Speaker 1

OK.

00:28:52 Speaker 1

Where were you at on December 7th, 1940?

00:28:55 Speaker 1

One in cash on Pearl Harbor.

00:29:00 Speaker 2

I was in high school, of course.

00:29:03 Speaker 2

And I still remember President Roosevelt coming home.

00:29:07 Speaker 2

The radio we were on.

00:29:09 Speaker 2

For service in the farm.

00:29:12 Speaker 2

And I, if I'm remembering correctly, I think this was on a Sunday morning.

00:29:17 Speaker 2

That the news broke.

00:29:20 Speaker 2

And.

00:29:22 Speaker 2

And the day of infamy.

00:29:27 Speaker 2

And so I was on our farm home.

00:29:31 Speaker 2

And.

00:29:32 Speaker 2

When our little battery set radio is still.

00:29:37 Speaker 2

And almost here even still.

00:29:41 Speaker 2

Yes, I was just.

00:29:44 Speaker 2

In 41 I would have been.

00:29:50 Speaker 2

Be their freshman or sophomore. I'm not sure which right now.

00:29:55 Speaker 1

On.

00:29:59 Speaker 1

Were you ever fearful that you might not make it back and uh, what's your?

00:30:06 Speaker 1

Also just with that.

00:30:09 Speaker 2

Very much so.

00:30:11 Speaker 2

You know, I've never been away from home.

00:30:14 Speaker 2

That one night.

00:30:16 Speaker 2

And then to be gone for 18 months for seeds, that in itself was enough.

00:30:22 Speaker 2

But yes, just like I explained on the Rhine River crossing, that was just one.

00:30:29 Speaker 2

Experience.

00:30:31 Speaker 2

But.

00:30:33 Speaker 2

Yes. Anybody who says they're not fearful at such a time and.

00:30:39

Fearful.

00:30:40 Speaker 2

That they might not make it through.

00:30:43 Speaker 2

I have to say I I certainly was.

00:30:55 Speaker 1

What did you do for recreation?

00:30:57 Speaker 1

Like while you was out on leave and.

00:31:00

Stuff like that.

00:31:06 Speaker 2

Now, to be honest with you, I don't recall too much recreation except we.

00:31:13 Speaker 2

We were.

00:31:16 Speaker 2

During the war itself, do you mean during the war itself?

00:31:20 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:31:22 Speaker 2

Oh, believe me, there wasn't any recreation except once in a.

00:31:25 Speaker 2

While we would get.

00:31:28 Speaker 2

Be able to go back and remember going back to the city of Metz.

00:31:33 Speaker 2

Where we could get a hot meal because otherwise we ate.

00:31:38 Speaker 2

K rations, that was we got 4.

00:31:43 Speaker 2

Uh, they were just about like a.

00:31:46 Speaker 2

A Cracker Jack box. You know what a Cracker Jack and that would have a little ring thing of meat within it and crackers.

00:31:59 Speaker 2

And strange enough.

00:32:01 Speaker 2

Some cigarettes.

00:32:03 Speaker 2

Which?

00:32:05 Speaker 2

That.

00:32:07 Speaker 2

I didn't smoke.

00:32:10 Speaker 2

Never did but my buddy.

00:32:14 Speaker 2

From West Virginia was a smoker.

00:32:17 Speaker 2

And in the foxhole at.

00:32:19 Speaker 2

Night, you know they didn't.

00:32:21 Speaker 2

He didn't dare.

00:32:23 Speaker 2

Light up the cigarette in the night because it was a dead giveaway.

00:32:28 Speaker 2

And.

00:32:30 Speaker 2

Threw down in a box hole.

00:32:34 Speaker 2

Where we had to sleep side by side.

00:32:41 Speaker 2

He later on developed cancer.

00:32:45 Speaker 2

And I think.

00:32:46 Speaker 2

His son told me he passed away just this past year.

00:32:50 Speaker 2

And.

00:32:52 Speaker 2

Finally quit.

00:32:54 Speaker 2

But too late.

00:32:56 Speaker 2

That.

00:32:57 Speaker 2

Anyhow.

00:32:58 Speaker 2

That's what we had.

00:33:02 Speaker 2

For rations, as I say, K rations. And that was it. But once in a while we get to go back.

00:33:08 Speaker 2

Or a shower. A hot shower.

00:33:12 Speaker 2

But just for.

00:33:15 Speaker 2

A short time and.

00:33:19 Speaker 2

In that case, we get a hot meal.

00:33:22 Speaker 2

And the shower and believed. And that felt good.

00:33:28 Speaker 2

I had actually 88 days in.

00:33:31 Speaker 2

Front line battle.

00:33:33 Speaker 2

Did.

00:33:35 Speaker 2

During the war.

00:33:37 Speaker 2

As an 18 year old.

00:33:46 Speaker 2

So there wasn't much right recreation.

00:33:49 Speaker 2

After the war, was he able to go to Switzerland or pass?

00:33:55 Speaker 2

And.

00:33:58 Speaker 2

Did some skiing or attempting to do some skiing.

00:34:07 Speaker 1

So how did you pass time like?

00:34:11 Speaker 1

In between battles and after the war.

00:34:16 Speaker 2

Well, during during the war, there was just.

00:34:20 Speaker 2

Believe me, you have to be on the alert all the time.

00:34:25 Speaker 2

And because.

00:34:28 Speaker 2

Even at night.

00:34:30 Speaker 2

The.

00:34:32 Speaker 2

One thing that we did was to dig foxholes. That was always the first thing, and this was.

00:34:39 Speaker 2

Day by day.

00:34:41 Speaker 2

They had those little shells, you know.

00:34:44 Speaker 2

Fold up and.

00:34:47 Speaker 2

First thing you did.

00:34:49 Speaker 2

When he came to a position was to take a foxhole.

00:34:53 Speaker 2

But the Nazis would be just a few 100 yards away.

00:34:59 Speaker 2

And sometimes.

00:35:00 Speaker 2

They would zero in on us with mortars.

00:35:04 Speaker 2

And a mortar shell is not like an artillery artillery. You can hear them coming screaming in at a mortar shell. This is like.

00:35:13 Speaker 2

Zoom, bang, zoom bang, that fast. One time we were digging in.

00:35:20 Speaker 2

You know.

00:35:22 Speaker 2

Wooded area and.

00:35:25 Speaker 2

The mortar shells started coming closer.

00:35:30 Speaker 2

And then finally, right in our midst and I had a shovel handle.

00:35:34 Speaker 2

Cut in two.

00:35:36 Speaker 2

But fortunately had started to dig in, right?

00:35:39 Speaker 2

Back on the log and.

00:35:41 Speaker 2

The Morgan landed that close.

00:35:45

So.

00:35:46 Speaker 2

A lot of close calls like that.

00:35:50 Speaker 2

And those are vivid, you know.

00:35:53 Speaker 2

I think I'm a little hard of hearing now because maybe that mortar shell.

00:35:58 Speaker 2

That I'm just thankful.

00:35:59 Speaker 2

To be alive and a lot of fellas.

00:36:03 Speaker 2

Didn't make it.

00:36:04 Speaker 2

Of course. And that's the tragedy of war.

00:36:08 Speaker 2

And I think it was.

00:36:09 Speaker 2

A very important.

00:36:11 Speaker 2

War.

00:36:13 Speaker 2

And would I do it again?

00:36:16 Speaker 2

I think so.

00:36:17 Speaker 2

If given the same situation.

00:36:21 Speaker 2

But on the other hand, there's such a thing as conscientious objectors.

00:36:26 Speaker 2

And.

00:36:28 Speaker 2

And we honor that too.

00:36:31 Speaker 2

Because.

00:36:33 Speaker 2

That.

00:36:37 Speaker 2

And I think.

00:36:39 Speaker 2

Well.

00:36:43 Speaker 2

I.

00:36:45 Speaker 2

Feel that in World War 2 especially.

00:36:48 Speaker 2

That that was very, very important.

00:36:51 Speaker 2

Our country and really from the world.

00:36:54 Speaker 2

Otherwise, I believe the Nazis could.

00:36:56 Speaker 2

Have well taken over.

00:37:00 Speaker 2

Exist that close.

00:37:04 Speaker 1

Well, Sir, I'd like to thank you for doing.

00:37:05 Speaker 1

This interview with me.

00:37:07 Speaker 1

And.

00:37:11 Speaker 1

And have good health and all that stuff and.

00:37:14 Speaker 1

Thank you. And we've done this interview on May 26, 2004.

00:37:19 Speaker 1

At.

00:37:20 Speaker 1

Bar 10.

00:37:23 Speaker 1

And I'm the interviewer, John Hurst.

00:37:27 Speaker 1

And the interviewee, Raleigh Perkins.

00:37:32 Speaker 2

Well, thank you, John, and blessings on you for your future. What year now are you in school?

00:37:38 Speaker 1

Sophomore.

00:37:39 Speaker 2

Sophomore. All right, you're just about where I was at the.

00:37:45 Speaker 2

Beginning of World War 2 and of course now with the Iraq situation.

00:37:53 Speaker 2

A very dangerous conflict. And yet I think very, very important.

00:37:59 Speaker 2

In what our nation is doing there.

00:38:04 Speaker 2

And we just pray that.

00:38:07 Speaker 2

All will workout and then our troops will come back. We lost the lot of people in World War 2.

00:38:15 Speaker 2

I'll find out.

00:38:16 Speaker 2

A little bit more after this weekend.

00:38:19 Speaker 2

In the year to Washington.

00:38:22 Speaker 2

So blessings on you.