

James Riffe Interview

2d Battalion Headquarters Company, 318th Inf Reg

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Ruth A. Hill)

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

00:00:03 Speaker 1

Born and raised in West Virginia, Jim Riffe turned challenging early life experiences into an education which took him from his Mountain Home and the depression to Davidson College in North Carolina, where he first learned of the attack on Pearl Harbor. By 1945, he was in the.

00:00:18 Speaker 1

7th Infantry Division leading a platoon of 10 men in the invasion of Okinawa, when?

00:00:24 Speaker 1

He said.

00:00:25 Speaker 1

All of the people behind me were knocked off. The man behind me had both legs blown off. My whole back was scattered with shrapnel.

00:00:31 Speaker 1

Colonel James L Riffy's story is that of a true American hero whose army career of 30 years never erased the question that he never stopped asking why not me?

00:00:41 Speaker 1

There were really no reasons why I wasn't killed several times.

00:00:53 Speaker 2

Good afternoon, everyone.

00:00:55 Speaker 2

This is Thursday, November 30th, 2017, and my name is Michael Lynetto and I'm the chairman of the 82nd Airborne Division Association, Washington DC chapter.

00:01:06 Speaker 2

I'm here with my very best friend Jim, also known as Colonel retired Jim Riffey.

00:01:13 Speaker 2

Going to spend.

00:01:14 Speaker 2

Minutes discussing Jim Riffe's born career career.

00:01:16 Speaker 2

Career, Jim. Pleasure to be with you today.

00:01:20 Speaker 2

I'd like to start by asking you a few general questions of how you became involved with the airborne.

00:01:27 Speaker 3

Well, Mike goes back a long way.

00:01:29 Speaker 3

I was a student at the army.

00:01:31 Speaker 3

Advanced Intelligence School in 1947.

00:01:35 Speaker 3

A major from the 82nd Airborne Division, visit our class and he said the division had received approval from Headquarters Department of the Army to recruit.

00:01:47 Speaker 3

Students.

00:01:47 Speaker 3

Intelligence class to be assigned to the 82nd Airborne divisions as intelligence officers.

00:01:53 Speaker 3

He said now if you volunteer, you'll be sent down to Fort Benning, GA for a six week training program, after which, when you complete that training program and you become a paratrooper, then you'll be signed as 82nd Airborne Division.

00:02:08 Speaker 3

Well, three members of our class, we had about 35 officers, about three members of the class signed up and so and.

00:02:17 Speaker 3

Early June of 1947, we signed on and start our training down at Fort Benning, Georgia. At that time, the airborne training program.

00:02:31 Speaker 3

Was six weeks. We spent four weeks on how to become a paratrooper.

00:02:37 Speaker 3

And also at that time you had to learn how to pack your own shoot and when you made your your six jumps.

00:02:46 Speaker 3

You jumped with a parachute that you'd packed, so he made sure he was right.

00:02:50 Speaker 3

Right. And at the same time also that was one week and then we had another week where we take we took glider training.

00:02:59 Speaker 3

So when we graduated from Fort Benning successfully at the end of six weeks, we got two badges. We got the basic.

00:03:07 Speaker 3

Parachute badge and we got the airborne glider badge.

00:03:12 Speaker 2

And do you recall what kind of glider that was that you were trained in?

00:03:15 Speaker 3

Well, the glider was World War 2 glider called ACG 4A.

00:03:21 Speaker 3

And I guess what surprised many of.

00:03:23 Speaker 3

Is that you know in the 82nd Airborne Division, which we'll discuss later on, one of the regiments was a A glider regiment and it was almost complete decimated when they landed in Normandy.

00:03:39 Speaker 3

So many of us were surprised that, you know, after the there was no really successful program in combat or the gliders ever used so many of us said, why are we still using the glider in 1947?

00:03:52 Speaker 3

Well, it took a few.

00:03:53 Speaker 3

It wasn't until 1949 that the army decided hey.

00:03:57 Speaker 3

We better give up on a glider training wish they did.

00:04:00 Speaker 2

And just to step back from 1947, you had interest in the airborne before that, but you were told something a little different.

00:04:07 Speaker 3

Well, yes, that it goes back really to 1943.

00:04:12 Speaker 3

I was a a member of the Officers Canada School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and this was about February of 1943.

00:04:21 Speaker 3

Had a a tactical officer which observed you.

00:04:25 Speaker 3

During your.

00:04:27 Speaker 3

Training to try to become an officer, and I've heard that at Fort Benning there was something called airborne units.

00:04:35 Speaker 3

I said the tactical officer, I said. Can you?

00:04:37 Speaker 3

Can you tell me about this airborne outfit? And I said I'd like to join. And he said well.

00:04:43 Speaker 3

How much do you?

00:04:44 Speaker 3

I said 195 lbs, he said.

00:04:46 Speaker 3

You're.

00:04:47 Speaker 3

You're too.

00:04:48 Speaker 3

The the weight limit is 190 now.

00:04:51 Speaker 3

I never found out where that was true.

00:04:53 Speaker 3

But anyway, that was my first inquiry about.

00:04:56 Speaker 3

The airborne units.

00:04:59 Speaker 2

And so, after your airborne training, your glider training an airport, airborne transport, transport, transport ability training, you were not immediately assigned to the 82nd airborne, correct?

00:05:11 Speaker 3

As a matter of fact, when we volunteered from the Army Advanced Intelligence Program and were sent down to Benning for four weeks, we were told that when you complete that four weeks train, six weeks training and if you are a qualified paratrooper.

00:05:29 Speaker 3

You will receive orders to the 82nd Airborne Division.

00:05:32 Speaker 3

Well, there were three of us and to our surprise, instead of getting orders to the 82nd.

00:05:40 Speaker 3

A three-week course in our transport ability and we thought, well, the Department of the Army is lagging behind and getting your orders to the 82nd to our surprise and great disappointment when we finish the three-week Air Transibility course.

00:05:58 Speaker 3

All three of us received orders to Europe.

00:06:02 Speaker 3

And I was a son to a Constabulary regiment doing occupation duty in Austria. So that was the end of my.

00:06:08 Speaker 2

Certainly a little bit of a disappoint ability, certainly a little bit of disappointability, but are disappointed.

00:06:13 Speaker 3

Definitely.

00:06:15 Speaker 2

Eventually, right. You would end up in the 82nd Airborne Division.

00:06:18 Speaker 3

Eventually, yeah, if some years later.

00:06:23 Speaker 2

So Jim, share with us some of your duties and experiences. Once you became part of the 82nd Airborne Division.

00:06:29 Speaker 3

Well, can I tell you how I became really got orders to the 82nd? Yeah.

00:06:33 Speaker 2

Yes, surely.

00:06:34 Speaker 3

Well, I was in Vietnam in 1956 and 57.

00:06:41 Speaker 3

And.

00:06:42 Speaker 3

While I was there, believe it or not, I got orders to the 82nd Airborne Division.

00:06:48 Speaker 3

But I had six week six months of temporary duty at the University of Maryland to complete the requirements for a degree in.

00:06:57 Speaker 3

In military science, so I really didn't get to the 82nd Airborne Division until early February of 19158.

00:07:07 Speaker 3

So that's a many years after I thought I was going to become a.

00:07:11 Speaker 3

So I finally, as I say, got to the 82nd in February of 1958 and I was assigned as the S3. The S3 is an individual who is responsible for training, operations and planning of his unit.

00:07:26 Speaker 3

So I was the S3 of the second Airborne Battle Group, 503 Parachute Infantry Regiment, and it's a job that I held for 16 months.

00:07:37 Speaker 2

Fantastic. And some of those duties and responsibilities as far as your command in in that unit?

00:07:45 Speaker 3

Well there the S3. Most people think of the S3 that all you have to do is.

00:07:52 Speaker 3

You know, take care of training, but you had many other responsibilities because remember that the you you involved in operations and you involved in planning.

00:08:04 Speaker 3

I had to develop procedures.

00:08:07 Speaker 3

For out loading for example.

00:08:08 Speaker 3

We frequently practice out loading because the airborne division, of course it gets into combat through car craft, so I had I had to do that and.

00:08:19 Speaker 3

Well, there's many other procedure I had to do it up procedures for operations in the.

00:08:25 Speaker 3

I had to develop domestic disturbances, so it was on and on on, but it was very, very interesting.

00:08:32 Speaker 3

And in certain way, challenging goes a many it was very new to me.

00:08:38 Speaker 2

OK. And during that time frame, was this the training notes were airborne all the way came about?

00:08:43 Speaker 3

Well, that came about.

00:08:47 Speaker 3

In 1958, when I was still the S3, I spent about half of my time visiting the.

00:08:56 Speaker 3

Seven companies we had in the battle group to observe their training and to talk to the officers and non commissioned officers.

00:09:05 Speaker 3

What would you like to do next week? 'cause? I was responsible for preparing the training schedules.

00:09:12 Speaker 3

So what I would do at on Saturday of every week.

00:09:17 Speaker 3

I would prepare my training notes and in one of those training notes I said that.

00:09:24 Speaker 3

When an officer of the battle groups meets one of our troopers, the officer will sound off airborne and the trooper respond all the way, Sir.

00:09:37 Speaker 3

Well, I was surprised really how fast that thing caught on.

00:09:40 Speaker 3

I mean it within a week or two, you walk around the battle group areas airborne all the way through Arbor all the way through.

00:09:48 Speaker 3

So that went on for a long, long time.

00:09:51 Speaker 2

Which still lives on today.

00:09:51

And.

00:09:53 Speaker 3

And it's still going.

00:09:55 Speaker 3

Today, as a matter of fact.

00:09:57 Speaker 2

In one of those maneuvers that you participated in was.

00:10:02 Speaker 2

You were deployed with the third Airborne Battle group to Alaska.

00:10:06 Speaker 3

Yeah. And the fall of 1958.

00:10:12 Speaker 3

The second hour born Battle Group 50 third Infantry, which we all thought was the best battle group in the division and we were sure we were the best battle group in the entire army.

00:10:23 Speaker 3

But anyway, in the fall of 1958, the division was selected to participate.

00:10:30 Speaker 3

In the Department of the Army Maneuver in Alaska.

00:10:32 Speaker 3

God and the maneuver eventually called Caribou Creek, so.

00:10:40 Speaker 3

The commanding officer of the Battle Group designated me to go to Alaska and coordinate with the headquarters, U.S. Army Alaska, about the oncoming exercise, which I did that.

00:10:54 Speaker 3

And also once I did that, the group Demandor said.

00:10:59 Speaker 3

Jim, I want you to design a program so our people will know how to operate in the cold weather conditions, which I also did that but.

00:11:10 Speaker 3

Actually, what happened in January and February of 19?

00:11:15

Yeah.

00:11:16 Speaker 3

See, that would have been 1959.

00:11:20 Speaker 3

We went to Alaska and they we had two months to train the battle group, which is about 2000 officers and men, how to operate in cold weather conditions.

00:11:31 Speaker 3

And this was done in an area very near Fort Richardson, AK, where the headquarters of the army was. So after the two weeks of training, then March was devoted to a.

00:11:45 Speaker 3

Exercise with another battle group.

00:11:48 Speaker 3

Was a battle group.

00:11:50 Speaker 3

We just called a straight legs battle group.

00:11:52 Speaker 3

Weren't.

00:11:52 Speaker 3

In Alaska, so the maneuver was.

00:11:57 Speaker 2

You might have to explain leg to people, Jim.

00:11:59 Speaker 3

Yeah, the maneuver was the battle group of the 82nd Airborne Division.

00:12:06 Speaker 3

Versus a battle group of the Alaska command. It was supposed to last a whole month, but actually in about two weeks, the umpires who were overseeing the maneuver.

00:12:21 Speaker 3

Said you.

00:12:22 Speaker 3

That's that's the end of that, because the other unit was no longer effective.

00:12:25 Speaker 3

Yeah.

00:12:26 Speaker 3

So I was very pleased that.

00:12:30 Speaker 3

When I finished that, I received a letter of commendation from the commanding general of the Alaskan Command. So that was very nice thing, I thought.

00:12:38 Speaker 2

Fantastic. And so for those of you, a leg would be a non airborne trooper, usually derogatory term used by the airborne to describe other soldiers in the army.

00:12:48 Speaker 2

So you went a long way from the the Arctic of Alaska and then would leave the division. And when coming back, you actually deployed to Vietnam.

00:12:56 Speaker 2

You want to talk about that timeframe, Jim?

00:12:56 Speaker 3

Well, actually when I came back from Caribou Creek.

00:13:05 Speaker 3

A little bit.

00:13:06 Speaker 3

I had had more time with the 250 third.

00:13:11 Speaker 3

In the fall of 1959, I was selected to be the Executive officer of the Battle Group, and in February of 1960 I was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.

00:13:26 Speaker 3

And there were still some some time left by service with a 250 third, but in April of 1960, the 250 third was ordered to go to Okinaw.

00:13:42 Speaker 3

A and if you've been reading about what's been going on in Vietnam the last several years, you heard about the 173rd Airborne Brigade with a 2503 was the basis for the?

00:13:58 Speaker 3

The 73rd Airborne Brigade.

00:14:00 Speaker 3

But anyway, so I couldn't go with them because I had orders to the Army War College when I was supposed to report in August. But in the meantime they they wanted to have me doing something.

00:14:12 Speaker 3

They decided to activate the second Arbor and Battle Group 2504.

00:14:19 Speaker 3

Parachute Infantry Regiment and I was ordered to.

00:14:24 Speaker 3

Organize the 2504 and to become its commanding officer.

00:14:29 Speaker 3

And so I was a commanding officer until about all maybe early June when the full Carl came in.

00:14:37 Speaker 3

So he he became the battle group commander, and I became the Debbie Battle group commander. And shortly after that.

00:14:44 Speaker 3

I left to go to the army war.

00:14:46 Speaker 3

So that's that was that, that was about the end of my.

00:14:46 Speaker 2

The Lieutenant Colonel Riffy stands up.

00:14:49 Speaker 3

Really most important to her with the agency, that board of agency, it's not my last one. Not my last one. But I but a very important one.

00:14:53 Speaker 2

So Lieutenant Colonel Riffy stands up the 2nd 504.

00:14:58 Speaker 2

Fantastic. So Lieutenant Colonel Riffy stands up 2nd 504, which is still part of the 82nd Airborne Division.

00:15:04 Speaker 3

Today I might mention for that.

00:15:07 Speaker 3

Last May, Mike and I go down to Fort Bragg, NC to to.

00:15:13 Speaker 3

What's it called Airborne Week and last year I was 'cause. I was down there and the company commander of one of the companies of the two 504.

00:15:25 Speaker 3

Came to me and he said, would you please?

00:15:28 Speaker 3

Come over and address my company in it and so.

00:15:33 Speaker 3

One of the most I think I think the most interesting and delightful time that I had during the whole week was meeting with a company of the Second Airborne Battle Group 504 and talking about my experiences in World War 2.

00:15:47 Speaker 3

And then I thought that was the end of that.

00:15:50 Speaker 3

But the that later on that day the battalion commander came up to me and he said.

00:15:57 Speaker 3

Would you mind talking to my battalion, which was going, by the way, to Afghanistan?

00:16:04 Speaker 3

So I went in and I talked to the battalion of the two 504 as they were getting ready to go to Afghanistan, and I'm not sure, Mike, if their tour is over there they are.

00:16:15 Speaker 2

They have returned and I've been in touch with the battalion.

00:16:18 Speaker 2

Just talk about your speech to them to this day, so they really enjoyed it. So they're really excited to have you in their presence prior to deploying the Afghanistan.

00:16:20 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:16:29 Speaker 2

So so after that you would leave for Bragg for a number of years.

00:16:34 Speaker 3

Well, yes, I left Fort Bragg and I thought, well, you know, I'll never be assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division again, however.

00:16:45 Speaker 2

Why is that, Jim? But why?

00:16:47 Speaker 3

Well, I was a regular army officer and you know, they try to point your career and give you assignments. So it you'll achieve the highest grade possible.

00:16:47 Speaker 2

Was that difficult for?

00:16:59 Speaker 3

So when I left Fort Bragg and I was a Lieutenant Colonel and I thought, well, that's the end of that.

00:17:09 Speaker 3

But in 19 August of 1967.

00:17:14 Speaker 3

I was a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and assigned as a delegate delegate to the Military Committee of NATO and.

00:17:25 Speaker 3

My boss was a four-star Admiral, and so one day he called me and he said, do you know general sites? I said, well, Sir, he was one of my battle group commanders. You know, back in the 50s and early 60s, he said.

00:17:41 Speaker 3

Well, he's now the division commander and he wants you to come down and command the brigade. And he said, would you like to go?

00:17:47 Speaker 3

Oh, yes, Sir, he.

00:17:49 Speaker 3

Well, we were getting ready, by the way, to move the military committee from the Pentagon.

00:17:56 Speaker 3

Belgium and I had been the part of the advanced party, so he said.

00:18:01 Speaker 3

Well, I hate to release you, but if you want to go, I.

00:18:07 Speaker 3

So he released me and August of 1967. I arrived at the 82nd Airborne Division and I was assigned as the commanding officer.

00:18:17 Speaker 3

Of the support command of the 82nd Airborne Division.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

A very important command.

00:18:24 Speaker 2

And after that, Jim, after the support command.

00:18:26 Speaker 3

Well, at the support command.

00:18:29 Speaker 3

Let me talk something that happened. I thought very unusual.

00:18:33 Speaker 3

Support command.

00:18:36 Speaker 3

In the February of 19.

00:18:41 Speaker 3

February of 19.

00:18:45 Speaker 3

68.

00:18:47 Speaker 3

The division received orders to.

00:18:50 Speaker 3

Now, you may recall that a Ted Offensive was in January of 1968.

00:18:57 Speaker 3

And of course, the fighting was still going on, so the 82nd.

00:19:02 Speaker 3

Asian was ordered to Vietnam.

00:19:06 Speaker 3

The the Regian commander said to.

00:19:08 Speaker 3

Jim, I want you to take a team.

00:19:11 Speaker 3

Go with the advanced elements to Vietnam, which was the 3rd Brigade.

00:19:16 Speaker 3

And when you get there, I want you to establish the division headquarters cause the remainder of the division is going to be coming the next month or so.

00:19:26 Speaker 3

So I went with the Advanced division that we we arrived at a place called Chula, Chula and was sort of toward the northern part of South Vietnam, but was also home with the Miracle Division.

00:19:39 Speaker 3

Headquarters was there.

00:19:41 Speaker 3

And they so my surprise, they had barracks. They had a post exchange.

00:19:45 Speaker 3

Said is this is this the war but anyway.

00:19:51 Speaker 3

I.

00:19:51 Speaker 3

I didn't know who to contact, but.

00:19:55 Speaker 3

I became acquainted with the chief of staff.

00:19:59 Speaker 3

And I said, you know, I got to find out for the division headquarters going to be. And I said, do you know anybody down in Saigon that you can call for me?

00:20:08 Speaker 3

So he called out and he explained what was going.

00:20:11 Speaker 3

They said, well, we haven't made a decision yet as to where the 82nd Harborne Division headquarters is going to be.

00:20:17 Speaker 3

Said call back tomorrow so we can get together and and he called every.

00:20:22 Speaker 3

We called every day for two weeks and every day it would say no decisions been made for the division headquarters going to be.

00:20:31 Speaker 3

And finally, after about two weeks, I said.

00:20:33 Speaker 3

Well, it was decided that the rest of the 82nd Airborne Division is not going to come because they realize that the strategic Services, military services.

00:20:48 Speaker 3

Available to the military forces, America were two brigades of 82nd Airborne Division. All other units were committed to Vietnam.

00:20:58 Speaker 3

So I was told then to bring my team back to Fort Bragg.

00:21:04 Speaker 3

Well, that was easier said than done.

00:21:06 Speaker 3

It was no problem getting out of July to denying and I got down there and they said, you know, we're going back to the States and they said, where are your orders?

00:21:16 Speaker 3

Well, I'm here with the orders of the commanding General, 82nd Airborne Division. No good.

00:21:23 Speaker 3

You have to have written order or you can't get on these planes.

00:21:26 Speaker 3

Well, that took another week or 10 days.

00:21:29 Speaker 3

So finally I got back to the agent Secondart board division and resume my duties there. As the commanding officer of the support command.

00:21:39 Speaker 2

And after the support command coming back to Fort Bragg, it was shortly.

00:21:44 Speaker 2

Then when you left Fort Bragg for the second time and thought you would never jump.

00:21:47 Speaker 3

Again, well, I had one more job.

00:21:51 Speaker 3

Yeah, there was a lot of turnover in the 82nd Airborne Division at that time.

00:21:57 Speaker 3

Remember.

00:21:58 Speaker 3

We had lost the third brigade, which was in Vietnam, and that was about 5000 troops. Because not only did you have the infantry, but.

00:22:07 Speaker 3

As a support command Commander, I had to provide a company of maintenance.

00:22:11 Speaker 3

I had to provide a company of medics and supply and all that stuff.

00:22:16 Speaker 3

So we we were really, you know sort of upset because we had lost 11 entire brigade of about 5000.

00:22:26 Speaker 3

But anyway, the chief of staff of the division, he went to the commanding general and he said, you know, I'd like to command one of these brigades and so.

00:22:40 Speaker 3

The chief of staff said OK and then so he said, well, rify you become the chief of staff.

00:22:45 Speaker 3

So I became the chief of staff for the 82nd Army Division and that was really my last.

00:22:54 Speaker 3

Assignment with the 82nd Airborne Division was the chief of staff.

00:22:58 Speaker 2

And when you and I went back to Fort Bragg this past year, Jim's picture was located on the hallway in the commanding general staff. As chief of staff from 1968.

00:23:09 Speaker 2

To 69.

00:23:10 Speaker 2

So after that you did leave the division for the second time and thought you would never jump again.

00:23:16 Speaker 3

Well, you know, I'll never jump again because they transfer me back to the Pentagon and the personnel department where I'd been before.

00:23:26 Speaker 3

And after I'd done a short tour there.

00:23:28 Speaker 3

Where they offered, I had a good friend who was in charge of the Colonel's division, and so we'd serve together in Berlin back in the 60s. And he said, Jim, we got a lot of assignments for you said, how would you like to be the PMS and?

00:23:45 Speaker 3

Of Hawaii I.

00:23:46 Speaker 3

No, I don't want it.

00:23:48 Speaker 3

How would you like to be the deputy United States representative to the League of Nations in New York?

00:23:55 Speaker 3

And I said, well, that sounds pretty good, so.

00:23:58 Speaker 3

Put me on the phone with a cardinal who's had the op, who had the job, and he said.

00:24:03 Speaker 3

Now you know you won't be living right in New York.

00:24:07 Speaker 3

There's a place called Fort Jay, and it's already out in the in the water. And he said, do you have any children?

00:24:14 Speaker 3

Said yeah, I have 4:00, he said.

00:24:16 Speaker 3

There's no schools in Fort.

00:24:17 Speaker 3

So what you have to do is your children have to get on.

00:24:21 Speaker 3

On a ferry every morning and go to Brooklyn and I don't want that job.

00:24:25 Speaker 3

So they finally offer me the job as director of organization, the Combat Development Command, which I thought, well, it's great. I didn't know when I accepted that job.

00:24:36 Speaker 3

Qualified airborne jump position.

00:24:39 Speaker 3

So I had that job for three years and I was on jump duty for three years.

00:24:46 Speaker 3

Of course, you couldn't jump at Fort Belvoir, so I fly down to Fort.

00:24:51 Speaker 3

Jump with 82nd Airborne Division Special Forces, 18th Airborne Corps and finally I found out that the.

00:24:59 Speaker 3

Marines at Quantico had his special forces unit that also jumped, so the closest place for me to complete my jumps was with the Marines as Quantico.

00:25:11 Speaker 3

So I finally got my 100 jumps in, which was my goal, so.

00:25:16 Speaker 2

And 100 jumps.

00:25:17 Speaker 3

At 100 jump, that's enough for me.

00:25:19 Speaker 2

And 100 jumps is a centurion.

00:25:22 Speaker 2

Can you talk a little bit about your airborne education and how you progress to a master parachutist?

00:25:28 Speaker 3

Well, yes, that that was a quite a quite an extensive program.

00:25:36 Speaker 3

First of all, when you qualify for a prayer trooper, you get these basic airborne badge okay.

00:25:42 Speaker 3

And then if you continue on jump duty, when you get 30 jumps in, you qualify as a senior parachuters and you get a senior parachuters badge.

00:25:54 Speaker 3

And then they top.

00:25:58 Speaker 3

Position in the airborne is to be a master parachuters.

00:26:03 Speaker 3

And you have to have, among other things, you have to have 65 jumps.

00:26:09 Speaker 3

But they can't just they have to be in some field.

00:26:15 Speaker 3

They have to be in conditions where you jump at night time. You jump with heavy equipment and you have to be a jump master.

00:26:26 Speaker 3

And taking a group out to jump.

00:26:28 Speaker 3

And you have to go before a board.

00:26:33 Speaker 3

A board to be qualified as a jump.

00:26:35 Speaker 3

So I finally got my jump master qualifications in about June of 1960 and.

00:26:42 Speaker 2

What would be some of the equipment that you would jump with?

00:26:47 Speaker 3

To become a master parachuters, you had to do many things.

00:26:51 Speaker 3

One of us, you had to jump out of an airplane with heavy equipment.

00:26:55 Speaker 3

I mean heavy equipment like you take 60mm mortar and you you jump with the tube.

00:27:02 Speaker 3

And of course, you couldn't land with a with a 60mm mortar tube.

00:27:06 Speaker 3

Your body.

00:27:07 Speaker 3

So what happened? You tied it to your body with about?

00:27:13 Speaker 3

300 feet well, 200 feet rope.

00:27:16 Speaker 3

And so when you got within about 100 feet or so of the of the?

00:27:21 Speaker 3

Own you. You released it. And so it went down and hit the ground. And so then you landed near it and you had a a rope tied to it.

00:27:30 Speaker 3

So you could get to it to use that and other things like light machine guns. You couldn't jump with a tripod, but you could jump with a light machine guns.

00:27:39 Speaker 3

So you had to do all those things to be qualified as a master.

00:27:43 Speaker 3

And then you had to go before I.

00:27:45 Speaker 3

You had to go before a board. And finally I met all the requirements and.

00:27:50 Speaker 3

June of 1960 got my orders as a master parachuter.

00:27:56 Speaker 2

And just backing up a little.

00:27:58 Speaker 2

Jim, you had an experience with another paratrooper where you had to remind him you land left Iran land right.

00:28:04 Speaker 2

You.

00:28:05 Speaker 2

Tell us about that experience.

00:28:07 Speaker 3

This is when I was enrolled in the basic parachute training at Fort Benning.

00:28:16 Speaker 3

And.

00:28:18 Speaker 3

We were making a jump and all of a sudden we I was out of the airplane.

00:28:24 Speaker 3

Chute was open.

00:28:25 Speaker 3

I was looking.

00:28:26 Speaker 3

Things look good and finally someone said Captain, I'm going to land on the top of your parachute.

00:28:32 Speaker 3

And so this man his his shoot.

00:28:35 Speaker 3

Partially open, but not completely, so he landed right on top of my parachute.

00:28:40 Speaker 3

And he said what they gonna?

00:28:42 Speaker 3

I said, well, you just come down and get ahold of my risers.

00:28:45 Speaker 3

That's what went from your back of your your shoulders up to the the parachute I.

00:28:52 Speaker 3

You just get a whole, come down and get ahold of my risers when we land. You make a left parachute landing fall.

00:28:59 Speaker 3

Make a right side parachute landing fall.

00:29:01 Speaker 3

And we'll be fine.

00:29:03 Speaker 3

We did that perfectly, but we got to there was a medics out there, there was ambulances out there and they came out well. How did you all do that?

00:29:12 Speaker 3

And I said to the test officer, well, we did what you trained us to do and it went off.

00:29:19 Speaker 3

Beautifully. And in my hunter jumps, the only collision I ever had.

00:29:20 Speaker 2

They're born all the way.

00:29:24 Speaker 2

Can you talk a little bit more about the aircraft and the equipment that you jumped out of, for example, of C47 was the first aircraft that you jumped out of?

00:29:31 Speaker 3

Yeah, that when I went when I in 1947, that Fort at Fort Benning, there was an airfield there.

00:29:38 Speaker 3

What was the name of the airfield there?

00:29:39 Speaker 2

Lawson Army Airfield and Friar Trop son, I believe.

00:29:40 Speaker 3

All lost narrow.

00:29:43 Speaker 3

We had two aircraft that we jumped out.

00:29:46 Speaker 3

One was called the sea. 47 C 47 had been used heavily in Europe, particularly when the land in the Netherlands.

00:29:57 Speaker 3

But the only thing about the sea for seven, it only had one door.

00:30:01 Speaker 2

Which was the left door.

00:30:03 Speaker 3

Dora, you could put the 34 people into the C47, but you could only jump 17 at a time.

00:30:11 Speaker 3

So if you would look back at the number of aircraft that they use, particularly in market gardens, that what they call it.

00:30:18 Speaker 3

In Netherlands, there's so many aircraft course, so many of them were 40 sevens and they could only jump 17. They couldn't.

00:30:25 Speaker 3

Jump 17 and go around and come back and Jump 7 anymore.

00:30:29 Speaker 3

You do that so anyway. So at Fort Benning is that?

00:30:34 Speaker 3

We had A/C 47th of World War 2 and we also had another aircraft called C 1/19 which was my least favorite aircraft of all I ever jumped out of.

00:30:45 Speaker 3

Was of it a little skinny thing and it had doors, but.

00:30:50 Speaker 3

Instead of jumping out a door, you just walked out the back end of it, and when you go down the runway, you look very in about.

00:30:57 Speaker 3

Two feet below you, it was running under on the.

00:31:02 Speaker 3

On the ground there. So I didn't like it. But anyway that was.

00:31:07 Speaker 3

Forced.

00:31:07 Speaker 3

They discontinued the C 119, but they did keep the 77. The 47 for quite a while, but eventually they got the the the 30 that.

00:31:22 Speaker 2

C130.

00:31:23 Speaker 3

1:30.

00:31:24 Speaker 2

C130.

00:31:25 Speaker 2

Another propeller aircraft and also OK and then also the C141 came in the service.

00:31:25 Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah. But he had had two doors.

00:31:30 Speaker 3

Well, when I left the 82nd Airborne Division in 1968.

00:31:38 Speaker 3

We were getting 141's a jet aircraft from Charleston Air Force Base and as you know, you don't jump out of a 141, you step out.

00:31:50 Speaker 3

But you can imagine paratroopers have been changed, trained all the life when you leave like a 130, you make a vigorous jump out there.

00:31:59 Speaker 3

'Cause you want to get out as far as you can.

00:32:01 Speaker 3

Well, it took a long time and we had many injuries before these power tubers had jump.

00:32:08 Speaker 3

Many, many times out of a 130 where you had to jump out vigorously and so they would jump out of a one of a 141 and the two would just go like that.

00:32:18 Speaker 3

Had some serious.

00:32:19 Speaker 3

So what you did in 141 as you know because you jumped at them also?

00:32:24 Speaker 3

You just stepped out and you stepped out to avoid the prop flash from The Jets.

00:32:28 Speaker 2

Yeah, totally different ride going from a turbo propeller to a.

00:32:30

Yeah.

00:32:32 Speaker 2

So let's talk a little bit more about Fort Bragg. Some of the drop zones out there, we know quite well.

00:32:39 Speaker 2

Can you describe the drop zones and some of your favorite ones and where you trained at mostly?

00:32:42 Speaker 3

Well, the drop zones at Fort Bragg were all named after battles in World War 2, for example.

00:32:52 Speaker 3

My favorite drop zone was called Normandy Drop Zone Normandy and it was by the way, it was the closest to Fort Bragg.

00:32:59 Speaker 3

But it was good.

00:32:59 Speaker 3

Was all.

00:33:00 Speaker 3

The sand was probably two or three feet deep.

00:33:03 Speaker 3

So they had.

00:33:04 Speaker 3

Then they had another room called Holland, which was a very large one, and then they had cicne which the.

00:33:12 Speaker 3

Today, when they're making mass jumps at Fort Bragg, they jump on Sicily.

00:33:17 Speaker 3

So we had Sicily, which is another battle group for the World War 2, and finally we had a small.

00:33:26 Speaker 3

Drop zone called Nam Megan.

00:33:28 Speaker 3

So, Normandy, Holland, Sicily. Now, Megan, all named after World War 2 events.

00:33:36 Speaker 2

Great review of that history and looking back at the 2nd 50 third, you say to me that's one of your best experiences.

00:33:44 Speaker 2

You explain why 2nd 50 third.

00:33:47 Speaker 3

During the about 2 1/2 years I was assigned to five of third, I had three battle group commanders.

00:33:56 Speaker 3

All three had were.

00:33:59 Speaker 3

Veterans of World War 2, and they were the finest colonels that I had ever served with.

00:34:06 Speaker 3

You know.

00:34:07 Speaker 3

Because I actually, I had never.

00:34:11 Speaker 3

I guess in my career I had probably never reported to in the fields of full colonels and they they were great.

00:34:19 Speaker 3

Were all graduates of the Army War College.

00:34:22 Speaker 3

They were all World War 2 veterans and and.

00:34:26 Speaker 3

And I I couldn't receive better treatment from them, you know, and they just gave me opportunities to to do many things that I thought that the battle group should do.

00:34:37 Speaker 3

So that that was great.

00:34:39 Speaker 3

Then of course.

00:34:43 Speaker 3

All the we had five rifle companies and every rifle company of Commander.

00:34:49 Speaker 3

Had been in great at least eight to 10 years 'cause there was no promotions going on at that time and one of the Battle rifle company commanders had also had a veteran World War 2. So they were great and the non commissioned officers.

00:35:04 Speaker 3

Outstanding because many of them had served with the 101st Airborne Division or the 82nd Airborne Division in World War 2.

00:35:13 Speaker 3

So all this experience that you had and the rapport was great, the.

00:35:22 Speaker 3

It was.

00:35:24 Speaker 3

It was one of the most interesting, satisfying and really enjoyable experiences that I had my 30 years in the army.

00:35:32 Speaker 3

Great.

00:35:32 Speaker 2

In 2nd 50 third would produce some of the most generals seen in the US.

00:35:37 Speaker 3

Well, yes it.

00:35:38 Speaker 3

Matter of fact, I always said that.

00:35:41 Speaker 3

I think I've got some notes on here somewhere that.

00:35:44 Speaker 3

5032503 was the making of generals and I'll just mention I had three battle group commanders during that time.

00:35:52 Speaker 3

The first one was Colonel Gomez.

00:35:56 Speaker 3

Colonel Gomez became the chief of staff.

00:35:59 Speaker 3

Of the division and the last time I heard of him, he was advisor to the military forces in the Philippine as a two star general.

00:36:08 Speaker 3

So I know he made 2.

00:36:11 Speaker 3

My second battle group commander was Colonel Seitz.

00:36:14 Speaker 3

Well, Colonel Seitz made three stars.

00:36:17 Speaker 3

He also commanded the 82nd Airborne Division and that's how I ended up back in the division in 1967 and 68. So he made.

00:36:27 Speaker 3

He finally made three stars and end up as a commanding general of the 18th Airborne Corps, and finally Lieutenant Colonel Blanchard when I joined him.

00:36:37 Speaker 3

Lieutenant Colonel Blanchard was a deputy commander of the 250 third.

00:36:42 Speaker 3

Well, he went on to.

00:36:43 Speaker 3

Make 4 stars.

00:36:46 Speaker 3

You end up as a commanding general of the US forces in Europe and he also.

00:36:53 Speaker 3

Was a commander of the 82nd and when I was with the unit up.

00:37:01 Speaker 3

Directive organization up in Fort Belvoir. I had to jump and I was in that position.

00:37:08 Speaker 3

Carl, then general manager, was a CG of the 82nd and from time to time I go down and jump with him so.

00:37:14 Speaker 2

Fantastic. Let's talk a little bit about the traditions. Now. When you came on board as a young Lieutenant or captain in the airborne, you experienced prop last and then you would also conduct prop last.

00:37:15 Speaker 3

Experience.

00:37:27 Speaker 2

Can you basically explain a little bit of the prop last ceremony that takes place in the airborne?

00:37:31 Speaker 3

Well, the prompt blast, the history goes back to.

00:37:37 Speaker 3

About 1941, when they had the.

00:37:42 Speaker 3

But first battalion, the 50, first with down in Fort Bragg.

00:37:46 Speaker 3

And it was sort of a training, getting acquainted, organization and so the officers of that battalion thought they should.

00:37:57 Speaker 3

Be recognized some different way so they decided what became known as the prop blast and the prop blast consisted of all the officers of the battalion getting the group in the evening, probably on a.

00:38:13 Speaker 3

Body or Saturday and they were the larger buildings, you know.

00:38:18 Speaker 3

And the he had a board of directors.

00:38:24 Speaker 3

I guess you'd call him and they were dressed in their blue uniforms and then the people who are going to be prop lasted. They had to be in their jump things.

00:38:33 Speaker 3

And what they what happened prop.

00:38:36 Speaker 3

They had a little.

00:38:40 Speaker 3

Uh, stand of some car about maybe 3 feet high and so if you want to go through the prop blast you.

00:38:49 Speaker 3

Was called. You got up on this little platform and they they give you, you know, hook up and all that stuff and stand the door and then jump and you had to jump off in front of this board.

00:38:57 Speaker 2

Hands in the aircraft.

00:39:02 Speaker 3

They are in their Blues, you know, and they're senior officers and you have to make.

00:39:07 Speaker 3

A correct parachute landing fall.

00:39:08 Speaker 2

Can you describe a parachute landing fall?

00:39:12 Speaker 3

Actually, you know basically.

00:39:16 Speaker 3

You are trained how to fall. As you probably know, and there are five parts of your body that you use so you don't get hurt.

00:39:25 Speaker 2

Do you remember them?

00:39:26 Speaker 3

Yeah. First of all, you start with you when you when you get out of the airplane, you you're going to land you land, you land on your, your your sort of your toes.

00:39:35 Speaker 3

So that's that's what you do want to put all your weight there.

00:39:38 Speaker 3

So then you want to go to Cal for your legs and then you want to go up here and then finally you get up here.

00:39:45 Speaker 3

So you're supposed to do all that so that you you're not injured and we went through that matter of fact every time you went down to.

00:39:55 Speaker 3

To jump before you got on the airplane, you had to go through that, that procedure and you know, and if you didn't make it right, you couldn't jump that day. So.

00:40:06 Speaker 3

That was that was part of it and.

00:40:12 Speaker 3

I think it was the discontinued. When I went back to the 82nd and 1960.

00:40:17 Speaker 2

So in the prop last with a little bit of hazing, a little bit of ritual to for a spirit decor, it had a concoction of alcohol.

00:40:23 Speaker 3

You haven't had it yet.

00:40:24 Speaker 3

They had a drink as a matter of fact, that they mixed vodka and champagne.

00:40:29 Speaker 3

And you know, when you jumped in front of the board?

00:40:34 Speaker 3

They say, well, you didn't make the correct parachute landing, so you drink this and they'd give him a little the little cup containing vodka and champagne, and they'd go back and you'd have to keep jumping until.

00:40:51 Speaker 3

You made the correct rainfall, but that time you were so drugated.

00:40:55 Speaker 2

In reference to prop last, you would come back to the division and actually conduct prop blast experiences with your men.

00:41:02 Speaker 2

Tell me how that went and how they experience.

00:41:05 Speaker 3

When I got back to the 80s second in 1967.

00:41:11 Speaker 3

I asked some of the officers, I said. Are you having prop blast?

00:41:15 Speaker 3

And they said, well, you talking about, I said you don't have propaganda, so of course.

00:41:23 Speaker 3

Colonel sites who I did my battle group commander was in the division, commander.

00:41:28 Speaker 3

He knew about prop glasses.

00:41:30 Speaker 3

I called general.

00:41:32 Speaker 3

I said, Sir, I said.

00:41:34 Speaker 3

I'd like to conduct a propagation for the officers of support command and he said, Jim, we don't do that anymore because the last time that happened, you know the officers, they have this drink of vodka and champagne and.

00:41:52 Speaker 3

And one of them was was drunk and he left and he got all blacked and he got killed.

00:41:58 Speaker 3

So I said that's the last one we.

00:41:59 Speaker 3

I said, Sir, I'd I'd like to have a plot blast.

00:42:05 Speaker 3

From my command, he said. Well, Jim.

00:42:07 Speaker 3

You can have one, but I'm going to hold you responsible if anything happens. So I had my prop blast and but what I did, I I in these support command was probably about 100 officers.

00:42:22 Speaker 3

Of all grades of Lieutenant Colonel on down, you know. And so I said to them, we're going to have a prop blast.

00:42:33 Speaker 3

But no one leaves until I personally say you can leave, you can go home.

00:42:39 Speaker 3

But I said you tell your families that you will probably be here all night long because we hold those things on a on a Friday night or Saturday night. Usually a Friday night.

00:42:49 Speaker 3

And So what happened?

00:42:51 Speaker 3

Because I you know, they they had to go through the routine of getting on the platform and jumping and making a PLF. And you didn't make a good PLF.

00:42:59 Speaker 3

So you got to drink this so you know they going to be inebriated, even though we served.

00:43:04 Speaker 3

Sandwiches.

00:43:05 Speaker 3

Soft drinks and so forth.

00:43:08 Speaker 3

So when it when I had the the doors locked up and I had the key to it, you know, and of course I I informed the the people at at Fort Bragg what was going to go on, you know like the fire department so forth.

00:43:26 Speaker 3

And so forth. But so when I thought they could leave it be, it'd be daylight and they'd come to me and I'd check them out. I said, OK, you can go. You can stay a little while.

00:43:37 Speaker 3

Longer so as it turns out, as far as I know, that was the last prop blast ever held for our board.

00:43:43 Speaker 2

Division responsibly responsible.

00:43:45 Speaker 3

But no, there was number injuries.

00:43:48 Speaker 3

No problems whatsoever and.

00:43:52 Speaker 3

I I think I called general sites on Monday.

00:43:54 Speaker 3

Said Sir, we had proposed. He went great.

00:43:57 Speaker 3

Anybody get hurt? No, Sir.

00:43:59 Speaker 3

Well, he.

00:44:00 Speaker 3

Don't think would ever do that again. I don't think they ever did.

00:44:03 Speaker 2

So Jim, you and I have a lot of memories of Fort Bragg and for last couple years you and I've been going down to Fort Bragg for all American week.

00:44:11 Speaker 2

I know you're a fan as well as I.

00:44:14 Speaker 2

And can you talk a little bit about going down to all American week of the?

00:44:18 Speaker 2

Several years.

00:44:18 Speaker 3

Well, you know, I there's something about being a paratrooper.

00:44:23 Speaker 3

You know, I I'm I'm an infantry officer.

00:44:26 Speaker 3

Yeah.

00:44:27 Speaker 3

And much of my time was was spent with straight leg infantry units.

00:44:33 Speaker 3

But there's something special about being a part of, as you know, at least we we we like to think there is any so.

00:44:43 Speaker 3

I I.

00:44:46 Speaker 3

Still, you know, have the fondest memories of.

00:44:48 Speaker 3

My days as a paratrooper and every year the 82nd Airborne Division, have they called all American?

00:44:58 Speaker 3

It's always Hilton may have every year and you know Mike and I, we go down to Fort Bragg for all American week and.

00:45:08 Speaker 3

Last year, we had, I'd say over 400 former members of the 82nd Airborne Division there and what I was also glad to see last year, the number of lives that we had last year.

00:45:21 Speaker 3

And it's just a, it's just a family affair and so.

00:45:25 Speaker 3

Airborne is weak, is very special to both of us, I'm sure, and we look forward to going down next May to Airborne week and.

00:45:38 Speaker 3

The the last night we were there, by the way, it's a very formal occasion.

00:45:42 Speaker 3

You have to have a coat and tie on, and then the officers, senior Don comes officers other days and they're all dressed in their their being uniforms. So it's a.

00:45:55 Speaker 3

A real great occasion and.

00:45:58 Speaker 3

And.

00:46:00 Speaker 3

You see people that.

00:46:02 Speaker 3

Year and year and year after and.

00:46:06 Speaker 3

In my life today, it's one of the highlights of my life is all American week.

00:46:11 Speaker 2

It is mine too.

00:46:13

Yeah.

00:46:13 Speaker 3

Oh, this is my second hour born division.

00:46:18 Speaker 3

And of course, when I get down to all American week on the Monday I wear this hat and then on Tuesday I wear my World War 2 hat.

00:46:27 Speaker 3

And they say, oh, you World War 2, I get more hugs.

00:46:33 Speaker 3

Oh, can I hug you?

00:46:34

Yeah, of course.

00:46:37 Speaker 3

And so so that's.

00:46:40 Speaker 3

But Mike, we served 82nd Airborne Division also.

00:46:43 Speaker 3

Yes, Sir. And I know that you participated in Desert Storm.

00:46:49 Speaker 3

And so here, you know, there's how many years difference between our service server 1930 or 40.

00:46:54 Speaker 2

3rd.

00:46:56 Speaker 3

So what do you think is different during your experience?

00:47:01 Speaker 3

What I've described today in 82nd.

00:47:03 Speaker 2

Well, Jim, I could attest to you that the.

00:47:06 Speaker 2

The traditions, the physicality, the spirit decor of a soldier. I think, General Gavin said it correctly.

00:47:16 Speaker 2

Show me a man that will jump of an airplane and I'll show you a man that will fight for his country.

00:47:21 Speaker 2

And that kind of spirit, the decor lives on. And I I hadn't been back when 2000.

00:47:28 Speaker 2

I had not been back to brag in 21 years, and every time I go back it's been wonderful and I get to share it with you.

00:47:34 Speaker 2

In 2018, we'll be our third consecutive year at All American Week.

00:47:38 Speaker 2

It'll be.

00:47:39 Speaker 3

Well, there is one more thing that's very important to me I didn't mention.

00:47:45 Speaker 3

That's how we get the word airborne all the way. I think I mentioned in my training notes, but in 2014 the commanding General General Nicholson called me down.

00:47:59 Speaker 3

And gave me this.

00:48:00 Speaker 3

I think we have a copy here today somewhere certificate about my service with the 82nd and he said also for Corning the phrase airborne all the ways.

00:48:12 Speaker 2

Tim, it's been an absolute pleasure.

00:48:14 Speaker 2

Discussing the airborne operations and your airborne experience with you today, and I'd definitely like to thank all of our staff here assisting us today.

00:48:23 Speaker 2

Filming video and recording us.

00:48:25 Speaker 3

I'd like to 2nd that thank all of you very much.

00:48:28 Speaker 3

Heard con?

00:48:29 Speaker 3

Ruth Hill, I want to thank you also for being behind a lot of this.

00:48:33 Speaker 2

So thank you.

00:49:41 Speaker 1

Born and raised in West Virginia, Jim Riffe turned challenging early life experiences into an education which took him from his Mountain Home and the depression to Davidson College in North Carolina, where he first learned of the attack on Pearl Harbor. By 1945, he was in the.

00:49:56 Speaker 1

7th Infantry Division leading a platoon of 10 men in the invasion of Okinawa, when?

00:50:03 Speaker 1

All of the people behind me were knocked off. The man behind me had both legs blown off. My whole back was scattered with shrapnel.

00:50:09 Speaker 1

Colonel James L Riffy's story is that of a true American hero whose army career of 30 years never erased the question that he never stopped asking.

00:50:18 Speaker 1

Why not me?

00:50:18

There.

00:50:18 Speaker 1

Were really no reasons why I wasn't killed several times.

00:50:35 Speaker 4

Jim, the 60s were a tumultuous time as we were just talking about, you know, Vietnam and you know, so many things were happening in the world and and and and domestically and at the beginning of the 60s decade.

00:50:50 Speaker 4

You found yourself in another than Berlin.

00:50:52 Speaker 3

Yes, I was a student at the Army War College in 1960 and 61.

00:51:00 Speaker 4

And that's located.

00:51:01 Speaker 3

At Karl Harbor, Pennsylvania, the Army was the senior Army school and.

00:51:03 Speaker 4

OK, right.

00:51:07 Speaker 3

It's a 10 by.

00:51:08 Speaker 3

Way and I it was good the.

00:51:14 Speaker 3

We complete the course in June and about early May I got a call from the personnel Department of Headquarters, U.S. Army in Heidelberg, Germany.

00:51:25 Speaker 3

And they said we have select you to be the assistant chief of staff of plans, operation Training for Headquarters, U.S. Army.

00:51:38 Speaker 3

Berlin. Wow.

00:51:40 Speaker 3

And I fought for a moment because I was in Austria in 1948 and 49, and I remember that the Soviet blockade of the autobahn and the Railcorp and I I said to the the the major.

00:51:56 Speaker 3

Carnatic calm, I said.

00:51:57 Speaker 3

I said.

00:51:58 Speaker 3

When I get there with my family, I'd like to.

00:52:01 Speaker 3

But here I'm 100 and 112 miles inside the Soviet zone. And he said, well, let me listen, he said just a minute.

00:52:09 Speaker 3

I was Lieutenant.

00:52:10 Speaker 3

There's a bit of Lieutenant Colonel, I said.

00:52:13 Speaker 3

If you accept that job in Berlin, your family will go with you.

00:52:17 Speaker 4

Ah.

00:52:18 Speaker 3

You'll be met at the airport in Berlin.

00:52:21 Speaker 3

They'll take you to a single family home, already furnished and in the refrigerator there will be food.

00:52:29 Speaker 3

Now, if you don't accept that assignment, they said your family will not go with you to Berlin, to Germany. You go to Heidelberg, U.S. Army, Heidelberg. And there they will tell you what kind of assignment you have, and it might take a year before your family can join.

00:52:45 Speaker 4

That was an easy choice, wasn't it?

00:52:45 Speaker 3

I said, hey, that was easy choice. So I robbed.

00:52:50 Speaker 3

From the Army War College on the third day of August of 1961, as the assistant chief of staff plans Operation Train, which we call the G3G3 General Staff G3.

00:53:02

Mm.

00:53:05 Speaker 3

And so.

00:53:08 Speaker 3

I was my home was maybe about.

00:53:12 Speaker 3

20 minutes from the headquarters and of course, as the G3, I'm responsible for the operations room.

00:53:21 Speaker 3

All the equipments are so around midnight on the 13th of August. I had a special phone for my home.

00:53:29 Speaker 3

To the operation center and.

00:53:33 Speaker 3

'Cause it a Colonel and said.

00:53:36 Speaker 3

Our patrols can't get into East Berlin cause the army had continuously send patrols into.

00:53:43 Speaker 3

And and I said, what just happened ever for accept checkpoint Charlie and I didn't even know her checkpoint Charlie was.

00:53:51 Speaker 3

Don't even know 10 days and I said, who have you notified?

00:53:55 Speaker 3

Said no, I said. Well, first thing you do.

00:53:57 Speaker 3

Said call.

00:53:59 Speaker 3

The deputy commanding general then call the G1, call the G2, call the G4, you know, and I'm on my way.

00:54:07 Speaker 3

So I got over there and I I didn't know what was really what was going on, but the.

00:54:15 Speaker 3

The.

00:54:16 Speaker 3

The deputy commanding general was general and the Commodore of U.S. forces in Berlin wore 2 hats.

00:54:26 Speaker 3

He had a diplomatic hat.

00:54:28 Speaker 3

He was also the assistant ambassador to Germany and he was also the Commandant.

00:54:33 Speaker 3

So he had two staff he had.

00:54:35 Speaker 3

A state Department staff and he had a.

00:54:38 Speaker 3

Military staff.

00:54:39 Speaker 3

Well, my job as the G3.

00:54:42 Speaker 3

When we face a situation like this, what courses of action are we going to take?

00:54:47 Speaker 3

1234 and which one should we take?

00:54:51 Speaker 4

1st what was happening?

00:54:53 Speaker 3

Well, we kept sending these patrols and they couldn't get they had wooden wooden frames with barbed wire. And you set those in Rd.

00:55:02 Speaker 4

And there were weather East, where there rush Russian.

00:55:05 Speaker 3

Well, they were East German, not Russia. Yeah, East Germany, right?

00:55:07

East.

00:55:07 Speaker 4

Germans at that point.

00:55:09 Speaker 4

Right, right.

00:55:10 Speaker 3

Could Russians were back there?

00:55:12 Speaker 3

Background and so.

00:55:14 Speaker 3

And so we couldn't get in there.

00:55:17 Speaker 3

So I.

00:55:18 Speaker 3

The commandant was meeting with the.

00:55:22 Speaker 3

The British and the French forces, and they had a small allied headquarters.

00:55:26 Speaker 3

So the Commandant was a 2.

00:55:28 Speaker 3

He was up there and so I made my I had a talk with my deputy who was.

00:55:37 Speaker 3

I inherited terrific staff when I became AG 3.

00:55:42 Speaker 3

Enormous. It's a position for a Lieutenant Colonel.

00:55:44 Speaker 3

But he'd gone to the States and I was replacement.

00:55:47 Speaker 3

But anyway, I had a very good staff and I was talking to the my deputy commander, who's a major, and he said, you know.

00:55:55 Speaker 3

Come up with course of action, he said.

00:55:57 Speaker 3

Know we have a reinforced tank here.

00:56:00 Speaker 3

Have 30 Sherman.

00:56:02 Speaker 3

Things and he said.

00:56:03 Speaker 4

Along the wall it.

00:56:04 Speaker 4

It was a wooden frame or something.

00:56:06 Speaker 3

Well it.

00:56:07 Speaker 3

This is some little they obviously planted in advance little wooden frames and they had some bobble.

00:56:11 Speaker 4

Trying to see how far they could go.

00:56:13 Speaker 3

All I had.

00:56:14 Speaker 4

That time they were trying to see what would happen.

00:56:16 Speaker 3

Bye bye.

00:56:17 Speaker 3

You couldn't drive a Jeep through it.

00:56:18 Speaker 4

OK.

00:56:19 Speaker 3

And of course, there was East German guards there. East, East German, East Germany. But the regards of East one too. So anyway.

00:56:22 Speaker 4

Yeah.

00:56:28 Speaker 3

And what the major said to be my deputy said, you know, we have these 30 Sherman tanks, one of them has a bulldozer on them as a blade.

00:56:37 Speaker 3

And I said, huh. Now I wonder if we just couldn't take that tank up there with that bulldozer and justice bulldoze them through.

00:56:45 Speaker 3

So I put that in my plan of action.

00:56:48 Speaker 3

And first of all, I talked to the the G1 personnel about.

00:56:55 Speaker 3

I talked to the G2 that of course you have to have a bear of comments and I talked to the G2 intelligence about it.

00:57:01 Speaker 3

I talked to the G4 logistics about about what I thought it's okay.

00:57:06 Speaker 3

That I present this to the deputy commanding general, he said. That's fine.

00:57:09 Speaker 3

That's fine, that's.

00:57:10 Speaker 3

Well, about 30 clock in the morning.

00:57:13 Speaker 3

The commando, the US commander, came back to our headquarters.

00:57:18 Speaker 3

Center which I'm responsible for and he said, well, they've been in contact with Washington.

00:57:24 Speaker 3

They've been in contact with Headquarters N Atlantic Treaty Organization in Paris at that time and they said we will not take any military action. We will not take any military action, so you know.

00:57:40 Speaker 3

My my boss has looked at our general, he said. He said he didn't know if he.

00:57:48 Speaker 3

Said I want you to take your plan and put it in a safe.

00:57:53 Speaker 3

Just keep it our safe.

00:57:54 Speaker 4

Now wait a.

00:57:55 Speaker 4

Your plan was to do.

00:57:56 Speaker 3

What Obama plan was never wanted to take that bulldoz that tank up there with a bulldozer on it, and and wherever we saw these things, just to bulldoze them down and have some proof to go on.

00:58:05 Speaker 3

What we've been doing.

00:58:07 Speaker 3

But then the.

00:58:08 Speaker 4

You saw it as a provocative act.

00:58:10 Speaker 3

Well, you know, you know it.

00:58:10 Speaker 4

You need.

00:58:13 Speaker 3

It was. Shouldn't I come as a surprise because for months and months?

00:58:19 Speaker 3

The professional.

00:58:21 Speaker 3

In East Berlin, the doctors, the lawyers, the businessmen, the entrepreneurs, they had been fleeing and coming into to West Berlin.

00:58:32 Speaker 3

And we had an airport there called Temple Hall.

00:58:35 Speaker 4

Oh, sure, sure, sure.

00:58:36 Speaker 3

And as the east come from East Berlin or East Germany, they come in and we have a place for them at Temple Hall to put them up for a few days. And then we fly them down to Germany and let Germany take care of.

00:58:47 Speaker 4

So you So what was going on?

00:58:49 Speaker 4

Knew that.

00:58:51 Speaker 4

What was that the?

00:58:52 Speaker 4

Soviets were.

00:58:54 Speaker 3

Well, of course you know, we do this always, but we knew that the Soviets were calling the shots.

00:59:00 Speaker 3

Would tell me exactly what to do, and we knew that when they.

00:59:04 Speaker 4

And their objective was to.

00:59:07 Speaker 3

Well, this your objective was was to.

00:59:12 Speaker 3

Completely divide East Berlin from Westborough.

00:59:16 Speaker 3

In so they would E Berliners be control of that part of the city.

00:59:21 Speaker 4

And that was the former Soviet sector after the war, correct?

00:59:24 Speaker 3

Well, as a matter of fact, Bernie was divided into four sets.

00:59:30 Speaker 3

The the Soviets had east all of.

00:59:33 Speaker 4

East Berlin, right, that's what.

00:59:34 Speaker 3

I'm.

00:59:34 Speaker 4

I meant.

00:59:34 Speaker 3

And West Berlin was divided between the Americans, the British and the French.

00:59:37 Speaker 4

Erica's a graduation of.

00:59:38 Speaker 4

Right.

00:59:39 Speaker 3

So we were there, we were there.

00:59:41 Speaker 4

So they were simply trying to seal their territory. At that point, they did.

00:59:43 Speaker 3

Well, they did.

00:59:44 Speaker 3

You know the only thing that were there were.

00:59:49 Speaker 3

Well, the only place you probably heard of Checkpoint Charlie, if you don't think.

00:59:53 Speaker 4

Oh, I've been there.

00:59:53 Speaker 3

Berlin.

00:59:54 Speaker 4

I was.

00:59:54 Speaker 3

There that as if time went on, that was the only way that anyone could get from West Berlin to East Berlin. But that wasn't a simple thing either. But anyway.

01:00:07 Speaker 3

So I am the G3 and So what I'm have to do it is to develop plans for the defense of the US sector of bur.

01:00:16 Speaker 3

In and then I work with a British comp. My.

01:00:22 Speaker 3

People on the other side, the the British G3 and the French G3.

01:00:26 Speaker 4

And they were in agreement.

01:00:27 Speaker 3

Well, what we haven't, what I did for whispering had to be approved by the, but the two star general that was approved, OK.

01:00:36 Speaker 3

But then that was for the US sector. Just we had a sector of West Berlin.

01:00:41 Speaker 3

But then.

01:00:43 Speaker 3

Work with the British, the French and we developed a plan for the defense of West Berlin.

01:00:48 Speaker 4

OK.

01:00:50 Speaker 3

Work together to defend W Berlin. So we had the American plan for our sector.

01:00:56 Speaker 3

We had the West Berlin sector and I also found out that.

01:01:02 Speaker 3

The in Berlin, they had some battalions called.

01:01:08 Speaker 3

I want to call them force be battalions, but something like that. Beaver sort of cross a military that the government of east of East Berlin, they had a mayor, of course. And so I got to looking about these.

01:01:23 Speaker 3

And they were battalions. And. And I asked the if we could talk to those people. And we went talk to them and they were also interested in sending defending W Berlin.

01:01:34 Speaker 3

So a battalion of those.

01:01:37 Speaker 3

Bodies.

01:01:39 Speaker 3

God. And so I entrained him into the defense of I gave him a position on the border between the US sector and the east sector.

01:01:49 Speaker 3

So we had those to work with and and I remembered of course that.

01:01:55 Speaker 3

That in 1948 and 49, when the Soviet blockaded Berlin, the trains couldn't get in the autobahn to come in, and so we would decided that that was not going to happen this time.

01:02:00 Speaker 3

Mm.

01:02:02

Mm.

01:02:08 Speaker 3

Now we didn't have any control of the trains because they came out of Heidelberg.

01:02:12

Hmm.

01:02:12 Speaker 3

But it came over. Came up every every night.

01:02:16 Speaker 3

And went back every evening back to to Heidelberg.

01:02:20 Speaker 3

So what we did?

01:02:23 Speaker 3

I thought that what we ought to do is keep traffic on the autobahn.

01:02:27 Speaker 3

The.

01:02:27 Speaker 3

All the time, so I recommended that we as I talked with my British counterpart and at the end of the autobahn was the British.

01:02:28

Mm.

01:02:37 Speaker 3

Silver. So I talked with my British F3G3 and I said what I'd like to do is to send.

01:02:45 Speaker 3

A rifle company down the Audubon.

01:02:46

A.

01:02:48 Speaker 3

We go down on Monday morning and can you put them up at the British zone? Give them a place to train. They come back on Friday, so we start doing that to make sure that we were using the, you know, the autobahn. And of course, finally they they.

01:03:03 Speaker 3

In Heidelberg and NATO.

01:03:05 Speaker 3

That we only had two battle groups to infantry battle groups in in Berlin, so they sent us another battle group which was about 1500 more people and they sent us an artillery battery.

01:03:18 Speaker 4

Wait a second.

01:03:19 Speaker 4

Confused.

01:03:20 Speaker 4

You.

01:03:21 Speaker 4

I thought you said that Washington and NATO said there was no.

01:03:27 Speaker 4

Provocation or no? OK.

01:03:29 Speaker 3

That's.

01:03:29 Speaker 3

So what we would we were adding to the defense of of West Berlin.

01:03:33 Speaker 4

OK, so but you weren't going to take any provocative move, OK?

01:03:35 Speaker 3

No, we were we.

01:03:36 Speaker 3

We were there in case they.

01:03:38 Speaker 3

We we had the two airborne 2 infantry battle groups. Each one had about 1500 people and then two or three days after.

01:03:50 Speaker 3

The the wall started coming up the commanding general and and the US Army and Europe sent us another battle group.

01:04:00 Speaker 3

We had three battle groups.

01:04:02 Speaker 4

Defense only.

01:04:03 Speaker 3

That was the defense only. So and then we they sent us an artillery battery so.

01:04:08 Speaker 3

For to define to defend the US sector, we had a total of about 4500 infantry.

01:04:16 Speaker 3

And then we had a 105 battery of artillery.

01:04:19 Speaker 4

Did.

01:04:19 Speaker 4

Agree with that strategy or?

01:04:21 Speaker 3

Well, I didn't make the strategy.

01:04:22 Speaker 3

Was.

01:04:22 Speaker 4

No, but I mean.

01:04:25 Speaker 4

I got the impression that you wanted to do something about what? About the.

01:04:27 Speaker 3

Well, what I want to do is use the bulldozer, but that was turned down completely.

01:04:31 Speaker 4

OK.

01:04:31 Speaker 3

So what I had to do now was to plan for the defense of the US sector of Berlin with three battle groups.

01:04:42 Speaker 3

What we did we.

01:04:44 Speaker 3

We deployed 2 battle groups on the sector sector with East Berlin.

01:04:50 Speaker 3

We kept 1 battle group in reserve.

01:04:53 Speaker 3

And we had these 30 Sherman tanks and we put about the only place where you could really get across was checkpoint Charlie.

01:05:02 Speaker 3

We put about a platoon of tanks up there, a major in command and at the same time.

01:05:09 Speaker 3

On the other side of Checkpoint Charlie, the soldiers brought up their tanks.

01:05:13 Speaker 3

So there are never forget on the 19th of October 1961.

01:05:20 Speaker 3

Our tanks were at about 5 of them or at Checkpoint Charlie. They were loaded and on the other side.

01:05:30 Speaker 3

Of just in East Berlin were Soviet tanks, so.

01:05:36 Speaker 3

Our, our.

01:05:36 Speaker 4

Understanding, looking out a standoff.

01:05:36 Speaker 3

OK.

01:05:38 Speaker 3

Yes, our tanks were loaded.

01:05:41 Speaker 3

I was in contact with a major who's in who has the charge of tanks up there.

01:05:47 Speaker 3

I was in charge with him and he said my men are men are all men, are all the guns are.

01:05:52 Speaker 3

Voted they're aimed on Soviet tanks on the other side. That was the 19th of October.

01:05:58 Speaker 3

Never forget it.

01:06:00 Speaker 3

And of course I didn't mention it. Also that President Lyndon Johnson came to Berlin and President Kennedy had a special representative came to Berlin.

01:06:09 Speaker 3

General Lucius Clay and he was a a representative of President Kennedy.

01:06:15 Speaker 4

Wait, I'm sorry you said President Johnson came. This was.

01:06:18 Speaker 3

Well, President Johnson came.

01:06:21 Speaker 3

A couple days after.

01:06:22 Speaker 4

He was vice president.

01:06:24 Speaker 3

He was vice.

01:06:25 Speaker 3

He was there within three days after they.

01:06:28 Speaker 3

It all OK.

01:06:29 Speaker 3

It and of course then President.

01:06:32 Speaker 4

What did he do when he got there?

01:06:33 Speaker 4

Make a speech or don't.

01:06:34 Speaker 3

He just sit his talk to the higher.

01:06:36 Speaker 3

You know, I didn't get to see him personally, but he he talked to the the the Commandant.

01:06:37 Speaker 4

OK, OK.

01:06:42 Speaker 4

It was a tense situation, wasn't it?

01:06:44 Speaker 3

Was very intense.

01:06:45 Speaker 3

We didn't know what was going to happen, quite frankly, what happened.

01:06:48 Speaker 3

But anyway, general Clay, who had been the commanding general of Berlin during the blockade in 1948 and 49, and of course he was retired but.

01:06:57 Speaker 4

Lucia stay. Yeah.

01:07:01 Speaker 3

President Kennedy.

01:07:02 Speaker 3

Was the president.

01:07:03 Speaker 3

He knew that general clay was for me that so general Clay came in and he became.

01:07:09 Speaker 3

Well, he he was in the operation center with, with, with me and the other people was I had not too many people.

01:07:17 Speaker 3

We had special rooms, you know, 'cause. We had general clay could talk directly to to President Kennedy, but on the 19th of October, talk about his face off of the Soviet tanks.

01:07:30 Speaker 3

And the American tank face to face.

01:07:33 Speaker 3

And evening.

01:07:36 Speaker 3

Went by and the night went by and the next morning I don't know. Shortly after daylight I got a call from the major I had up there, he said.

01:07:46 Speaker 3

You know, so it takes a withdrawing. And I said, dude, I told the general Clay that I had a good relationship with the helpless. Even I was the guy telling.

01:07:57 Speaker 3

On and he said what happened? I said the Soviet tanks withdrawn and he had. We had special communications we could talk to anywhere. We could talk to the part of the fence. We could talk. As President, we could talk to NATO special all before I got there. But.

01:08:13 Speaker 3

Army had prepared for that and so he got on the phone, he said. Mr. President.

01:08:18 Speaker 3

Just won the Soviet tanks that withdrawing.

01:08:23 Speaker 3

So that was.

01:08:24 Speaker 3

That was a a great day.

01:08:25 Speaker 4

What was the condition of the?

01:08:27 Speaker 4

This was in October and you said in.

01:08:29 Speaker 3

That was that was in.

01:08:31 Speaker 3

That was in September, August, August well, but that that happened in October because we.

01:08:32 Speaker 4

October.

01:08:38 Speaker 4

Right, right, that.

01:08:39 Speaker 3

We we had gone from August until October, all kinds of maneuvers, but nothing like that.

01:08:44 Speaker 4

Was the wall rising during that they kept building it? I mean, I always thought that it was like they kept doing it just to see what would happen, and nobody tried to.

01:08:46 Speaker 3

They were dealing the wall, you know.

01:08:54 Speaker 3

Stop them. No, nobody.

01:08:56 Speaker 3

We can see.

01:08:59 Speaker 3

It was a very sad situation because a lot of East Berliners try to go through the wall and got killed. I know, but.

01:09:06 Speaker 3

Because we were told there be no military action, so all we could do is observe them.

01:09:10 Speaker 4

Did you see any of that?

01:09:12 Speaker 3

Oh yeah, I.

01:09:12 Speaker 4

Saw you saw some E Berliners killed.

01:09:15 Speaker 3

Well, no, I didn't see any kill. I knew about them getting killed.

01:09:18 Speaker 3

I knew about them getting killed.

01:09:19 Speaker 4

I was there 2-3 years later and they were jumping at by.

01:09:22 Speaker 4

Time the.

01:09:23 Speaker 4

Was well, concrete or cinder block.

01:09:25 Speaker 3

I remember one day and I saw the father.

01:09:29 Speaker 3

A.

01:09:30 Speaker 3

East Berliner was coming to the West Berlin, and at that time they had big rolls of barbed wire.

01:09:38 Speaker 3

You know, they had got the ball.

01:09:42 Speaker 3

And he he got through the guard and he got into the barbed wire and they shot and killed him right there. And I thought it 'cause. He almost got to the he almost got in our US section before he got through the lot of it, but they killed.

01:09:57 Speaker 3

And I thought, God, if I'd been there, I think I'd probably have that guy.

01:10:01 Speaker 3

But I wasn't.

01:10:02 Speaker 3

I was somewhere else that day.

01:10:04 Speaker 4

At what point did the wall become more of like a cinder block?

01:10:08 Speaker 3

Oh, it took years and years. Yeah, years.

01:10:09 Speaker 4

Oh, wait, Chucky here a bit.

01:10:11 Speaker 3

They just see it was not only just Berlin, but it. The wall went divided Eastburg East Germany from West Germany. But the emphasis initially was the wall.

01:10:23 Speaker 3

In Berlin and to keep the East Berliners and the East Germans from from coming over to the West 'cause they didn't like what was going on.

01:10:32 Speaker 3

Like the comments at all of.

01:10:34 Speaker 3

The Soviets were they had the headquarters in East Berlin also.

01:10:38

Yeah.

01:10:39 Speaker 3

But we we had another thing was very interesting.

01:10:43 Speaker 3

After the Nuremberg Trials, some of the.

01:10:47 Speaker 3

The sentence were given prisoner for life and they had a prison. It was up in the French zone called Spandau Prison.

01:10:55 Speaker 3

And Hess and a few others were up there. And when I became a battalion commander.

01:10:57 Speaker 4

Right.

01:11:02 Speaker 3

Of the security of that prison, rotate between the Russians, the British, the French and Americans. And when I was a teammate.

01:11:11 Speaker 3

In December, 19 watts.

01:11:17 Speaker 3

Well, that must have been 68, I guess.

01:11:22 Speaker 3

Or later.

01:11:24 Speaker 3

11 time my battalion had responsibility for the security of Spandel and we went up there and of course we took it over from the Russians and they they left the barracks in such a condition we couldn't live in for a few days.

01:11:41 Speaker 3

But anyway, I got to walk around.

01:11:44 Speaker 3

The the outside and I was head smoking around.

01:11:47 Speaker 4

Well, how long were you in Berlin?

01:11:49 Speaker 3

Well, I was in.

01:11:50 Speaker 3

I was there for four years. I was.

01:11:52 Speaker 4

From 61 to 65.

01:11:52 Speaker 3

I was the GC.

01:11:53 Speaker 3

Was the G3 from August the 3rd 1961 until the 28th of?

01:12:04 Speaker 3

28th of November.

01:12:08 Speaker 3

Of 63.

01:12:11 Speaker 3

So for 28 months I was AG 3 and I actually commanding general. I said I've been the G3 for 28 months and.

01:12:21 Speaker 3

A friend of mine.

01:12:24 Speaker 3

Is in command of Second Battalion, I said.

01:12:27 Speaker 3

We'd like to change jobs so they let us change up.

01:12:29 Speaker 4

Was your, did your family get tired?

01:12:31 Speaker 4

I mean, what was it like there for them?

01:12:32 Speaker 3

Well, it wasn't it.

01:12:37 Speaker 4

That was the height of the Cold War.

01:12:39 Speaker 3

We had, for example, when I went there, we we.

01:12:44 Speaker 3

We had a private home, but was willing, built by the Americans.

01:12:49 Speaker 3

And later on when.

01:12:52 Speaker 3

Aus official.

01:12:56 Speaker 3

State Department man.

01:12:58 Speaker 3

Left the house been blown to a Nazi Nazi?

01:13:02

Hmm.

01:13:03 Speaker 3

Well, they let us move in.

01:13:06 Speaker 3

So the last oh, I guess.

01:13:08 Speaker 4

Was it nice?

01:13:09 Speaker 3

Oh, last two years we did this beautiful home.

01:13:14 Speaker 3

They've been in Nazi Nazi's lived there and The thing is.

01:13:19 Speaker 3

They had what's called black black car.

01:13:24 Speaker 3

We call them Black Guards because throughout W Berlin, the German, the government had these security people and they post them over and they posted one right outside the gate of my house. And it was it was.

01:13:40 Speaker 3

Big entrance and he had a he had to have a bunch of buttons to get in. All that kind of thing. You know, The thing is the garage was heated and I got to know the guards that came there every evening.

01:13:54 Speaker 3

And I said, if you get cold, you come my garage.

01:13:58 Speaker 3

There. But anyway.

01:13:59 Speaker 4

What about your?

01:14:00 Speaker 4

Did they go to school?

01:14:01 Speaker 3

Yeah, they went to school there.

01:14:03 Speaker 4

In American school or what? OK.

01:14:04 Speaker 3

American. Oh, yeah. American school.

01:14:06 Speaker 3

They.

01:14:06 Speaker 3

They had a good.

01:14:08 Speaker 3

They had a good post exchange they had.

01:14:09 Speaker 4

So you just got weary of the Cold War stress or what did you you want to go home?

01:14:15 Speaker 3

Well, I had been the G3 for 28 months and that was a very.

01:14:24 Speaker 3

Demanding job, for example from the.

01:14:30 Speaker 3

13th day of August of 61 until.

01:14:38 Speaker 3

I say at least June of 62 I spent anywhere from 16 to 18 hours a day on the operation center.

01:14:46 Speaker 4

Wow, that's tough.

01:14:47 Speaker 3

Yeah, so it.

01:14:49 Speaker 3

It was very stressful. Yeah, but it was very.

01:14:53 Speaker 4

Well, you were acknowledged your your award there that you got.

01:14:56 Speaker 3

Well, yes, when I when I somewhere here.

01:15:02

Repl.

01:15:02 Speaker 3

We're gonna do it.

01:15:04 Speaker 4

I believe this is you're going to show us the 1st Legion of Merit award, right? That you got?

01:15:09 Speaker 3

Yes, when I left there.

01:15:15 Speaker 3

That's another bronze star. I thought I had.

01:15:17 Speaker 3

Oh, here it is.

01:15:20 Speaker 3

For my service primarily as the G3 for 28 months and also as a commander of a reinforced infantry battalion for six months.

01:15:31 Speaker 3

I was awarded the Legion of Merit and this is the first of four that I received, by the way. At that time, the Lieutenant was a second highest award that you could get for Victoria service.

01:15:45 Speaker 3

Was one called the Distinguished Service Medal?

01:15:48 Speaker 3

It was.

01:15:49 Speaker 3

One and at that time, and what?

01:15:52 Speaker 4

Were the others for the?

01:15:54 Speaker 4

You got other three more after this.

01:15:56 Speaker 3

Well, umm.

01:15:57 Speaker 3

I got this one was for Burling #2. I was a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

01:16:03 Speaker 3

And I was assigned as a member of the US delegation to the Military Committee of NATO, and my boss was a four-star Admiral, a great, great man.

01:16:14 Speaker 3

So I got the second one there and the third one I got.

01:16:19 Speaker 3

As the commander of the support Command, 82nd Airborne Division and Chief of Staff of the division, that was #3.

01:16:26 Speaker 3

Well, and #4 I received as a director of organization for the Army and I only knew know of one other person who got four of these.

01:16:38 Speaker 4

Well, Jim, your career is just absolutely amazing and I know the one piece that we haven't talked about yet, but we're going to do in our next segment is about your fantastic 82nd Airborne career.

01:16:50 Speaker 3

It's when I'm looking forward to that, that's.

01:16:52 Speaker 4

I know and so.

01:16:55 Speaker 3

Of all the units I ever served with in my 30.

01:16:58 Speaker 3

Years 82nd was number one right and I still.

01:17:01 Speaker 4

And it's near and dear to your heart.

01:17:02 Speaker 3

Still.

01:17:02 Speaker 3

Down.

01:17:03 Speaker 4

Even though you have some knees to.

01:17:05 Speaker 4

Remember it by right.

01:17:07 Speaker 3

Well, of course every may they have all American week and and I go down there.

01:17:13 Speaker 4

You still go down there in Fort.

01:17:15

Yeah, Brad.

01:17:15 Speaker 4

Fort Bragg.

01:17:16 Speaker 4

And Mike, Lynette oh takes you down.

01:17:17 Speaker 3

He takes me down, right?

01:17:19 Speaker 3

And their last year there were about 400 of us down there.

01:17:22 Speaker 4

Wow.

01:17:22 Speaker 3

These are.

01:17:22 Speaker 4

Well, it was 100th anniversary, wasn't it? Yeah, yeah.

01:17:24 Speaker 3

What was 100th?

01:17:26 Speaker 3

Yes. And they were about 400 people there who had served with 82nd Airborne.

01:17:31 Speaker 3

But I was the only World War 2 individual there and they oh, I can't tell how many hugs I got for women down there.

01:17:41 Speaker 3

Oh, I hug you.

01:17:42 Speaker 3

On come on.

01:17:44

Yeah.

01:17:44 Speaker 4

We'll stay.

01:17:45 Speaker 4

We're going to. That's what the next segment's going to be that OK.

01:17:48 Speaker 4

Is.

01:18:15 Speaker 1

Born and raised in West Virginia, Jim Riffe turned challenging early life experiences into an education which took him from his Mountain Home and the depression to Davidson College in North Carolina, where he first learned of the attack on Pearl Harbor. By 1945, he was in the.

01:18:30 Speaker 1

7th Infantry Division leading a platoon of 10 men.

01:18:34 Speaker 1

In the invasion of Okinawa, when we were hit, he.

01:18:37 Speaker 1

All of the people behind me were knocked off. The man behind me had both legs blown off. My whole back was scattered with strange.

01:18:42 Speaker 1

Colonel Colonel James L Riffy story is that of a true American hero whose army career of 30 years never erased.

01:18:49 Speaker 1

Question that he never stopped asking why not me?

01:18:52 Speaker 1

There were really no reasons why I wasn't killed several times.

01:19:17 Speaker 4

Hello, I'm Ruth Hill and I'm here this afternoon in Gainesville, VA with my friend and neighbor, Jim Riffey, Colonel James Riffy, who had 30 years of distinguished service with the US Army.

01:19:30 Speaker 4

And this afternoon, we're going to talk about some of his experiences in World War 2.

01:19:36 Speaker 4

Jim, you were born in 1920.

01:19:40 Speaker 3

I was born in 1921.

01:19:42 Speaker 4

21.

01:19:42 Speaker 3

As a matter of fact, in about 10 days I'll be 96.

01:19:46 Speaker 4

96, OK. And you grew up in McDowell County, West Virginia?

01:19:50 Speaker 3

I was born in MacDowell County and I spent most of my school days, grade school and high school in MacDowell County.

01:20:00 Speaker 3

I did live occasionally in the next door. County is Wyoming and the next Door County in Virginia was Buckhannon County, Virginia.

01:20:07 Speaker 3

But basically.

01:20:09 Speaker 3

I was born and spent most of my time until I went to College in 1941 in MacDowell County.

01:20:14 Speaker 4

OK.

01:20:15 Speaker 4

OK. And I believe you went through about 9 grades of school and in McDowell County, is that correct?

01:20:25 Speaker 3

Well, yes, this is in the heights of the depression in 19.

01:20:29 Speaker 3

30S and the school I went to, you had to buy your own books. And of course we had no money to to buy books.

01:20:39 Speaker 3

I had no money to buy clothes.

01:20:42 Speaker 3

Or I go to the school and I had no money to buy food to.

01:20:46 Speaker 3

So I decided I would try to join the Civilian Conservation Corps. My older brother had joined the core about three years earlier.

01:20:58 Speaker 3

Now the rule was to join the Conservation Corps.

01:21:01 Speaker 3

You had to be 18 between the years of 18 and 28 and you had to be single.

01:21:08 Speaker 3

Well, right after my 16th birthday on July the 9th, 1937, I went to the county seat in Wells, West Virginia.

01:21:18 Speaker 3

In MacDowell County, and I said, I want to join the Civilian Conservation Corps.

01:21:24 Speaker 3

And they said, how old are you?

01:21:25 Speaker 3

And I said I'm 18.

01:21:27 Speaker 3

I was about 3 weeks over 16.

01:21:30 Speaker 3

They didn't ask me for a birth certificate, so I signed up and I became a member of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

01:21:39 Speaker 3

And I was assigned to a camp.

01:21:42 Speaker 3

And Fayette County, West Virginia, and we were constructing Babcock State Park, which exists today as a very popular place for those living in West Virginia.

01:21:54 Speaker 4

And how did that work for?

01:21:56 Speaker 4

Did you have any premonition about? You were trained by military people, right?

01:22:01 Speaker 4

Or you were guided by.

01:22:02 Speaker 3

Well, I had had.

01:22:06 Speaker 3

At that time, I've had no military training whatsoever I ever have to remember that the Civilian Conservation Corps was quasi military.

01:22:15 Speaker 3

Your company commander was the Army captain and he had a Lieutenant who was executive officer.

01:22:21 Speaker 3

And then you had a first Sergeant, but the first Sergeant was a member of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

01:22:26 Speaker 3

And when you went into the field to work your your bosses were all civilians from the Department of the Interior or other organizations that were charged with building.

01:22:38 Speaker 3

Building the parks.

01:22:41 Speaker 3

So I had.

01:22:44 Speaker 3

Some very interesting experiences there, and but I recognize one thing associated with all the people whom are much, much older than me.

01:22:53 Speaker 3

Of fact I was a obviously the youngest man in the camp of about 200.

01:22:58

Hmm.

01:22:59 Speaker 3

And matter of fact, when I checked in, the company commander interviewed me and he said.

01:23:04 Speaker 3

Yeah.

01:23:05 Speaker 3

Well, how old are you?

01:23:06 Speaker 3

And I looked at him, he said.

01:23:08 Speaker 3

Tell me the truth.

01:23:09 Speaker 3

I'll let you stay, I.

01:23:11 Speaker 3

Well, Sir, I just turned 16, he said.

01:23:13 Speaker 3

That's what I thought.

01:23:14 Speaker 3

So they let me stay and I spent a little over a year.

01:23:20 Speaker 3

Before I had an opportunity to request a early release so I could go back to school.

01:23:26 Speaker 4

So was a typical tour three years, I believe in the CCC.

01:23:30 Speaker 3

The typical story surveying conservation was three years, and that's what my brother was to Colorado, and he he spent three years out in Colorado.

01:23:39 Speaker 4

But after a year, what was going through your mind?

01:23:42 Speaker 4

You thinking about going back to?

01:23:44 Speaker 4

Why did you?

01:23:45 Speaker 3

I missed school to begin with. I thought I was always a pretty good student.

01:23:50 Speaker 3

Of course I dropped out because I didn't have the money to continue because expenses. They weren't many, but they were more than we could afford.

01:24:00 Speaker 3

But I after I associated with these individuals, mostly in the 20s and most of them did not have an education.

01:24:05

Mm.

01:24:09 Speaker 3

And from that experience, I began to recognize that if you want to get ahead in this world, you have to have a good education.

01:24:18 Speaker 3

So that's when I decided I would require a request an early release.

01:24:22 Speaker 3

So I can return to school and.

01:24:25 Speaker 3

They asked me to get a certificate letter from principal to high school.

01:24:30 Speaker 3

The mayor of the town and someone who else? That was a cous for me, and I did that and I.

01:24:36 Speaker 3

Able to to release.

01:24:38 Speaker 4

So you went back to school in the 10th grade. You had three more years.

01:24:40 Speaker 3

Yes.

01:24:43 Speaker 4

You graduated valedictorian, I believe.

01:24:45 Speaker 3

Yes, in 1941 I was very fortunate.

01:24:51 Speaker 3

Of I entered the 10th grade. I was really after spending a year in the Civilian Conservation Corps. I was really interested in education because I also was interested in basketball.

01:25:05 Speaker 3

But it just so happened at that time. For the first time ever, my high school had a football team also.

01:25:11 Speaker 3

So I in the 10th grade I made straight A's and the 11th grade. I made straight A's and the 12th grade I made straight A's.

01:25:22 Speaker 3

Was the president of my sophomore, junior and senior classes.

01:25:27 Speaker 3

Graduate is valedictorian and at the same time I had 6 scholarship opportunities, 6 scholarship opportun.

01:25:36 Speaker 3

Well, I had.

01:25:37 Speaker 3

The first one was the University of Tennessee, and then I had one to Marshall College, which is in West Virginia.

01:25:45 Speaker 3

I had one in Charleston colleges in West Virginia. I had one college over near.

01:25:52 Speaker 3

Louisville, West Virginia and I had one.

01:25:56 Speaker 3

At Davidson College in North Carolina, and.

01:26:00 Speaker 3

I accepted Davidson for two reasons. One.

01:26:05 Speaker 3

They would let me play football in basketball.

01:26:07 Speaker 3

That's the only college let me do that.

01:26:09 Speaker 4

Yep.

01:26:10 Speaker 3

And #2, you had to take ROTC for two years and.

01:26:16 Speaker 4

And Davidson.

01:26:17 Speaker 3

I had some 5 military training. I selected Davidson College.

01:26:21 Speaker 4

They gave you the ROTC training, yeah.

01:26:23 Speaker 3

Oh yeah, you matter of fact, you had a student there.

01:26:27 Speaker 3

You had to take ROTC for two years. That was because the relationship that Davidson had with the federal government was one of those schools.

01:26:36 Speaker 3

You had to take ROTC for two years.

01:26:40 Speaker 4

So you graduated in 41.

01:26:42 Speaker 3

We have high school in.

01:26:44 Speaker 4

41 right and you went to Davidson that fall?

01:26:47 Speaker 3

Davidson fall in a football scholarship.

01:26:49 Speaker 4

So when Pearl Harbor happened, you were on the Davidson campus.

01:26:54 Speaker 3

Yes, on December the 7th, 1941, I was a student at Davidson, and that evening my roommate and I were walking to dinner and we met a member of our class and he said.

01:27:09 Speaker 3

Do you all know the Japanese Bom Pearl Harbor?

01:27:12 Speaker 3

And we looked at each other.

01:27:13 Speaker 3

Pearl Harbor. Where is that?

01:27:16 Speaker 3

We didn't know, so he told us it's in the Hawaii knowledge.

01:27:20 Speaker 3

Later that evening, we learned that the next day, December the 8th, that President Roosevelt would address a joint session of Congress at noon.

01:27:30 Speaker 3

So my roommate and I, we.

01:27:32 Speaker 3

Wondered where we could find the radio to listen to cause in those days on the college campus.

01:27:37 Speaker 3

I'm not sure whether.

01:27:40 Speaker 3

I know as a freshman you couldn't have.

01:27:42 Speaker 3

Maybe a sophomore couldn't have 1:00, so we did know that just across the street from the campus was a hotel and we eaten there many times.

01:27:50 Speaker 3

We knew in the lobby they have a a radio.

01:27:55 Speaker 3

So we gathered there at noon on the 8th of December, and we heard President Roosevelt deliver his speech, which was only 5 minutes, and he began by this way, he said.

01:28:09 Speaker 3

Yesterday, December the 7th, 1941, a date that will live in infamy.

01:28:17 Speaker 3

And so he went on for about 5 minutes.

01:28:20 Speaker 3

His applause was 8 minutes and he requested that as of the December the 7th 41 that a state of war had existed between Japan United States.

01:28:32 Speaker 3

And he asked the Congress to approve that and 401.

01:28:38 Speaker 3

Voted yes and one representative from Montana voted no.

01:28:45 Speaker 3

So that was the. Yeah. Yeah. It's almost matter of factly.

01:28:45 Speaker 4

Really, it was almost unanimous.

01:28:50 Speaker 3

It was a woman from Montana who voted against World War 2 and doing some research. I found that she also voted against the US entering World War One.

01:29:02 Speaker 4

So what was the mood around you and with you and your buddies at that point, after this happened, how did you process?

01:29:07 Speaker 3

It well, I think.

01:29:10 Speaker 3

Both individuals were anxious to finish their education and join the service.

01:29:16 Speaker 3

As a matter of fact, when I entered Davidson College, I was 20 years old.

01:29:21 Speaker 3

And actually, there are some members in the in the on the campus there who were graduating at 20 years old.

01:29:28 Speaker 3

I'm a 20 year old freshman, but anyway in February.

01:29:33 Speaker 3

I had to register for the draft.

01:29:36 Speaker 3

At 18 and above, you had to register for the draft at that same month, I got an appointment to the Naval Academy.

01:29:44 Speaker 3

Congressional appointment from the Naval Academy and I accepted.

01:29:48 Speaker 3

But then after a month or so, I began to think, well, you know, I've had two summers of Civilian Conservation Corps training, which I haven't discussed.

01:29:58 Speaker 3

I had one year of ROTC training in college, so this is all.

01:30:03 Speaker 3

So I thought if I was going to get ahead, I better join the.

01:30:07 Speaker 3

So I wrote to the congressman. Thank you very much and told him that when school was out, I was going to join the army. And so I was actually drafted.

01:30:16 Speaker 3

In June of July of 1942.

01:30:19 Speaker 3

At that time, they had so many volunteers that the the the camps weren't large enough to hold them and have people to train them.

01:30:30 Speaker 3

So you get a letter. I got a letter saying please don't volunteer.

01:30:36 Speaker 3

As a matter of fact, as of October of 1942, you could not volunteer for the army.

01:30:42 Speaker 3

If they had somebody, they could take care of them.

01:30:42 Speaker 4

Goodness.

01:30:45 Speaker 4

So all the young men, including yourself, wanted to go to.

01:30:49 Speaker 3

I think most of did.

01:30:51 Speaker 3

But remember, Davidson College was a Presbyterian College.

01:30:54

Mm.

01:30:54 Speaker 3

And I would say probably 50% of the students there were going to be.

01:31:01 Speaker 3

In the have a religious career. Yeah, I know that two or three people that I played, football and basketball with, they were going to go into four years. And after that they wanted.

01:31:04

Hmm.

01:31:13 Speaker 3

Wanted to be in the religious field.

01:31:16 Speaker 3

But Davidson was a Presbyterian College, and it turned out, a lot of.

01:31:20 Speaker 3

Individual for that career.

01:31:22 Speaker 4

So where did you go that fall of 42?

01:31:25 Speaker 3

That fall of 42 actually on the 8th of August.

01:31:30 Speaker 3

I was.

01:31:31 Speaker 3

I was in Macdall County and I, along with about 30 other individuals in that community, we were ordered to Fort Thomas, KY.

01:31:42 Speaker 3

I've never heard of Fort Thomas, KY, but they said well.

01:31:46 Speaker 3

You get on a train in Macdall County and about 400 miles later you arrived in Cincinnati. OH.

01:31:54 Speaker 3

So we got on the train and we got to Cincinnati. OH, and there was there was a truck, several trucks there and they put us on trucks and took us across the river, the Ohio River. And there was Fort Thomas, KY.

01:32:10 Speaker 3

And so that's where we got our orientation.

01:32:14 Speaker 3

Got our uniforms? We took a apt test.

01:32:19 Speaker 3

Army General Classification test they gave you that to give give the Army an audio quart to assign you and mine turned out that they said Jim Rifk. You ought to go to the infantry and that's where I want to go anyhow.

01:32:21 Speaker 4

OK.

01:32:32

Now.

01:32:33 Speaker 4

You at this point you were what was your rank?

01:32:37 Speaker 4

You were a private private.

01:32:37 Speaker 3

I was.

01:32:38 Speaker 3

Yeah, you're always, you know, enters the service in the army as a private.

01:32:41 Speaker 4

Right.

01:32:43 Speaker 3

I entered as.

01:32:44 Speaker 4

A private OK.

01:32:45 Speaker 4

And how long was basic training?

01:32:47 Speaker 3

Well, we didn't have what to call basic training because I joined the Blue Ridge Division, which was the 80s division.

01:32:49 Speaker 4

Oh no.

01:32:53

OK.

01:32:54

Right.

01:32:55 Speaker 3

And of course, you know the blue rags is not too far from here, but the Blue Ridge division, the 80S division, was a Reserve Army division and it was made-up of units from Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, so.

01:32:59

Mm.

01:33:11 Speaker 3

When I got there, the division had only been federalized for about.

01:33:17 Speaker 3

About six weeks. So we didn't have anything called basic.

01:33:21 Speaker 3

We had to take basic training, but the division had to give us the basic training and so all they had in the company that I joined had a company commander or captain.

01:33:33 Speaker 3

We had a first.

01:33:34 Speaker 3

These are regular army people and we had.

01:33:38 Speaker 3

A supply.

01:33:39 Speaker 3

We had a Met Sergeant with a couple of cooks.

01:33:42 Speaker 3

We had a clerk or two and then we had just one Sergeant.

01:33:46 Speaker 3

Train us in basic training.

01:33:48 Speaker 3

One Sergeant.

01:33:48

Mm.

01:33:50 Speaker 4

But you started gaining rank pretty quickly, as I recall.

01:33:53 Speaker 3

Well, as a matter of fact, on the second day.

01:33:57 Speaker 3

They marched the petunia at that time. There was about maybe.

01:34:01 Speaker 3

O35 of us and you know, just like myself.

01:34:05 Speaker 3

Just kind of the service.

01:34:08 Speaker 3

And the the platoon Sergeant marks us over to the parade field. And when we finished there, he said.

01:34:15 Speaker 3

Anybody March this platoon back to the?

01:34:17 Speaker 3

Company and I said I can't, he said.

01:34:20 Speaker 3

Slim you take over.

01:34:22 Speaker 3

So I marched a company back to the company area because it was simple for me because I had all TC in college and.

01:34:33 Speaker 3

I had two summers at at the Citizen Military training camp, so I'd already gone through more than just basic training.

01:34:40

Mm.

01:34:40 Speaker 3

So after that I began to get more responsibilities and.

01:34:46 Speaker 3

And September, I was promoted to Pfc and October I was promoted to corporal.

01:34:53 Speaker 3

And November, I promoted to Sergeant and December, I was promoted to staff Sergeant. Wow.

01:35:00 Speaker 3

And I got a call one day asking. I got promoted to staff Sergeant.

01:35:04 Speaker 3

I was the acting first Sergeant.

01:35:06 Speaker 3

Because the regular first Sergeant had gone home for Thanksgiving on a vacation.

01:35:12 Speaker 3

And so while he was gone, the company commander said to me.

01:35:17 Speaker 3

Jim, I want you to be the acting first Sergeant.

01:35:20 Speaker 3

So that's how I got promoted to staff Sergeant, but again.

01:35:23 Speaker 4

So yeah, we're basically it there in Kentucky. The whole fall. Yeah. OK.

01:35:26 Speaker 3

Oh.

01:35:27 Speaker 3

This is a camp forest.

01:35:30 Speaker 3

I may not have mentioned that name for Bedford Forest. You know, this people work for veteran general.

01:35:33 Speaker 4

Uh huh. Uh.

01:35:36 Speaker 3

So the reason I got promoted to staff Sergeant because I was acting first Sergeant and the first Sergeant didn't return.

01:35:41

At.

01:35:44 Speaker 3

Oh, and as a matter of fact, a couple of days after that I got a call from the regimental adjutant and he said the regimental commander wants to see you.

01:35:53 Speaker 3

And I went to the company commander, Captain Helms, I said, Sir, I'm supposed to report to the regimental commander.

01:36:01 Speaker 3

And he said, well, I don't know.

01:36:02 Speaker 3

So I went up there and I introduced the regimental commander.

01:36:07 Speaker 3

Shook my hand.

01:36:08 Speaker 3

Said.

01:36:09 Speaker 3

I want to shake your hand because you're the 1st man in the regiment to be promoted to staff Sergeant.

01:36:15 Speaker 3

And about two days later, I got another call from the agent.

01:36:18 Speaker 3

Said.

01:36:18 Speaker 3

Well, Jim, why haven't you gone to Officer candidate School?

01:36:22 Speaker 3

And I said, well, Sir, a month or so ago, there was a notice on the bulletin board.

01:36:28 Speaker 3

That these men will apply for every office, candidate, school and my name was on it.

01:36:35 Speaker 3

I signed up.

01:36:36 Speaker 3

I went before review board and I assume I didn't pass the board because that's the last I heard of, he said.

01:36:44 Speaker 3

Passed the.

01:36:45 Speaker 3

You should have been the ocsa month ago.

01:36:48 Speaker 3

He said Captain Helms is still going to release you.

01:36:50 Speaker 3

So they cut orders and I reported the officer, Kansas School of Fort Benning on Christmas Eve 19142.

01:36:59 Speaker 4

So you went to Fort Benning, GA for what's my name, officer?

01:37:03 Speaker 3

Official Infantry officers candidate.

01:37:06 Speaker 3

It was a 13 week course.

01:37:06

OK.

01:37:09 Speaker 3

And we start out with about 200.

01:37:14 Speaker 3

Men like myself somewhere.

01:37:16 Speaker 3

Some if you were a private, you got to moment to staff Sergeant during the OCS course.

01:37:21 Speaker 3

Anyway, about 200 of us and.

01:37:25 Speaker 3

After five weeks, they had review and some men didn't make it beyond five weeks and they were released. And then your next review was at the end of seven weeks and more individuals were released.

01:37:41 Speaker 3

And then at the end of nine weeks, they made their final release of individual who were not going to graduate.

01:37:48 Speaker 3

So if you made it 9 weeks, you know you're going to graduate. And at that time they also.

01:37:57 Speaker 3

Uh gave money for you to to buy an uniform.

01:38:00 Speaker 3

And they had a tailor on the post. And we go there and get get our uniform made. So and finally.

01:38:08 Speaker 3

In the 27th of March of 1943, we all graduated.

01:38:12 Speaker 3

Guess it may have been maybe.

01:38:15 Speaker 3

Oh, probably 130 out of 200 that graduated.

01:38:20 Speaker 3

I was very fortunate.

01:38:21 Speaker 3

I was the honor graduate of Monticell.

01:38:26 Speaker 3

And for that I when we had to March over to the Recreation Center to get our.

01:38:33 Speaker 3

Dend on our bars.

01:38:37 Speaker 3

The honored graduate as an honor, I got to March the company over to the Recreation Center, and there we got our we got our second Lieutenant bars and we already received our assignments, by the way.

01:38:48 Speaker 4

And what was yours?

01:38:49 Speaker 3

My assignment was to Camp Roberts, California.

01:38:53 Speaker 3

And quite frankly, I was very, very happy to get that assignment because I knew that I against the Japanese in the Pacific and Pearl Harbor, were still waiting on me.

01:39:05 Speaker 3

I thought, well, maybe this will give me a chance to.

01:39:08 Speaker 3

Make amends for the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor.

01:39:12 Speaker 3

I got to Camp Roberts.

01:39:15 Speaker 3

They had a officer school there. If you were a captain or a Lieutenant.

01:39:21 Speaker 3

You had to go through this school.

01:39:25 Speaker 3

Because they were preparing you to go to the Pacific.

01:39:29 Speaker 3

Four week course and it was located about four miles outside the main campus with a special special organization.

01:39:39 Speaker 3

And so when I graduated there after four weeks, I was assigned as an instructor.

01:39:45 Speaker 3

And platoon tactics.

01:39:46 Speaker 3

And I kept that job for a year. And after that they sent me to the infantry officers.

01:39:55 Speaker 3

Candidate school.

01:39:57 Speaker 3

Well, they sent me to the infantry officer's advanced course.

01:40:02 Speaker 3

Not the already gone to oldest, they sent me to the advanced course at Fort Benning, which is also a 13 weeks, and I returned after that.

01:40:10 Speaker 3

Then shortly, I was on my way to.

01:40:13 Speaker 4

So what? OK, so you finished your training and at what point did you go to the in the Pacific?

01:40:19 Speaker 3

What I was about October of 1944.

01:40:25 Speaker 3

And.

01:40:27 Speaker 3

We went up to San Francisco, got on the ship and of course.

01:40:33 Speaker 3

They didn't tell us where we're going, but the headlines of the San Francisco paper that day were Japanese Subs off coast.

01:40:42 Speaker 3

So they had.

01:40:43 Speaker 3

It was a troop ship, but still they should.

01:40:46 Speaker 3

They had some 20mm guns on top of the deck for.

01:40:53 Speaker 3

Any support they could probably give?

01:40:56 Speaker 3

In about 3 weeks, we arrived in new Maya, New Caledonia.

01:41:01 Speaker 3

That was a French procession had been won for many years. I think it may still be today.

01:41:09 Speaker 3

New Caledonia's north, northeast of Australia. So it's it's way down there.

01:41:16 Speaker 4

Had I.

01:41:17 Speaker 4

Did you say that you you were in train, you weren't?

01:41:21 Speaker 4

You could have been in training rather that. Did you ask to go into combat?

01:41:25 Speaker 3

Well, when I got to do me a New Caledonia, the army had a.

01:41:33 Speaker 3

They had a center there for individuals who who were going to be assigned to divisions.

01:41:43 Speaker 3

They call it their replacement or replacement center and.

01:41:49 Speaker 3

So what all the armored troops going to Pacific went through a replacement training center and then the divisions could call the replacement training center say we want so many men of this great in this time.

01:42:01 Speaker 3

So anyway, I've been there about a week or so and the and the Lieutenant Colonel commanding mob Italian called me in and he said.

01:42:11 Speaker 3

I would like you to stay on as one of our company commanders and we'll get you promoted to captain and I said, Sir, I want to go to combat.

01:42:21 Speaker 3

So he he started offended.

01:42:23 Speaker 3

Well, OK, Lieutenant. Put it in writing.

01:42:25 Speaker 3

So I put it in writing that I want to be assigned to a combat unit.

01:42:30 Speaker 3

And then a a few days later.

01:42:33 Speaker 3

I was ordered to.

01:42:35 Speaker 3

And there was about 8 lieutenants along with me. And we got on a cargo ship.

01:42:40 Speaker 3

We didn't know where we were going, but was on a cargo ship and.

01:42:46 Speaker 4

How long were you on the cork?

01:42:47 Speaker 4

Ship we.

01:42:48 Speaker 3

Were on a cargo ship about 10 days. We had some cots in the in the whole of the cargo ship. They we got to eat twice a day.

01:42:59 Speaker 3

We had breakfast about 10:00 in the morning and then about 4:30 in the afternoon we had dinner.

01:43:06 Speaker 3

And so we weren't treated too well as a matter of fact, one of the lieutenants with me.

01:43:13 Speaker 3

His uncle was a senator in U.S. Congress and he said I'm going to write my senator about this and see if they can't do something about giving people like us better treatment.

01:43:23 Speaker 4

Were you when you were in that cargo hole? Were you having second thoughts about having?

01:43:28 Speaker 3

Oh no, I I.

01:43:29 Speaker 3

I didn't. We I didn't know where we're going.

01:43:31 Speaker 4

Why did you choose combat over?

01:43:34 Speaker 3

Well, that's what I trained for, and particularly at Fort Benning.

01:43:35 Speaker 4

OK.

01:43:39 Speaker 3

At Officer candidate School, you are trained to lead an infantry platoon.

01:43:45 Speaker 3

That, and the motto is, follow me. And if you look at the organizational structure, everything about a platoon level, you're a commander, a company commander, you're a company. You're a company commander.

01:44:00 Speaker 3

But as a platoon level in the infantry rifles, you are a leader and that's what they train you to be down at Fort Benning.

01:44:08 Speaker 3

It's follow me.

01:44:10 Speaker 3

You know.

01:44:11 Speaker 3

I'll follow you, but you follow me.

01:44:14 Speaker 4

So you spent 10 days in the cargo hold and then what happened?

01:44:17 Speaker 3

Yes, we did.

01:44:18 Speaker 3

Well, then, we arrived at a place on an island called Espiritu Santo.

01:44:25 Speaker 3

Santo was a island in the New Hebrides which was in the South Pacific and it had one of the phallus climates, probably in the entire world.

01:44:36 Speaker 3

Addition to that, it was covered with mosquitoes.

01:44:40 Speaker 3

And the temperature and the rain and the humidity and the everything we could start about about.

01:44:49 Speaker 3

Maybe 6:30 in the morning.

01:44:53 Speaker 3

And by 10:30, we had to quit.

01:44:56 Speaker 3

We had to quit.

01:44:57 Speaker 3

And so then you come, come back to the company area which was.

01:45:04 Speaker 3

All tense, of course.

01:45:05 Speaker 3

I may not have mentioned my assignment when I got there.

01:45:09 Speaker 4

Yeah. What was that?

01:45:10 Speaker 3

Well.

01:45:12 Speaker 3

I reported to the regimental commander and he said I'm going to sign you to IKEA.

01:45:17 Speaker 3

Company and I've just assigned one of my best company commanders, Captain Diaz, to be the company commander.

01:45:26 Speaker 3

So they saw me through I company and I didn't know where they work was all tents and a Sergeant for the regimental headquarters took me down to where the eye company was and have to be lunch time. And I went up and in the back of the lunch.

01:45:41 Speaker 3

Was.

01:45:42 Speaker 3

Captain Diaz, Lucan, and Dampier, a first Lieutenant.

01:45:46 Speaker 3

Was executive officer.

01:45:48 Speaker 3

And 2nd Lieutenant Pitts, who had clinical third platoon.

01:45:51 Speaker 3

They had.

01:45:54 Speaker 3

What three officers is that taught in the company so?

01:46:00 Speaker 4

Is this island in relation to Okinawa at that point?

01:46:02 Speaker 3

Oh, it was a long, long long.

01:46:04 Speaker 4

Way.

01:46:05 Speaker 3

I don't know how many miles exactly, but you're going from the South Pacific.

01:46:11 Speaker 3

It took us how many days to get there, but I remember that on the route we.

01:46:18 Speaker 3

They have a assembly at Ulysses.

01:46:22 Speaker 3

Ulys.

01:46:25 Speaker 3

SES everything is symbol to go to.

01:46:31 Speaker 3

I don't know how how how far it was.

01:46:33 Speaker 3

I know it was on the ship before we got off of Oak Canal.

01:46:38 Speaker 3

Were on the ship.

01:46:41 Speaker 3

I would say at least two to two weeks before we landed, OK.

01:46:47 Speaker 3

Two weeks.

01:46:48 Speaker 4

So you did the training on the spirit to the island there and then.

01:46:51 Speaker 3

Oh yes.

01:46:52 Speaker 3

Well, that that was one of the fortunate things in my experience with the 27th of Asian goes on as spiritual Santos.

01:47:01 Speaker 3

I was there for three months and had the opportunity to train my platoon.

01:47:06 Speaker 3

And the.

01:47:10 Speaker 3

First day I was there, I contacted the platoon Sergeant and I said, would you please assemble the platoon tomorrow morning?

01:47:17 Speaker 3

I'd like to meet them and have me meet. Have them meet me.

01:47:21 Speaker 3

So the next morning he assembles a platoon, which.

01:47:24 Speaker 3

I know that only can this consist of 29 men and having been an instructor in Officer School, I knew that the authorized strength for Rafa platoon was 40.

01:47:36 Speaker 3

So we were.

01:47:37 Speaker 3

We were living in short, but anyway, the platoon Sergeant introduced me.

01:47:44 Speaker 3

You know, this is your new patrol leader, and I asked each man to go around and give his name and.

01:47:53 Speaker 3

Where he was from and.

01:47:56 Speaker 3

How long he'd been in the army and had he been in combat?

01:47:59 Speaker 3

They all did that and then.

01:48:03 Speaker 3

The platoon started so well. You tell us a little bit about yourself.

01:48:07 Speaker 3

And I told him I had enlisted as a private in August 1942.

01:48:12 Speaker 3

I was a staff Sergeant by December 42.

01:48:16 Speaker 3

I went to Officer Kansas School in 43 and they all when they heard that I had been.

01:48:22 Speaker 3

Uh, from private to staff Sergeant in four months, they wondered why. So I had to tell them why.

01:48:30 Speaker 3

Because the two summers at civilian conservation, I mean 2 summers at civilian military training camp and then ROTC, I had all that background.

01:48:39 Speaker 3

But anyway, they knew that I'd been a staff Sergeant and they sort of said, hey, this is this guy's one of us.

01:48:46 Speaker 3

And so from that moment on, I had a very good.

01:48:49 Speaker 3

Good close relationship with those 29 men.

01:48:55 Speaker 3

The closest relationship I've ever had any group outside my own family.

01:49:00 Speaker 4

So that training was the early part of 45.

01:49:03 Speaker 4

When was taking.

01:49:03 Speaker 3

That with party more. Yeah, that was that was that was.

01:49:05 Speaker 4

4044.

01:49:08 Speaker 3

I got third early December and I had an opportunity to be with my platoon.

01:49:10

A.

01:49:14 Speaker 3

And we had platoon training.

01:49:15 Speaker 3

Had company.

01:49:16 Speaker 3

We had battalion training, regimental training. We had live fire training, we had jungle training.

01:49:22 Speaker 3

We a lot of men didn't know how to.

01:49:24 Speaker 3

We taught them how to swim, so it was interesting, but as I say, we can only train for about 1/2 a day.

01:49:31 Speaker 3

Then at noon time, everybody had to fall out from the company St. in the shorts because everybody had sores on their back.

01:49:39 Speaker 3

And many of us got malaria. I got malaria because it was full of mosquitoes.

01:49:47 Speaker 3

And if you think about malaria, it it comes back year after year after year. And I think the last.

01:49:55 Speaker 3

Bout of malaria I had was probably 19151.

01:50:00 Speaker 3

And.

01:50:02

So.

01:50:02 Speaker 4

And how long were you there on that island?

01:50:03 Speaker 3

Are.

01:50:04 Speaker 3

We were.

01:50:05 Speaker 3

I was there from the say the 8th of December there about to about the 25th of March when we loaded the the troop ships at S Pier to Santo and headed southward.

01:50:17 Speaker 3

Didn't tell us where we were.

01:50:18 Speaker 3

They just said, you know, you're going into combat, so.

01:50:22 Speaker 3

We found out much later.

01:50:23 Speaker 3

Going to dock.

01:50:24 Speaker 3

Out. OK.

01:50:25 Speaker 4

So when did you land on Okinawa? What was that like?

01:50:29 Speaker 3

Let me just mention a little bit about Okinaw. Okinaw was.

01:50:37 Speaker 3

Assigned to the 10th Army Division for its capture, the 10th Army Division consisted of four infantry divisions, the 7th, the 27th, the 77th and the 96th, and also it had two marine divisions.

01:50:54 Speaker 3

The first Marine division and the 6th Marine Division. Altogether there was about over 200,000 combat troops, including about 18,000 who were with the Navy right offshore.

01:51:07 Speaker 3

So we had a group, so the 10th Colony was commanded by Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner.

01:51:15 Speaker 3

And so he was responsible for.

01:51:19 Speaker 3

Making the final plans for the invasion.

01:51:22 Speaker 3

So Oak Canal, which is, by the way, was the last Battle of World War 2.

01:51:28 Speaker 3

And it was the most deadly battle in the entire Pacific War.

01:51:33 Speaker 3

Later on I can give you some figures after the number.

01:51:37 Speaker 3

Of people who were wounded or killed on Okinawa, it was terrible.

01:51:40 Speaker 3

Not only the people got killed, but the the ships that got sunk.

01:51:45 Speaker 3

Got damaged? The planes that got damaged and also but also the fact that probably with our we were killing Japanese that's what we were.

01:51:52 Speaker 3

For so anyway, on April the 1st, which is Easter Sunday.

01:51:59 Speaker 3

They launched what they call Operation Iceberg.

01:52:03 Speaker 3

The 10th Army commander selected the two Marine divisions and two armoured divisions to make the initial landing.

01:52:14 Speaker 3

The 1st and the 6th Marine Division landed.

01:52:16 Speaker 3

We were on the West Coast of Okina, part of it, and the two army divisions, which happened to be the.

01:52:29 Speaker 3

7th and the.

01:52:31 Speaker 3

96 they landed on the right, now the 27th Division.

01:52:36 Speaker 3

Division was what they called floating arm floating reserve.

01:52:41 Speaker 3

So we were still in our troop ship just offshore to to go ashore. We need. And that happened on about the.

01:52:50 Speaker 3

9th for us it happened about.

01:52:53 Speaker 3

The 8th or 9th of April when we landed.

01:53:00 Speaker 3

Where the four divisions had previously declared the way they sent us to an assembly area about a mile north of the landing area, we spent the night there. The next day we marched toward the front lines.

01:53:16 Speaker 3

Down South.

01:53:17 Speaker 3

The particular non insects division had run into a real real Japanese defensive position as a matter of fact, we soon learned the army commander learned and all the combat leaders learned.

01:53:32 Speaker 3

That the Japanese weren't defending the northern part of the island.

01:53:36 Speaker 3

Okinawa, by the way, is 60 miles long and it's anywhere from 2 to 18 miles wide.

01:53:42 Speaker 3

The northern part is 40 miles.

01:53:45 Speaker 3

And the southern part is 20 miles.

01:53:48 Speaker 3

And so the Japanese had decided they would.

01:53:52 Speaker 3

In the southern part, the 20 miles because the northern was heavily wooded and.

01:53:59 Speaker 3

Hilly and full of brush and it just it wasn't a good defensive position, whereas the South had escarpments, it had east West ridges where they could really make the fences and the so the Japanese decided to defend the southern part of.

01:54:15 Speaker 3

Okinawa.

01:54:16 Speaker 4

So how did that go?

01:54:18 Speaker 4

You were headed for the frontline.

01:54:19 Speaker 3

Well.

01:54:21 Speaker 3

On the second, second day, we were moved to a rear area.

01:54:27 Speaker 3

Just South of.

01:54:29 Speaker 3

The 96th Division was and then on the third day, which I think was about the, I'm going to say about the 9th, I think I didn't know the date.

01:54:39 Speaker 3

About the third day, see about the 9th. We went up to a Ridge called Carcassu Ridge and that's where this picture was taken much, much later, of course. And we relieved the unit of the 96 division and we were on the completely.

01:54:57 Speaker 3

West Coast of Okinawa.

01:55:00 Speaker 3

And by the way, on the West Coast of Okinawa is the East China Sea. And on the East Coast is the Pacific Ocean.

01:55:09 Speaker 3

Now our position on Carcassu Ridge overlooked the East China Sea, so we were on the very right flank.

01:55:17 Speaker 3

Of the divisions heading South at that time.

01:55:22 Speaker 4

So Jim, you were relieving the division on the South end of the island?

01:55:28 Speaker 3

Yeah, the well, what we saw we right in front of us was a valley.

01:55:28 Speaker 4

What did you see?

01:55:37 Speaker 3

And on the valleys up to an escarpment.

01:55:39 Speaker 3

And this was at least 200 feet tall.

01:55:43 Speaker 3

And what the Japanese had done it from the back of the area, they had dug tunnels.

01:55:50 Speaker 3

And then out big enough to put their artillery in. And so they we could see them.

01:55:57 Speaker 3

With our glasses, we could see them rolling their artillery out so they knew they was going to fire on us so.

01:56:05 Speaker 3

What we.

01:56:06 Speaker 3

Do we try to get a hold of our artillery, but with the time we would get information back to the artillery and they coordinated?

01:56:13 Speaker 3

The Japanese knew that, and they'd fire at us, and then they'd go back in the hole.

01:56:18 Speaker 3

So even though we get a naval gun fire.

01:56:22 Speaker 3

On the arcturia far had no effect whatsoever on that, so the division commander knew.

01:56:29 Speaker 3

There would be suicide for everybody to try to go through that valley and up the steep escarpment.

01:56:36 Speaker 3

Almost impossible to do so.

01:56:40 Speaker 3

Later on, I'll explain to you what the division commander decided to do.

01:56:45 Speaker 4

OK.

01:56:46 Speaker 4

Well, what?

01:56:47 Speaker 4

Why don't you tell us now?

01:56:49 Speaker 3

Well, then something happened before that, yeah.

01:56:51 Speaker 4

OK.

01:56:53 Speaker 3

Well, when we relieve the elements, the 96 division, they told us another Japanese attack every night. But you can hear them coming 'cause.

01:57:04 Speaker 3

It was said that they were all drunk on sake. Stephanie's sort of whiskey said.

01:57:10 Speaker 3

Can hear them coming, but they'll just attack every night. And so they did.

01:57:16 Speaker 3

We had good defensive positions.

01:57:19 Speaker 3

Had support from.

01:57:21 Speaker 3

Our heavy weapons company with our heavy mortars and heavy machine guns.

01:57:24 Speaker 3

We had artillery and we took communications bar and we taugt empty sea cans to that and so Japanese.

01:57:34 Speaker 3

Noise. So they did attack every night, but we never lost an individual.

01:57:40 Speaker 3

And.

01:57:41 Speaker 4

Were you able?

01:57:42 Speaker 4

You didn't sleep well. Where did you sleep?

01:57:46 Speaker 3

I don't remember sleeping, but I guess we did.

01:57:47 Speaker 4

You don't recently recently.

01:57:49 Speaker 3

But everybody had you had a budding and you and a buddy dug a hole together where one of you slept and one of you stayed awake.

01:57:57 Speaker 3

11 Every every other man.

01:58:02 Speaker 3

Was awake all night long, so you know you didn't think much about sleeping with that.

01:58:07 Speaker 3

It thing is what you going to do the next day and I hope you survive and every man I talk to.

01:58:14 Speaker 3

I never brought the service yet, but they all said, you know, they all are convinced that they were going to survive the war. And I had the same feeling. I said no matter what happens, I'm going to live through this war.

01:58:27 Speaker 3

I did.

01:58:30 Speaker 3

Unfortunately, some of the young men that service me did not.

01:58:35 Speaker 4

What is it like being in the thick of combat like that?

01:58:38 Speaker 4

You just what are you thinking?

01:58:39 Speaker 4

It just about survival.

01:58:41 Speaker 3

Thing you think is is this. You're given the mission and an objective, and it might be a hill. It might be some other. It'll be some kind of a topographical thing identified. And the other thing you think of.

01:58:57 Speaker 3

Taking that objective, that's.

01:58:59 Speaker 3

You know you're assigned to do something and they are depending upon you. And so you don't want to fail them.

01:59:05 Speaker 3

I'm talking about they the.

01:59:09 Speaker 3

Division will start at the top and go down to the.

01:59:12 Speaker 3

The regiments will go to battalions and battalions will assign their companies to do the actual fighting and so.

01:59:21 Speaker 3

All I thought about was just.

01:59:24 Speaker 3

Taking them in and making sure that we seize the objective that we were assigned to.

01:59:31 Speaker 4

So you had you had Japanese planes flying at you and artillery from the valley.

01:59:37 Speaker 3

Is that well, the artillery came from the escarpments.

01:59:42 Speaker 3

Over there, and as a matter of fact.

01:59:46 Speaker 3

We had some casualties not from the Japanese artillery, but from our own artillery on that Ridge didn't hit my platoon, but hit the the the opportunities on the left, probably about maybe 200 feet from Hermoputane was.

01:59:51

Hmm.

02:00:03 Speaker 3

And killed quite a few people. So based upon that.

02:00:09 Speaker 3

The battalion commander said he wanted to sign a forward artillery observer to be with each of the companies.

02:00:16 Speaker 3

They said well, we.

02:00:18 Speaker 3

Do that, but we.

02:00:20 Speaker 3

We can sign 1 to one company.

02:00:21 Speaker 3

So it was assigned to my company, our company, so.

02:00:25 Speaker 3

What would happen if we, the artillery observer and I, we look at this garment, for example, we see the Japanese.

02:00:33 Speaker 3

Polar artillery out start firing and you know to see how far the way were. If I remember it correctly, we could see the flash and sound travel through 1086 feet per second.

02:00:46 Speaker 3

Think that's what I remember.

02:00:49 Speaker 3

So we we see the flash and then when we start counting 1002 thousand, 3000 and we when we heard the act of the boom, we get a a estimate of how far away they were and then the forward optimum observer could call.

02:01:04 Speaker 3

Back to the operations center and on Okinaw.

02:01:10 Speaker 3

A.

02:01:10 Speaker 3

Went to the forward artery.

02:01:11 Speaker 3

Called back from fire.

02:01:13 Speaker 3

You he might get artillery fire, he could get naval Gunfire Operations center control at all. So.

02:01:22 Speaker 4

How many days were you in actively in combat there?

02:01:25 Speaker 3

Well on on.

02:01:29 Speaker 3

On Caucasus, let me just say this.

02:01:33 Speaker 3

Even though the Japanese they attacked every night, we found out on the 1st morning after that that when they would leave a sniper in the area and when we get up in the morning, start moving around, then the sniper would take off.

02:01:50 Speaker 3

So the second morning that happened, the company commander said to me, OK.

02:01:56 Speaker 3

Look, you didn't.

02:01:59 Speaker 3

You didn't use ranks and in combat our combat, we all had a nickname and my nickname was Luke.

02:02:06 Speaker 3

And so based on my middle name, Lucas. So the second morning, he said.

02:02:12 Speaker 3

Well, I want you to take two or three men and go out and see if there's any snipers around.

02:02:17 Speaker 3

So I got three men from my platoon and I had a scout in front of me and I had put two men to the right left rear of me and the.

02:02:29 Speaker 3

Lieutenant, who was the?

02:02:31 Speaker 3

Forward arterial server as we're getting ready to move out, he.

02:02:35 Speaker 3

To me.

02:02:37 Speaker 3

I'd like to go along because I want to see combat.

02:02:40 Speaker 3

He wanted to see combat.

02:02:43 Speaker 3

And I said, well, you'll fall into the rear back there. And of course, we're going to go outlook for snipers.

02:02:50 Speaker 3

Well, we've gone maybe about 200 feet and there was a loud roar, a huge roar and I got knocked off my feet. The two men behind me got locked off their feet. The only man standing was the scout in front of me.

02:03:04 Speaker 3

That I heard this loud screaming.

02:03:09 Speaker 3

I was in.

02:03:10 Speaker 3

I didn't know what was happening and I looked around and two men behind me were on the ground and then I looked down the hill and here was this second Lieutenant forward arterial server. Both he and step.

02:03:25 Speaker 3

The Japanese during the night had had poured in the land mine and of course we step on land mine as individual.

02:03:33 Speaker 3

Not enough to activate.

02:03:35 Speaker 3

So what they did, they booby trap the land.

02:03:37 Speaker 3

So the second Lieutenant artillery hit the booby trap. The booby trap set off the.

02:03:42 Speaker 3

Mine blew off both his legs right above the knees, and so I heard his moaning and I said, who is that?

02:03:49 Speaker 3

Going on here and so I looked down the hill and there was his head down the hill.

02:03:54 Speaker 3

And his feet up the hill. And he was holding his right like that.

02:03:58 Speaker 3

So I rushed down to.

02:03:59 Speaker 3

I took my my belt and made a turn 1 ladder.

02:04:03 Speaker 3

I took his belt and made a turn on other leg and I told the Scout in front of Maine he wasn't wounded. Go back immediately.

02:04:10 Speaker 3

Get an aid.

02:04:11 Speaker 3

Get a stretcher to come up and get this Lieutenant and make sure he got back to the aid station immediately.

02:04:19 Speaker 3

And that did they did that, and I learned many years later that he survived.

02:04:25 Speaker 3

And of course, I'm often thought about this, you know.

02:04:29 Speaker 3

I was indirectly responsible for his.

02:04:33 Speaker 3

Having both of his legs blown off because when he asked me can I go along? Connor, Steve comment, I could just said no.

02:04:35

MMM.

02:04:42 Speaker 3

Because I didn't I so following the bar, so I've often thought about that and I feel I feel guilty because I feel that that decision I made.

02:04:55 Speaker 3

Not only that, but when the landmine went off it knocked out me and the two men behind me.

02:05:03 Speaker 3

And so after we while we were building and one of the men said to me, Luke.

02:05:11 Speaker 3

Let me explain.

02:05:12 Speaker 3

Now in combat, we did not use rank.

02:05:15 Speaker 3

Nobody had a rank back in the rear.

02:05:18 Speaker 3

Did.

02:05:19 Speaker 3

Well, it's a company level, you.

02:05:19 Speaker 4

Wise app.

02:05:21 Speaker 3

Everybody had a nickname, for example, Captain Diaz. My company commander was tiger.

02:05:26 Speaker 3

All called him tiger.

02:05:28 Speaker 4

And is this because you did not want the Japanese to not do?

02:05:30 Speaker 3

Yeah, because you see.

02:05:30 Speaker 4

Officers were.

02:05:32 Speaker 3

Japanese, you know.

02:05:34 Speaker 3

Many of them had come to the United States and they had some what's it called? Nieces second born people.

02:05:40 Speaker 3

NI saw she go 05 and the niece he were second born and a lot of those families.

02:05:47 Speaker 3

In in.

02:05:47 Speaker 3

United States, when their sons were growing up, they want to send them back to the Japan, the home country, to learn Japanese and and see their their relatives back there. So it it so happened a lot of those people that went back from America to.

02:06:02 Speaker 3

Japan ended up in the Japanese army and they could.

02:06:05 Speaker 4

Oh English.

02:06:08 Speaker 3

And that's the one reason you know, for example.

02:06:12 Speaker 3

I heard occasion where.

02:06:15 Speaker 3

I think this happened to the Marines the first time. Guatemala first. I read about it was in the night with. Oh, help me. Help me.

02:06:22 Speaker 3

I'm wounded. I'm wounded.

02:06:24 Speaker 3

Well, they thought it was over their own Marines and they went out and it was.

02:06:30 Speaker 3

A nicey Japanese American, but he was a member of the Japanese army and killed the people.

02:06:36 Speaker 3

So that's the reason that, you know, we were worried about that.

02:06:40 Speaker 3

And also rank.

02:06:42 Speaker 3

We didn't have rank, for example, as a first Lieutenant, I had a one on the back of my helmet and on our fatigues. They had the stamp. They stapled stamp.

02:06:54 Speaker 3

Some information that showed you what unit were in base on that. So and the first aid men, I guess in Europe, I understand they were Red Cross under helmets. Well, our first aid people did not wear a.

02:07:07 Speaker 3

A rain cross on their helmets as a matter of fact, they even carried a carbine because the Japanese, we learned, were really their primary targets were officers and medics, officers and medics.

02:07:22 Speaker 3

And I'll tell you later on that I lost my medic.

02:07:25 Speaker 4

What you have some bronze stars from your time in Okinawa.

02:07:31 Speaker 4

Earned you those.

02:07:32 Speaker 3

Well, the the first one was.

02:07:38 Speaker 3

First of all, we did get up.

02:07:39 Speaker 3

Let me just about by being one, just go back there.

02:07:43 Speaker 3

After we got the.

02:07:46 Speaker 3

Arctic Lieutenant and the stretcher in a minute back, the two other men and I. We walked back to the battalion aid station and my back was full of shrapnel. And so they took the shrapnel out and put some bandages on it.

02:08:02 Speaker 3

And I told the battalion surgeon. I said now it was a captain, by the way, he medical officer.

02:08:08 Speaker 3

I said please don't report this because my brother was seriously wounded in Europe and my families are really.

02:08:17 Speaker 3

Grieving about that, and I don't want to increase the way they feel by knowing that their other son got wounded. And he said I'll see what I can do well about a month later, I saw him and he said, well, you know, check the regulations and he said.

02:08:22

Environmentalists.

02:08:34 Speaker 3

Have to report that you're wounded.

02:08:36 Speaker 3

So it's on that basis that I received the Purple Heart.

02:08:40 Speaker 3

But anyway, the other two men were more seriously wounded than I.

02:08:44 Speaker 3

And they were evacuated. And after they patched me up, forced me. I was able to go back and join my unit.

02:08:52 Speaker 4

Lucky they patched you up and sent you back, huh?

02:08:56 Speaker 3

Well, I got.

02:08:57 Speaker 3

See, but that time? Well, I guess we still had about the six officers we landed with.

02:09:05 Speaker 3

Oh well.

02:09:07 Speaker 3

Always we still had five South.

02:09:09 Speaker 4

How many days and all were you in non-stop combat there.

02:09:14 Speaker 3

Oh, I see. non-stop.

02:09:14 Speaker 4

Let me remember.

02:09:19 Speaker 3

Well, let me think, I would say.

02:09:27 Speaker 3

You know, it just gets.

02:09:28 Speaker 3

I'd have to guess because.

02:09:31 Speaker 3

I don't remember dates.

02:09:33 Speaker 4

That's OK.

02:09:34 Speaker 3

I don't remember days I remember events.

02:09:36 Speaker 4

You were at.

02:09:37 Speaker 4

I don't know how long Okinawa, how many days was the Battle of Okinawa? Was a couple of months. What?

02:09:42 Speaker 3

Well, well, actually the landing began on the 1st of April 19.

02:09:47 Speaker 4

And you were there for that.

02:09:48 Speaker 3

No, I was.

02:09:49 Speaker 3

I was OK my division, the 27th was a board troop. Ships were called the folding reserve. We were just off the.

02:09:58 Speaker 3

That two other.

02:10:00 Speaker 3

Other infidels and two marine divisions made the actual landing.

02:10:03 Speaker 3

We came in after that video but.

02:10:04 Speaker 4

The landing.

02:10:08 Speaker 3

We finally, by the way, I just mentioned we.

02:10:12 Speaker 3

To get across that escarpment, if I can just mention that very briefly, the division Commander, General Greiner.

02:10:22 Speaker 3

He recognized that we couldn't.

02:10:26 Speaker 3

Attack across that.

02:10:27 Speaker 3

But there was there was little in that East China Sea to our right.

02:10:32 Speaker 3

And he said if we can get across there and attack at night, which is unusual because it was very unusual for infantry divisions in the Pacific to attack at night and the Japanese knew that.

02:10:47 Speaker 3

That the Americans don't attack in light, but General Gunner had some engineers come up.

02:10:54 Speaker 3

And did that after dark and put pontoon bridges across there.

02:10:58 Speaker 3

And so we at least my regiment, all of the division. But at least my regiment.

02:11:04 Speaker 3

Was able to get across the in that Fortune bridges and gain a ridged.

02:11:12 Speaker 3

Japanese, you know, we're going to be there.

02:11:13 Speaker 3

And so the next morning we had we had seized an occupied a good defensive position and from there on it was just rolling hills up and down woods and so forth.

02:11:26 Speaker 4

So you were there.

02:11:27 Speaker 4

At the end of the battle, at the end of the yeah, you're sorry.

02:11:29 Speaker 3

The end of the oh, you asking how long the battle?

02:11:31 Speaker 3

I'm sorry I got off on a note there, but the landing took place on the 1st of April 1945 with the 10th U.S. Army. As I mentioned, former divisions and two marine divisions.

02:11:38

I know.

02:11:44 Speaker 4

Mm.

02:11:45 Speaker 3

On the 20.

02:11:49 Speaker 3

8th of June.

02:11:53 Speaker 3

The album was declared secured. Now when the army.

02:12:01 Speaker 3

And the Marine Corps declared it an island secured. It didn't mean the fighting was over.

02:12:07 Speaker 3

It just means that we had more control of it.

02:12:10 Speaker 3

So the island was support reporter secured on the 28th.

02:12:16 Speaker 3

Of June. And then there's mop up operations going on.

02:12:23 Speaker 3

And actually.

02:12:25 Speaker 3

It was declared.

02:12:27 Speaker 3

The battle it was declared over on the 2nd of July of 1940.

02:12:32 Speaker 3

However, my outfit was up north and for us it didn't end until the 4th of August of 1949.

02:12:40 Speaker 4

So I was going to ask you how the Japanese strategies changed toward this as the battle evolved where they well.

02:12:48 Speaker 3

Well, the Japanese, the Japanese were absolutely superior and the establishment of defensive positions, and of course they knew that eventually we would attack just like we did the water canal on Iwo Jima.

02:12:50 Speaker 4

Persistent they were.

02:12:53

Persistent.

02:13:04 Speaker 3

Saipan and Guam and all that came before they knew that the way to get to Tokyo and defeat their country was going island hopped from 1:00 to 1:00 to another. So.

02:13:14

Mm.

02:13:18 Speaker 3

They were very good.

02:13:20 Speaker 3

They would dig underground 100 feet, 200 feet.

02:13:25 Speaker 3

So when the arctur would land, didn't bother them whatsoever, didn't bother her.

02:13:29 Speaker 3

And that's the reason it took.

02:13:33 Speaker 3

It took three armored Divas and two marine divisions to get down to the southern tip of.

02:13:41 Speaker 3

Okinawa. And during that time, my outfit, by the way, the 27th Division here.

02:13:50 Speaker 3

In a little over three weeks, we'd lost 3300 men.

02:13:54 Speaker 3

3300 men in three weeks and also on one day my division lost 506 men.

02:14:02 Speaker 3

And that's the heaviest loss division sustained without.

02:14:04 Speaker 4

But the Japanese were losing too.

02:14:06 Speaker 3

All they were looting.

02:14:08 Speaker 3

They were really looting.

02:14:08 Speaker 4

Did you?

02:14:09 Speaker 4

Did you see the Japanese start getting a little crazy or giving up or what?

02:14:15 Speaker 4

What changed the?

02:14:17 Speaker 3

To go on beyond Caucasus Ridge and head South.

02:14:22 Speaker 3

What the several things about the Japanese at really I couldn't understand.

02:14:28 Speaker 3

One from time to time you come face to face with a Japanese soldier.

02:14:32 Speaker 3

And instead of him fighting back, he'd kill himself.

02:14:36 Speaker 3

He'd kill himself and I found out later.

02:14:40 Speaker 3

Their dedication to the Emperor and I see every, every man, every woman in Japan, had pledged their life to the Emperor Hirohito.

02:14:51 Speaker 3

And so they would rather die for the Emperor and be killed by Americans. So.

02:14:56 Speaker 4

So that was.

02:14:57

Let's carry.

02:14:58 Speaker 4

Harry, what did you call it?

02:14:59 Speaker 3

Well.

02:15:02 Speaker 3

Hire carriers.

02:15:03 Speaker 4

How we care, right?

02:15:03 Speaker 3

Is suicide.

02:15:06 Speaker 3

We didn't refer to that as hirakuri, but the.

02:15:10 Speaker 3

The.

02:15:11 Speaker 3

Japanese commander on Okinawa when he saw that he was losing, he had a big feast, you know, and he drank all the sake he could had a few of his staff members with him.

02:15:24 Speaker 3

Hundreds of feet underground, you know.

02:15:26 Speaker 4

Really.

02:15:26 Speaker 3

And he got his last message into Japan, and then he and the his staff that were still alive, they committed Harry carry suicide.

02:15:36

Yeah.

02:15:37 Speaker 4

And that was in June, toward the end of this.

02:15:39 Speaker 3

That was that would have been.

02:15:43 Speaker 3

Uh, about June.

02:15:46 Speaker 3

I'm gonna say June the 26th or 27th.

02:15:49 Speaker 3

Just a few days before.

02:15:53 Speaker 3

By the way, I should mention of all the cavities of General Buckner, the 10th Army commander. He was killed on the 18th of June.

02:16:04 Speaker 3

He was visiting a marine observation post in Japan.

02:16:10 Speaker 3

Putting artillery and killed him and the unusual thing happened, the senior general on Okinawa happened to be.

02:16:19 Speaker 3

A Major General Geiger who was a marine.

02:16:22 Speaker 3

So for the first time in the history, a Marine commanded Aus army until.

02:16:30 Speaker 3

The I guess the US Army didn't like that very much, so they was a.

02:16:37 Speaker 3

A army general.

02:16:40 Speaker 3

Advised Shyam Kashyap in China.

02:16:43

Hmm.

02:16:43 Speaker 3

I think his name was. I'm going to say Stillwell.

02:16:46 Speaker 3

And so General Stillwell eventually came in and took over the army.

02:16:52 Speaker 3

He had the army for the last few days.

02:16:54 Speaker 4

What do you think?

02:16:56 Speaker 4

Turned the tide against the Japanese. What?

02:17:01 Speaker 3

I say.

02:17:05 Speaker 3

The dedication and the determination.

02:17:09 Speaker 3

Of the.

02:17:10 Speaker 3

To survive to win.

02:17:11

I.

02:17:12 Speaker 3

Mean we didn't have any idea of losing.

02:17:14 Speaker 3

The only thing was we are going to win and so that was a big drive behind us.

02:17:17

OK.

02:17:19 Speaker 3

Yeah. OK, well.

02:17:23 Speaker 3

Our battalion was attacking South.

02:17:26 Speaker 3

We've been, we've.

02:17:27 Speaker 3

I don't know how far from Caracas do, but we were going South.

02:17:31 Speaker 3

Making good, good time. And one afternoon the.

02:17:36 Speaker 3

Battalion was ordered to take a Ridge next Ridge in front of us.

02:17:42 Speaker 3

And it was probably from where we were.

02:17:45 Speaker 3

Probably I don't know 8 or 900 feet. And so the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Crocker, decided to attack the three raffle companies abreast.

02:17:55 Speaker 3

Now that meant he didn't have a raffle company for reserve. So.

02:18:00 Speaker 3

My platoon was selected to be the battalion reserve, so the three rifle companies they attacked and out, they'd gone, maybe.

02:18:12 Speaker 3

2 or 300 feet at most when they got pinned down with Japanese mortar fire.

02:18:17 Speaker 3

Fire machine guns and everything they could.

02:18:20 Speaker 3

So the battalion commander said to me, he said, you know, take your oppon.

02:18:26 Speaker 3

ENT and try to find the left.

02:18:28 Speaker 3

Of the Japanese position 'cause, there was a Ridge and he knew that the Ridge would slope off, and so I I took my platoon and after about 200 feet I headed toward the Ridge and we drew fire.

02:18:43 Speaker 3

Japanese and I pull back.

02:18:45 Speaker 3

And who went unlive?

02:18:47 Speaker 3

And I did it again and again. And finally, after about the fourth time, when I approached the Ridge.

02:18:55 Speaker 3

And so I knew we had reached the flank of the Japanese position.

02:18:59 Speaker 3

So I took my opportunity at that time, I think I had about 20 men left and we just.

02:19:04 Speaker 3

Up the Ridge.

02:19:05 Speaker 3

We did surprise the Japanese because they thought everybody was coming.

02:19:09 Speaker 3

The front.

02:19:10 Speaker 3

So we had the advantage initially.

02:19:13 Speaker 3

We.

02:19:16 Speaker 3

We put all the fire.

02:19:17 Speaker 3

Had.

02:19:18 Speaker 3

We could get into them and we got the point where we had to hit the hit the ground and I had all the men, we, we I couldn't call for fire.

02:19:30 Speaker 3

Because I didn't have a map of that area and.

02:19:35 Speaker 3

So I decided it would.

02:19:38 Speaker 3

Have everybody give their rifle grenades to the platoon Sergeant and the platoon Sergeant would be our far and he would fire the rifle grenades out there toward the Japanese and I would advance in a skirmish line.

02:19:53 Speaker 3

Toward the Japanese position.

02:19:54 Speaker 3

And that's what happened.

02:19:56 Speaker 3

And we did surprise the Japanese.

02:20:01 Speaker 3

We will read here in a few minutes what really happened.

02:20:04 Speaker 3

We did surprise the Japanese, but they finally got alert to us and they turned the fire on us.

02:20:11 Speaker 3

But I just like to read here briefly what happened and I know only notice the 20th day of April. Because here's an order from the headquarters.

02:20:21 Speaker 3

7th Division is dated July of 1945 and I'll just.

02:21:33 Speaker 3

But I just like to read here briefly what happened and I know only noticed the 20th day of April. Because here's an order from the headquarters. 27th Division is dated July of.

02:21:48 Speaker 3

1945 and I'll just read from the citation for which I got the bond star for valor.

02:21:55 Speaker 3

On 20 April 1945, Lieutenant Riffy's Battalion was in a deep pocket under constant enemy fire with frontal or flank maneuver so hazardous that the success of that movement was highly doubtful.

02:22:10 Speaker 3

Leading his platoon to the flank through extremely difficult porches under constant fire, he lost in himself against a strong enemy position, consisting of three pill boxes, 2 caves, and 15 Rifleman.

02:22:26 Speaker 3

With spider holes covered all the.

02:22:29 Speaker 3

With absolute disregard for his own safety, he personally supervises structure of each insulation. His attack was so successful that enabled his battalion to organize a far better coordinate night defense than would have been impossible had he not taken the strong point.

02:22:45 Speaker 3

His supporter of courage and never ending failure devotion to duty when in court with the highest standards of service.

02:22:51 Speaker 3

Now I did.

02:22:52 Speaker 3

I was notified in July about the order.

02:22:56 Speaker 3

Actually didn't get the metal.

02:22:58 Speaker 3

19520 But I think maybe it's a beautiful metal and probably sure it's the next thing.

02:23:05 Speaker 3

Yeah. Now they after that, by the way, we talk talk here about.

02:23:12 Speaker 3

These spider.

02:23:12 Speaker 3

The Japanese, as I've mentioned, were good at defense.

02:23:16 Speaker 3

I mean really great.

02:23:18 Speaker 3

They would.

02:23:18 Speaker 3

They dig back in the mountains and then they go straight up for a hole and that's where a Rifleman could be.

02:23:25 Speaker 3

So he'd shoot at you.

02:23:27 Speaker 3

And you return fire.

02:23:28 Speaker 3

Just.

02:23:29 Speaker 3

Back in the hole, well, there was.

02:23:33 Speaker 3

A 15 of those.

02:23:34 Speaker 3

So what we did once we.

02:23:36 Speaker 3

Way clear.

02:23:38 Speaker 3

Clear them all out we took.

02:23:41 Speaker 4

How did you clear out?

02:23:43 Speaker 3

With with far and far and far and far inner and the grenade with my opponents, I've had what we got it cleared for all those holes.

02:23:50 Speaker 4

Firepower.

02:23:52 Speaker 4

OK, OK.

02:23:56 Speaker 3

We just put a grenade down it and just so happened that was a Japanese ammunition truck down there as well.

02:24:03 Speaker 3

So all night long I'm this is the truth. All night long, that Ridge shook with all those ammunition going off.

02:24:12 Speaker 3

Well, the next morning, the company commander said to me there's some brushy areas down to the bottom of the forward slope.

02:24:20 Speaker 3

And he said, I want you to take your platoon down there and see if there's any **** in there.

02:24:24 Speaker 3

Well, we went down there and it was very.

02:24:27 Speaker 3

You only see maybe 5 or 10 feet because brush was about maybe 12 to 15 feet tall and just so in a few moments.

02:24:36 Speaker 3

One of my squad beaters came running to me, holding his crotch, and he said. Luke, I've been hit, I've been hit and I said, can you make it back up to the top of?

02:24:46 Speaker 3

Hill, where the aid man up there and I said I'll join you later.

02:24:52 Speaker 3

And I did get back up to later, but I never saw him again.

02:24:57 Speaker 3

Never saw him again.

02:24:59 Speaker 3

Well, we're still trying to clear the buses out, so I pulled away some brush and that was a Japanese soldier.

02:25:07 Speaker 3

About 8 or 10 feet away. And so this is the first time I'd come face to face that close with a Japanese soldier. Well.

02:25:17 Speaker 3

I survived.

02:25:20 Speaker 3

And it was not the only time during the war in Okinawa that I came face to face with Jeff.

02:25:27 Speaker 4

What happened when you came face to face?

02:25:29 Speaker 3

Well, it's killer be killed.

02:25:31 Speaker 4

Yeah.

02:25:31 Speaker 3

It's killer be killed.

02:25:32 Speaker 4

So did you? You shot it?

02:25:33 Speaker 3

That's that's a.

02:25:34 Speaker 3

That's a simple the whole, the whole thing about fighting at that level is you either kill or you're going to be killed, or you're going to be wounded.

02:25:44 Speaker 3

So and and.

02:25:46 Speaker 3

The day after we secured the Ridge, my division, which had lost 3300 men in three weeks, 506 which were killed on one single day.

02:26:00 Speaker 3

We were relieved by an outfit of the 1st Division in order to the reserve to the rear as a reserve unit.

02:26:09 Speaker 3

However, when we got back to the rear, we found that we ordered to do something else.

02:26:15 Speaker 3

When we left Carcassu Ridge around the middle of April and headed South, we assume that that strategic position would be reoccupied.

02:26:27 Speaker 3

By Femi military units.

02:26:30 Speaker 3

That didn't happen.

02:26:31 Speaker 3

So the Japanese reoccupied carcass.

02:26:36 Speaker 3

So a special task force reform consisting of two battalions, which my battalion of 3rd 106 was part of to retake Carcasson Ridge.

02:26:48 Speaker 3

So we were going to attack from the near the East China Sea.

02:26:51

E.

02:26:53 Speaker 3

Along the top of the Ridge.

02:26:56 Speaker 3

Heading east for the Pacific Ocean.

02:27:00 Speaker 3

When the attack began, the two battalions were deployed side by side and my battalion was on the north side and my company was on the extreme left flank of the attacking force.

02:27:15 Speaker 3

And my platoon was on the extreme left flank and I didn't have anybody on my flank.

02:27:21 Speaker 3

So there we were.

02:27:23 Speaker 3

So when he gets in order to attack I.

02:27:28 Speaker 3

I was on the lower side of the Ridge and I had my plan of attack was that I would take two scouts and the BAR man BAR stands for Browning automatic rifle.

02:27:44 Speaker 3

I would to take two scouts and Abar men, and I would go ahead of the rest of the platoon, which I would leave in the draw with the platoons Sergeant.

02:27:54 Speaker 3

Well, we did this for several times.

02:27:56 Speaker 3

Things were going very well.

02:27:58 Speaker 3

Had no casualties and.

02:28:00 Speaker 3

We certainly had killed a lot of **** because it get easy fire back, but sometime around, maybe the midday, maybe later as we left the draw and top another little hill.

02:28:15 Speaker 3

We came under extreme Japanese fire.

02:28:20 Speaker 3

My lead scout was killed immediately.

02:28:24 Speaker 3

And my BA, our man was struck in the left thigh between.

02:28:29 Speaker 3

Knee and the rib cage line and he was screaming out because he was.

02:28:36 Speaker 3

In terrible pain, obviously.

02:28:37 Speaker 3

So I called over to where the BAR man was to see what was going on.

02:28:42 Speaker 3

I could do.

02:28:44 Speaker 3

And about that time.

02:28:46 Speaker 3

Platoon first aid man arrived.

02:28:49 Speaker 3

Now he had been back in the draw with the rest of the platoon, but I said.

02:28:56 Speaker 3

Pose that the bar man was in such pain and crying out so loud that even though the first aid man was back in the draw, he heard this and he rushed up while I was on my knees with the bar man.

02:28:58

And.

02:29:12 Speaker 3

And the first made aid man came up and he got right down beside me.

02:29:16 Speaker 3

And.

02:29:17 Speaker 3

And we were shoulder to shoulder. And as he reached for his first aid kit to plot dressings on the wounded be our men, we came under fire. And I can hear the bullets going by my head.

02:29:31 Speaker 3

Know how far, but maybe two or three inches.

02:29:34 Speaker 3

But one of those bullets struck the first aid man and killed him instantly.

02:29:40 Speaker 3

Well, I knew that if we got the wounded man out safely.

02:29:46 Speaker 3

And by other scout Pfc. Schultz was not wounded.

02:29:51 Speaker 3

So I told the wounded man that Sheila and I were going to go back to the draw.

02:29:56 Speaker 3

Going to have the platoon Sergeant put smoke.

02:30:00 Speaker 3

Through the rifle rifle grenade smoke on the area and we would come back and take him back to the draw. And the platoon Sergeant would have a medic team and the stretcher waiting for him.

02:30:12 Speaker 3

Well, we went back.

02:30:14 Speaker 3

I asked the platoon Sergeant to get the smoke out of for the 8 men was in that area and just a few minutes the entire area was covered.

02:30:24 Speaker 3

At that time, Schultz and I went back to the wounded man.

02:30:28 Speaker 3

We picked him up and we brought him back down to the draw and the platoon started, had medics and a stretcher waiting for him.

02:30:35 Speaker 3

So.

02:30:39 Speaker 3

I was getting ready to resume the attack. I know we had lost two men and.

02:30:45

And.

02:30:47 Speaker 3

I I was really upset because one of them was killed, shoulder to shoulder with me and and I've often thought about it, and I often wondered, you know, why? Why not me?

02:31:02 Speaker 3

And even to this day, I and I think about that part of the combat.

02:31:08 Speaker 3

I still think of of why not me?

02:31:12 Speaker 3

But anyway, as I was getting ready to resume the attack, even though I was short made man and be our man.

02:31:21 Speaker 3

A runner came up and he said that I was report immediately to the company commander.

02:31:27 Speaker 3

And I did so while I was going back to the see the company commander when I was in the middle of a firefight.

02:31:35 Speaker 3

When I got back there, the company commander said that all the officers in K company, the six of them, they all had been either killed or wounded and the battalion commander wanted me to take over K company.

02:31:50 Speaker 3

And I asked my company commander, who is K company, and he poured around the Ridge.

02:31:56 Speaker 3

So when I got there, I met the first soldier. He told me that about an hour before that there beloved company commander was the one who got killed and was the last officer.

02:32:11 Speaker 3

It was also a very good friend of mine.

02:32:15 Speaker 3

And I asked the first Sergeant of cake.

02:32:16 Speaker 3

I mean, how many men do you have?

02:32:18 Speaker 3

He said about 35.

02:32:21 Speaker 3

One thing about the 27th Division going into Okinawa we were.

02:32:28 Speaker 3

Well below our authorized strength, a rifle company was had an authorized strength of 167.

02:32:35 Speaker 3

When we land on Oak Canal, most rifle companies had about 135, about 135.

02:32:44 Speaker 3

So we, you know, we were supposed to accomplish a lot with fewer men.

02:32:51 Speaker 3

Actually, what I learned later was that the 27th Division during the Battle of Saipan, they had heavy losses.

02:33:00 Speaker 3

Was in June and July.

02:33:02 Speaker 3

Of 44 and they said 27th Division really had never recovered.

02:33:08 Speaker 3

From the Battle of Saipan Pan. Well, I asked the call the battalion S3 S 3 is in charge of planning and operations.

02:33:20 Speaker 3

I called the Battalion S3 and I said.

02:33:23 Speaker 3

Do I'm up here with K coming out and who's on my left?

02:33:29 Speaker 3

I don't see anybody over there and who's on my right.

02:33:31 Speaker 3

Don't see anybody there and the SC3 said.

02:33:35 Speaker 3

On your left is eye company.

02:33:37 Speaker 3

And on your right is an engineer company.

02:33:40 Speaker 3

So I told the first sword to send out a couple of men to left and a couple of men to the right, and I said make sure that one of the two is Economic Commission officer.

02:33:50 Speaker 3

I said have him go out at least 200 feet and see if there's anybody out there.

02:33:57 Speaker 3

Both.

02:34:00 Speaker 3

Two men from the left and from 2:00 right came back and said there's no one on your left flank and he's over on the right flank.

02:34:09 Speaker 3

Well, I call the S3 again.

02:34:11 Speaker 3

Said yo.

02:34:12 Speaker 3

We went out a couple 100 feet and we didn't find anybody on the left lake.

02:34:17 Speaker 3

No one on the right flank.

02:34:19 Speaker 3

And he said, well, you better beat dig it in for the night because you're going to be.

02:34:23 Speaker 3

And I said to him, I said, you know, I said, Sir, we've already been digging in. When I got there, I told the 1st art to have them in digging very deeply.

02:34:34 Speaker 3

Because I assume we'd be spending the night there.

02:34:38 Speaker 3

Well, we had about 35.

02:34:41 Speaker 3

We were all dug in as well as we could and I.

02:34:45 Speaker 3

Didn't know any non comms. I'd seen the first Sergeant before so all my commands and requests and what to do was through the 1st Sergeant.

02:34:57 Speaker 3

But anyway, there were about 35 of us.

02:35:00 Speaker 3

And if the Japanese had attacked during the night would say a couple hundred men, we would probably all have been killed or wounded. Fortunately for us, during the night.

02:35:13 Speaker 3

The Japanese withdrew to the South and that saved us.

02:35:17 Speaker 3

Well, I was commanded. Ate cake on me for only a short time. When the battalion S3 came down with dengue fever, which I believe was caused by mosquito bites, and he was sent back to.

02:35:33 Speaker 3

A rear.

02:35:35 Speaker 3

Combat hospital. And so I was the acting S3.

02:35:42 Speaker 3

And I suppose the reason that I got that acting S re position because I was the only officer in the battalion that was a graduate of the infantry advanced Course at Fort Benning, GA.

02:35:57 Speaker 3

And where you will learn to taught how to be take over as a, as a staff officer of Italian or being assistant Staff officer at the regiment.

02:36:08 Speaker 3

Level.

02:36:10 Speaker 3

When the S3 returned, the battalion commander asked me to stay on as the battalion S2. The S2 is the intelligence officer of the battalion.

02:36:22 Speaker 3

So obviously I accepted the order of the battalion commander and I stated that position until about the middle of July.

02:36:33 Speaker 3

In the middle of July of thereabouts the battalion S3 again became I'll and he was evacuated and I became the permit.

02:36:43 Speaker 3

S3.

02:36:45 Speaker 3

That's the position I held during the remainder of the battle on Oconell.

02:36:49 Speaker 3

E and for the 3 1/2 months, that's a division was stationed in in Japan around the 19th of May or so.

02:37:01 Speaker 3

My division received orders to mop up Northern Oak Canal. This is a 40 mile hilly, rugged, heavily forested part of the 60 mile Long Island.

02:37:11

That's.

02:37:12 Speaker 3

The 6th Marine Division had fought over in April and early May.

02:37:18 Speaker 3

We finally reached the.

02:37:21 Speaker 3

Northern part of the island.

02:37:24 Speaker 3

Around the 4th or 5th of August.

02:37:27 Speaker 3

And the report was that during that mop up that the division had killed about 1000 **** and captured about 500.

02:37:40 Speaker 3

The fact that we kept it 500 jets was a big surprise to me on the 8th of August we removed from northern Okinawa.

02:37:49 Speaker 3

To to our fields that were captured on D-Day.

02:37:55 Speaker 3

In the meantime.

02:37:58 Speaker 3

There were so many cavities on.

02:38:03 Speaker 3

The 18th day of May.

02:38:06 Speaker 3

The 10th Army commander, Lieutenant General Samanar Buck, was was killed.

02:38:14 Speaker 3

On June the 23rd, the island was declared secured.

02:38:19 Speaker 3

Now when island is.

02:38:23 Speaker 3

Is.

02:38:25 Speaker 3

Declared.

02:38:26 Speaker 3

It doesn't mean that the fighting is over.

02:38:29 Speaker 3

It just means that the situation is such that the attacking force has the upper hand or is in charge.

02:38:40 Speaker 3

But on seven days later.

02:38:43 Speaker 3

The mop up operations began and the MOP up operations of course.

02:38:49 Speaker 3

When the Japanese commander surrenders, it doesn't mean all the Japanese troops surrender 'cause they.

02:38:56 Speaker 3

Are placed to fight to the death for the Imperial Hirohito.

02:39:01 Speaker 3

But the on the June 30th of Operation MOP up operation to the South were completed.

02:39:10 Speaker 3

But it wasn't until about the 8th of August.

02:39:14 Speaker 3

Of 1945 that the MOP up operations in the north was completed.

02:39:23 Speaker 3

During my service as the leader of the first platoon.

02:39:28 Speaker 3

Of I company, 106th Infantry regiment. Seven of our brave young Americans gave their lives for our country.

02:39:40 Speaker 3

And 14 were seriously wounded and evacuated.

02:39:44 Speaker 3

They were and always will be a very important part of my life, and I think of them almost every day.

02:39:55 Speaker 3

I one thing to that you know I want to say this or not but.

02:40:00 Speaker 3

On Espirito Santos, they had classes in.

02:40:05 Speaker 3

This reason I remember a few words from Japanese and.

02:40:11 Speaker 3

We were taught, really.

02:40:14 Speaker 3

To not think very highly of the Japanese, because if you hate somebody that was a philosophy. If you hate somebody, you're more likely to want to kill them.

02:40:23 Speaker 3

So I actually I really believe that you know.

02:40:27 Speaker 3

Unit I was with that.

02:40:29 Speaker 3

We hate the Japanese.

02:40:31 Speaker 3

Did you know?

02:40:32 Speaker 4

You just kept you with the combat hits till. Yeah, right.

02:40:35 Speaker 3

I thought even though the.

02:40:39 Speaker 3

Olive was secured in 28th of June.

02:40:42 Speaker 3

Then they had to mop up in the South.

02:40:47 Speaker 3

And the island was.

02:40:51 Speaker 3

Declared.

02:40:52 Speaker 3

Under complete US control on the 2nd of July. But shortly after, even at that time the Marines were fighting up north and they didn't come back down South until about the 8th of May.

02:41:06 Speaker 3

Then right after them, we were sent north.

02:41:12 Speaker 4

What you were involved in some of the cleanup, were you not?

02:41:16 Speaker 3

Well, this wasn't what they called a cleanup.

02:41:20 Speaker 3

My regiment and another regiment was ordered to again clean up the north.

02:41:27 Speaker 3

Just 40 miles and we started that and.

02:41:32 Speaker 4

What does cleanup involved?

02:41:32 Speaker 3

I don't.

02:41:34 Speaker 3

Killing all the jabs. That's right.

02:41:34 Speaker 4

Carrying all of jabs, picking up the bodies and all that.

02:41:37 Speaker 3

Now that's.

02:41:38 Speaker 3

Well, we we do stuff with Japanese bodies where they were with Jim. Fool with him, you know, and Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Now there was one big battle that took place on the clean up is a mountain called Onataka.

02:41:43 Speaker 4

But American?

02:41:46 Speaker 4

Are you dripping here?

02:41:53 Speaker 3

Onataka was 1200 feet tall, and it just so happens that mob it was in the zone of mob Italian and this was sometimes.

02:42:03 Speaker 3

I don't know what I'd say.

02:42:05 Speaker 3

Late may.

02:42:07 Speaker 3

And it was raining.

02:42:09 Speaker 3

I understand that that month that.

02:42:13 Speaker 3

Okinawa got in May of 45, got 16 inches of rain and it was just raining and the hills were straight up and we didn't lose any men killed. We had some wound.

02:42:28 Speaker 3

Ed. Because as we were trying to crawl up the hill, the Japanese were throw grenades down us, they took us.

02:42:36 Speaker 3

About I don't know about 10 days to reach the top of owner talk. It was called the Battle of the Clouds.

02:42:43 Speaker 3

And turned out we had.

02:42:46 Speaker 3

We had killed about 700 Japanese up.

02:42:49 Speaker 3

But we were still on our way north and we didn't get to the northern.

02:42:54 Speaker 3

Of.

02:42:55 Speaker 3

I think it was around the 4th of August.

02:42:57

Hey.

02:42:59 Speaker 3

And at that time, my battalion was on the very tip of Okinawa, and we were the closest ground troops to Japan, 375 miles away.

02:43:11 Speaker 4

Jim I.

02:43:12 Speaker 4

Would you tell me the about the Korean women that you came upon in part of the combat issue experience?

02:43:20 Speaker 3

Yes, this is a dispute between South Korea and Japan that's going on to this very day.

02:43:28 Speaker 3

I learned about it by some articles in the Washington Post written by Anna Fifield.

02:43:35 Speaker 3

I have.

02:43:37 Speaker 3

I have kept those articles.

02:43:39 Speaker 3

Mostly they.

02:43:40 Speaker 3

Not in 2015, but.

02:43:45 Speaker 3

There was a dispute because.

02:43:47 Speaker 3

Of the Japanese initially said, all the women that they they took as sex slaves, really.

02:43:56 Speaker 3

Out to where the Japanese soldiers were said they were prostitutes, and so even though that happened once.

02:44:04 Speaker 3

72 years ago.

02:44:07 Speaker 3

It's not completely solved yet, and here's a Washington Article Washington Post article says Tokyo and Seoul resolved dispute over sex slaves in World War 2.

02:44:20 Speaker 3

This was in December of 2015, so see, they're still talking about it.

02:44:26 Speaker 3

And that there's others here about to have the Japanese are going to give the women who are were these.

02:44:34 Speaker 3

Of uh.

02:44:36 Speaker 3

Women who they call them sex slave. Yours. One dated January the 1st, 2016. That Tokyo is going to provide \$8.3 million.

02:44:48 Speaker 3

To put in fun for the remainder, remainder of 46 S comfort women who are still alive so well.

02:44:56 Speaker 4

Why?

02:44:57 Speaker 3

Uh, there were comfort women from many other.

02:45:02 Speaker 3

They were comfort women, the Japanese one that occupy an out country.

02:45:08 Speaker 3

Take it over.

02:45:08 Speaker 3

They probably take some of their.

02:45:10 Speaker 3

And send them into.

02:45:12 Speaker 3

The places where they're like you have a Barbie. I want you call it.

02:45:17 Speaker 3

They were sex slaves.

02:45:19 Speaker 3

But they they were they.

02:45:22 Speaker 3

Were from China.

02:45:23 Speaker 3

Korea at that top all of Korea 'cause their members to Japan occupied and took over Korea.

02:45:32 Speaker 3

In 19101910. So they've been there a long, long time.

02:45:37 Speaker 3

So the Korean women there are Chinese women 'cause they had.

02:45:44 Speaker 3

By 1938, the Japanese had taken over most of East China.

02:45:48 Speaker 3

So they had them.

02:45:49 Speaker 3

Had the.

02:45:50 Speaker 3

They had Mando China, they had.

02:45:52 Speaker 3

So there are estimates that there were 20,000 of these comfort women, but there's some as high as 100,000.

02:46:01 Speaker 3

Of these women, but it mentioned this article here from the Washington Post at that time.

02:46:07 Speaker 3

This was January the 1st 2016. There was only 46 of them left.

02:46:14 Speaker 4

Now and you encountered some in Okinawa.

02:46:16 Speaker 3

Ah, well, yes. What I read these articles and it's the first time I knew about it, so I thought, I'm going to contact this.

02:46:24 Speaker 3

Reporter for the Washington Post. And I thought she was in Washington, DC.

02:46:26

3.

02:46:28 Speaker 3

So I wrote a letter to her and I told her my personal experience of rescuing 8 comfort women from Korea.

02:46:39 Speaker 3

And so.

02:46:41 Speaker 3

I I wrote to her and turns out that she is the.

02:46:46 Speaker 3

She is the Washington Post reporter for Japan, and she stays in Tokyo so.

02:46:54 Speaker 3

I.

02:46:55 Speaker 3

I wrote her a letter and I told her my spirits and my experience was.

02:47:02 Speaker 3

One afternoon.

02:47:05 Speaker 3

My company commander got in order to send the patrol down to the valley in front of us because we had the Japanese hadn't attacked us for a couple days and the battalion commander wanted to know what was down.

02:47:18 Speaker 3

So he said, don't make it more than 10.

02:47:21 Speaker 3

So the company commander said OK.

02:47:23 Speaker 3

You know.

02:47:25 Speaker 3

Uh, look, you get 10 men and go down there.

02:47:29 Speaker 3

And the surprise came to me when he said now you will have an interpreter, a niece, interpreter.

02:47:35 Speaker 3

Well, the policy was that.

02:47:37 Speaker 3

The interpreter did not go below the battalion level, but anyway.

02:47:44 Speaker 3

A niece interpreter was.

02:47:45 Speaker 3

Me and we went down to the toward the valley and I see.

02:47:51 Speaker 3

Oh, it was clear down there and at the valley floor was Japanese.

02:47:58 Speaker 3

Packed up like.

02:48:01 Speaker 3

Firewood and I don't how many there were, but maybe 50 or 60. But anyway, to avoid, you know, the Roma coming from there, I took the squad around the side of the hill.

02:48:14 Speaker 3

And when I did that, we came upon a big hole in the mountain, and it was big enough at least to put a.

02:48:23 Speaker 3

Jeep or truck in there?

02:48:25 Speaker 3

So I.

02:48:26 Speaker 3

I thought there might be somebody firing out, so I put five men on one side of the hole and I took the interpreter with the rest of them on the other side, and I asked the interpreter. I said call back in there and see if it's anybody there.

02:48:41 Speaker 3

Or if you call back in Japanese so he called back in there.

02:48:45 Speaker 3

And he called two or three times, and then here come.

02:48:49 Speaker 3

Some women coming out with long robes on and they looked like they were starving to death.

02:48:57 Speaker 3

Were.

02:48:58 Speaker 3

They were filthy.

02:48:59 Speaker 3

They looked like the world was about to end for them and so.

02:49:04 Speaker 3

I asked him to talk to them and see if there's any Japanese soldiers back there.

02:49:10 Speaker 3

So he was talking to the men in Japanese and he turned to me and I said, what's wrong?

02:49:16 Speaker 3

Said they don't speak Japanese.

02:49:19 Speaker 3

Korea. They are from Korea and they identify themselves, of course, as being from Korea.

02:49:26 Speaker 3

So I.

02:49:27 Speaker 3

Ask the one of them if there's anybody left back in that hole and they said yes, there's a Japanese major back there and that's well, have one go back and and get the Japanese major.

02:49:39 Speaker 3

I won't give him 2 minutes.

02:49:41 Speaker 3

Or less.

02:49:43 Speaker 3

And I had some explosive conversation to.

02:49:46 Speaker 3

I said we're going to blow this place up and so when the.

02:49:51 Speaker 3

Korean woman came back. They.

02:49:54 Speaker 3

They were young, by the way. I'd.

02:49:55 Speaker 3

You know 1819 or something like that. They bought back the Japanese major and so I asked the buy niece, the interpreter to.

02:49:58

Hmm.

02:50:06 Speaker 3

Interrogate this Japanese major to see if information and he was talking to him and all of a sudden they interpreter had a car being on his shoulder, he pulled it off and held it back to hit the Japanese major.

02:50:19 Speaker 3

I started, I said no.

02:50:21 Speaker 3

We don't.

02:50:21 Speaker 3

Murders don't treat prisoners that way.

02:50:24 Speaker 3

And I said, what's the problem?

02:50:26 Speaker 3

He said with Japanese major called me.

02:50:28 Speaker 3

Traitor called me a traitor.

02:50:31 Speaker 3

So anyway, I had a little 536 radio with me and I called back to the company commander and I told him what was going on.

02:50:38 Speaker 3

Had these eight Korean women down here.

02:50:41 Speaker 3

And I said I got to do something. But he said, well, just bring them on back to the company area and when you get here, I'll have a security detail come up from the battalion.

02:50:53 Speaker 3

Take a.

02:50:53 Speaker 3

Over. So we took them back and the nice the interpreter said to me, you can be sure that I'm going to get that Japanese major back there. He was angry with him so.

02:51:07 Speaker 3

That's the first time I'd heard had anything about comfort women, and then I didn't.

02:51:14 Speaker 3

About it.

02:51:15 Speaker 3

Well, anyway I did write.

02:51:17 Speaker 3

I wrote her a letter and she.

02:51:19 Speaker 4

Did you take the comfort women somewhere or you get?

02:51:21 Speaker 3

Well, I took her.

02:51:22 Speaker 3

I took her back to the company area.

02:51:26 Speaker 3

Where the the head company headquarters.

02:51:27 Speaker 4

You released them. Are you rescued him?

02:51:28 Speaker 3

Well, I got back there and there was a detail from the battalion and then the company commander turned him over to the battalion. They went back to the battalion. But I I wrote to.

02:51:38 Speaker 4

OK, OK.

02:51:42 Speaker 3

To Anna Farfield and sent her a description of what I just told you.

02:51:47 Speaker 3

And she said, dear Colonel Ruthie, thank you very much for your letter, which I just collected from a mailbox at these.

02:51:56 Speaker 3

FCC this week.

02:51:58 Speaker 3

And she said.

02:52:01 Speaker 3

The story was very informative to me and very helpful.

02:52:06 Speaker 3

As a way how to approach the report of the sensitive subject so she knew how to report it.

02:52:12 Speaker 3

Well, anyway, so that my experience except.

02:52:14 Speaker 4

So basically, Japan has been denying that they did this and all these years, yeah.

02:52:18 Speaker 3

They denied the years and then these articles here. If you read freedom and cheerfully, she's been writing about it and she's these articles that I have from the Washington Post are from 2015.

02:52:24 Speaker 4

She's been writing about.

02:52:32 Speaker 3

Last one is.

02:52:34 Speaker 3

Dated 2016.

02:52:35 Speaker 3

I haven't had any contact with her since that time.

02:52:40 Speaker 4

OK, Jim, as a veteran of the Pacific War, one thing I wanted to talk with you about is.

02:52:47 Speaker 4

The remaining controversy, even to this day about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and I wanted to get your opinion about your perspective as a veteran about.

02:52:57 Speaker 3

That well, of course you know.

02:53:01 Speaker 3

The bombing of Japan began in 1944 from bases in.

02:53:07 Speaker 3

The islands here. Well, one was called Kenyan and Saipan and Guam.

02:53:14 Speaker 3

And they would call it Marianna Islands and they had B 2029 S There, and the B 29 S flyed to Japan with 1500 Ocean Miles, 1500 ocean miles.

02:53:27 Speaker 3

But they did, and they bombed Japan and bombed Japan and bombed Japan.

02:53:31 Speaker 3

And of course they killed.

02:53:34 Speaker 3

How many?

02:53:35 Speaker 3

But they killed a lot of civilians as well and so.

02:53:40 Speaker 3

It was decided earlier that the all the way for the Japanese to surrender.

02:53:44 Speaker 3

Was a ground attack.

02:53:46 Speaker 3

But then the President Truman got worried about the atomic bomb.

02:53:52 Speaker 3

And so.

02:53:54 Speaker 3

They briefed him on the atomic bomb.

02:53:56 Speaker 3

They also briefed him on the plans for the invasion of Japan itself, which was going to be starting in November of 1945, with a total of 14 army and marine divisions that way.

02:54:09 Speaker 3

Then that was to be followed up in the spring of 46 with 21 divisions in the Tokyo area.

02:54:16 Speaker 3

And so President Truman said, how about casualties?

02:54:21 Speaker 3

Well, General McArthur, who was going to be the commander of all of?

02:54:24 Speaker 3

And he had made the plans for it and their best estimate was that before we completely got Japan to surrender, be the end of 1946.

02:54:36 Speaker 3

And by that time.

02:54:38 Speaker 3

We, we Americans, would lose, would have lost 1,000,000 people.

02:54:43 Speaker 3

But also the estimate was that the Japanese would have lost.

02:54:47 Speaker 3

10 million people.

02:54:49 Speaker 3

Now, so and the gravy. So going back to.

02:54:49 Speaker 4

In a ground war.

02:54:54 Speaker 3

Hiroshima, Nagasaki.

02:54:56 Speaker 3

When President Truman was briefed on that and he also was briefed on the terrific losses that we suffered at Okinawa, he said.

02:55:04 Speaker 3

Enough to drop the atomic bomb.

02:55:07 Speaker 3

So they decided Hiroshima would be the first one. And you probably know it was.

02:55:13 Speaker 3

A plane was called the Enola Gay, which is at the Smithsonian War Space Museum, out near Dulles Airport, which I saw a few months ago.

02:55:16 Speaker 4

It's right.

02:55:21 Speaker 3

And.

02:55:23 Speaker 3

It was commanded by Colonel Tibbetts.

02:55:24 Speaker 3

So it was decided to drop a bomb basically on Hiroshima on the 6th of August of 1945. And so we did.

02:55:36 Speaker 3

We did drop that bomb and the Esplanade of how many were killed were.

02:55:41 Speaker 3

Different Japanese had one figure the Americans had another figure.

02:55:45 Speaker 3

I later, many years later, matter of fact. Two years ago I got the exact figure from the Japanese embassy.

02:55:51 Speaker 3

Well, that atomic bomb didn't didn't make Japan surrender.

02:55:57 Speaker 3

But when they dropped the second one on Nagasaki on three days later, on the 9th day of August.

02:56:05 Speaker 3

The numbers killed wasn't as large, but it was still around 200,000.

02:56:12 Speaker 3

And so here he told you about that. The Japanese imperial staff did not want to.

02:56:19 Speaker 3

They want to keep fighting, but he said no. You know if we can? He said that the enemy has employed a weapon which we have never seen before.

02:56:29 Speaker 3

And he said if we continue to fight, we'll be eliminated from the face of Earth.

02:56:32 Speaker 4

And line up on.

02:56:34 Speaker 3

No longer exist, he.

02:56:35 Speaker 3

We're going to surrender so that word got to the Americans on the 14th of August that Japan would surrender.

02:56:45 Speaker 4

So you were still in Okinawa at that point?

02:56:46 Speaker 3

At that time, yeah, Japanese would surrender.

02:56:50 Speaker 3

And.

02:56:52 Speaker 3

So then the audio was of course, if you look at the total.

02:56:57 Speaker 3

On Hiroshima and Nagasaki, about the Japanese, the total on both was about 400,000 killed. OK, then you look, if we had to invade Japan in November of 45.

02:57:14 Speaker 3

And early spring of 46, the Japanese would have lost 10 million.

02:57:17 Speaker 3

So even within the last year, I have seen articles.

02:57:22 Speaker 3

In the paper.

02:57:23 Speaker 3

That the bombing of Hiroshima in Japan saved American lives and it saved Japanese lives as a matter of fact, after it was over with President Truman was asked Sir, why did you agree to drop the atomic bomb?

02:57:39 Speaker 3

On Hiroshima, Nagasaki and he's head from fame to save young American lives.

02:57:44 Speaker 3

So I understand when the Enola Gay was being brought in to be at the.

02:57:53 Speaker 3

Museum out its near Dulles that there were. There were some.

02:57:59 Speaker 3

Demonstrations. The thing is, those people didn't know what would happen.

02:58:04 Speaker 4

Right.

02:58:05 Speaker 3

If we didn't drop the atomic bombs. So you look at it that way, as many people do.

02:58:07

Right.

02:58:11 Speaker 3

Obviously it was.

02:58:12 Speaker 3

A terrible thing to happen, but there's no question that most people might save lives.

02:58:18 Speaker 3

Saved American.

02:58:19 Speaker 3

Maybe a million and save 10 million Japanese, but most people just look at the Enola Gay.

02:58:27 Speaker 3

And the other plane that dropped on Nagasaki as as a, as a cruel.

02:58:34 Speaker 3

Action. Inhumane action.

02:58:35 Speaker 4

Exactly. OK, once that happened.

02:58:38 Speaker 4

And they did surrender.

02:58:40 Speaker 4

Did you go?

02:58:40 Speaker 4

Were you?

02:58:41 Speaker 3

Well, I was on Okinawa and.

02:58:45 Speaker 3

The Japanese.

02:58:48 Speaker 3

They informed the Americans of the surrender on the 14th of August.

02:58:54 Speaker 3

The next day, on the 15th of August, emperor, he told.

02:58:59 Speaker 3

He went on the radio and for the first time they heard his voice and he told them that Japan had to surrender.

02:59:06 Speaker 3

OK, now you know the formal surrender didn't take place until September the 2nd, and the reason for that is the details had to be worked out.

02:59:11 Speaker 4

Mm.

02:59:15 Speaker 3

So what happens is Joe McArthur has about 10 or 15 members of the Imperial staff.

02:59:22 Speaker 3

And the Japanese government.

02:59:23 Speaker 3

Fly down to Manila and they spent quite a while down there working out the details. Executive surrender. What would happen?

02:59:31 Speaker 3

Know that it would be unconditional surrender.

02:59:34 Speaker 3

The Emperor would act as a figurehead, but he would no longer have authority.

02:59:40 Speaker 3

The.

02:59:42 Speaker 3

Democratic type of government would be established there.

02:59:45 Speaker 3

The rule by the military would have to go in that there would be.

02:59:51 Speaker 3

Allied forces occupying entire entire country, all the four main islands. You know that so.

02:59:58 Speaker 4

And all these decades later were allies, I guess.

03:00:02 Speaker 3

You know the soul is, I think, on the I'm going to say the 8th of August of 1945, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan.

03:00:13 Speaker 3

Mm.

03:00:13 Speaker 3

But after.

03:00:14 Speaker 3

But after Hiroshima? And so when the Japanese surrendered Soleaves, they recommended that Japan be occupied by the Soviet Union and the other Allied forces.

03:00:31 Speaker 3

You know, but MacArthur said no. If you want to have a liaison officer here at my headquarters in Tokyo.

03:00:40 Speaker 3

But the jet, the Soviet Union?

03:00:42 Speaker 3

Soviet army and units are not going to be in Japan.

03:00:46 Speaker 3

And they were not in Japan.

03:00:50 Speaker 4

So what?

03:00:51 Speaker 4

What did you?

03:00:52 Speaker 4

What happened then? Pacific still?

03:00:53 Speaker 4

Long were.

03:00:53 Speaker 3

In the well on the 5th day of.

03:00:58 Speaker 3

The formal surrender took place and both that Battleship Missouri, which was from where President Truman was from Missouri on Tokyo Bay on the second day of.

03:01:07

Mm.

03:01:09 Speaker 3

September of 1945 and so on the 5th of September, my unit was.

03:01:16 Speaker 3

From Okinawa to the airfield in Japan.

03:01:25 Speaker 3

And our mission was called the demilitarization of Japan, which meant we were supposed to go around and collect all their weapons and swords and anything they could use to fight with.

03:01:35 Speaker 3

But we.

03:01:35 Speaker 3

We weren't the only invasion, of course there was about.

03:01:38 Speaker 3

I know the 11th hour Born Division was there and I think there were a couple other army divisions because.

03:01:45 Speaker 3

You know, we had.

03:01:48 Speaker 3

Get out the whole country and make sure that we collected all their weapons. And so my unit was first we went to Zama, which the Military Academy. And we thought if the Japanese are going to fight, they would fight at Zama.

03:02:01 Speaker 3

But we marched from the airfield, which was that suit called at Suki.

03:02:06 Speaker 3

About 20 miles up the Zama, we thought if a Japanese going to fight, it'll be at the Japanese Military Academy.

03:02:14 Speaker 3

And we.

03:02:15 Speaker 3

We go through these villages, they.

03:02:17 Speaker 3

People with fleas.

03:02:19 Speaker 3

And we wondered why we found out later, of course. But we got to the Zama and there's one Japanese major there.

03:02:27 Speaker 3

And so we stayed.

03:02:28 Speaker 3

Just a few days, but long enough for us to take a trip into Tokyo and to Tokyo to buy Jeep.

03:02:37 Speaker 3

What was going on there that was great.

03:02:40 Speaker 3

Then we were ordered to a place called San Jo. San Joe was on the northwest coast of of Japan, and the main island of Honshu, and so we got there.

03:02:51 Speaker 3

I was the S3, the plans and Operations Officer.

03:02:55 Speaker 3

It was my job to to develop plans.

03:02:58 Speaker 3

They going to collect these weapons?

03:03:00 Speaker 3

We did have a.

03:03:03 Speaker 3

American spoke Japanese assigned to me, and I go to the towns, to the chief of police.

03:03:10 Speaker 3

That was a.

03:03:11 Speaker 3

That was a big.

03:03:12 Speaker 3

Thought you didn't go to.

03:03:14 Speaker 3

We go and we'd say to him, we want you to collect all the weapons in your area and bring them, right?

03:03:21 Speaker 3

And we back in three days to get them. And you know, every time we do that, they do it, they do it and we correct 100,000.

03:03:29 Speaker 3

Of them, we were in SAMA probably 3 weeks and we got orders to go to.

03:03:39 Speaker 3

A Japanese Army base.

03:03:42 Speaker 3

Uh, but several miles up the up the road, the on the railroad and.

03:03:50 Speaker 3

When we got on a train to go to the next location.

03:03:57 Speaker 3

All these young Japanese girls around are crying and in three weeks the American soldiers had made contact with the Japanese girls. I said what's going on here?

03:04:08 Speaker 3

And and so they girls are crying so.

03:04:13 Speaker 3

We moved to the next base and we continue to connect those weapons.

03:04:17 Speaker 3

On the in December, the twenty. Oh yeah, I did. Matter of fact ones right there.

03:04:20 Speaker 4

He brought home a couple of them, didn't you?

03:04:24

I.

03:04:26 Speaker 3

And in early December, my division, the 27th, was ordered to return to the.

03:04:31 Speaker 3

And you had to have points to go and I didn't have enough points. So they transferred me to the Tokyo Military Police.

03:04:40 Speaker 3

And I was a son, as the escort officer for the Tokyo Military Police. And that's a long, long story.

03:04:47 Speaker 3

The only thing I'll mention to you is I had an opportunity to have dinner with General Marshall.

03:04:54 Speaker 3

On his visit to.

03:04:57 Speaker 3

Seema general.

03:04:58 Speaker 3

And he was on his way to to China to talk with Shaheen Kashyap because, you see, that was in 46, the big war between the Chinese nation and the Communist and and General Marshall was in. He may have been Secretary of State. I'm not sure at that.

03:05:14 Speaker 4

It's wise.

03:05:15 Speaker 3

But very that was a.

03:05:18 Speaker 3

A really memorable thing that came out of that.

03:05:21 Speaker 4

There's so many stories that you could tell.

03:05:24 Speaker 4

So.

03:05:25 Speaker 4

Your memory is.

03:05:27 Speaker 4

I but I've when I visited with you, I've heard some really good comments from you.

03:05:34 Speaker 4

About what's known as the greatest generation.

03:05:37 Speaker 3

Yes, yes.

03:05:38 Speaker 3

Tell.

03:05:38 Speaker 4

Me. What your feelings are about that.

03:05:41 Speaker 3

I guess Tom Brady wrote a book called The Greatest Generation.

03:05:43 Speaker 4

Rockaway.

03:05:46 Speaker 3

And I heard about that, of course.

03:05:49 Speaker 3

So people like myself, who served in uniform in World War 2, and by the way, there are 16,000,000 Americans that served in uniform in World War 2.

03:05:59

Good morning.

03:06:01 Speaker 3

And so based upon that, we are referred to as the greatest generation.

03:06:07 Speaker 3

Well, you know, you look at the home.

03:06:09 Speaker 3

We had millions and millions and millions of Americans on a home front, and they were turning out thousands of planes, thousands of ships and guns and ammunition and rations and.

03:06:23 Speaker 3

Tents and everything that was needed for an army to succeed.

03:06:27 Speaker 3

So the home front was there. So my view is that you take the those in uniform.

03:06:37 Speaker 3

They were a great generation and those on the home front were our great generation.

03:06:43 Speaker 3

So when I look back at World 2, I don't just say that the World War 2 veterans, the greatest generation, I say that during World War Two Americans were the greatest generation.

03:06:59 Speaker 4

Gave credit to the home.

03:06:59 Speaker 3

Americans were the greatest generation.

03:07:00 Speaker 4

Yeah, even if you weren't in combat.

03:07:03 Speaker 3

With without see, without the home front we could not have won the war.

03:07:10 Speaker 3

We could have not won the war in the Pacific.

03:07:13 Speaker 3

We could not have won the war in Europe, which of course we were providing.

03:07:18 Speaker 3

The supplies and equipment.

03:07:20 Speaker 3

Airplanes to the Soviet unions. To the French.

03:07:23 Speaker 3

And so that was all on the home front. And by the way, the World War 2 memor.

03:07:30 Speaker 3

When Congress approved the World War 2 memorial, it was understood and funded that it would be to recognize all the individuals, military and civilian, who helped win the war in World War 2.

03:07:46 Speaker 3

So the World War 2 Memorial is a memorial to all Americans.

03:07:52 Speaker 3

Unfortunately, today, many individuals think of World War 2 memorial as a memorial.

03:07:59 Speaker 3

The military, which is not true.

03:08:02 Speaker 3

If you look at the the legislation on that is specifically said is to honor all Americans who can.

03:08:10 Speaker 3

To winning World War 2.

03:08:13 Speaker 4

What?

03:08:14 Speaker 4

You. What message do you want future generations to know about what to and the country and the condition of the country and and that period of time?

03:08:18

So that.

03:08:25 Speaker 3

Well, I would say.

03:08:28 Speaker 3

To everything that's possible.

03:08:32 Speaker 3

To avoid war.

03:08:36 Speaker 3

There are no winners in the.

03:08:38 Speaker 3

There are no winners in war, only losers.

03:08:41 Speaker 3

And so I know that right now.

03:08:45 Speaker 3

I believe, and I think many people do, that Russia is.

03:08:51 Speaker 3

Our closest enemy today, and then I would go further and saying that our #2 enemy is probably China, but the most important one is.

03:09:03 Speaker 3

Russia is Russia, and of course I think what's going on in Syria.

03:09:07 Speaker 3

Particularly where the Russians are and where we are and.

03:09:13 Speaker 3

Now the news I saw last night on television was that.

03:09:19 Speaker 3

President Trump thinks the Syrians are preparing for another chemical attack, and he has said that, you know, they'll pay the price. And so there, you know, the Russians are there.

03:09:33 Speaker 3

They got troops there, but they got ships in the port. They've got lots of airplanes and.

03:09:39 Speaker 3

They have said, you know, if you cross a certain.

03:09:42 Speaker 3

Down South, it's a very.

03:09:45 Speaker 3

You know, something got to be done to stop that.

03:09:48 Speaker 4

What about the American culture as opposed to how it was in that period of time?

03:09:53 Speaker 3

Well, of course you see World War 2.

03:09:58 Speaker 3

Had its beginning.

03:10:01 Speaker 3

And it ended by the way, the depression, the Depression was going.

03:10:05 Speaker 3

The started 1929, when the stock market crashed in October 1929.

03:10:11 Speaker 3

And it really got going in saying mid 30s. When I go out of school and join the Civilian Conservation Corps.

03:10:18 Speaker 3

And it went on and on and.

03:10:21 Speaker 3

South World War 2 broke the depression and of course we came out as the winners.

03:10:28 Speaker 3

But do you think of the?

03:10:31 Speaker 3

For example, 406,000 Americans lost their life in World War 214 thousand and even today.

03:10:40 Speaker 3

This very day.

03:10:41 Speaker 3

From World War 2, there's over 70,000 Americans missing.

03:10:47 Speaker 3

We know what happened to.

03:10:49 Speaker 3

Of course it could gone down with ships or whatever, and the same thing if you if you look at Vietnam, how many are still missing in Vietnam?

03:10:57 Speaker 3

Many missing in Korea.

03:10:58 Speaker 4

Come on.

03:11:00 Speaker 4

But didn't you?

03:11:03 Speaker 3

To avoid war, to avoid war.

03:11:06 Speaker 4

But didn't you tell me one time you felt like the American public was unified in ways that it?

03:11:07

It's.

03:11:11 Speaker 3

Well, from my own lifetime.

03:11:16 Speaker 3

And even going back in history to the Revolutionary War.

03:11:20 Speaker 3

I believe that the only time that we ever fully United was during World War 2.

03:11:28 Speaker 3

Were not united fully in the revolutionary?

03:11:30 Speaker 3

Some people still had religions to Great Britain or England.

03:11:35 Speaker 3

The next war was the War of 1812.

03:11:37 Speaker 3

People opposed that one, you know.

03:11:40 Speaker 3

Burned down a capital White House.

03:11:43 Speaker 3

And go. If you go from that of civil war, of course. You know, civil war.

03:11:47 Speaker 3

And the American Civil War was about 650,000.

03:11:51 Speaker 3

The most we ever lost.

03:11:53 Speaker 3

And you go from the Civil War to Spanish American war in 1898, when we took over Cuba, we took over Philippines.

03:11:59

Thank you.

03:12:00 Speaker 3

Know we weren't united then.

03:12:02 Speaker 3

And then so the Philippines followed World War One and and, you know, we weren't fully united then because a lot of people were against the World War One. But in World War 2, I saw.

03:12:11

Right.

03:12:16 Speaker 3

In my perception that America was united.

03:12:19

And.

03:12:20 Speaker 4

We just thank you so much for sharing with us.

03:12:22 Speaker 3

Well, I appreciate the opportunity because it's the first time I've ever had the opportunity, or at least I've taken advantage of the opportunities right to talk about my experiences on the on Okinawa, right?

03:12:30 Speaker 4

That's.

03:12:35 Speaker 4

Thank you so much.

03:12:37 Speaker 3

Thank all of you appreciate it very much.