

## **John Schaefer Interview**

780th Ordnance Battalion

*(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Jesse M. Diaz)*

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

00:00:06 Speaker 1

Today is the 28th day of December, the year 2005.

00:00:12 Speaker 1

And we are interviewing Mr. John Schaefer at the offices of the retired and senior volunteer program in Sacramento County, 3727 Marconi Ave. Sacramento, CA.

00:00:28 Speaker 1

Mr. Schaefer was.

00:00:31 Speaker 1

On the 5th day.

00:00:34 Speaker 1

Of March 1925 in Los Angeles, CA, which makes him 80 years old.

00:00:42 Speaker 1

My name is Jesse Diaz and I'm a an RSVP volunteer, and I'll be doing the interview and operating the camera.

00:00:52 Speaker 1

Also with this today is Mr. Schaefer's son, also John Safer John Safer Junior, who is a 25 year Navy veteran and submarines and was right E9.

00:01:08 Speaker 1

Is now retired from the Navy.

00:01:12 Speaker 1

Mr. Schaefer, can you tell us what branch of the service you served in?

00:01:17 Speaker 2

Oh, the United States army.

00:01:20 Speaker 1

And when did you enter the service?

00:01:22 Speaker 2

I entered the army on on April the 9th, 1943.

00:01:28 Speaker 1

So you.

00:01:28 Speaker 2

There's about 35 days after my 18th birthday.

00:01:31 Speaker 1

Uh.

00:01:32 Speaker 1

You you were actually in before the war. Two years.

00:01:35 Speaker 2

Two years after, yeah.

00:01:35 Speaker 1

The war.

00:01:37 Speaker 1

So you were, what about 16?

00:01:39 Speaker 1

When the when the.

00:01:40 Speaker 1

Pearl Harbor took place there 15.

00:01:41 Speaker 2

Yeah, I was.

00:01:42 Speaker 2

I know 16.

00:01:43 Speaker 2

Pearl Harbor took place, you know.

00:01:45 Speaker 1

What were your thoughts about that?

00:01:47 Speaker 2

My thoughts about Pearl Harbor well.

00:01:52 Speaker 2

I.

00:01:53 Speaker 2

My mother wouldn't let me sign up if you wouldn't sign me up.

00:01:56 Speaker 1

Wanted to go.

00:01:57 Speaker 2

I finished high.

00:01:59 Speaker 2

I was a midterm High School graduate, graduated from Hoover High in Glendale in January of 1943.

00:02:08 Speaker 2

My birthday was in March and I immediately signed up.

00:02:13 Speaker 1

Were your parents OK with that?

00:02:14 Speaker 2

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:02:16 Speaker 2

But as long as I finished high school.

00:02:19 Speaker 1

So. So you enlisted then in Los Angeles?

00:02:22 Speaker 2

Yeah, I was.

00:02:23 Speaker 2

They enlistments had been have been slowed down and I asked the.

00:02:29 Speaker 2

Draft me and they did.

00:02:32 Speaker 1

I see was was that. Is that like a volunteer draft or?

00:02:38 Speaker 2

Umm, no, I all I remember about it was going to the I mean like there were no enlistments per say.

00:02:46 Speaker 2

They were still drafting people and I can't remember what my number was, but I went to the draft board in Burbank where?

00:02:55 Speaker 2

I was registered and and asked him to draft me, which they did.

00:03:01 Speaker 1

And was there any particular reason that you chose the army?

00:03:07 Speaker 2

Yeah, I'm partly colour blind and the Navy wouldn't take me.

00:03:11 Speaker 1

Oh.

00:03:14 Speaker 2

So.

00:03:16 Speaker 2

So I joined the army.

00:03:18 Speaker 1

So you.

00:03:18 Speaker 1

Through for the duration during the World War 2.

00:03:20 Speaker 2

I was released from active duty in December the 9th, 1945, at Fort MacArthur.

00:03:29 Speaker 2

Sit down around San Pedro.

00:03:33 Speaker 1

And what was your rank and?

00:03:35 Speaker 2

That was at 4, which is. I mean when I finished, which was like a Buck Sergeant 3, striper.

00:03:40 Speaker 1

Mm.

00:03:41 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:03:43 Speaker 1

For your first days in the army like.

00:03:45 Speaker 1

Did.

00:03:45 Speaker 1

Where did you go for basic training?

00:03:49 Speaker 2

They went go back a little.

00:03:52 Speaker 2

I went to the Arlington Reception Center, which was by Riverside.

00:03:56 Speaker 2

Now where we took all kinds of tests and all this stuff and I've scored quite high in my mechanical aptitude examinations and they they classified me a mechanic as a matter of fact they told me I could go anywhere I wanted to in the army and I wanted.

00:04:13 Speaker 2

Work on airplanes, but.

00:04:15 Speaker 2

I woke up one morning after about four days on the train at Fort.

00:04:17

OK.

00:04:20 Speaker 2

OK, looking to see if tanks.

00:04:25 Speaker 2

Which are a little different than airplanes.

00:04:27 Speaker 1

Yeah, they're a little hard to get up near.

00:04:29 Speaker 2

Yeah, they don't fly very well.

00:04:33 Speaker 1

So did you take your basic training there?

00:04:35 Speaker 2

Took my basic training at Fort Knox, KY.

00:04:39 Speaker 1

And was there?

00:04:39 Speaker 1

Was there such thing as advanced training at that time or?

00:04:42 Speaker 2

No, no. The the training I received on working on tanks came from the older people that were in the in the 528 heavy maintenance.

00:04:53 Speaker 2

Tank company that I was in are assigned to.

00:04:58 Speaker 2

And being the buck private and.

00:05:01 Speaker 2

There were about 30 of us from the LA area.

00:05:04 Speaker 2

There wasn't much of A possibility of getting anything above Pfc in that company.

00:05:11 Speaker 1

So what did? After your basic training?

00:05:14 Speaker 1

Did you go from there?

00:05:17 Speaker 2

I stayed with a 528 heavy maintenance tank company we went to.

00:05:22 Speaker 2

To to Umm Pine Camp, New York, which is now camp. Drum.

00:05:27 Speaker 2

Up on the South Shore of Lake Ontario.

00:05:30 Speaker 2

We had all kinds of gunnery training and.

00:05:34 Speaker 2

You know marksmanship and that sort of thing, so.

00:05:38

So.

00:05:40 Speaker 2

We were there to probably sometime around August, September, maybe things were a little foggy and we moved from there to Camp Shanks, which is the Poe.

00:05:54 Speaker 2

In New York State, right next to the Hudson River.

00:05:58 Speaker 1

Now when you say POS part of embarkation, so you were getting ready to ship off.

00:06:02 Speaker 2

Mm.

00:06:03 Speaker 2

You integrated overseas.

00:06:06 Speaker 2

We went overseas.

00:06:07 Speaker 2

We went to England.

00:06:10 Speaker 2

I would say.

00:06:14 Speaker 2

October the end of October 1st, November 1943.

00:06:18 Speaker 2

And worked on tanks.

00:06:23 Speaker 1

What was your? What was your specific job mccaus mechanic?

00:06:26 Speaker 2

Young with a mechanic, you know.

00:06:28 Speaker 1

And you were you were signing.

00:06:29 Speaker 2

My Mou is a engine mechanic track vehicle.

00:06:35 Speaker 1

And I know that you that you were all over Europe during the war.

00:06:41 Speaker 1

Did you actually get into combat yourself?

00:06:44 Speaker 2

No, no. I was a service troop. The company I was in with.

00:06:49 Speaker 2

Well, we have to go back a little bit.

00:06:51 Speaker 2

Injured myself working on tanks.

00:06:54 Speaker 2

We worked in a big shop at Tidworth in England, which is close to Salisbury in the southern part of England.

00:07:03 Speaker 2

And we were modifying M4 and M5 and M4A ones and a threes.

00:07:10 Speaker 2

With additional armor plate on the outside of the tanks and on the inside around the ammo racks, they were having a problem with them when they were hit. The stuff inside would blow up and kill everybody.

00:07:22 Speaker 2

So these pieces of armor were quite heavy.

00:07:26 Speaker 2

304 hundred.



00:07:28 Speaker 2

It took 4-5 of us to lift these things up on the side of.

00:07:31 Speaker 2

And then hang on to it while somebody attack welded it.

00:07:37 Speaker 2

Then we could release it, but I ruptured 2 discs in my lower back and went to the hospital and they operated on them.

00:07:45 Speaker 2

Got out of the hospital about.

00:07:48 Speaker 1

June.

00:07:49 Speaker 2

And in during June sometime.

00:07:53 Speaker 2

44 the invasion had already taken place, and Patton was.

00:08:02 Speaker 2

Building up a third army in England.

00:08:05

Yeah.

00:08:06 Speaker 2

And I went to England as a replacement.

00:08:09 Speaker 2

I went into a replacement depot after I got out of the hospital. I lost at 5:00.

00:08:13 Speaker 2

8I became.

00:08:15 Speaker 2

You know.

00:08:16 Speaker 2

Don't know that you call it separated from from the original company I was in.

00:08:21 Speaker 2

I went to.

00:08:24 Speaker 2

France as a as a replacement and stayed the replacement depot there for about a month before.

00:08:31 Speaker 2

Patton had the 3rd Army assembled around Argentan in France.

00:08:38 Speaker 2

And they assigned me to the 780th Ordnance Company, and which was part of the 80th Infantry Division.

00:08:47 Speaker 2

3rd army.

00:08:50 Speaker 1

So.

00:08:52 Speaker 1

How?

00:08:53 Speaker 1

How long were you in the hospital this?

00:08:54 Speaker 2

I was in the hospital about 5 months.

00:08:57 Speaker 1

That long?

00:08:59

Yeah.

00:08:59 Speaker 2

Well, they don't let you go until you're ready to go to service.

00:09:02 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:09:03 Speaker 1

So did they give you an option of coming?

00:09:05 Speaker 1

Or I didn't.

00:09:06 Speaker 2

Yeah, I didn't want to do.

00:09:07 Speaker 2

They they wanted to send me to Walter Reed and I.

00:09:11 Speaker 2

You know, I wanted to.

00:09:12

On.

00:09:12 Speaker 2

I'd never been out of the state of California.

00:09:16 Speaker 2

Maybe before I went in the army and it was kind of interesting going to different places.

00:09:21 Speaker 1

Yeah, you have a nice.

00:09:24 Speaker 1

Here we could take a look at that.

00:09:25 Speaker 1

You could.

00:09:27 Speaker 1

Lead us through, OK, where you were there.

00:09:36 Speaker 1

Get back here.

00:09:45 Speaker 1

OK, starting.

00:09:45 Speaker 2

Can you see that? I was stationed approximately in that area of southern England. This is Southampton, which was our port of Embarkation from England. We went on a small ship across.

00:10:00 Speaker 2

To the Omaha Beach, Fox Red is where we went in and it's approximately where this dip is in the shoreline there.

00:10:10 Speaker 2

Hiked up there with the.

00:10:16 Speaker 2

The invasion beachheads were pretty well secured.

00:10:18 Speaker 2

Would.

00:10:19 Speaker 2

We had about a five mile.

00:10:23 Speaker 2

Limit of you know where where the advances had been, you know, so the.

00:10:33 Speaker 2

Replacement depot that I was in was in a hedgerow field.

00:10:37 Speaker 2

I stayed in there about a month and they had us doing all kinds of jobs, cleaning out tanks and stuff and.

00:10:45 Speaker 2

In the meantime, I think patent was assembling the 3rd Army right in this area here around above branches.

00:10:55 Speaker 2

And I was assigned to the 80th Division.

00:10:58

And.

00:10:59 Speaker 2

They came to break out.

00:11:02 Speaker 2

We went followed this, this yellow. They were originally going to send us down to into the South. Part of that. They pulled us back out we went.

00:11:13 Speaker 2

Had a baptism of fire at Argentine.

00:11:17 Speaker 2

That's where we ran into the first German resistance. The 3rd Army did.

00:11:22 Speaker 2

And they turned.

00:11:23 Speaker 2

We went down through Orleans and across France South of Paris, about 80 miles.

00:11:32 Speaker 2

And you know just.

00:11:35 Speaker 2

That that the dates I think we broke out with within August of 40.

00:11:42 Speaker 2

Four, and we were in Alsace, Lorraine by November.

00:11:48 Speaker 2

The 20th or so.

00:11:50 Speaker 1

Oh, can I ask you now how long after?

00:11:55 Speaker 2

Not getting the math in my head, but how long after D-Day was it that you I went into into France about the 25th of June, so that was maybe a couple weeks.

00:12:07 Speaker 2

Several weeks after the invasion.

00:12:09 Speaker 1

And was there still a lot of devastation there?

00:12:11 Speaker 1

Lot of Oh yeah.

00:12:14 Speaker 2

Everywhere you look, it was really.

00:12:17 Speaker 2

Was really terrible.

00:12:19 Speaker 2

The thing that bothered me the most were the little kids hungry, hungry children.

00:12:27 Speaker 2

OK, but uh.

00:12:29 Speaker 2

By the time we got over into, you know, Chelan, some more than San Mahil and Panama San and those places, everyone was pretty well heartened to the sites that were, you know, common to see.

00:12:45 Speaker 2

Right.

00:12:47 Speaker 2

And when we got into all 6, Lorraine, we were in the in the line about 100 days without a rest.

00:12:55 Speaker 2

They pulled us.

00:12:57 Speaker 2

We were at Sargam means which is.

00:13:01 Speaker 2

I can't read this anymore, but right in this area here of of uh, allsace Lorraine.

00:13:08 Speaker 2

Where are we at?

00:13:10 Speaker 2

Sorry Brooke and down here.

00:13:13 Speaker 2

They pulled us out of the line for a three day rest and they.

00:13:16 Speaker 2

Going to refurbish our.

00:13:19 Speaker 2

Equipment and all this stuff.

00:13:22 Speaker 2

When the when the Bulls began up here.

00:13:24 Speaker 2

When that's pushed.

00:13:27 Speaker 2

They pulled us out of the line, put us in trucks and in about 30.

00:13:30 Speaker 2

Hours.

00:13:30 Speaker 2

Were in in Luxembourg City and I went the company I was with was at a place called de Kirch, which was on a river.

00:13:42 Speaker 2

And we stayed there until the until the bulge was reduced and then turned around and went down through Trier and crossed Orion here at at.

00:13:52

A.

00:13:54 Speaker 2

Lights, wherever that is right there, you know, right there where we cross the right lights.

00:14:00 Speaker 2

On the floating bridge.

00:14:02 Speaker 1

Now you said that you were not in combat, but you were.

00:14:08 Speaker 2

What we did?

00:14:08 Speaker 1

You were under fire.

00:14:12 Speaker 2

I can't tell you that I was ever shot at.

00:14:14 Speaker 2

I don't know.

00:14:15 Speaker 2

There were some tense moments, but I don't know that we were ever shot at.

00:14:19 Speaker 2

Was a service troop.

00:14:21

Right.

00:14:21 Speaker 2

Know it.

00:14:22 Speaker 2

I can't remember how many, three or four people in service.

00:14:27 Speaker 2

Positions to support one infantryman. Yeah.

00:14:31 Speaker 2

Well, I was never a Rifleman.

00:14:34 Speaker 2

Put it that way.

00:14:34 Speaker 1

No, I understand.

00:14:35 Speaker 1

But you were certainly performing a critical service to.

00:14:39 Speaker 2

And normally we were.

00:14:41 Speaker 2

We were in between the artillery and the infantry and when we bit back at night in these places we could hear those shells going over, you know, they they have a whispering sound they make when they go over.

00:14:44 Speaker 1

Mm.



00:14:55 Speaker 2

And you hope none of them fall short.

00:14:58

Yeah.

00:15:00 Speaker 2

And then from there we we were our 80th Division had three infantry regiments at 317th, 318th and 319th Infantry Regiments in the 318th and 319th went into Bastone from the South side.

00:15:17 Speaker 2

And helped relieve that with a fourth armored division, which we were with all all the way across Europe.

00:15:24 Speaker 2

Once, once we cross the Rhine, things went quite.

00:15:29 Speaker 2

Well, I think we were only about 40 or 50 days clear down here into Austria.

00:15:37 Speaker 2

I ended the war at this little town of Leipzen, Austria.

00:15:41 Speaker 2

Where we were and our inventory was.

00:15:45 Speaker 2

Just ahead of his stare.

00:15:49 Speaker 2

Interesting.

00:15:51 Speaker 2

OK.

00:15:52 Speaker 2

Interesting time of my life.

00:15:54 Speaker 1

Little photograph here of you as a young skinny kid.

00:15:57 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:16:01 Speaker 1

How old were you there?

00:16:02 Speaker 2

I was 18 and that was taken about two months after I'd gone in right after basic training.

00:16:10 Speaker 2

Actually, I was home on.

00:16:14 Speaker 2

10 day furlough from Pine Camp, New York, before we went overseas.

00:16:19 Speaker 2

And it took two days to get home on a train, so we had about 7-6 or seven days on the train.

00:16:26 Speaker 2

Mean on the furlough?

00:16:33 Speaker 1

Mr. Shafer, before the interview started, you were telling me about some of these camps that you.

00:16:43 Speaker 1

That you came upon liberated.

00:16:45 Speaker 1

You.

00:16:46 Speaker 1

Well, just for the camera looking into the camera, can you tell me a little?

00:16:49 Speaker 2

Bit more about we the 80th Division, 4th Armored and another infantry division.

00:16:55 Speaker 2

Can't remember which we were associated with.

00:16:59 Speaker 2

Overran two of these death.

00:17:02 Speaker 2

One of them was order of Nord, which was a sub camp of Buchenwald and Buchenwald.

00:17:08 Speaker 2

We overran those two places.

00:17:12 Speaker 2

And when that happened?

00:17:16 Speaker 2

We were set up.

00:17:20 Speaker 2

And a hanger on an airfield at Gotha terminate.

00:17:26 Speaker 2

And outside of that little town was the death camp of Ordrath Nord.

00:17:35 Speaker 2

And.

00:17:36

Patton.

00:17:38 Speaker 2

Patton's orders came down that everyone had to go.

00:17:42 Speaker 2

At this.

00:17:44 Speaker 2

I didn't particularly want to look at it, but we did.

00:17:48 Speaker 2

And both of those places were beyond description.

00:17:53 Speaker 2

I remember order of.

00:17:55 Speaker 2

We were there probably the day after it was captured.

00:17:59 Speaker 2

There were still hundreds of these walking skeletons around, you know, smiling and.

00:18:08 Speaker 2

You know, probably for the first time in years.

00:18:11 Speaker 2

And.

00:18:14 Speaker 2

We stepped over the bodies OF2SS guards to get into this place.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

Somebody torn their shirts open or had blue holes in them.

00:18:26

And.

00:18:27 Speaker 2

Pretty one.

00:18:28 Speaker 2

Wandered around in there.

00:18:29 Speaker 2

Stench was.

00:18:30 Speaker 2

You know, almost everyone threw up because it was an awful isn't awful experience.

00:18:38 Speaker 1

On these dev camps.

00:18:39 Speaker 2

When you hear, when you hear people.

00:18:43 Speaker 2

Say that didn't exist.

00:18:44 Speaker 2

Believe.

00:18:45 Speaker 2

It did exist.

00:18:48 Speaker 2

And it was it was.

00:18:49 Speaker 2

That's something that will remain with me for the rest of my life.

00:18:54 Speaker 1

And.

00:18:55 Speaker 1

You were telling me earlier also that it wasn't just the Jewish people that were, there were American soldiers here.

00:19:02 Speaker 2

There were American soldiers in those places also, and they were walking skeletons. The only way you could tell them apart was by their language they spoke.

00:19:10 Speaker 1

She's.

00:19:13

Yeah.

00:19:14 Speaker 1

We've looked at it.

00:19:14 Speaker 2

Or they.

00:19:15 Speaker 2

They were immediately removed to American hospitals and that but.

00:19:22 Speaker 2

You know.

00:19:25 Speaker 2

They were horrible.

00:19:29 Speaker 1

You you talked about.

00:19:32

A very.

00:19:34 Speaker 1

Difficult situation where they had a trench open, trenches where they machine gun people also.

00:19:39 Speaker 2

Yeah. Yeah, they could.

00:19:40 Speaker 2

Well, when they when they knew we were coming, they started killing those people.

00:19:44 Speaker 2

They didn't have time to kill them all and.

00:19:49 Speaker 2

There were piles and piles of bodies on grotesque piles.

00:19:56 Speaker 2

Prisoners, I don't know who they were, you know, either political or Jewish.

00:20:01 Speaker 2

Victims of being a racist kind of people.

00:20:05 Speaker 1

Were there American soldiers in that included in that?

00:20:08 Speaker 2

I don't believe that they had had machine gunned any American.

00:20:13 Speaker 2

They may have, but there would be no way to tell them apart.

00:20:18 Speaker 2

I mean, they starved those people to because they were and worked on the desk, you know.

00:20:26 Speaker 1

That's a horrible thing to have to live with.

00:20:31 Speaker 2

Well, I I think about it quite often. As a matter of fact, I I go back to the Internet and look at it occasionally and.

00:20:39 Speaker 2

You know.

00:20:41 Speaker 2

I don't know why I'm drawn to it, but it just.

00:20:45 Speaker 2

Ugly thing.

00:20:49 Speaker 1

Can you tell?

00:20:52 Speaker 1

Me, obviously.

00:20:53 Speaker 1

That's one of the things that must stick out in your mind. Are there any other experiences that stick out in your mind? Timing the service?

00:21:05 Speaker 2

No, not really.

00:21:08 Speaker 2

Of course.

00:21:10 Speaker 2

You know, as we went across there, we were ahead of graves registration and the more people and there were bodies everywhere and all this sort of stuff and dead horses and dead cattle and dead civilians. And, you know, General mayhem.

00:21:26 Speaker 2

But most every town that we went through, especially in France.

00:21:32 Speaker 2

The the civilian population.

00:21:36

They.

00:21:36 Speaker 2

You know, we're so happy to see us that they were throwing bottles of champagne at us and all this sort of stuff, but.

00:21:43 Speaker 2

Uh oh.

00:21:45 Speaker 2

A good part of it was very ugly. Did you?

00:21:50 Speaker 1

You didn't really enter into Germany itself or yes you did.

00:21:55 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, we crossed that.

00:21:56 Speaker 2

Crossed the.

00:21:57 Speaker 2

Actually, we're in Germany. When we crossed the Rhine because this part of this part.

00:22:04 Speaker 2

Of all states, Lorraine has bounced back and forth between Germany and France for years for centuries, and we crossed the mines there and went on up to Castle.

00:22:17 Speaker 2

We were.

00:22:23 Speaker 2

There was.

00:22:26 Speaker 2

There was a road about 20 miles long.

00:22:30 Speaker 2

Going into castle it we went.

00:22:33 Speaker 2

Down.

00:22:35 Speaker 2

And there was.

00:22:38 Speaker 2

A column of German.

00:22:41 Speaker 2

Trucks and, you know, vehicles caught in there by P-47 and there must have been 10 or 15 miles of this mayhem. And Patton said this is the finest.



00:22:53 Speaker 2

This is the finest bunch of carnage I've ever seen.

00:22:59 Speaker 1

How did how were you treated by the Germans?

00:23:03 Speaker 2

Not too well they were.

00:23:03 Speaker 1

Cool.

00:23:06 Speaker 2

Were.

00:23:07 Speaker 2

They were very few of them that would speak to you, which was fine.

00:23:07 Speaker 1

Which still.

00:23:12 Speaker 2

Know we weren't there to talk to them anyway.

00:23:16 Speaker 2

But the people around those death camps refused to believe that those places existed.

00:23:21 Speaker 2

And Patton made the entire town of Gotha, Germany, go see order of Nord.

00:23:27 Speaker 2

Then he made him clean it up.

00:23:31 Speaker 1

Was there was there change in their attitude and the people's attitude there after they saw that some I would say?

00:23:36 Speaker 2

You know.

00:23:40 Speaker 2

They just refused to believe that that their people could do that kind of stuff.

00:23:45 Speaker 1

YouTube.

00:23:49 Speaker 2

Pretty much of a race from from Castle on down to into Czechoslovakia and Austria.

00:23:57 Speaker 2

It was just you.

00:23:57 Speaker 2

We were.

00:23:59 Speaker 2

By the time we got down here into Bavaria.

00:24:07 Speaker 2

We were you.

00:24:08

Oh yeah.

00:24:08 Speaker 2

Know just buzzing along in the Germans were if they saw an American, they gave up.

00:24:15 Speaker 1

How how did they when you saw the German soldiers that were surrendering? How were they?

00:24:19 Speaker 2

Oh, they were glad it was over.

00:24:21 Speaker 1

They were glad it.

00:24:22

Favorite.

00:24:22 Speaker 2

Glad it was over. The bulk of them at that point were all youngsters or old men.

00:24:28 Speaker 2

You know, people in their 60s or people in their teens, early teens and.

00:24:36 Speaker 2

I mean, they were tired of it.

00:24:37 Speaker 2

Been.

00:24:38 Speaker 2

It for six or seven years, right? All right.

00:24:41 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:24:43 Speaker 2

All their prime.

00:24:45 Speaker 2

Males were gone.

00:24:49 Speaker 1

And there's a lot of I.

00:24:51 Speaker 1

The country was pretty much shutting devastated by.

00:24:54 Speaker 2

Yeah, the towns were.

00:24:59 Speaker 2

They would.

00:25:01 Speaker 2

We did 2.

00:25:02 Speaker 2

Any high point you could find to direct artillery and what not. So as a result of that, a lot of churches were at the steeple, shot off and that sort of thing.

00:25:13 Speaker 2

We were over in France about it two years ago, three years ago now and.

00:25:19 Speaker 2

Wandered around a few little places where I'd been, and I remembered 11 cathedral and still had all the bullet marks on it.

00:25:27 Speaker 1

So.

00:25:28 Speaker 2

Yeah, they they had scaffolding all around.

00:25:29 Speaker 1

Do it.

00:25:31 Speaker 2

They were working on it, but it was 60 years after that it happened.

00:25:35 Speaker 1

Where was that?

00:25:37 Speaker 2

Oh, it was in central France.

00:25:39 Speaker 2

Somewhere around tool in that.

00:25:43 Speaker 2

It was Nancy.

00:25:45 Speaker 2

I can't remember the name of it.

00:25:47 Speaker 2

Was in the champagne.

00:25:48 Speaker 2

I think that's in this area here.

00:25:56 Speaker 1

Well.

00:26:00 Speaker 1

Were you awarded any medals or other citations?

00:26:02 Speaker 2

No, no. We had unit citations and that sort of thing.

00:26:06 Speaker 1

OK.

00:26:06 Speaker 2

And we had 4 battle for campaign start.

00:26:10 Speaker 2

Had France.

00:26:13 Speaker 2

Yarden, which is a bulge, the Rhineland, which is this area and central Europe, which is this part.

00:26:26 Speaker 2

But there you know the.

00:26:28 Speaker 2

The way we moved was different than the way Montgomery moved, so.

00:26:34 Speaker 2

What you've got?

00:26:36 Speaker 2

What I think.

00:26:39 Speaker 2

The 3rd Army just experienced 1 long never ending battle, right?

00:26:45 Speaker 2

We didn't dig in and stay put in anyone's spot. That was against Patton's religion.

00:26:52 Speaker 2

No, his, his, his.

00:26:55 Speaker 2

His philosophy was to attack.

00:26:57 Speaker 1

Right. Well, he's a mechanized Calvary, so yeah.

00:27:00 Speaker 2

Yeah, so we just roared across the.

00:27:04 Speaker 2

Far faster than the First Army did you know?

00:27:07 Speaker 2

Was when they went into.

00:27:09 Speaker 2

They stayed on the kind of the the.

00:27:13 Speaker 2

Northern part of all of this went into Belgium and Holland above there, but they had less distance to travel than the 3rd Army.

00:27:25 Speaker 1

And so you were just keeping up with the armored and trying to keep the tanks.

00:27:30 Speaker 2

Yeah, we kept the tags and the guns and everything in repair.

00:27:34 Speaker 2

We had wrecking trucks and we'd go out and pick.

00:27:39 Speaker 2

Dead tanks and.

00:27:41 Speaker 2

And.

00:27:43 Speaker 2

All kinds of vehicles and clean them up, put them back in shape and get them on back if you know if they were. If it was possible to to repair them under the conditions that we were working under, we repair them we had.

00:27:59 Speaker 2

When we did, when we got over into this area of Nancy and Mets and those towns, it was raining.

00:28:07

Run.

00:28:08 Speaker 2

Mosa River went into flood stage and we were hung up there for about a week or two weeks.

00:28:15 Speaker 2

Bivouacked in the woods and 6 by 6 trucks going off of the road and down through the gully and.

00:28:23 Speaker 2

Onto the bivvy car, it would, you know, spin the wheels and pull in about a mile of telephone wire all around.

00:28:30 Speaker 2

The rear axles and break all the brake lines off of them and.

00:28:36 Speaker 2

It was kind of messy, but it was fun.

00:28:41 Speaker 1

What was the? What was the food like?

00:28:43 Speaker 1

You able to get good food or?

00:28:45 Speaker 2

Not.

00:28:46 Speaker 2

We had lived on K rations and see rations and D rations which were cooked, you know.

00:28:53 Speaker 2

But it depends on where we were and how long we stayed there.

00:28:57 Speaker 2

Had field kitchens that.

00:29:01 Speaker 2

You know.

00:29:01 Speaker 2

Ate outside and we were told not to feed any of the civilian population with the scraps that we had and I never could understand that.

00:29:11 Speaker 2

But I kind of fed the kids when I could, you know, give them scraps of red and whatnot, because every time we stopped anywhere, the videos came out of the woodwork begging for food. And what?

00:29:17 Speaker 1

OK.

00:29:24 Speaker 1

What was your rationale for that?

00:29:26 Speaker 2

I have no idea.

00:29:29 Speaker 1

Did.

00:29:29 Speaker 1

Were you well supplied?

00:29:31 Speaker 1

You feel like.

00:29:31 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, yeah.

00:29:32 Speaker 2

You.

00:29:34 Speaker 2

The only thing that I lack with shoes I had big feet.

00:29:40 Speaker 2

And I can remember taping my souls back on my shoes because I couldn't get size 13 shoes.

00:29:47 Speaker 2

So.

00:29:49 Speaker 2

I had my mother send me a set of Russell bird shooters that I'd had at home, and she sent those to me and I wore those the rest of the way.

00:29:59 Speaker 1

It was mailed pretty good.

00:30:00 Speaker 1

Able to we've been.

00:30:01 Speaker 2

Ms.

00:30:02 Speaker 2



V male. The little bitty letters, and so on.

00:30:04 Speaker 1

Right.

00:30:06 Speaker 2

I couldn't read them now, but my eyes away they are.

00:30:12 Speaker 1

Was there sounds like you were just constantly on the move was everywhere. Anytime that you got a break, got to go on leave or anything like Howard.

00:30:16 Speaker 2

They were.

00:30:21 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:30:23 Speaker 2

For instance, around Nancy and Mets and rhymes.

00:30:28 Speaker 2

Google or RMS. However they say it.

00:30:32 Speaker 2

Were allowed to go into towns in the evening or, you know, take a 8 hour day and go into town.

00:30:41 Speaker 1

So going into town then, I guess in France and Belgium was probably not bad, but.

00:30:48 Speaker 1

If you went into town in Germany, was that dangerous?

00:30:50 Speaker 2

Yeah, we, I I didn't do that.

00:30:52 Speaker 2

It could have been dangerous.

00:30:53 Speaker 2

I think I, but I didn't do.

00:30:56 Speaker 2

We were going so fast across here that we were.

00:30:59 Speaker 2

Every day.

00:31:03 Speaker 2

Similar.

00:31:04 Speaker 1

Did they ever bring any entertainment out to you? Yeah.

00:31:10 Speaker 2

I didn't see any until we were.

00:31:15 Speaker 2

We're Munich.

00:31:17 Speaker 2

Munich down here somewhere, isn't it?

00:31:21 Speaker 2

That was where the Willie met.

00:31:22 Speaker 1

It's right below your.

00:31:23 Speaker 1

There now over to your left.

00:31:26 Speaker 1

A little bit right there.

00:31:27 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:31:28 Speaker 2

Yeah, they brought Bob Hope and.

00:31:31 Speaker 2

I don't know Francis, Lankford and the Bing Crosby.

00:31:34 Speaker 2

Think communic.

00:31:39

Oh.

00:31:41 Speaker 2

And we met with. It was about 60 miles from wherever we were, and it took several hours for us to get there in 6 by 6 trucks.

00:31:49 Speaker 2

But the war was essentially over at that point.

00:31:53 Speaker 1

And you stayed on then in. Well, you stayed on a couple.

00:31:58 Speaker 1

You were still in in the in Europe for a couple months after the war ended that you did you take any leave?

00:32:02 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

00:32:05 Speaker 2

Yeah, I went to Paris and I went to Brussels and.

00:32:10 Speaker 2

You know, took two day.

00:32:12 Speaker 2

And wandered around Bavaria. People in Bavaria were.

00:32:17 Speaker 2

Considerably different than the citizenry around Central Germany.

00:32:22 Speaker 1

It was where Hitler had it.

00:32:25 Speaker 1

Is to people's next one minute.

00:32:26 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah. In fact, he was born in Bruno.

00:32:31 Speaker 2

Where we went through burnout.

00:32:37 Speaker 1

That's right. Over the Austrian border.

00:32:38 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

00:32:40 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:32:42 Speaker 2

Then, after the war was over, we pulled back from here and went into Bavaria, which was down in this part.

00:32:50 Speaker 2

Of the Bavarian Alps and I can't remember the name of little town bad third time I think.

00:32:56 Speaker 2

And which are ski resorts now?

00:33:00 Speaker 2

And we stayed there for several months and then they put us.

00:33:05 Speaker 2

On trains and took us to Camp Lucky strike.

00:33:08 Speaker 1

Right. We can't look at strike.

00:33:10 Speaker 2

Yeah. Which was over on the coast nearly half. And when the ship was available, they put us on it and brought us home.

00:33:18 Speaker 2

That was on.

00:33:19

And.

00:33:20 Speaker 2

Over thanks over Thanksgiving week of 1945.

00:33:24 Speaker 1

What? What was a trip like coming home?

00:33:26 Speaker 2

Ugly.

00:33:28 Speaker 2

Coming home, you mean this?

00:33:30 Speaker 2

Yeah, it.

00:33:30 Speaker 2

It was really rough in the North Atlantic in the winter time is terrible.

00:33:35

Uh.

00:33:36 Speaker 2

And this.

00:33:36 Speaker 1

But faster than going over though.

00:33:38 Speaker 2

Yeah, it was quite a bit faster than coming, going over.

00:33:43 Speaker 2

We went over.

00:33:44 Speaker 2

Originally in about 150 ship convoy on a on a victory ship which was a real slow.

00:33:54 Speaker 2

Court bobbing in the water business, you know?

00:33:57 Speaker 2

We had a few sub scares but.

00:34:01 Speaker 2

Another.

00:34:02 Speaker 2

That we could see from where we were.

00:34:05 Speaker 1

No.

00:34:06 Speaker 2

Matter. In fact, looking over the wave was kind of hard times.

00:34:12 Speaker 2

But.

00:34:14 Speaker 1

So then you you arrived back in the states?

00:34:18 Speaker 1

In New Jersey, did you say no in new?

00:34:21 Speaker 2

York.

00:34:21 Speaker 1

In New York.

00:34:22 Speaker 2

Right up to Hudson River went right up to Hudson River on this boat that had 7000 GIS on it and they all ran over the over the starboard side and the whole thing tipped over and never the.

00:34:34 Speaker 2

That were working in the dock, warehouses and things along were blowing whistles and all this stuff and we.

00:34:39 Speaker 2

Waving and yelling and going on.

00:34:42 Speaker 2

Then they took us to Camp Shanks, where we left from, took us off the off the boat and anchored it in the river.

00:34:51 Speaker 2

Took us off, took us to Camp Shanks.

00:34:55 Speaker 2

And then they let us give us train tickets and we left to go our various ways.

00:35:01 Speaker 1

You just let from there, you.

00:35:04 Speaker 2

That was the end of my.

00:35:05 Speaker 2

I went from Camp Shanks to San Pedro, CA on a on a train.

00:35:12 Speaker 1

How is that?

00:35:14 Speaker 2

That was coach class, you know, in a chair card.

00:35:17 Speaker 2

The people loaded the well.

00:35:21 Speaker 2

Actually, it was a troop train.

00:35:23 Speaker 2

We they they held a train until they had enough cars full of various people that were going wherever and then they'd hook it onto some other train.

00:35:33

You know.

00:35:35 Speaker 2

And they served boxed meals.

00:35:41 Speaker 2

By the time it got Los Angeles pretty much of A stinking mess.

00:35:45 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:35:46 Speaker 2

But we were glad to get on.

00:35:51 Speaker 1

So what was your?

00:35:55 Speaker 1

Spirit, what were the relationships like with your fellow servicemen and your officers and all?

00:36:02 Speaker 2

It was pretty good and I had a bunch of good friends who we did.

00:36:05 Speaker 2

Never stayed in touch, but.

00:36:12 Speaker 2

You know, just go your go your own way after it's all over.

00:36:15

Let's.

00:36:17 Speaker 2

What you signed on to do and.

00:36:20 Speaker 1

But during, I mean during your your service experience coming through Europe and all was it was there a pretty good relationship between the men and the officer? Yeah.

00:36:30 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

00:36:33 Speaker 2

We had a job to do, you know, we were mostly mechanics.

00:36:36 Speaker 2

Were.

00:36:37 Speaker 2

We had artillery, mechanics, had small arms, gunsmiths who they handled rifles and machine guns and that sort of thing.

00:36:48 Speaker 2

Repaired them.

00:36:49 Speaker 2

You know, if it was impossible to repair these through, scrap the stuff.

00:36:53 Speaker 2



Because there was no point in carrying junk with us.

00:36:55 Speaker 2

Right, you know, so.

00:36:59 Speaker 1

So you leave. You would leave tanks that weren't.

00:37:02 Speaker 2

Yeah, if they if they were badly damaged, there's no, there's no way we can repair them in the field.

00:37:09 Speaker 1

Uh.

00:37:09 Speaker 2

But if they had engine problems or broken tracks or that sort of thing, we could fix that, yeah.

00:37:16 Speaker 2

Back in service.

00:37:17 Speaker 1

These were the Sherman tanks.

00:37:22 Speaker 2

Well, we worked.

00:37:23 Speaker 2

There were a number of track vehicles. There were half tracks, of course, of white half tracks.

00:37:29 Speaker 2

Were several models of Sherman tanks and they had M5 light tanks, M6 Tractors, M8 tractors.

00:37:39 Speaker 2

Things that pulled.

00:37:40 Speaker 2

Heavy guns and that sort of thing, you know?

00:37:42 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:37:44 Speaker 2

We worked on all of that stuff.

00:37:47 Speaker 1

Where were you the day that the war ended?

00:37:51 Speaker 2

We were.

00:37:53

Yeah.

00:37:57 Speaker 2

I can't remember exactly where somewhere.

00:38:00 Speaker 2

In between.

00:38:03 Speaker 2

And Branagh somewhere in there?

00:38:06 Speaker 2

But.

00:38:06 Speaker 2

We didn't stop. We went on ahead down into Austria.

00:38:13 Speaker 2

And this was several days after.

00:38:16 Speaker 2

Or no, wait a.

00:38:17 Speaker 1

Minute. There's a notation.

00:38:18 Speaker 1

It says May 8th, 1945.

00:38:20 Speaker 2

Right. That's where, that's where I was.

00:38:23 Speaker 2

And there was a bridge across this ends river.

00:38:31 Speaker 2

The end.

00:38:32 Speaker 2

It was in a beautiful little valley with green meadows like and the German civilians and German soldiers were just streaming across this bridge to get away from the Russians. We met the Russians at Leitzen.

00:38:47 Speaker 2

And they had driven all of the people, you know, civilians and and German soldiers into this valley.

00:38:56 Speaker 2

There were probably several 1000.

00:38:57

A.

00:38:58 Speaker 2

Them in there and.

00:39:00 Speaker 2

Of them were still had their arms with them.

00:39:03 Speaker 2

Was like four or five German generals.

00:39:07 Speaker 2

And.

00:39:09 Speaker 2

Even us as mechanics stood guard around these guys.

00:39:14 Speaker 2

And.

00:39:15 Speaker 1

They were.

00:39:16 Speaker 1

There was pretty bad blood between the Russians and the Germans. Oh yes.

00:39:20 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:39:22 Speaker 2

And they eventually there was a railroad line through there, and they eventually got all those German people arranged and on trains and out of there. But.

00:39:38 Speaker 2

Myself and several other guys went across a bridge in the opposite direction and talked to the Russians, you know, a couple of days after the war was over.

00:39:48 Speaker 2

And that was kind of an interesting.

00:39:52

Yeah.

00:39:53

What?

00:39:53 Speaker 2

Yeah, they they, the the way I understood that they weren't any happier about being there than anybody who is you know.

00:40:00 Speaker 1

Right.

00:40:01 Speaker 1

But what were the Germans afraid of?

00:40:06 Speaker 2

Afraid of the Russians doing to them what they had done to the Russians.

00:40:10 Speaker 1

What day of the week felt it was better in better hands with the Americans?

00:40:15 Speaker 2

And Oh yeah.

00:40:16 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:40:19 Speaker 1

What was your what?

00:40:21 Speaker 1

What was the day like the day?

00:40:23 Speaker 1

War ended.

00:40:24 Speaker 1

How did you find out?

00:40:28 Speaker 2

Well, it actually ended at midnight.

00:40:31 Speaker 2

And when we we were in a little little bird down in Austria, I can't, I can't remember them.

00:40:39 Speaker 2

Well, maybe it was Leeds some.

00:40:44 Speaker 2

It's foggy.

00:40:45 Speaker 2

I can remember seeing 3 me 10 nines at about 500 feet with this yellow spiral spinners.

00:40:53 Speaker 2

Come down through the everybody hit the dirt.

00:40:57 Speaker 2

Came. They came down to three of them in this valley and disappeared.

00:41:01 Speaker 2

Were flying away from the Russians.

00:41:04 Speaker 2

And they probably landed somewhere and surrendered.

00:41:07

I.

00:41:11 Speaker 1

Was there a lot of celebrating going on that day?

00:41:14 Speaker 2

Not really I can.

00:41:16 Speaker 2

I can remember them saying, well, it's over.

00:41:19 Speaker 2

What do we do now?

00:41:21 Speaker 2

You know, and we're.

00:41:23 Speaker 2

We're cleared that clear down here.

00:41:25 Speaker 2

1000 miles away from.

00:41:26 Speaker 2

The.

00:41:27 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:41:27

Other thing.

00:41:30 Speaker 1

A lot of.

00:41:31 Speaker 1

Though were there, were there any incidents that you think of that people, that Germans that had hadn't heard the news that kept on fighting?

00:41:42 Speaker 2

No, by the time the war ended, it was everybody who had resigned themselves to surrender.

00:41:42

Oh.

00:41:52 Speaker 2

I don't think there was a shot fired from maybe Nuremberg on to the end.

00:41:58 Speaker 2

The war.

00:41:59 Speaker 1

Gosh.

00:42:00 Speaker 2

Maybe 15 days, two weeks 3.

00:42:02 Speaker 2

I don't think there was a shock fire.

00:42:06 Speaker 2

Every German soldier you saw was had his hands.

00:42:08 Speaker 2

The air.

00:42:10 Speaker 2

Glad you were marching down the middle of the autobahn's.

00:42:16 Speaker 2

Great big groups, you know, going home.

00:42:21 Speaker 1

Where they. So if they were headed home, they weren't stopped.

00:42:25 Speaker 1

It's pressures to its perfect.

00:42:25 Speaker 2

No, no. I mean it was over if as.

00:42:28 Speaker 2

As they weren't armed, right?

00:42:29

Right, right.

00:42:32 Speaker 1

OK, so you've got.

00:42:32 Speaker 2

But the s s guys.

00:42:35 Speaker 1

The s s troops.

00:42:38 Speaker 2

They would go into these towns and get civilian clothes, put them on so they weren't, wouldn't be recognized as s s. And that's how a lot of them got away from being tried for war crimes.

00:42:53 Speaker 2

And they let them became bartenders in Argentina.

00:42:55

Run.

00:42:57 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:42:58 Speaker 2

You know.

00:43:01 Speaker 1

So you you got home, you said.

00:43:04 Speaker 1

Headed back to Juan Pedro.

00:43:06 Speaker 2

Yeah, Fort McArthur, California, which is, you know, on the coast from Burbank and Glendale, where where my folks lived.

00:43:14 Speaker 1

And where were you discharged at Fort McCarthy?

00:43:16 Speaker 2

Port MacArthur.

00:43:18 Speaker 2

And you remember the day that you December the 9th, 1945. You spent one night there.

00:43:22 Speaker 1

No.

00:43:26 Speaker 2

And practically, the whole day standing in line.



00:43:30 Speaker 1

Standing in line.

00:43:32 Speaker 1

Were your parents there to greet you?

00:43:34 Speaker 2

No, no, I jumped on a red car and went home.

00:43:39 Speaker 1

And what it in the days following your discharge?

00:43:43 Speaker 2

Oh, I I spent about a month doing nothing.

00:43:47 Speaker 2

And then went to work at a motorcycle shop as a mechanic in Glendale.

00:43:53 Speaker 2

Worked there several years.

00:43:58 Speaker 1

Did.

00:43:58 Speaker 1

Did you go back to school or do you?

00:44:00 Speaker 2

To college, I started College in 1950.

00:44:05 Speaker 1

Use the GI bill for that.

00:44:06 Speaker 2

Yes, I did and I just thought of three 4349 was it.

00:44:08

3D.

00:44:13 Speaker 2

And I got my umm.

00:44:16 Speaker 2

My bachelor's in education at Fresno State College and with a teacher.

00:44:20 Speaker 1

That'll be darry.

00:44:22 Speaker 2

But I couldn't stand the kids.

00:44:24 Speaker 2

I gave it up.

00:44:28 Speaker 1

So you were telling me earlier that that you had a career as a machine. How did that come?

00:44:33 Speaker 2

Right. Well, I've done a lot of things I after I got out of college, I went to work selling audio visual equipment and supplies for educational supplies.

00:44:45 Speaker 2

I worked at that for about 10 years and then.

00:44:50

I.

00:44:51 Speaker 2

The company I was with was sold and I didn't really want to go with the new owners and so I quit and I became a regional representative for a company that also sold audio, visual product, educational stuff.

00:44:53

Oh.

00:45:06 Speaker 2

And umm.

00:45:09 Speaker 2

But my first love was always mechanics and machinery, and I was very good at it and still AM, and I still do it.

00:45:18 Speaker 2

And I love.

00:45:19 Speaker 2

I love make little engines and all kinds of stuff.

00:45:22 Speaker 2

Airplane parts for the government.

00:45:27 Speaker 2

I worked at that for.

00:45:31 Speaker 2

Well, when I finally decided to give up the educational business with 1970, when it's 70, yeah, 1971.

00:45:41 Speaker 2

And Kate came to Sacramento to open a machine shop and.

00:45:46 Speaker 2

Struggled with that for a few years until I finally got in at McClellan.

00:45:48

What time are you?

00:45:51 Speaker 2

And made parts for them.

00:45:54 Speaker 2

And then you know, it became quite successful in it.

00:45:57 Speaker 1

But Brooks, you to Sacramento.

00:46:00

Oh.

00:46:00 Speaker 2

Umm.

00:46:03 Speaker 2

The company that that was.

00:46:07 Speaker 2

That I worked for that was sold to another company in, in the educational bent brought us up here.

00:46:15 Speaker 2

My wife and I moved to Fresno in 1949 or 1950 and I went to college for President State.

00:46:25 Speaker 2

We were married in July of 1949.

00:46:29

Woo Hoo.

00:46:30 Speaker 2

And I knew that I was never going to be.

00:46:34 Speaker 2

Really successful at being a motorcycle mechanic, so I gave that up.

00:46:41 Speaker 2

I still do it.

00:46:43 Speaker 1

You met your wife and.

00:46:44 Speaker 2

In in Burbank in Burbank.

00:46:48 Speaker 1

And married their.

00:46:49 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, I met her in January of 49.

00:46:52 Speaker 2

Were married in July.

00:46:55 Speaker 2

Well, when the Peoria went real mad, I'd rather have it, but we're still together. Well, that's.

00:47:01 Speaker 1

What counts is.

00:47:02 Speaker 2

56 years later.

00:47:04

Yeah.

00:47:05 Speaker 1

Did you? You said you.

00:47:09 Speaker 1

Didn't have a lot of relationships, long lasting relationships that with people that you served with.

00:47:17 Speaker 1

Do you belong to any veterans organization?

00:47:19 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, I blogged the.

00:47:20 Speaker 2

I'm not active in them and the VFW, but I'm I'm not active in them. I like to read the publications and.

00:47:27 Speaker 2

What their legislative views are, and those sort of things.

00:47:31 Speaker 2

Veterans Affairs and that, you know.

00:47:33 Speaker 1

Do you go to reunions at all?

00:47:36 Speaker 2

I've never seen a reunion for the 80th Infantry.

00:47:40 Speaker 2

I've never.

00:47:41 Speaker 2

I've looked at.

00:47:42 Speaker 2

You if you go on the Internet, you can look up the lone century or lonesome century.

00:47:49 Speaker 2

And it'll be a history of the.

00:47:51 Speaker 2

And then they have reunions and get together and that sort of thing.

00:47:55 Speaker 2

But it's a West Virginia.

00:47:58 Speaker 2

It was West Virginia division.

00:48:01 Speaker 1

Uh.

00:48:03 Speaker 2

And so the reunions are naturally back there, which, you know, I'm not that interested in dinner.

00:48:10 Speaker 1

Thank you.

00:48:11 Speaker 2

I didn't know anyone except.

00:48:16 Speaker 2

The ordinance company that I was.

00:48:18 Speaker 2

Right. And none of the guys that I that I was really close with. There was one guy from Los Angeles, but I didn't particularly care for him.

00:48:25 Speaker 2

I never stayed in touch with him.

00:48:28 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:48:29 Speaker 1

You mentioned.

00:48:30 Speaker 1

You went back to Europe a few years back.

00:48:35 Speaker 1

How was that going back in Mexico?

00:48:37 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:48:39 Speaker 2

When, when, like we'd go into hotels and I'd say, well, I was here 60 years ago, they were great to us, you know.

00:48:47 Speaker 1

Really.

00:48:47 Speaker 2

They were really great.

00:48:50 Speaker 2

Without the Normandy and visited the cemeteries and all that and.

00:48:55 Speaker 2

Made in Paris for several days and we wandered around, went over to into Germany, went to the Porsche factory and.

00:49:07 Speaker 2

You know, just kind of revisiting places and I didn't.

00:49:10 Speaker 1

Yeah, just shooting the one.

00:49:13 Speaker 2

I didn't recognize any of it.

00:49:17 Speaker 2

When we were in Saint Abold, which is a little town here in.

00:49:23 Speaker 2

Alsace Lorraine.

00:49:26 Speaker 2

It was beginning to.

00:49:28 Speaker 2

It was middle of November, maybe.

00:49:33 Speaker 2

And it was colder than wedge and we were working on trucks out in the middle of the street.

00:49:40 Speaker 2

And this other fellow and I, we were working under trucks.

00:49:44 Speaker 2

I think we were cutting telephone lines off of the axles, you know, and my hands got so cold we went into this building and it turned out it was.

00:49:55 Speaker 2

The was the what they call the hotel to be or the.

00:50:00 Speaker 2

County Courthouse like thing.

00:50:02 Speaker 2

You.

00:50:03 Speaker 2

But apparently the Germans had ransacked a place on their retreats and the floors were covered with papers. And I we we were in there trying to warm up.

00:50:16 Speaker 2

Of course, there was no heat, but it was warmer inside than it was outside.

00:50:20 Speaker 2

And there were all these papers on the floor, and I looked at him.

00:50:23 Speaker 2

There were some really old papers, so I gathered up my handful of them, put them in my fatigue jacket and I kept them in envelope until we went back and I gave them back to those people.

00:50:28

Play.

00:50:37

Moment.

00:50:38 Speaker 2

And we found the same building.

00:50:42 Speaker 2

And it changed.

00:50:44 Speaker 2

But talk about deja vu.

00:50:47 Speaker 2



Right.

00:50:48 Speaker 2

Go to something.

00:50:49 Speaker 2

Did you have a wrote a newspaper article about it and said sent me all kinds of stuff. You know, it was neat.

00:50:57 Speaker 1

What kind of documents?

00:50:58 Speaker 2

They weren't.

00:50:59 Speaker 2

They dated back to the early 1700s and they were like maritime commissions and the birth records and.

00:51:09 Speaker 2

Of people who were Lords and you know, whatever.

00:51:14 Speaker 2

And when I took him back, they didn't know what to do with them and.

00:51:21 Speaker 2

In this building was a was a, was a specialist in archives.

00:51:26 Speaker 2

And he spoke very good English and I gave those papers back to him. And he was really appreciative of it. But they didn't know what to do with them.

00:51:35 Speaker 2

Don't know what happened to the rest of the papers that were on.

00:51:38 Speaker 2

Floor.

00:51:39 Speaker 2

You know, because some of them, some of the ones I had the reason why I said they were probably.

00:51:44 Speaker 2

Ransacked by Germans was that they?

00:51:46 Speaker 2

They were boot prints on them that had hot nails on them.

00:51:49 Speaker 2

We didn't have those.

00:51:50 Speaker 2

The Germans had Hotmail boots.

00:51:53 Speaker 2

That's why they made so much noise when they marched.

00:51:59 Speaker 1

And not the food.

00:52:00 Speaker 1

What exactly is a hobnail?

00:52:02 Speaker 1

Is that?

00:52:02 Speaker 2

Well, they're like horseshoe nails the heads and they, they nail them in on the bottom against a last or something and turn the ends over inside. So you don't stand on the shore parts.

00:52:07 Speaker 1

Uh.

00:52:17 Speaker 2

But they just make the shoe soles last longer.

00:52:21 Speaker 1

Like kind of like taps and.

00:52:23 Speaker 2

No, they were nailed it.

00:52:24 Speaker 1

Yeah, nail heads, but.

00:52:25 Speaker 2

Yeah, all over the bottom of the shoes.

00:52:27 Speaker 1

Right. Cool. So.

00:52:31

Well.

00:52:34 Speaker 1

Did your military experience?

00:52:38 Speaker 1

Influenced your thinking about war, about the military in general, you think?

00:52:46 Speaker 2

Probably probably.

00:52:52 Speaker 2

My family's been in military, you know, my my uncle was a Colonel.

00:52:57 Speaker 2

Was a medical officer. He was a doctor, an MD.

00:53:02 Speaker 2

He was in World War One and World War Two. He was a doctor in Europe, in France, in World War 1.

00:53:11 Speaker 2

And I have great grandparents that fought in the.

00:53:15 Speaker 2

War.

00:53:18 Speaker 2

My son Aries.

00:53:20 Speaker 2

Navy veteran, you know, so I I agree with the military.

00:53:26 Speaker 2

What are your thoughts about the war? You mean Baghdadi war?

00:53:32 Speaker 2

Well, Moore's nudge saying.

00:53:35 Speaker 2

But there there are cases where you you can't negotiate.

00:53:39 Speaker 2

There's nothing. There's no ground to negotiate on.

00:53:42 Speaker 2

Couldn't negotiate with the Nazis.

00:53:46 Speaker 2

I mean their philosophies and.

00:53:50 Speaker 2

Genocidal tendencies to it cleanse ethnically is against my way of thinking, and against most Americans way of thinking.

00:54:01 Speaker 2

And.

00:54:02 Speaker 2

You just.

00:54:04 Speaker 2

I.

00:54:05 Speaker 2

With what's going on in in the Middle East, I hate to see it happening, but I think we're in something that's going to be a quagmire for a long, long time.

00:54:20 Speaker 2

I.

00:54:22 Speaker 2

My opinion doesn't really mean much.

00:54:25 Speaker 2

But that's it.

00:54:27 Speaker 1

How?

00:54:28 Speaker 1

How do you think your service affected your life later on? Yeah.

00:54:33 Speaker 1

What you went on to do?

00:54:35 Speaker 2

Well, I have to say this.

00:54:36 Speaker 2

Grew up in a.

00:54:38

From being.

00:54:39 Speaker 2

18 years old.

00:54:41 Speaker 2

To 20. I was out when I was still 20.

00:54:45 Speaker 2

And.

00:54:48 Speaker 2

You know, I think I had. I think I gained a sense of responsibility from that, that.

00:54:54 Speaker 2

Kids normally don't get and I think that everyone that was in mice kind of shoes did the same thing.

00:55:01 Speaker 1

Moment changed, man.

00:55:02 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

00:55:03 Speaker 2

Well, he came home a man.

00:55:07 Speaker 2

Instead of a 20 year old kid.

00:55:10 Speaker 2

Don't you believe that too? Absolutely.

00:55:13 Speaker 1

Absolutely ugly.

00:55:14 Speaker 2

I think so.

00:55:17 Speaker 2

The sites that we saw when we were still teenagers.

00:55:22 Speaker 2

You wouldn't put anybody through.

00:55:25

Yeah.

00:55:27 Speaker 1

No.

00:55:29 Speaker 1

So we're.

00:55:29 Speaker 1

About to the end of the interview, but I wanted to take a moment to ask you if there's anything that.

00:55:37 Speaker 1

That we haven't covered in this interview that you'd like to talk about, we'd like to express this point.

00:55:42 Speaker 2

No.

00:55:44

I know.

00:55:47

OK.

00:55:48 Speaker 1

Well, I want to thank you for taking the time to come and Share your story with us. And in spite of the fact that you said you were not a combat veteran, you.

00:55:59 Speaker 1

Certainly put yourself in harm's way.

00:56:03 Speaker 1

And you served, you put, you feel the critical need that that couldn't have been probably true.

00:56:09

Well, that's.

00:56:11 Speaker 1

And so the country owes you a debt of gratitude.

00:56:14 Speaker 1

We have all Americans.

00:56:15 Speaker 2

I think they give that back.

00:56:17 Speaker 1

Appreciate. So, thank you very much.

00:56:19 Speaker 1

Thank you.

00:56:19 Speaker 2

Thank.

00:56:20 Speaker 2

I I appreciate having the opportunity.