

Vincent M. Shannon Interview

Company B, 319th Inf Reg

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Nick M. James, Patrick Shannon)

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

00:00:00 Speaker 1

And let's wait click over. Yeah. OK, let's wait a couple of seconds.

00:00:05 Speaker 2

Boy, you're scaring the jeebies out of it.

00:00:08 Speaker 1

Well, it's OK.

00:00:09 Speaker 2

I know.

00:00:13 Speaker 2

Jimmy, you look very nervous. What's the matter?

00:00:16 Speaker 2

But still tall, that's his problem.

00:00:16

All right.

00:00:21 Speaker 2

The tall yarn they're working those things and find you over there.

00:00:27

Wait about 10 more seconds.

00:00:35 Speaker 2

Shall I sing the yellow matter go?

00:00:36 Speaker 3

Ahead, we are interviewing Vincent M Shannon from Syracuse, NY, who was enlisted March 1942 into the 777th Infantry Division. The interviewers are Nicholas M James and Patrick Shannon.

00:00:51 Speaker 1

OK. Do you want to sing the alumina?

00:00:53 Speaker 2

This is our home, our college home. Though hard and strict Chevy.

00:00:53

Will.

00:01:01 Speaker 2

The home of many a noble soul. This is the line I like the shrine of Purity. We love her rocks and rivers.

00:01:13 Speaker 2

Whole weather where? I don't know.

00:01:17 Speaker 2

Where we be shall cry for Old Niagara and her lovely scene.

00:01:24 Speaker 2

Three shout hurrah for oh Nyagra and her lovely Sheen aren.

00:01:35 Speaker 2

Amen.

00:01:37 Speaker 2

None of you guys know what to eat now that's saying.

00:01:41 Speaker 1

Well, Dad, we're going to start with a few questions kind of going back before, before you enlisted and and start with why you enlisted and why you chose the army.

00:01:54 Speaker 1

Why did you? Why did you and?

00:01:57 Speaker 2

Because I had to in those days, anybody who was young and could carry a rifle, they enlisted, they got dragged in anyway.

00:02:04 Speaker 1

Did you choose the army?

00:02:06 Speaker 2

No, I didn't because I hit ROTC at Niagara, so I had to go in the infantry.

00:02:12 Speaker 1

OK.

00:02:12 Speaker 2

They were looking for people who knew how to carry a rifle then.

00:02:16 Speaker 2

Don't carry anything.

00:02:17 Speaker 1

Actually, you've told me you've told me lots about about boot camp. Can you think of any any stories from boot camp? What it was like? Yeah.

00:02:24 Speaker 2

Vote camp.

00:02:26 Speaker 2

Gee.

00:02:28 Speaker 2

You know, I can't think of anything real good unless you can remind me of what?

00:02:32 Speaker 2

I've told you.

00:02:32 Speaker 1

Some of the specific training.

00:02:35 Speaker 1

That you did.

00:02:36 Speaker 2

Learn how to crawl. They never took a dry field to teach you how to crawl. It's.

00:02:39 Speaker 2

Always a muddy one. Yeah, yeah.

00:02:42 Speaker 2

Keep the rifle dry. That was the main thing.

00:02:47 Speaker 1

How did you get through boot camp?

00:02:50 Speaker 2

Well, I just did what they told me to do and that's the way you do it. If you start questioning people, then you're gonna stay there for the.

00:02:57 Speaker 2

Rest of your days.

00:02:59 Speaker 1

Hey, you became a drill instructor later on, right?

00:03:01 Speaker 2

Ohh yeah, well you know why? Because I knew how to March 1 foot after the other.

00:03:06 Speaker 2

You always started over the left foot, OK? And you'd be amazed at some of the ones you were trying to train. And you tell them to forward Birch. They'd be all over the place banging into each other. But they learned quickly.

00:03:22 Speaker 1

You were originally in the the 77th right, the New York division.

00:03:25 Speaker 2

All.

00:03:27 Speaker 1

New York division. And what what changed?

00:03:31 Speaker 2

Well, they were forming the 80s at that time. They needed a cadry. So I was one of the lucky ones. They got and cadry because the 77th went way over there.

00:03:42 Speaker 2

Net Corp, where was it? South Pacific, yeah.

00:03:43 Speaker 1

Korea or South Pacific?

00:03:46 Speaker 1

And in.

00:03:46 Speaker 1

Fact you were on the West Coast, right?

00:03:48 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

00:03:50 Speaker 1

OK, so you went, you went back with the 80th. And where were you? Where were you stationed with the 80th stateside?

00:04:02 Speaker 2

Down South.

00:04:04 Speaker 2

I forgot and.

00:04:06 Speaker 2

Why don't you ask me something to?

00:04:07 Speaker 1

Remember why? Well, I'll get to that. So don't worry about the questions that you can't remember. Some of these are very specific questions. OK.

00:04:10 Speaker 2

OK.

00:04:16 Speaker 1

What was your job? What was your assignment?

00:04:19 Speaker 2

I was a platoon Sergeant and I was a trainee for our trainer for a while and bringing in recruits and teaching how to put one front and foot in front of the other.

00:04:29 Speaker 2

And then they switched me to the.

00:04:32 Speaker 2

Or from the 77th to the 80th. Yeah. And that's the outfit I went overseas with.

00:04:38 Speaker 1

OK. And where did you go?

00:04:40 Speaker 1

With the 80th.

00:04:42 Speaker 2

And we hit the beach at Normandy, hit just to the left of Saint Low, I remember.

00:04:48 Speaker 2

I also remember there was a wall when they let us, they let us off the landing barges and in deep water and they're supposed to take you in where you can jump out and start running. You know, like they do in Hollywood. But they let us out in about 10 feet of water and down we went. We had to slash our way up at that time. You'd have.

00:04:59 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

00:05:05 Speaker 2

A rifle that wouldn't work.

00:05:07 Speaker 2

That's very embarrassing, actually.

00:05:10 Speaker 2

But we got through it.

00:05:12 Speaker 2

And I got up to this wall. I remember. Then I.

00:05:14 Speaker 2

Shook like a.

00:05:17 Speaker 2

What shakes?

00:05:19 Speaker 1

Leave leaves on a.

00:05:19 Speaker 2

Huh.

00:05:20 Speaker 1

Tree.

00:05:20 Speaker 2

Leaves on a tree, yeah.

00:05:23 Speaker 2

And otherwise, things were all right. Nobody hit me.

00:05:26 Speaker 2

But boy, was I scared like everybody else.

00:05:30 Speaker 2

I remember the Canadians were right alongside us. This one guys there talking to me, those next to me were both gravel down the dirt. The poor kid couldn't talk.

00:05:41 Speaker 2

And if he could talk, I couldn't have answered him. So that worked out good.

00:05:47 Speaker 2

Right here we are. We got through it.

00:05:49 Speaker 1

Well, I think we know the answer to the next question, but this kind of leads us into a a series of questions. And did you see combat?

00:05:56 Speaker 2

He sure did.

00:05:58 Speaker 2

Hit the beach, it seemed lower there and well, we started right there and I got as far as the Mets.

00:06:06 Speaker 2

The sons of guns, when we got to Paris, they snapped our outfit, put us in trucks and drove us around and let the free French take Paris and then ticked us up. Everybody wanted.

00:06:15 Speaker 2

To go to see Paris.

00:06:17 Speaker 2

Never did.

00:06:21 Speaker 1

Were there many casualties in your unit?

00:06:24 Speaker 2

Yes. In fact, when I left.

00:06:27 Speaker 2

There were 7 original men left. They weren't all killed, some wounded, and a couple blew their taps.

00:06:33 Speaker 2

But there's seven of us.

00:06:35 Speaker 1

OK.

00:06:36 Speaker 1

And here's where I think I can help you with remembering a few things. What were some of your most memorable experiences?

00:06:44 Speaker 2

Coming out alive.

00:06:46 Speaker 2

The main main one.

00:06:49 Speaker 2

I can't remember a pen.

00:06:50 Speaker 1

Well, how about did you ever see George Patton?

00:06:54 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, I was on the factual on. Never forget that day.

00:06:59 Speaker 2

We were all dug in, facing the enemy and they were shooting and all of a sudden patent shows up with three or four officers.

00:07:07 Speaker 2

And he's standing right over my fax hole and giving directions. And why are these men doing this? They're doing that. He could have got this at us then, but he didn't.

00:07:16 Speaker 2

So I didn't get on my facts all either I stayed there.

00:07:20 Speaker 2

And then he left.

00:07:23 Speaker 1

OK, I'm trying to a couple of the other stories that I that I've heard you talk about a a wild boar.

00:07:31 Speaker 1

Do you remember the story about the wild?

00:07:33 Speaker 1

Boar that night.

00:07:35 Speaker 2

Oh, I thought it was the enemy crawling up. Yeah.

00:07:40 Speaker 2

I'm trying to remember what did.

00:07:42 Speaker 2

Take a shot at him a couple of times thinking there was a skull coming in, but when he showed up, where did I get back in my hall?

00:07:51 Speaker 2

I remember that animal.

00:07:53 Speaker 2

He was probably in somebody's dinner table the next day.

00:07:56 Speaker 1

Yeah, I I think that's what I remember is you saying that that you did shoot the boar and the next day you saw a couple of French?

00:08:02 Speaker 1

Villagers presents taking them off for for their day.

00:08:02 Speaker 2

Dragging them all up. Yeah, that's right, yeah.

00:08:05

Yeah.

00:08:06 Speaker 2

Yeah, they ate well that week.

00:08:09 Speaker 1

Well, what about? I've heard you tell a lot of stories about the hedgerows.

00:08:12 Speaker 2

Oh, the hedgerows. Forget those places.

00:08:15 Speaker 2

You know, at night everybody you automatically stopped shooting the enemy as well as you when you get to a hedgerow you might be on this side of it and some of the enemy would be sitting right

on the other side. You could hear them talking, but there's more or less of a unwritten code. Then let's sleep. Don't shoot.

00:08:31

Excuse me.

00:08:35 Speaker 1

What else about the hedgerows?

00:08:39 Speaker 2

What else can I think about them? I was just glad they were there so to hide behind.

00:08:49 Speaker 1

OK. A couple other stories. You talked about a little girl seeing a little girl on the battlefield one day.

00:08:57 Speaker 2

She came out of a house. I know I was dug.

00:08:59 Speaker 2

In we all were.

00:09:02 Speaker 2

This little girl come out of the house down the line and just start wandering right between us and.

00:09:06 Speaker 2

The enemy.

00:09:07

Hmm.

00:09:08 Speaker 2

So we got got her out of there quick.

00:09:11 Speaker 2

But she just want to see what's going on.

00:09:15 Speaker 2

But she got away all right.

00:09:17 Speaker 1

That's good.

00:09:18 Speaker 1

UM.

00:09:20 Speaker 1

You've also talked a lot about the the German 80 eights. Any, any experiences with the the German?

00:09:23 Speaker 2

I hate it.

00:09:25 Speaker 2

88 were the worst thing in the.

00:09:27 Speaker 2

War as far as.

00:09:27 Speaker 2

We are concerned this was a flat trajectory weapon.

00:09:31 Speaker 2

And they could shoot there at a good distance. It didn't have to live in, which is almost like a rifle shooting at you.

00:09:37 Speaker 2

And you'd hear that thing coming, and then you'd wait for it to burst and you'd be crawling your hole there and open it. Enough burst over you.

00:09:44 Speaker 2

That was about it.

00:09:47 Speaker 2

That was their best weapon.

00:09:51 Speaker 1

And and I heard another story you told once about looking for a place to sleep for the night and opening up a barn door.

00:10:03 Speaker 2

And the enemy was in there, and that one thought you that scared the hell out of me that night.

00:10:04 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:10:08 Speaker 2

We're sort of drizzling and we only get out.

00:10:10 Speaker 2

Of the rain. So.

00:10:12 Speaker 2

We can't open the barn door and here they are. All in there. Well, they were scared to. It was as we were of them. But they all dropped their rifles and commanded.

00:10:21 Speaker 2

Thank heaven.

00:10:23 Speaker 1

Do you remember how many it was?

00:10:25 Speaker 2

The Count, I don't know. They just marched out. And it's funny thing they marched out and step.

00:10:31 Speaker 2

Kaboom, kaboom. Kaboom, you know.

00:10:33 Speaker 2

And they were just as glad to get out of there as we were to get them outside.

00:10:37 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah. Did you sleep in the barn that night?

00:10:40 Speaker 2

We had a dry night there.

00:10:47 Speaker 1

Is it? Is it true that you escorted Jane Russell?

00:10:50 Speaker 2

Oh, I like that. That was a. That was a good deal there.

00:10:56 Speaker 2

But I never got to touch her or.

00:10:57 Speaker 2

Anything.

00:10:59 Speaker 2

The officers took care of that.

00:11:02 Speaker 2

We just guarded.

00:11:04 Speaker 2

She was nice too.

00:11:06 Speaker 1

How? How did that happen?

00:11:08 Speaker 2

When this happened, they needed an escort, so they grabbed the first ones.

00:11:11 Speaker 2

Insight and.

00:11:12 Speaker 2

Dragged us out and there we went.

00:11:14 Speaker 1

Do you remember where the show was?

00:11:17 Speaker 2

Where was it?

00:11:19 Speaker 2

No, I don't. Where did I tell?

00:11:21 Speaker 1

You. I don't. I don't know either. We can probably find that.

00:11:22 Speaker 2

Jane Russell.

00:11:24 Speaker 1

Out.

00:11:26 Speaker 1

Did you ever experience any combat patrols?

00:11:30 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, yeah.

00:11:33 Speaker 2

We all had to go into those combat controls.

00:11:37 Speaker 2

Use the.

00:11:39 Speaker 2

Take a squad, or sometimes you take a full platoon.

00:11:43 Speaker 2

He talked to them is that?

00:11:46 Speaker 2

What?

00:11:46

OK, automated the call.

00:11:48 Speaker 1

What were? What were some of the combat patrol experiences like?

00:11:51

OK.

00:11:53 Speaker 2

Well, one thing I know is when you have you ran into an enemy they didn't want to shoot at you anymore and you want to shoot at them.

00:11:59 Speaker 2

So they lay there quiet as you went by and they clicked a whole bunch of it.

00:12:05 Speaker 2

But a couple of times we had a few skirmishes.

00:12:08 Speaker 2

Mm-hmm.

00:12:09 Speaker 2

They're very unfriendly people in those days.

00:12:13 Speaker 1

About how often did you go on combat patrols?

00:12:17 Speaker 2

But every night when you were there.

00:12:19 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:12:20 Speaker 2

Well, you'd go and reckon ordering to see where the strength of the enemy will.

00:12:26 Speaker 2

And if.

00:12:26 Speaker 2

Come back safely and know where they were.

00:12:29 Speaker 1

OK.

00:12:31 Speaker 2

They were the good old days, as they say.

00:12:35 Speaker 2

Why are they full of baloney?

00:12:38 Speaker 1

A couple of other a couple other stories.

00:12:42 Speaker 1

And I don't remember too clearly what the story was, but a story about having an encounter with the Messerschmitt.

00:12:50 Speaker 2

Would you ask me that one for?

00:12:53 Speaker 2

Can't remember that one.

00:12:55 Speaker 1

OK, how about?

00:12:59 Speaker 1

Finding out some potatoes in a French town and having dinner with.

00:13:07 Speaker 1

After the way you found it was Warren Chelmo.

00:13:11 Speaker 2

You got me there.

00:13:12 Speaker 1

That, that's. That's the story you told once too, about finding some potatoes and cooking some potatoes and someone from another unit. And after the war, you and Warren talked to each other. You didn't know each other prior to the war and that you decided that.

00:13:26 Speaker 1

It was the two of you that had dinner that day.

00:13:30 Speaker 2

I don't remember that one. You're asking me things I've forgotten.

00:13:31 Speaker 1

OK.

00:13:33 Speaker 1

I know. Well, that's don't worry about. We can't remember.

00:13:34 Speaker 2

Never go to.

00:13:35 Speaker 2

War, fellas, I want to stay away.

00:13:39 Speaker 1

OK. Well, let's go on with some of the other questions. Did you sustain any injuries during the war?

00:13:44 Speaker 2

Just my ankle.

00:13:45

OK.

00:13:46 Speaker 2

Had my helmet shot off once.

00:13:49 Speaker 2

I carried that helmet all the time after that.

00:13:52 Speaker 1

Then what happened with your ankle? How did you sustain that injury?

00:13:56 Speaker 2

I figured I was running or diving or something.

00:13:59 Speaker 2

I forget these things. What did I tell you?

00:14:01 Speaker 1

Was it riding on the the tank near?

00:14:03 Speaker 1

Maps.

00:14:03 Speaker 2

All the tank. Yeah, that's right. In the back of a tank from three or four of us on that. We're going in. These were the Shermans. You could sit up in.

00:14:10 Speaker 2

The back of them.

00:14:12 Speaker 2

And that thing hit a landmine. One side of it and boy away we went. And that's when my ankle went to.

00:14:20 Speaker 2

But the tank fell back down. I should have stayed in it. I would have been safer, probably.

00:14:26 Speaker 1

What about your front teeth?

00:14:29 Speaker 2

Got knocked out by a rifle ****.

00:14:31 Speaker 1

How did that happen?

00:14:32 Speaker 2

Guy hit me. I'm just thinking.

00:14:37 Speaker 2

A rifle **** right in the.

00:14:38 Speaker 1

Face. So you you told the story about exactly how it happened. Walking down the street with your spotter on the.

00:14:44 Speaker 1

Other side of the street.

00:14:46 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, and he started to well, we'd watch each other. I'd watch his side. He'd watch my side. I should.

00:14:52 Speaker 2

Get a better view.

00:14:54 Speaker 2

And all of a sudden I could see his face changed and I turned around quick and Wham.

00:14:58 Speaker 2

Well.

00:14:59 Speaker 2

That's where my teeth went.

00:15:01 Speaker 2

But the other guy got him. Thank heaven.

00:15:05 Speaker 2

And there were there were very bad days actually, yeah.

00:15:06 Speaker 1

Right.

00:15:11 Speaker 1

OK. The other thing we wanted to talk about too are things how the experience changed your life and what life was like after the war as well. And some of your other experiences during the war. How did you stay in touch with with family?

00:15:26 Speaker 1

During the war.

00:15:27 Speaker 2

Was saying just by.

00:15:29 Speaker 2

Letter emails. They call them. And I couldn't think of them. That was the only way you could.

00:15:36 Speaker 2

Didn't get a chance to phone.

00:15:38 Speaker 1

How often did you write letters?

00:15:40 Speaker 2

Oh, I'd say about once a month. You too scared to do anything else but crawl around their friends.

00:15:47 Speaker 2

But people were glad to see you, though I can remember when you'd be marching down through these towns.

00:15:52 Speaker 2

Peasants that come out and to hand your fresh bread or cookies or.

00:15:55 Speaker 2

Something like that.

00:15:57 Speaker 2

They were so glad to see you.

00:15:58 Speaker 2

Hmm.

00:16:00 Speaker 2

Always were the good old days.

00:16:04 Speaker 1

This is probably also kind of a dumb question, but did you feel pressure or stress?

00:16:09 Speaker 2

What do you mean I'm?

00:16:09 Speaker 2

Scared stiff all the time.

00:16:10 Speaker 1

And and how did you deal with that? How did you cope with that? What were some of things?

00:16:13 Speaker 2

By.

00:16:13 Speaker 1

That you used to to deal with it.

00:16:15 Speaker 2

Just put one foot in front of the other and keep on going.

00:16:18 Speaker 2

You always want to be with your buddies. You never want to be stay behind or too far ahead. But you were a target then.

00:16:26

Umm.

00:16:27 Speaker 2

So you hung together.

00:16:29 Speaker 1

Was there anything that you kept or did for good luck?

00:16:32 Speaker 2

Anything I did for good luck? Yeah.

00:16:32

The thing.

00:16:36 Speaker 2

Remember that one, yeah.

00:16:37 Speaker 1

The rituals or charms or?

00:16:40 Speaker 2

No, I didn't have anything like that that I remember.

00:16:45 Speaker 1

What about entertainment? How did you entertain yourself?

00:16:49 Speaker 2

Where is he going to hold the ground and climb it in? That was this. That's where you spend half your life. There was in a hole.

00:16:54 Speaker 1

Well, what did you do when?

00:16:56 Speaker 1

You're on leave.

00:16:58 Speaker 2

We went to London.

00:17:01 Speaker 2

And there was pubs there. You'd went and drink.

00:17:02 Speaker 2

This lousy beer.

00:17:05 Speaker 2

The flat beer. Actually, I I didn't care for that.

00:17:08 Speaker 2

And there was really nothing else to do there.

00:17:10 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:17:11 Speaker 2

Couldn't chase girls because the British had them all tied up.

00:17:15 Speaker 2

But otherwise I was just getting away from the front first while you went in.

00:17:23 Speaker 2

Those were the days.

00:17:24 Speaker 1

Do you remember any humorous or unusual events?

00:17:29 Speaker 1

Anything out of the ordinary that happened?

00:17:31 Speaker 2

Did I ever tell you any? I forget?

00:17:33 Speaker 1

I think we've covered a lot of them. OK. OK.

00:17:35 Speaker 2

I think you have too.

00:17:43 Speaker 1

What did? What did you think of some of your platoon leaders during?

00:17:47 Speaker 1

Trying to watch.

00:17:48 Speaker 2

I had good ones.

00:17:51 Speaker 2

Although I had one guy that.

00:17:54 Speaker 2

He just didn't have it. He was too scared.

00:17:59 Speaker 2

We're going to take that off and tap Sergeant gets up and also other sergeants get up.

00:18:04 Speaker 2

And.

00:18:05 Speaker 2

Let's go. And he just stayed there. We're going.

00:18:09 Speaker 2

I don't know. I have no sense.

00:18:11 Speaker 2

But now when they were scary days, though, yeah, and there were no. What's going to happen?

00:18:16 Speaker 2

The worst part was at night when bed check Charlie came in, as one plane had come through and he had dropped his low.

00:18:24 Speaker 2

And if you were in the area where his loaders draft, you were dead.

00:18:28 Speaker 2

Bed chef Charlie.

00:18:30 Speaker 2

Nobody ever shot him down either, that I remember.

00:18:34 Speaker 2

Maybe it's plane blew up or something I hope.

00:18:39 Speaker 1

Did you have a lot of platoon leaders?

00:18:42 Speaker 2

The guy in.

00:18:44 Speaker 2

There's a four.

00:18:45 Speaker 2

For three or four, I forget.

00:18:48 Speaker 2

Well, they were the guys that were in the line all the time. That first guy that had to get up out of that hole, he was a target.

00:18:55 Speaker 2

Get up and follow me.

00:18:58 Speaker 2

Give me your blessing as he get up. That's what all you can do. But once he got going, you can get out after him.

00:19:05 Speaker 2

That was the worst time time to go early in the morning because everybody was sat and ready to fight.

00:19:12 Speaker 2

But I'm still here. Yeah, that's what counts.

00:19:13 Speaker 1

Yes you are.

00:19:16 Speaker 1

Well, so let's talk a little bit about after service. Do you remember the day your service ended?

00:19:22 Speaker 1

The actual date? Yeah. Well, not, not that you have to give me the date, but do you have any memories of of the day that you got out of service?

00:19:30 Speaker 2

Well, that was back here.

00:19:31 Speaker 1

Yeah. Where were you?

00:19:35 Speaker 2

Was I in New York or?

00:19:37 Speaker 2

New Jersey.

00:19:39 Speaker 2

I can't remember.

00:19:40 Speaker 2

Pat, tell me.

00:19:42 Speaker 1

I don't know.

00:19:42

OK.

00:19:45 Speaker 1

What did you do for the, you know, the first days and weeks after after the service. And I do remember one story about that. Well, I I believe something to do with your first night back in Syracuse. You spent and sitting on the hospital steps with mom.

00:19:52 Speaker 2

You tell me I ate a.

00:19:55 Speaker 2

Lot, I know that.

00:20:03 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:20:05 Speaker 1

Who's Jimmy? Your oldest son.

00:20:09 Speaker 2

I don't remember.

00:20:11 Speaker 1

He he was. He was in the hospital and I don't remember what before we generated.

00:20:13 Speaker 2

Yeah, that's right. The day I come home, I had to go to the hospital. Jimmy had an inspiration for something. There's a spandex or something.

00:20:18

Yeah.

00:20:20 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:20:21 Speaker 2

I remember that what a time to come home from a war and sit down.

00:20:25 Speaker 2

At a hospital.

00:20:30 Speaker 1

So what did you do after? After the war, when things started getting back to some sense of normalcy, did you go?

00:20:37 Speaker 1

To work. Oh.

00:20:38 Speaker 2

Yeah, I had to go out and.

00:20:39 Speaker 2

Get a job.

00:20:40 Speaker 1

What was your first?

00:20:41 Speaker 2

Job I was a salesman. American home foods. I think it was.

00:20:46 Speaker 1

OK.

00:20:47 Speaker 2

And from there on, and I was a.

00:20:49 Speaker 2

Salesman, different companies.

00:20:49 Speaker 1

OK.

00:20:51 Speaker 2

Then I was raising kids, too. You were one of them, and a lot of them I remember.

00:20:54 Speaker 1

I want one about you, yeah.

00:20:59 Speaker 1

Did you make any close friendships while you were in the service, and did you stay in?

00:21:02 Speaker 1

Touch with anybody I did for a.

00:21:05 Speaker 2

While with one of them.

00:21:07 Speaker 2

You see, there's only actually 7 original men left in my platoon. The day I decided to leave.

00:21:15 Speaker 2

And I've lost track with them.

00:21:17 Speaker 1

Do you remember his name?

00:21:19 Speaker 1

We stayed in touch with.

00:21:21 Speaker 2

Would you ask me that for?

00:21:23 Speaker 1

You don't have to answer him, OK?

00:21:24 Speaker 2

I can't remember.

00:21:29 Speaker 1

After you said you were a salesman for a long time, what else did you do?

00:21:34 Speaker 1

In terms of a career after the war?

00:21:37 Speaker 2

Basically, as a salesman, did they do something else? I'm raised kids.

00:21:40 Speaker 1

Salesman. He raised a lot of kids grocery store.

00:21:44 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, I had a grocery store in Pulaski, NY.

00:21:49 Speaker 2

When there was a job or working **** off all the time.

00:21:54 Speaker 2

But I broke in a few. You your kids there too? And.

00:21:56 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:21:56 Speaker 2

So that helped.

00:21:59 Speaker 1

How did your military experience influence your thinking about either war and or the military?

00:22:07 Speaker 2

Well, the military is very, very necessary. You got to have a strong backing. If you don't, they're going to come right in on top of you.

00:22:15 Speaker 2

All the bad guys, they just waiting.

00:22:18 Speaker 2

You make a mistake and there they are. That's why you gotta have a strong military. Mm-hmm. That's my opinion.

00:22:26 Speaker 1

Now well did did you enjoy your military experience other than think all about combat?

00:22:29 Speaker 2

Yeah. Yes, I really enjoyed it.

00:22:32 Speaker 2

What I like was close order drill. In fact, our platoon used to win the.

00:22:38 Speaker 2

We we'd have contests with the different battalions and we always learned tap.

00:22:44 Speaker 2

Because I had one guy that knew how to stay in step.

00:22:47 Speaker 2

And he kept everybody going.

00:22:50 Speaker 2

If they didn't keep it, he would have got him. He was a big son of a gun.

00:22:55 Speaker 1

In general, did you like military?

00:22:56 Speaker 2

Life. Yes, I did. I love military life.

00:23:00 Speaker 2

Loved, I guess, is not the word, but it was very content with it because you needed that regimentation. I think in your life when you're young especially.

00:23:09 Speaker 2

And if I had to do it again, I'd go.

00:23:12 Speaker 2

And head that teach me how to shoot the new.

00:23:14 Speaker 2

Weapons though.

00:23:15 Speaker 2

Those old enfields and oh threes. When we finally got to the M1 so.

00:23:22 Speaker 2

I'll never forget those enfields the British had Hawks and cheese. What a cumbersome. It was a great big thing.

00:23:27 Speaker 2

But it was good for blood strokes. If you had that monism.

00:23:31 Speaker 1

That that's a good question. I probably should ask what what types of supplies, weapons, things that you carry?

00:23:40 Speaker 2

You had a bayonet and you had a rifle.

00:23:43 Speaker 2

And you had some hand grenades. If you were lucky to get them.

00:23:49 Speaker 2

And that was about it.

00:23:51 Speaker 2

Of course, she always carried child with you because she had to eat.

00:23:55 Speaker 2

I used to love it. When you come into some of.

00:23:57 Speaker 2

Those French towns.

00:23:58 Speaker 2

That people come up and start feeding your cheese.

00:24:01 Speaker 2

Homemade bread.

00:24:04 Speaker 2

And then all of a sudden, they told us we couldn't take.

00:24:05 Speaker 2

Those things because.

00:24:06 Speaker 2

They make enough poison. You at the head.

00:24:10 Speaker 2

Back to your K rations.

00:24:15 Speaker 1

I'm getting back to after the war. How did your service and experiences affect?

00:24:18 Speaker 1

The rest of your life.

00:24:22 Speaker 2

Why did you ask me a question like that?

00:24:24 Speaker 1

I think it's a good question.

00:24:25 Speaker 2

OK, well, I don't know what.

00:24:28 Speaker 2

Taught me that I had to go and do.

00:24:30 Speaker 2

Things and do.

00:24:30 Speaker 2

Them right. So I started raising my family and.

00:24:34 Speaker 2

Teaching them.

00:24:35 Speaker 2

What's right from wrong?

00:24:37

Hmm.

00:24:37 Speaker 2

The key to the whole thing.

00:24:40 Speaker 2

That's what causes war, as the guy that do.

00:24:43 Speaker 2

The wrong thing?

00:24:46 Speaker 1

Well, here's a good way to ask another way to ask it. Were you a different person than you were prior to the war?

00:24:52 Speaker 2

Well, I think very definitely.

00:24:55 Speaker 2

I had before the war, I was sort of a boisterous type and a wise guy type.

00:24:59 Speaker 2

And I get over that quick after the war.

00:25:04 Speaker 2

Otherwise, everything's OK. I'm still here. That's the main.

00:25:06 Speaker 2

Thing.

00:25:12 Speaker 1

Is there anything else that you want to?

00:25:14 Speaker 2

No.

00:25:15 Speaker 1

Ask.

00:25:16 Speaker 2

I feel I'm in an inquisition here right now. You better.

00:25:18 Speaker 1

Yeah, it kind of looks like it too.

00:25:22 Speaker 2

Ah, they were good days and bad days. I'd love to come into the French towns when that all run up and give you a bread and Jelly homemade Jelly. Yeah, but then we got the orders. We weren't to take that stuff because they might be poisoning or So what the?

00:25:35 Speaker 2

Hell.

00:25:36 Speaker 2

You went back to your season case.

00:25:39 Speaker 1

You know, I actually have a couple other good questions. What was Mom doing during the war?

00:25:45 Speaker 2

You know, I was over there and.

00:25:46 Speaker 2

She was here.

00:25:46 Speaker 1

What did she tell you she was doing?

00:25:49 Speaker 2

I don't remember. She was raising Jimmy. And then yeah, yeah.

00:25:54 Speaker 1

Did she work?

00:25:55 Speaker 2

Yes, she was. What was she doing?

00:25:58 Speaker 1

Do you remember? Was it not Bristol-Myers?

00:26:01 Speaker 2

Carrier carrier carrier. She was working? Yeah.

00:26:02

OK.

00:26:02 Speaker 1

Period.

00:26:06 Speaker 2

She was one of the maidens.

00:26:09 Speaker 2

And there's nothing else except I came home.

00:26:11 Speaker 1

Alive. Yeah. How old was Jimmy? Your oldest son when he came back?

00:26:19 Speaker 2

I don't know 3 or 4 around them.

00:26:20 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:26:23 Speaker 2

Those were the days.

00:26:26 Speaker 2

I hope you fellas never had to go.

00:26:26 Speaker 1

Do you want to?

00:26:27 Speaker 1

Do you have any questions you want to ask? I've gone through all all the.

00:26:30 Speaker 1

Lists and everything that I can think of. So.

00:26:31 Speaker 2

I hope you never hit the go boys.

00:26:34 Speaker 2

If you do keep your head down and keep your **** down.

00:26:38 Speaker 2

To him and some of their crew.

00:26:40 Speaker 3

An ending remark, just save time and.

00:26:42

Which concluded that Mister Sherman.

00:26:45 Speaker 3

OK, the time now is uh.

00:26:48 Speaker 3

1012 we started at about 10-9 to 50 and we're concluding the interview with Vincent M Chen.

00:26:55 Speaker 2

I've been talking all that time.

00:26:57 Speaker 2

Yeah, doing doing a great job. Shut me up.

00:27:02 Speaker 2

Right. OK.

00:27:03 Speaker 1

That was great.