

## **Jesse Szoke Interview**

Company I, 319th Inf Reg

*(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Donna Madver)*

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

00:00:04

Don't try it.

00:00:05 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:00:08 Speaker 1

Today I'll be looking at her as she interview.

00:00:08 Speaker 2

No.

00:00:10 Speaker 3

You'll be looking.

00:00:11 Speaker 3

You could be looking right at them.

00:00:15 Speaker 3

Hello. Today we are here at Madonna University June 6, 2011 to interview Jesse Zoki.

00:00:25 Speaker 3

He is a veteran in the branch.

00:00:28 Speaker 3

Of the army.

00:00:30 Speaker 3

And he was.

00:00:34 Speaker 3

June 16, 1944.

00:00:36 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:00:38 Speaker 3

To April 15th, 1945.

00:00:40 Speaker 1

Exactly right.

00:00:42 Speaker 3

And his highest rank is the Sergeant.

00:00:45 Speaker 1

That's right, communication setting.

00:00:47 Speaker 3

Communication Sergeant in the 80th Division, the 3rd Battalion, 1 company.

00:00:54 Speaker 1

OK.

00:00:54 Speaker 3

I company.

00:00:57 Speaker 3

OK. And his son?

00:01:01 Speaker 1

Alvin.

00:01:01 Speaker 2

Allen, Sophie.

00:01:02 Speaker 3

Alan's Okie is present with the interview so.

00:01:08 Speaker 3

Hi, my name is Donna.

00:01:09 Speaker 3

I am a student at I'm a Donna University in the Gerontology Department. Cheryl Horvat is the.

00:01:17 Speaker 3

Video logger.

00:01:19 Speaker 3

So and the interview is being conducted for the veteran history project at the Library of Congress.

00:01:27 Speaker 3

All right, Jesse.

00:01:29 Speaker 3

So a few of the biological details. So you were born.

00:01:36 Speaker 1

9625.

00:01:37 Speaker 3

1925.

00:01:39 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:01:41 Speaker 3

In Michigan.

00:01:42

Yeah.

00:01:43 Speaker 3

Michigan. So let's.

00:01:44 Speaker 3

Talk a little bit about.

00:01:46 Speaker 3

Let's start from.

00:01:47 Speaker 3

Beginning.

00:01:47 Speaker 3

OK. Did you?

00:01:49 Speaker 3

You were drafted. Yes, yes.

00:01:51 Speaker 3

So talk. You want to start talking about that a little bit? Yeah. OK.

00:01:57 Speaker 1

Drafted on May 16th of June 1944.

00:02:05 Speaker 1

And then I went to Fort Sheridan, IL.

00:02:12 Speaker 1

Picked up all of our clothes that we had.

00:02:16 Speaker 1

And from there, after we got everything that we needed in a way of clothing, I went out.

00:02:22 Speaker 1

Went to.

00:02:26 Speaker 1

South Carolina camp crop, South Carolina.

00:02:32 Speaker 1

And took 17 weeks of basic training there.

00:02:37 Speaker 1

Kidney glutath.

00:02:41 Speaker 1

lone, also machine guns and crawling underneath the machine gun.

00:02:47 Speaker 1

Ammunition.

00:02:50 Speaker 1

And.

00:02:53 Speaker 1

We had a.

00:02:53 Speaker 1

Of work 20 to 20 year or 20.

00:02:58 Speaker 1

5 marches.

00:03:00 Speaker 1

Which we had gone on to.

00:03:01 Speaker 1

We were pretty good condition.

00:03:04 Speaker 1

And it was hot South Carolina, Spartanburg in June, and when I marched into camp proud South Carolina, only I came out of the water.

00:03:15 Speaker 1

Was just all wet, you know, from sweat.

00:03:20 Speaker 1

The heat goes.

00:03:22 Speaker 3

So before you got to South Carolina, you grew.

00:03:26 Speaker 3

In.

00:03:27 Speaker 3

So what were you doing before you were drafted?

00:03:31 Speaker 1

From high school, but during the we had a truck garden farm and we all we only had three months to make a good living and we raised a garden vegetable, go to the western and eastern market.

00:03:46 Speaker 1

And I I attended many times my brother, he was taking the truck and we get up at 40 clock in the morning.

00:03:56 Speaker 1

And we get to the market, we'd have breakfast before the market opened.

00:04:00 Speaker 1

The market opened generally about 60 clock.

00:04:04 Speaker 1

And then from there, the big buyers would buy everything you had that was nice.

00:04:10 Speaker 1

And at 9:00 they would leave for the terminal to pick up their bananas and oranges and things like that.

00:04:17 Speaker 1

And from there, they went to their stores and got everything all set.

00:04:22 Speaker 2

Dad, you might want to tell them about the.

00:04:24 Speaker 2

How you got drafted, how your oldest brother was in the Air Force and you took a place of your next oldest brother.

00:04:32

Right.

00:04:35

Yes.

00:04:36 Speaker 1

Well, I did.

00:04:37 Speaker 1

My brother was up for grabs and I.

00:04:41 Speaker 1

Took his place because I thought I could serve better than he could and uh not.

00:04:46 Speaker 1

I don't mean that.

00:04:48 Speaker 1

It was easier for me.

00:04:49 Speaker 1

Serve than to West for him, you know.

00:04:52 Speaker 1

So I did that and of course, right home, he worked on a farm where he always had.

00:05:01 Speaker 1

When I went to camp out South Carolina.

00:05:05 Speaker 1

Got in there on a hot day in the morning.

00:05:09 Speaker 1

And we started 17 weeks down the 10th of train.

00:05:14 Speaker 1

And that included, as I said before.

00:05:17 Speaker 1

Right on on the on the rifle range of 0 in your rifles and also learning how to operate.

00:05:27 Speaker 1

Machine guns.

00:05:29 Speaker 1

And your.

00:05:29 Speaker 1

One rifle, which was the grand at that time.

00:05:37 Speaker 1

When I finish the basic training.

00:05:40 Speaker 1

They gave us like a 30 day delay and route which included you get about two weeks at home and that will give you enough time to get to the port which was Maryland.

00:05:55 Speaker 1

And every.

00:05:56 Speaker 1

Our ship, which was the Queen Elizabeth.

00:06:00 Speaker 3

Queen Elizabeth.

00:06:01 Speaker 1

Yeah. And we got over 7 1/2 days.

00:06:06 Speaker 1

Ships with the movement, even if even though they think that you know because of the submarines.

00:06:12 Speaker 1

And then we landed at Glasgow, Scotland. We got off and got onto a train and went to Southampton, England.

00:06:24 Speaker 1

And that's where.

00:06:26 Speaker 1

We had issues of more equipment.

00:06:32 Speaker 1

And a lot of we had a lot of.

00:06:38 Speaker 1

Sessions are pretty.

00:06:39 Speaker 1

You know what we would be looking forward to doing.

00:06:43 Speaker 1

We have pretty good idea what was going to come next, you know.

00:06:48 Speaker 1

So after I got off the boat and.

00:06:53 Speaker 1

Southampton. We went over to, we got all went over to Lahore.

00:07:00 Speaker 1

And that's where I ordered.

00:07:01

The.

00:07:02 Speaker 1

Train to go all the way up to Belgium to be Belgium and then we had our records there, our weapons.

00:07:12 Speaker 1

You know.

00:07:13 Speaker 1

Again, we went on a rifle range of 0 to.

00:07:16 Speaker 1

So we did that twice.

00:07:20



Did you see?

00:07:20 Speaker 2

Brother in England, when you were in England.

00:07:22 Speaker 2

On before you never did.

00:07:25 Speaker 3

So how was it adapting to all this?

00:07:28 Speaker 3

Were you comfortable with it? Were you?

00:07:31 Speaker 1

Oh, it was something completely.

00:07:31 Speaker 3

Intimidating.

00:07:32 Speaker 1

I've never been out of the country before.

00:07:38 Speaker 1

Oh yes, it was, you know, but.

00:07:41 Speaker 1

What you get a group of people and big crowds and you got your story.

00:07:46 Speaker 1

Very hard.

00:07:46 Speaker 3

So she.

00:07:47 Speaker 3

You didn't know anybody.

00:07:48 Speaker 1

No, you.

00:07:49 Speaker 1

No, you didn't know everybody else was the same you.

00:07:52 Speaker 3

Know and then you just you just caught on and you just met people and.

00:07:57 Speaker 3

Be corrected them and.

00:07:58 Speaker 1

Oh yeah, I always tell my husband.

00:08:02 Speaker 1

And then of course, like I say, we got all of our equipment and when we were ready to go.

00:08:11 Speaker 1

We boarded a train.

00:08:13 Speaker 1

For jibe Belgium.

00:08:16 Speaker 1

That was a rebel demo.

00:08:19 Speaker 1

We're late.

00:08:21 Speaker 1

We're deciding on what division needed you most.

00:08:25 Speaker 1

And so happened.

00:08:26 Speaker 1

That the 80th Division under General McBride.

00:08:31 Speaker 1

Would be the division that was calling for the troops at that time.

00:08:35 Speaker 3

And you did not have.

00:08:36 Speaker 1

A choice? No, you had. No, you addressed it.

00:08:39 Speaker 3

Yeah, you had to go where?

00:08:41 Speaker 1

See I what I did.

00:08:44 Speaker 1

Is I decided to.

00:08:47 Speaker 1

Finished school, you know, high school and I graduated the next.

00:08:52 Speaker 1

I was in the service, you know, but if I had went when they called me, I could have chosen the service. I could have either a air car or the Marines.

00:09:04 Speaker 1

Or the.

00:09:05 Speaker 1

I could have done all that, but once you're drafted, you lose that choice and you go where they tell you. And of course, at that time they had just made the nominee landings and we were going to as a replacement for the boys that.

00:09:22 Speaker 1

A lot of them that we said we can, all they they lost, you know, three different ways.

00:09:29 Speaker 1

Of them were.

00:09:32 Speaker 1

Or, you know, automatically, you know, the safe to others were captured.

00:09:43 Speaker 3

OK, I.

00:09:44 Speaker 3

To just break is everything go away.

00:09:54

It started back over.

00:09:54

OK.

00:09:57 Speaker 3

So basically this is your first your first year service.

00:10:00 Speaker 3

Just getting yourself.

00:10:00 Speaker 1

Yeah, right. Right.

00:10:03 Speaker 3

In belt, the Belgium area so.

00:10:06 Speaker 3

You form some camaraderie, friendships.

00:10:12 Speaker 3

Were you able to stay in touch with your family?

00:10:14 Speaker 3

Or how did that work?

00:10:16 Speaker 1

Well.

00:10:16 Speaker 3

Tell talk a little bit.

00:10:18 Speaker 1

Actually.

00:10:20 Speaker 1

You could write letters to them, but they didn't know exactly where you were going to be at because you didn't know.

00:10:25 Speaker 1

You know, until they sent you out and then you'd have to write some more letters and let them know what your present address was.

00:10:35 Speaker 1

That's how that work because.

00:10:37 Speaker 1

We were replacements for the division at the ground forces, you know, because they suffered a lot of heavy losses.

00:10:46 Speaker 1

Of course, we went in and replaced these boys, you know.

00:10:51 Speaker 1

And then.

00:10:54 Speaker 1

After we found out what.

00:10:57 Speaker 1

Uh companies we were with and what the regimen was, we could give them RA question like the right.

00:11:02 Speaker 1

You.

00:11:02 Speaker 1

Know.

00:11:05 Speaker 3

And then did you take advantage of that?

00:11:07 Speaker 3

You able to send letters home.

00:11:09 Speaker 1

Oh, sure.

00:11:09 Speaker 3

And they responded as quick as I could.

00:11:11 Speaker 1

Well, yeah, they they could. Yes, yes.

00:11:15 Speaker 1

If you had a letter and you knew you were moving when you tell them to hold the letter, up until you got to where you were going because you know it takes forever to get that letter.

00:11:25 Speaker 1

Going back and forth and some of them were lost and things like that, you know.

00:11:30 Speaker 1

To avoid that.

00:11:32 Speaker 3

So how about how was your?

00:11:34 Speaker 3

I did. You have to carry.

00:11:36 Speaker 3

How was your gear?

00:11:38 Speaker 3

Did you have to carry your gear around?

00:11:40 Speaker 1

Oh yeah, you'd have to leave when you're going into, let's say you were attacking a certain town.

00:11:46 Speaker 1

You would have a full field.

00:11:48 Speaker 1

You'd have a shovel. Would be the last thing, and you have a knapsack full of whatever you needed to carry rations, or C rations, or whichever way we're going, you wouldn't start, you know.

00:12:00 Speaker 1

And once you took a count, it took a it took you at least about two days, sometimes three days before you could get a hot meal.

00:12:08 Speaker 1

You know, because usually right after you take the to count, they all germs always had to retake the town, you know.

00:12:17 Speaker 1

And sometimes they come close to doing it four or five times.

00:12:22 Speaker 1

50 clock every morning.

00:12:25 Speaker 1

The first two weeks, with two hours on or two hours off.

00:12:30 Speaker 2

Probably clocked every morning and show you.

00:12:33 Speaker 1

Oh yeah, let me tell you more than that. Do you know?

00:12:37 Speaker 3

And you were. Where were you when they were shelling?

00:12:40 Speaker 1

Well.

00:12:40 Speaker 3

Over your.

00:12:41 Speaker 3

Or we were in.

00:12:43 Speaker 1

Gemini you were.

00:12:46 Speaker 1

When we took this town out and we're all intact by the next morning, all we were living in was the basement 'cause. It was all level, you know, from our celery.

00:12:57 Speaker 1

Oh.

00:12:59 Speaker 3

And how did you were you able to keep your group together or did?

00:13:04 Speaker 3

Have to.

00:13:04 Speaker 3

Things individually. Or was it all?

00:13:07 Speaker 1

Well.

00:13:11 Speaker 1

And.

00:13:13 Speaker 1

Also, you belong to a battalion, you know, but in the meantime, we lost people from just shelling, you know.

00:13:24 Speaker 1

At the GIS, weren't careful.

00:13:26 Speaker 1

They.

00:13:26 Speaker 1

They exposed themselves too.

00:13:28 Speaker 1

While they get hit, you know.

00:13:30 Speaker 1

Shrapnel and bad stuff would kill everything trees.

00:13:36 Speaker 1

Uh, Harsha, no matter what livestock or they were.

00:13:40 Speaker 1

The fortunate thing for me was that this was an undertaking.

00:13:45 Speaker 1

And you didn't have to spell the body and stuff like that, you know?

00:13:51 Speaker 1

Boy, I was 10° outside.

00:13:55 Speaker 3

You explain more about the shrapnel during the break.

00:13:58 Speaker 3

Are.

00:13:59 Speaker 1

Oh, the shrapnel.

00:14:00 Speaker 1

Yeah, those are usually 88 and usually they explode in front of you behind you in every which way.

00:14:10 Speaker 3



What's an 88?

00:14:12 Speaker 1

88mm shell.

00:14:15 Speaker 1

Boy, I mean, they were a candidate.

00:14:19 Speaker 1

What it?

00:14:20 Speaker 1

You know, they monitored those ADAS, first of all.

00:14:25 Speaker 1

And here we have underneath started the model on their tanks. Boy that was.

00:14:30 Speaker 1

Only blow our tanks.

00:14:32 Speaker 1

They had better tanks than we did, but we had so many of them and we overcame them, you know.

00:14:38 Speaker 3

Now, did you have?

00:14:40 Speaker 3

Were you in foxholes or how did you protect protect your body?

00:14:46 Speaker 1

Well, if you were on a frontline, you would be in the foxhole right away.

00:14:51 Speaker 1

And usually in Luxembourg, like I say, all them houses were stolen, you know, and they would burn it up inside. But.

00:15:03 Speaker 1

It would still remain concrete, you know, and we live in.

00:15:06 Speaker 1

Basement all the time.

00:15:12 Speaker 3

And what about your?

00:15:14 Speaker 3

Your officers and your command.

00:15:16 Speaker 3

Your bosses?

00:15:18 Speaker 3

Talk about.

00:15:19 Speaker 3

Talk about that.

00:15:20 Speaker 3

They present.

00:15:21 Speaker 1

Get a little bit rag with the division commander and.

00:15:26 Speaker 1

Captain Leroy was our company commander.

00:15:30 Speaker 1

And Lieutenant General, when the platoon leader you know and I was in his plateau, I was in the third plateau. So.

00:15:39 Speaker 1

2nd Ed.

00:15:41 Speaker 1

Colonel, in general, I'm talking about now, you know.

00:15:44 Speaker 1

You see, the two leader was either a first Lieutenant or a second Lieutenant.

00:15:50 Speaker 1

Didn't take long to get rank over there because a lot of guys got hit and stuff.

00:15:56 Speaker 1

I became a Sergeant right away and I was a squad leader.

00:16:00 Speaker 1

Then there was an opening for communication Sergeant, which I like very much because you have to go from box holder box hole and make sure that the lines were always.

00:16:15 Speaker 1

Oh, we're not.

00:16:16 Speaker 1

You know, uh, hurt by shrapnel.

00:16:20 Speaker 3

The.

00:16:20 Speaker 3

The communication lines.

00:16:21 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah. Figure.

00:16:22 Speaker 1

The telephone line. OK. And did you get one of these little?

00:16:25 Speaker 2

Portal.

00:16:25 Speaker 1

Like that.

00:16:26 Speaker 1

Yeah, portable had a battery in it and they could.

00:16:30 Speaker 1

They could call battalion if they wanted to talk to him, you know, and.

00:16:34 Speaker 1

But everyone of the parks don't have one of those.

00:16:37 Speaker 1

They can get in touch with each.

00:16:40 Speaker 1

Other because you have a telephone in the warehouse.

00:16:43 Speaker 3

You have to did you have a portable one with you at all times too?

00:16:47 Speaker 1

We had a portable one when we had HP, what they call the 300 radio and that portable.

00:16:55 Speaker 1

Was usually used when you attacked another town or.

00:16:58 Speaker 1

It was a pretty big sized nail strapped on a gas pedal, you know.

00:17:03 Speaker 1

And then.

00:17:05 Speaker 1

But they did have a 536 or 8mm squad.

00:17:10 Speaker 3

A squat.

00:17:11 Speaker 1

Well, yeah. It's squeaked in squats and everything out and we.

00:17:12 Speaker 3

OK. One final.

00:17:14 Speaker 1

Thing we usually do is everybody could hear, including the enemy, you know.

00:17:20 Speaker 3

So he didn't.

00:17:21 Speaker 1

Have a you didn't use it anymore.

00:17:23 Speaker 1

Had that, you know.

00:17:26 Speaker 2

Should we?

00:17:27 Speaker 2

Go on chronic illogical order of how?

00:17:31 Speaker 2

Disperse action and.

00:17:34 Speaker 2

OK. What was your first action?

00:17:36 Speaker 1

Well, my perception was that December the 23rd.

00:17:41 Speaker 1

And we tagged the town of Dow Dahl in Luxembourg and.

00:17:49 Speaker 1

We took the town.

00:17:53 Speaker 1

And then once you got in there more, you had to get into a foxhole right away. Because whenever you jump in town, they were just shelled the living daylights out.

00:18:01 Speaker 1

You know.

00:18:03 Speaker 1

And then the 5:00 every morning for the next 5 days, they try to retake the town, you know.

00:18:09 Speaker 1

And what I'm going.

00:18:14 Speaker 1

To.

00:18:17 Speaker 1

We had good fighter support also.

00:18:22 Speaker 1

Support our P 47 was a fantastic scraping gun and now also carried a £500 bomb in the P51.

00:18:34 Speaker 1

Mustang was a terrific fighter also.

00:18:37 Speaker 1

Used for striping at low levels fighting.

00:18:42 Speaker 1

And it was the British Rolls Royce engine in that plane and it became a real fighter.

00:18:48 Speaker 1

They had a better motor in their plane, like the British pitbullers.

00:18:50

The.

00:18:51 Speaker 1

Heard of?

00:18:52 Speaker 1

They were their famous planes.

00:18:55 Speaker 1

That's what the P51 actually becomes, Spitfire.

00:19:02

Any.

00:19:05 Speaker 3

Where were these planes located?

00:19:09 Speaker 3

You near them.

00:19:11 Speaker 1

Well, they were always. They would be at least 10 miles behind the line at least, so that they were out of shellfire range, although although they could reach them sometimes if they wanted to, but.

00:19:24 Speaker 1

A.

00:19:25 Speaker 1

They weren't that far away, you know.

00:19:28 Speaker 1

And these guys are really well, we sure like to have them do the straight.

00:19:35 Speaker 3

And you, you you mentioned when the you would.

00:19:39 Speaker 3

A town.

00:19:40 Speaker 3

Yeah. When you took a town where the town's occupied populated.

00:19:45 Speaker 1

In some cases it was so in Luxembourg it was. So you've got to see the Oh yeah.

00:19:51 Speaker 1

People, what they did is they took as many of them as they could out right away and they take them back to regimental somewhere, relocate a place for, you know, that's about.

00:20:02 Speaker 1

600 miles behind a lot, you know, and until.

00:20:07 Speaker 1

They could get back to the home again, you know, but unfortunately out of their homes that were gone, you know, from the shelling and everything, you know.

00:20:17 Speaker 1

Victoria Price for the war, I'll tell you.

00:20:21 Speaker 3

And at the time.

00:20:22 Speaker 3

Since you were so young, I mean, what were you? If you remember, what were you feeling?

00:20:29 Speaker 1

Well, when I got there, if you're AI was obviously, you know, you were scared.

00:20:35 Speaker 1

And were very careful, you know.

00:20:38 Speaker 1

I made sure I was always close to a foxhole, or if we were on a move, attacking the town and we stood around a long time.

00:20:47 Speaker 1

I've got another doctor. A lot of guys said.

00:20:50 Speaker 1

Are you doing that for?

00:20:52 Speaker 1

I.

00:20:52 Speaker 1

Well, I'm still going to be here.

00:20:58 Speaker 1

These guys had asked for that question would be on my back.

00:21:03 Speaker 1

Trying to get in.

00:21:04 Speaker 1

Box all and.

00:21:06 Speaker 3

So foxhole was a personal thing.

00:21:08 Speaker 3

Oh yeah, and you had just a normal army shovel and that's all you use.

00:21:12 Speaker 1

Yeah, that's all you had was, we were lucky because like I said, they could turn over like a whole, you know, and you could use, you know, with their shell just hit because you could.

00:21:25 Speaker 1

Could start taking them easy, you know.

00:21:28 Speaker 1

Go from there and lot big enough for your body, usually about that.

00:21:34 Speaker 1

Keep it from shriveled, you know.

00:21:38 Speaker 1

Or you could get hurt in.

00:21:39 Speaker 1

Ways I'm sure.

00:21:42 Speaker 3



This was.

00:21:46 Speaker 3

Your first year experience.

00:21:47 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:21:49 Speaker 3

OK, so you got.

00:21:51 Speaker 3

How did it end for?

00:21:52 Speaker 3

Here for after your first year, talk about how your first year ended the season of the year.

00:21:54

Hello.

00:21:58 Speaker 3

Know talk about.

00:22:03 Speaker 1

Well, I guess.

00:22:05 Speaker 1

It was really the 8, but actually our war over there ended the 5th of May.

00:22:11 Speaker 1

And of course, we were living in a town and there were people that were.

00:22:15 Speaker 1

Were.

00:22:17 Speaker 1

Taken out of their town, you know.

00:22:20 Speaker 1

So we were then the army of occupation. When the war was over. But.

00:22:25 Speaker 1

New people came over and we could come home.

00:22:29 Speaker 3

And the Battle of bulge. When did this occur in your?

00:22:35 Speaker 1

In December.

00:22:38 Speaker 1

Yeah, actually.

00:22:40 Speaker 1

They come back with old man. They had about 23 armor conditions. They were.

00:22:45 Speaker 1

In a small area and they broke through and we had to, I mean really.

00:22:54 Speaker 1

Are telling our telly was terrific and our air car was terrific and they kept up the tail on towns, you know.

00:23:04 Speaker 1

They played a big part and favored our lives.

00:23:08 Speaker 1

Sometimes.

00:23:09 Speaker 1

We lost a few people from their close bonding, you know.

00:23:14 Speaker 3

And is the how does it.

00:23:16 Speaker 3

You said you were at the 80th Division and then a battalion and then the eye company is that it goes from.

00:23:18 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:23:23 Speaker 1

Largest it goes to OK. It goes like division regimental.

00:23:29 Speaker 1

Division's got three regions and I have to be in the 390.

00:23:33

Provisional.

00:23:35 Speaker 1

And each one of those have had three vaginas.

00:23:39 Speaker 3

And how many men?

00:23:40 Speaker 1

It'll be about 10,000 people.

00:23:45 Speaker 3

And then the eye company, how did what was?

00:23:48 Speaker 3

Was the eye company exactly?

00:23:50 Speaker 1

My company actually would.

00:23:52 Speaker 1

Coming could be when it's low on men, you could only have maybe sometime like up to 2 1/2 men you're waiting for.

00:24:03 Speaker 1

Draftees mostly to come up as replacements, you know.

00:24:07 Speaker 1

Yeah, you had to replace these companies all the time.

00:24:11 Speaker 1

That's there's a lot of ways you could lose those guys like.

00:24:16 Speaker 1

Crossbite it was a cold weather, you know? And like, look, the guys had broken me and some of they were supposed to change their sacks, but they didn't.

00:24:30 Speaker 1

Wanted to get out of there.

00:24:32 Speaker 3

And what was the? What were your uniforms like?

00:24:36 Speaker 3

Were they made?

00:24:37 Speaker 3

They.

00:24:37 Speaker 3

What were they made of back then?

00:24:38 Speaker 1

But I think while they were packing, you know, and.

00:24:45 Speaker 1

We had.

00:24:45 Speaker 1

The did we call them all, man? Uh.

00:24:51 Speaker 1

They were all green, you know, and.

00:24:57 Speaker 1

To me, if you wear a shirt and.

00:24:59 Speaker 2

Kind of wear.

00:25:01 Speaker 1

Long guns at that time.

00:25:04 Speaker 1

That was cold.

00:25:04 Speaker 3

Under there, and how many different?

00:25:07 Speaker 3

Of clothes did you get?

00:25:09 Speaker 1

Well, they do as soon as you were.

00:25:12 Speaker 1

Oh, they kind of get you to a shower somewhere.

00:25:17 Speaker 1

Nearby and you could shower and everything and then.

00:25:23 Speaker 1

We went through clothes like telling, you know.

00:25:29 Speaker 1

I don't know how many since I.

00:25:30 Speaker 1

I had plenty of clothes.

00:25:32 Speaker 3

And said with the boots and so anything, anything you needed, did you just ask or did you have to go and sign off on it?

00:25:33 Speaker 1

Oh yeah, yeah. Down there, go to.

00:25:40 Speaker 1

Well, they would hit you.

00:25:41 Speaker 1

They would issue so many pay ransoms, C rations and after you took a town about the second or third day, they bring hot food up.

00:25:51 Speaker 1

And this would be generally about three people they take and treat, and uh, we had a wonderful uh Marlon Cochran, Grand Rapids.

00:26:00 Speaker 1

He was the man charged in this kitchen and this guy would come up, one of the three people. He was. One of them would come up with the hot food and stuff.

00:26:12 Speaker 1

So that he got hit up there one time after I just got on top and go, you know, he didn't have to come up, but he did.

00:26:19 Speaker 3

So talk about the.

00:26:20 Speaker 3

What did? What were your meals like?

00:26:22 Speaker 3

Did you eat?

00:26:25 Speaker 1

I can't seem to get.

00:26:27 Speaker 1

Every time we get hot dogs and you know.

00:26:32 Speaker 1

You get chicken and all that stuff and.

00:26:39 Speaker 1

You have. You have a lot.

00:26:42 Speaker 1

Egg, you know.

00:26:45 Speaker 3

Just your every.

00:26:47 Speaker 1

Yeah, right.

00:26:48 Speaker 3

Or my cold. Whatever you needed. Yeah.

00:26:51 Speaker 3

If I can, if I can ask. Were you injured in any way down here? Fine.

00:26:57 Speaker 1

Well, I'm very fortunate I get the only thing I ever had was.

00:27:02 Speaker 1

I.

00:27:02 Speaker 1

Had to be in this House and I was looking at in the mirror.

00:27:07 Speaker 1

And all of a sudden, all the glass came out and my whole face was just full of blood because of the the shell here.

00:27:15 Speaker 1

In the same building they understand again and killed the guy. My buddy that was standing to the left of me.

00:27:21 Speaker 1

That whole thing came out at me and then I had to go to the first day station.

00:27:26 Speaker 1

Get the glasses stuff out of my face.

00:27:28 Speaker 3

You know, and how far away did you have to go for that?

00:27:31 Speaker 1

Well, it was right in town, right? Yeah.

00:27:33

That.

00:27:34 Speaker 1

And if you wanted, if you had to go do a marijuana, you could go to the regimental you know, and if you had to be evacuate and you can one of their uh, we call it the meat wagon.

00:27:47 Speaker 1

It was a ban, you know, and he'd have a driver. And every guy that would be.

00:27:53 Speaker 1

\*\*\*\* those guys would put you on a stretcher, put you in, you know.

00:27:58 Speaker 1

You take off.

00:28:01 Speaker 1

And.

00:28:03 Speaker 1

I was in the hospital one time I had.

00:28:07 Speaker 1

Close the toes and stuff, you know, but they were OK.

00:28:10 Speaker 1

Have to be agitated or anything.

00:28:15 Speaker 3

And did they let you know when to get back out?

00:28:17 Speaker 3

The field, or did you tell them?

00:28:18 Speaker 2

Oh yeah.

00:28:18 Speaker 1

Oh yeah, once you were ready to go. What I needed because you have the experience and all that.

00:28:24 Speaker 3

So what happens when you're? You said you had a comrade that was killed, right?

00:28:29 Speaker 3

To you or.

00:28:29 Speaker 1

Oh yeah.

00:28:31 Speaker 3

You let the do they stay there?

00:28:34 Speaker 3

Or what do you do with them?

00:28:35 Speaker 1

Well, if you're all pinned down it, everything in each hip, all you do is you let the medic know you get a medic that's floating around.

00:28:45 Speaker 1

Guy's got a real bad job. He's got to go from foxhole to foxhole and he'd come and take care of that guy.

00:28:51 Speaker 1



Was bleeding or whatever, you know.

00:28:54 Speaker 3

And everybody wore their dog tags.

00:28:56 Speaker 1

Oh, everybody at their.

00:28:58 Speaker 1

Remember when I show you?

00:29:00 Speaker 3

Yeah.

00:29:04 Speaker 3

OK.

00:29:07 Speaker 3

So what?

00:29:10 Speaker 3

If you could.

00:29:13 Speaker 3

How are we doing and how are we doing?

00:29:14 Speaker 3

Good on time, 2 minutes 330.

00:29:17 Speaker 3

You want to talk about how.

00:29:20 Speaker 3

Once you came home, your reaction.

00:29:23 Speaker 3

Or do you want to talk anymore about your active service?

00:29:28 Speaker 1

I'll talk about when I when I come home.

00:29:30 Speaker 3

So you ended your.

00:29:32 Speaker 1

Yeah. Stay over.

00:29:33 Speaker 1

I got on a boat early in.

00:29:36 Speaker 1

I don't know exactly what day it was, but I came over on the Cherry Hill victory with the victory ship.

00:29:43 Speaker 1

And then of course got off in New York and.

00:29:50 Speaker 1

We actually got discharged right there.

00:29:54 Speaker 1

But when I when I come home from there.

00:29:57 Speaker 1

I was, you know, a civilian again.

00:30:02 Speaker 3

And that your family did your family know how long did it take family to know that you got back to New York?

00:30:05 Speaker 1

Oh yeah, well.

00:30:10 Speaker 1

I wrote a letter, you know ahead of time.

00:30:13 Speaker 1

Just forget about writing until I get stateside, you know.

00:30:17 Speaker 1

And they did.

00:30:18 Speaker 1

And of course I get a call to call, you know.

00:30:23 Speaker 3

So it was a trip.

00:30:25 Speaker 3

Did that take 7 days?

00:30:27 Speaker 3

No.

00:30:27 Speaker 1

It took about that game.

00:30:28 Speaker 3

It took 15.

00:30:29 Speaker 1

I got a little victory show.

00:30:31 Speaker 3

OK, so how?

00:30:32 Speaker 3

What's the difference in size?

00:30:34 Speaker 1

Oh, it's just it's small compared to Queen Elizabeth.

00:30:38

OK.

00:30:40 Speaker 1

Like we hold it was a life luxury like her, you know. And they used it for poop movements during World War 2.

00:30:48 Speaker 3

So how did?

00:30:49 Speaker 3

What did you do for?

00:30:51 Speaker 3

15 days did you?

00:30:53 Speaker 3

Could you go outside or did you just stay in your?

00:30:57 Speaker 3

In this ship, you know what I mean?

00:30:59 Speaker 3

You go up on deck.

00:31:01 Speaker 1

Oh.

00:31:01 Speaker 1

Oh yeah, they want to go on.

00:31:03 Speaker 1

You know, get out and we've got to make sure that you did exercise and get out of your, you know, rule, you know and.

00:31:14 Speaker 1

You are good to all exercises and you watch movies. A lot of kids are doing, you know.

00:31:20 Speaker 3

But you definitely knew you were going home.

00:31:22 Speaker 1

Definitely knew I was going home.

00:31:25 Speaker 1

Yeah. Boy, that was a good feeling.

00:31:28 Speaker 3

And was it like a?

00:31:32 Speaker 3

How many men do you think we're?

00:31:34 Speaker 3

That ship going home.

00:31:36 Speaker 1

I think there was probably maybe around.

00:31:41 Speaker 1

Be about 7500.

00:31:43 Speaker 1

Yeah. The big shift right that day.

00:31:46 Speaker 1

The Queen Elizabeth have a lot of people around.

00:31:48 Speaker 1

When I was.

00:31:49 Speaker 3

Going over, you know, so I'm sure it was the common.

00:31:51 Speaker 3

Conversation was probably completely different going on the Queen Elizabeth.

00:31:59 Speaker 3

As opposed to coming up to the order.

00:32:00 Speaker 1

Yeah, right. Right.

00:32:01 Speaker 3

With all your your comrades.

00:32:05 Speaker 1

Well, I was fortunate I wasn't married by some of these guys that were married and.

00:32:12 Speaker 1

All things were always.

00:32:13 Speaker 1

You know, when I got home, but uh, without this single guy.

00:32:23 Speaker 1

When when I come home, I took it easy for about 3 months and then I went to work for Monsanto Chemical here.

00:32:30 Speaker 1

Trenton.

00:32:31 Speaker 3

So from.

00:32:31 Speaker 3

York, you traveled by bus. Train. Back to.

00:32:35 Speaker 3

In Michigan.

00:32:35 Speaker 1

Well by train, OK.

00:32:38 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:32:38 Speaker 3

I'm sure that took a while.

00:32:40 Speaker 1

Oh yeah, yeah. It took a while and.

00:32:43 Speaker 3

And your family was all here waiting for you.

00:32:45 Speaker 1

Or you bet they were, yeah.

00:32:52 Speaker 3

So right now are you?

00:32:56 Speaker 3

Do you belong to any veterans organizations or?

00:33:00 Speaker 1

Kind of a viable.

00:33:03 Speaker 3

OK.

00:33:03 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:33:04 Speaker 3

And that's you live downriver, so you're the DFW.

00:33:06 Speaker 1

Yes, I do.

00:33:08 Speaker 1

I well, I would.

00:33:09 Speaker 1

Yeah, I belong to the rhymes post. I'm a lifetime member.

00:33:15 Speaker 1

And I live actually on the same property I was born on New Boston.

00:33:21 Speaker 1

Still got about 10 acres right close to 10 acres.

00:33:26 Speaker 3

You know, so All in all, how do you think the wartime experiences affected your?

00:33:38 Speaker 3

You came out one person. You go in one young man and can't come out a different person.

00:33:43 Speaker 3

The other.

00:33:46 Speaker 1

I still. I met my buddies.

00:33:49 Speaker 1

I'll tell you something I when I come back, I wasn't old enough to go get in Tavern with these guys.

00:33:57 Speaker 1

Come on, we'll go.

00:33:58 Speaker 1

We'll get a beer, get a lot together.

00:34:01 Speaker 1

I was only 20 years old.

00:34:03 Speaker 1

And I got a lot of points.

00:34:06 Speaker 1

That's because I saw combat, you know, was fast and furious.

00:34:11 Speaker 3

How was the reception when you pulled into the port in New York?

00:34:16 Speaker 1

Well, they had a bad waiting there.

00:34:20 Speaker 1

And then.

00:34:23 Speaker 1

We we have certain meetings in life groups, you know.

00:34:27 Speaker 1

They try to get us through what we're going to be doing, you know, make it easy for them and for us.

00:34:36 Speaker 1

But uh, they were trying to get us back home as fast as possible.

00:34:41 Speaker 1

We were glad to have.

00:34:44 Speaker 3

And your your your bosses. Did you get to say goodbye to them?

00:34:49 Speaker 3

How did how did you?

00:34:50 Speaker 1

Oh yeah, anybody that was in charge here, you're absolutely.

00:34:56 Speaker 1

And uh, one of the guys, they didn't.

00:34:59 Speaker 1

Like they should.

00:35:00 Speaker 1

Uh, I always respected.

00:35:03 Speaker 1

They were charged.

00:35:06



OK.

00:35:07 Speaker 3

So how?

00:35:07 Speaker 3

I mean, how do you want to sum up?

00:35:09 Speaker 3

You want to say some.

00:35:13 Speaker 3

Closing.

00:35:15 Speaker 1

All in all, I was fortunate.

00:35:19 Speaker 1

Fortunate to get back home.

00:35:22 Speaker 1

And I didn't have any marks on me or anything at all.

00:35:25 Speaker 1

The war woods or anything like that.

00:35:28 Speaker 1

And.

00:35:30 Speaker 1

I probably.

00:35:32 Speaker 1

I waited a while before I was looking for work, but I did get a good job at Monsanto Chemical, which is just downriver here, you know?

00:35:40 Speaker 1

I don't know.

00:35:41 Speaker 1

I think they sold out to somebody, didn't think much.

00:35:45 Speaker 1

Not there.

00:35:46 Speaker 1

You're not on the property, but it's a big company.

00:35:48 Speaker 1

All over the world, Australia.

00:35:52 Speaker 1

England and all over.

00:35:53 Speaker 3

So you have a son, Allen.

00:35:55 Speaker 3

Obviously you were married.

00:35:57 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:35:58 Speaker 3

Can't have it.

00:35:59 Speaker 3

Did your wife?

00:36:01 Speaker 3

Did you talk to your wife about?

00:36:02 Speaker 3

In the service at all or.

00:36:04 Speaker 1

Well, she has to be Buster, you know.

00:36:07 Speaker 2

And.

00:36:10 Speaker 1

She was.

00:36:11 Speaker 1

I told her my words.

00:36:15 Speaker 1

She was.

00:36:16 Speaker 1

She took everything you know, with a grain of salt.

00:36:19 Speaker 3

How old were you when you got? Very.

00:36:22 Speaker 1

Well, I was 22 years old.

00:36:22 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:36:26

Yeah.

00:36:28 Speaker 1

My wife was 19 and I just lost her last Christmas.

00:36:34 Speaker 1

We're not good marriage. For 62 years, you know.

00:36:37

Very nice.

00:36:41 Speaker 1

Yep, unfortunately, as kids and everything turned out good.

00:36:49

OK.

00:36:52 Speaker 3

I think I think that's.

00:36:54 Speaker 1

Covered it pretty good.

00:36:56 Speaker 3

I think we did pretty good.

00:36:58 Speaker 3

If there's anything else, you.

00:37:00 Speaker 1

No, I think that would just cover everything.

00:37:03 Speaker 3

They look pretty good, so we thank you.

00:37:05 Speaker 3

It's OK.

00:37:06 Speaker 3

And I think that.

00:37:08 Speaker 3

We'll enter in the interview.

00:37:09 Speaker 1

OK. And your best example.

00:37:10 Speaker 3

You have anything?

00:37:11 Speaker 2

Well, I don't.

00:37:11 Speaker 2

If you wanted to talk about him losing his.

00:37:14 Speaker 2

Brother over there.

00:37:16 Speaker 2

When you came old on the ship you had.

00:37:18 Speaker 2

Lost your brother?

00:37:19 Speaker 1

He got killed.

00:37:20 Speaker 3

Yeah. So you you knew.

00:37:23 Speaker 3

He was already.

00:37:26 Speaker 2

You got a word when you were.

00:37:27 Speaker 1

Well, I got a letter from him.

00:37:30 Speaker 1

And then what I didn't like is I got another letter.

00:37:33 Speaker 1

At the same time, from the same office that he was in. But I read his letter 1st and then when I got to the other letter, he said, I'm sorry to report to you what your brother was.

00:37:46 Speaker 1

Kill him this morning.

00:37:48 Speaker 1

On his mission, you know?

00:37:51 Speaker 1

I would write about him.

00:37:52 Speaker 1

Had a hunch and.

00:37:54 Speaker 1

Is that supposed to coming home?

00:37:57 Speaker 2

One week before the war was over.

00:37:59 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:38:00 Speaker 3

So you and.

00:38:01 Speaker 3

Your brother were the only ones in active service.

00:38:04 Speaker 1

And yes, right.

00:38:05 Speaker 3

And did you have any other siblings?

00:38:08 Speaker 1

Yeah, I had a brother that was at home and he had a department for the fire because.

00:38:12 Speaker 3

You must develop that you OK?

00:38:15 Speaker 1

Yeah. And I had a sister.

00:38:18 Speaker 1

And.

00:38:21 Speaker 1

I had a a young brother.

00:38:23 Speaker 1

He's passed away already.

00:38:26

Richard.

00:38:27 Speaker 2

You might.

00:38:28 Speaker 2

To ask how he got the Bronze star.

00:38:32 Speaker 3

The medals are special services.

00:38:34 Speaker 3

Were awarded.

00:38:36

There.

00:38:37 Speaker 3

Were 3 battle stars.

00:38:39 Speaker 1

And a bronze star.

00:38:39 Speaker 3

And a bronze star.

00:38:40 Speaker 3

Talk.

00:38:41 Speaker 3

Little bit about that for bravery in action.

00:38:42 Speaker 1

Well, I, yeah. Well, I didn't know it together because.

00:38:48 Speaker 1

We had a big formation from and then they called me out. One of the guys.

00:38:54 Speaker 1

Who were given citations.

00:38:55 Speaker 1

That's what I got the citation.

00:38:58 Speaker 1

I got that for when we were attacking this next town. One of our buddies.

00:39:05 Speaker 1

Was here, but you can't stay with him because the medics will take care of him and you got to keep.

00:39:10 Speaker 1

You.

00:39:11 Speaker 1

And we got pinned down about.

00:39:14 Speaker 1

Oh, I wasn't far from here.

00:39:15 Speaker 1

About 400 feet.

00:39:18 Speaker 1

And it took a long time for the medics to get there, so I finally.

00:39:24 Speaker 1

As one of the guys who come with me, nobody would come with me.

00:39:27 Speaker 1

They were scared I.

00:39:29 Speaker 1

You know, so I went and got him.

00:39:33 Speaker 1

And you never really. Who helped me get that guy?

00:39:38 Speaker 1

It was the guy that shot.

00:39:40 Speaker 1

It was a German on a machine gun, but he was already my prisoner when I when I got going, he came out in the upper room and got back.

00:39:51 Speaker 1

Amazing.

00:39:54 Speaker 3

Well, and So what?

00:39:55 Speaker 3

You wear this.

00:39:57 Speaker 3

What did they look like?

00:40:00 Speaker 3

The three battle stars. What? We're out.

00:40:01 Speaker 1

You give you a real long, you know, but you never wear a mask. If you wear a ring, you know.

00:40:07 Speaker 3

You never wear.



00:40:10 Speaker 1

And then just got three stars on it and the battle stars.

00:40:18 Speaker 3

Were you able to to save them?

00:40:20 Speaker 3

Mean do you?

00:40:21 Speaker 1

I forgot to.

00:40:22 Speaker 3

You still have one.

00:40:25 Speaker 1

So hard.

00:40:27 Speaker 1

I was very happy. It was the people I was with and.

00:40:32 Speaker 1

Feel sorry for the ones that didn't get back. You know a lot of good people lost their.

00:40:38 Speaker 1

In the pre division, well first you're right up on the frontline.

00:40:42 Speaker 1

These guys are exposed all the.

00:40:44 Speaker 1

You know when you're going for a town?

00:40:47 Speaker 1

That's when I get here.

00:40:51 Speaker 3

Well, we appreciate.

00:40:53 Speaker 3

Both of what you did for us.

00:40:53 Speaker 1

OK.

00:40:56 Speaker 1

Thank you for the interview too.

00:40:59

Many other things.

00:41:00 Speaker 2

You could not offend.

00:41:03 Speaker 1

Out of my country.

00:41:05 Speaker 3

Yes, Sir.

00:41:08

OK.

00:41:09

Just it.

00:41:09 Speaker 1

We have for many good claims here that people don't realize.

00:41:12 Speaker 3

You know, oh, most definitely.

00:41:16

OK.

00:41:16 Speaker 3

Well, we thank you.

00:41:18 Speaker 3

We're going to end that for now and then.