

Paul Wiedorfer Interview

Company G, 318th Inf Reg

Congressional Medal of Honor

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

00:00:16 Speaker 1

It's January 5th in 2002, and today we're at the home of Paul J Weedorfer, who is a Medal of Honor winner of the 80th Division.

00:00:26 Speaker 1

Is the only surviving Medal of Honor winner from the 80th.

00:00:32 Speaker 1

And it's my pleasure to interview him today.

00:00:35 Speaker 1

Major Grant Porter and.

00:00:38 Speaker 1

We're gonna discuss, first of all, the actual event itself, Mr. Wiedarfer, if you could expand on what happened that Christmas Day in 1944 that led to.

00:00:53 Speaker 1

Your presentation of the Medal of Honor.

00:00:56 Speaker 2

Well, that's a little bit difficult because I've been asked it so many times and can never come up with an easy answer.

00:01:05 Speaker 2

But anyway basically.

00:01:08 Speaker 2

We went in to attack that morning.

00:01:11 Speaker 2

And hopefully to get across the open area into another wooded area where the Germans were.

00:01:18 Speaker 2

But unfortunately, as we went out and went into the attack machine gun fires open rather heavily on us.

00:01:30 Speaker 2

And because of that, we all went to the ground and try to take cover.

00:01:35 Speaker 2

And.

00:01:37 Speaker 2

The weather at that time was no snow clear. Beautiful day. But the snow was on the ground from previous days.

00:01:46 Speaker 2

And as I'm laying there, I'm more or less thinking to myself.

00:01:52 Speaker 2

Something's got to be done.

00:01:55 Speaker 2

Because the borders are starting to get closer and closer and closer to us, and somebody's got to stay.

00:02:01 Speaker 2

And frankly, it was a little bit that I have to somehow get my *** out of there.

00:02:07 Speaker 2

And would maybe do.

00:02:09 Speaker 2

I'll never know, but I decided to take off and see if we can somehow stop this fire in the machine gun.

00:02:18 Speaker 2

And when I sprung off, I ran towards the desk and for some reason they found, but they never hit me.

00:02:26 Speaker 2

And I one time I know I fell. A trip slipped.

00:02:29 Speaker 2

I got up and charge more and probably got within.

00:02:33 Speaker 2

Oh, I don't.

00:02:34 Speaker 2

Maybe 1215 yards and logged grenades and lucky enough to go right smack into.

00:02:42 Speaker 2

The to the nest.

00:02:43 Speaker 2

And it blew that nest up and it jumped into the nest.

00:02:48 Speaker 2

Was dead Germans laying there?

00:02:50 Speaker 2

There's machine gun aimed in a ridiculous position, pointing straight up as I remember.

00:02:57 Speaker 2

And then that gave me a clearview of another machine gun nest, which originally would be to my would have been to my left.

00:03:05 Speaker 2

But now I could look straight across to it and I jumped up and lobbed another grenade and that.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

Nest and next thing you know, other ones that I nest are up in the air hollering.

00:03:18 Speaker 2

Comrade, and that sort of ended the day ended for me, of course, to let the platoon get up in advance and we took our objective that day.

00:03:30 Speaker 1

So you destroyed 2 machine gun nests and.

00:03:34 Speaker 1

The enemy's.

00:03:36 Speaker 1

How many enemies were there that surrendered?

00:03:39 Speaker 2

Or the actual real.

00:03:41 Speaker 2

I don't know, but I know is about three to four dead somewhere around 18 or 19 of after the machine gun people jumped up to surrender.

00:03:50 Speaker 2

There was other men on the line. The German line they joined into with them and they threw their hands up.

00:03:56 Speaker 2

It was about anywhere from 18 to 2021 of them surrendered.

00:04:00 Speaker 2

And of course, our outfit took them at that time.

00:04:04 Speaker 2

Didn't sort.

00:04:05 Speaker 2

So-called take em because.

00:04:08 Speaker 2

Our the company was advancing and took the prisoners.

00:04:10 Speaker 1

And you had a platoon with you that was moving through.

00:04:14 Speaker 1

How about how many men were in your your platoon that were moving through the wooded area?

00:04:20 Speaker 2

Tomb was probably about.

00:04:22 Speaker 2

I don't know about 30.

00:04:24 Speaker 2

In fact, I think a platoon really consists of about 36 men or so, and it started out initially when the attack went on as a platoon.

00:04:34 Speaker 2

That by the time I sprang up and figured trying to do something bad, it was a few of the platoon was already knocked out either wounded or dead.

00:04:44 Speaker 2

They're probably at the.

00:04:46 Speaker 2

That the Germans surrendered? Probably we still had about 200 225 men in the battalion, but there was other parts of the company to my left and to my right.

00:04:58 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:04:59 Speaker 1

That's that's.

00:05:01 Speaker 1

And then so you brought them back and turned them on over to the to the rear.

00:05:08 Speaker 1

OK.

00:05:09 Speaker 1

Then you assumed command of the platoon.

00:05:12 Speaker 1

As it says here in the citation, actually, because your platoon leader and platoon Sergeant were wounded.

00:05:19 Speaker 2

That's right. That's right.

00:05:23 Speaker 1

So that's that's a great story here.

00:05:26 Speaker 1

Let's pause.

00:05:29 Speaker 1

All right. Now, Mr. Widorfer, I would like to hear a little bit about you from from your upbringing in Baltimore. It you lived here all your life.

00:05:40 Speaker 1

If you could just tell us a little bit about your, your past and.

00:05:45 Speaker 2

Well, I was born involved, born and raised in Baltimore.

00:05:50 Speaker 2

I was born January the 17th, 1921.

00:05:55

And.

00:05:56 Speaker 2

Had the average childhood type life.

00:05:59 Speaker 2

Love to play.

00:06:00 Speaker 2

Did a hell of a lot of it.

00:06:03 Speaker 2

But Sandlot, Sandlot, type baseball.

00:06:06 Speaker 2

I went to a Catholic school St.

00:06:09 Speaker 2

School for eight years.

00:06:12 Speaker 2

That was followed by graduating from there naturally and then going to Balmer Polytechnic Institute for four years.

00:06:20 Speaker 2

It's high school.

00:06:23 Speaker 2

I passed that.

00:06:26 Speaker 2

And then started to work.

00:06:30 Speaker 2

Smaller type jobs initially. In fact, some jobs that work while I was still going to Bulgaria probably take the institute like a paper boy type of job.

00:06:38 Speaker 2

But later on when I got out of.

00:06:42 Speaker 2

Polly, I work for the Glen Allen company.

00:06:47 Speaker 2

It's a rather famous Baltimore company made an aircraft. Everybody should certainly know it.

00:06:51 Speaker 2

But Martin, I work for.

00:06:55 Speaker 2

We're about two years and I tried and applied for a job in Baltimore Gas and Electric Company.

00:07:05 Speaker 2

First time I applied they wouldn't accept me.

00:07:08 Speaker 2

Tried.

00:07:09 Speaker 2

They did accept me.

00:07:11 Speaker 2

And I never forget my mother would keep saying whatever you do, go with the gas and electric company.

00:07:18 Speaker 2

The greatest secureest company gone.

00:07:21 Speaker 2

She do absolutely nothing about the company, but it's funny how people fall in balance. Anyway, I did.

00:07:27 Speaker 2

Quit the Glen Allen company and go to the Balmoral Electric Company.

00:07:31 Speaker 2

I worked for them for just started with them January the 14th.

00:07:38 Speaker 2

1941.

00:07:42 Speaker 2

And after working for the gas company.

00:07:46

About.

00:07:47 Speaker 2

7-8 nine months, maybe half a year, maybe. I'm not a.

00:07:50 Speaker 2

Maybe a year is when I met my wife, Alice.

00:07:55 Speaker 2

Now I can tell you how we met, but I think it would be much better if she told you because women have a greater ability, remembering all the small little facts.

00:08:04 Speaker 1

Well, why don't we bring Alice in?

00:08:06 Speaker 2

OK, we bring.

00:08:08 Speaker 2

Let her tell you the story.

00:08:10 Speaker 2

How I bet my love.

00:08:11 Speaker 1

Alice, come on in.

00:08:13 Speaker 3

Me.

00:08:21 Speaker 3

I forgot what on a blind date.

00:08:23 Speaker 2

I can tell you if you did no, first you you come out type first. You ought to remember you come down to visit my sister Catherine.

00:08:31 Speaker 3

I've got it up a guy.

00:08:33 Speaker 2

Yeah, alright, go ahead. Tell me. Tell the story.

00:08:36 Speaker 2

Tell me a Boo Boo.

00:08:40 Speaker 1

Boo. It's a pleasure to meet you and have you in the interview as well. Oh, thank you.

00:08:40 Speaker 2

You are my dear Alice.

00:08:46 Speaker 3

It's a pleasure to meet you.

00:08:50 Speaker 3

I had a date with.

00:08:52 Speaker 3

With a boy next door that my father thought he was a really nice boy.

00:08:56 Speaker 3

Just came out of the priesthood and I didn't like him.

00:09:01 Speaker 3

I went to please my father, I.

00:09:02 Speaker 3

All right. I'll go out with him, but I didn't.

00:09:06 Speaker 3

I stood him up, so I'm going to meet Katherine Weed off her.

00:09:09 Speaker 3

What this? My husband's sister?

00:09:12 Speaker 3

See, it's come on in a plaus sitting in there.

00:09:15 Speaker 3

And I said you what a pretty blue eyes he.

00:09:18 Speaker 3

You know, looking, you know? So he says to me, if you hang around a little longer, I'll walk you home.

00:09:24 Speaker 3

So that's how our romance began. You brought me home and the next day called me for a date and.

00:09:31 Speaker 3

More dates and.

00:09:33 Speaker 3

Seven years of.

00:09:34 Speaker 1

And there's a picture of you that in those newspaper clippings that showed.

00:09:41 Speaker 1

Uh, you and uh, the announcement that war had been declared uh against Japan.

00:09:48 Speaker 1

Right. So that was soon afterwards, I imagine.

00:09:51 Speaker 3

Yeah, that was afterwards, yeah.

00:09:51 Speaker 1

It.

00:09:53 Speaker 1

Because he met in.

00:09:53 Speaker 3

42 I met in 42.

00:09:57 Speaker 1

How refu is it for OK so.

00:09:58 Speaker 3

The yeah, I think it was 42 years we got married. We were married.

00:10:00 Speaker 1

42 is the one was already taken place.

00:10:03 Speaker 3

Only went together.

00:10:03 Speaker 2

Yeah, we got, we got married in.

00:10:05 Speaker 2

March the 7th, 43.

00:10:11 Speaker 3

Umm, that's it. I don't know.

00:10:13 Speaker 3

Else.

00:10:14 Speaker 3

Day.

00:10:19 Speaker 1

OK, the weed Orfers March 7th, 1943, you 2 are married.

00:10:24 Speaker 3

That's right.

00:10:25 Speaker 1

And it started the long, wonderful marriage that you've had.

00:10:28 Speaker 1

You have 4 kids.

00:10:29 Speaker 3

And the babies came along.

00:10:31 Speaker 1

Then the babies came.

00:10:32 Speaker 1

Why don't you tell us about how life was changed in those 40s for you?

00:10:38 Speaker 3

Well, I.

00:10:39 Speaker 3

I don't know what do you mean we had.

00:10:40 Speaker 3

Had a wonderful life.

00:10:43 Speaker 3

With with a good looking guy.

00:10:46 Speaker 3

What we're doing it with my hero over here.

00:10:50 Speaker 1

Married in 1943 and all comes with kids.

00:10:53 Speaker 1

Many kids, did you have prior to world?

00:10:54 Speaker 3

Two boys and two girls.

00:10:56 Speaker 3

How we wanted.

00:10:56 Speaker 3

We planned it like that and we were lucky.

00:10:59 Speaker 1

Well, now we're at some born before the war or.

00:11:02 Speaker 3

No.

00:11:04 Speaker 1

They're all born after the war, OK?

00:11:06 Speaker 3

Where are they at on there?

00:11:08 Speaker 3

Yeah, hold on.

00:11:08 Speaker 2

Yeah, all of them.

00:11:10 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:11:11 Speaker 2

But they were all born after the war.

00:11:13 Speaker 2

Fact an article in the paper was.

00:11:17 Speaker 2

Because I was discharged from the service in 1947 and one of the articles in the paper in those years, and we'd offer Beats first daughter.

00:11:30 Speaker 2

Not not the way to word it.

00:11:32 Speaker 2

We'd offer out of service before first daughter born that I just made.

00:11:37 Speaker 2

You know, I got out of service and then about a week or two later, my first daughter was born.

00:11:43 Speaker 2

Know so all my children were born.

00:11:46 Speaker 4

Really.

00:11:47 Speaker 2

After the war and after I was discharged and I was discharged, as I just mentioned.

00:11:54 Speaker 2

In 1947, after having spent quite a little bit of time in.

00:12:01 Speaker 2

The hospital over Walter Reed Hospital.

00:12:04 Speaker 1

Well, that that's something I want to go into. Is it will get to the part about the the the long lengthy stay 2 1/2 years at Walter Reed.

00:12:13 Speaker 2

Well, not only Walter Reed, but at various hospitals, primarily Walter Reed.

00:12:19 Speaker 2

I.

00:12:20 Speaker 2

I was wounded in February the 10th, 1945.

00:12:26 Speaker 2

And from February to 10th, 1945 into my discharge date, which was 47.

00:12:32 Speaker 2

Remember the exact month the scrapbook was showed at.

00:12:37 Speaker 2

I spent in hospital.

00:12:40 Speaker 2

Maybe we're going to jump ahead a little bit, but that February, the 10th incident.

00:12:47 Speaker 2

I was blown up pretty bad. A mortar came in on us and caught me and another surgeon and.

00:12:52 Speaker 2

Blew us. Blew us up in the air, killed him, and by the time he wound up with me both legs, I was blasted through both legs, strapping him up in the stomach and my one hand.

00:13:05 Speaker 2

Got shot to or not shot? Strapping went through my hand.

00:13:10 Speaker 2

And I was caught in bed in which desensitized the hospital stay of.

00:13:16 Speaker 2

Two years and something, and I joke about this, but man, I had I had.

00:13:22 Speaker 2

Can name.

00:13:23 Speaker 2

I had bone grabs skin grafts.

00:13:27 Speaker 2

About any type, almost any type operation, you can almost think of.

00:13:31 Speaker 2

Had osteomyelitis in that leg.

00:13:34 Speaker 2

You know that necessitated more operations trying to clear it up, so it took a little while.

00:13:40 Speaker 1

Well, let's go back and keep it chronological and let's go back to when you were drafted.

00:13:47 Speaker 1

You were the two of you.

00:13:49 Speaker 1

Were working and.

00:13:51 Speaker 2

I was working through gas and electric company and I was drafted and had.

00:13:53 Speaker 1

Right.

00:13:56 Speaker 2

Had a report to the draft center on the month of August of 1940.

00:14:04 Speaker 2

4343 same year I was married, married in March, had a report to the draft general. 43 August of 43.

00:14:13 Speaker 1

And then so where did you?

00:14:15 Speaker 1

Was that located?

00:14:17 Speaker 2

OK, of course, the the report NAD was right here in Baltimore. Natasha. From there, I went to the Fifth Regiment Army from a physical.

00:14:26 Speaker 2

A mayor I put me on a train and I went to can't leave Virginia.

00:14:29 Speaker 2

Got a little Virginia in there, but it didn't last long. Can't leave Virginia.

00:14:35 Speaker 1

Was that a reception replacement company or reception station?

00:14:36 Speaker 2

And then the knot.

00:14:39 Speaker 2

Ah, now I don't know.

00:14:41 Speaker 2

I just went there. I think getting ready to ship because almost immediately he sent me from Camp Ley, Virginia, to Fort Raleigh, Kansas. And I joined up with the 75th Division for basic Training.

00:14:52 Speaker 1

Oh, OK.

00:14:53 Speaker 2

In camp Raleigh.

00:14:55 Speaker 2

Camp Fort Riley.

00:14:57 Speaker 3

Come here. Come here. Come here.

00:14:59 Speaker 2

After basic training, they shipped me out of all places. I went from basic training.

00:15:04 Speaker 2

The Railroad operating battalion in Marietta, PA.

00:15:09 Speaker 2

And I spent very little time down Marietta, Pennsylvania, 'cause I at that time I had the bug and a strong bug that joined the Air Force.

00:15:19 Speaker 2

So I went to see my Commandant officer and determined we went to York.

00:15:23 Speaker 2

He sent me to York, PA, for a test that I passed for flying colours and let me join the Air Force.

00:15:32 Speaker 2

What from?

00:15:33 Speaker 2

And then I was shipped to Cincinnati. OH went to Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH, for studies.

00:15:40 Speaker 2

My wife moved there with us.

00:15:41 Speaker 2

Had a ball so.

00:15:41 Speaker 2

Had one other amazing.

00:15:44 Speaker 2

I'll say this is showing how smart I am.

00:15:47 Speaker 2

You had to have.

00:15:49 Speaker 2

No subject could be less than 85% and your total overall average had to be 85% before you get weekend pass in on ever Vista Pass.

00:16:01 Speaker 3

Them patiently come see me.

00:16:02 Speaker 2

Wait, wait. You're trying to make a hell a lot of studying.

00:16:05 Speaker 1

But anyway, now what years were you in Savior?

00:16:05 Speaker 3

And I disagree. Then you can.

00:16:09 Speaker 1

Did you got to save?

00:16:09 Speaker 2

Have whatever you had.

00:16:12 Speaker 2

40.

00:16:12 Speaker 3

And you come to visit me, didn't he?

00:16:14 Speaker 2

Four, probably 44.

00:16:17 Speaker 2

See, I got drafted in 43 and I was pushing on in the early 44. But then what happened? The the Air Force, because they they had adequate manpower and it was a shortage of manpower in the in the infantry type division.

00:16:24 Speaker 3

I need to add someone.

00:16:27

To my.

00:16:32 Speaker 2

He decided to close the Air Force training down at some point of your education and about a matter right.

00:16:33 Speaker 3

I wonder where that is.

00:16:37 Speaker 3

I don't know where it is.

00:16:39 Speaker 2

Point was that you had to have solo flight.

00:16:43 Speaker 2

Have have did solo flight and you would have been kept in the Air Force if you didn't get that far. You went back to an infantry outfit, which I did.

00:16:44 Speaker 3

Free flights, granny.

00:16:52

And.

00:16:52 Speaker 2

Of course, that in turn I went back to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

00:16:58 Speaker 2

Did a little training in Camp Kilmer and then finally jumped on the the Mary went overseas.

00:17:04 Speaker 2

As a infantry replacement destination not known.

00:17:06

I couldn't fix it.

00:17:12 Speaker 2

Obviously, the outcome of that was.

00:17:17 Speaker 2

Finally, from overseas staying, you know from from shuffling from here to there to everywhere.

00:17:23 Speaker 2

And I finally wound up as a replacement at 80th Infantry Division.

00:17:29 Speaker 1

Alice, how did?

00:17:31 Speaker 1

Were you surprised or did you both see it coming, that when the the draft took place, was it?

00:17:36 Speaker 3

Well, he said you didn't have to go in because he was important for the gas.

00:17:39 Speaker 3

Electric and, he said. But we were married.

00:17:43 Speaker 3

Was a.

00:17:43 Speaker 3

I didn't think you know he was going to serve.

00:17:46 Speaker 2

And I gotta add that I was deferred once with the job I had one time. The second time went to Ferb and come around.

00:17:48 Speaker 3

He was.

00:17:53 Speaker 2

Answer was number and that's what.

00:17:56 Speaker 2

From there on in.

00:17:57 Speaker 3

The draft, but we made it, you know, we just stuck together and go through it all demick thing.

00:18:04 Speaker 2

Which we sure.

00:18:05 Speaker 2

We've been married one out.

00:18:07 Speaker 2

1943 It's we had a 50th anniversary party.

00:18:08 Speaker 3

Took a **** Mary.

00:18:12 Speaker 2

How many years ago now we go 57.

00:18:14 Speaker 1

Could be 58 years, I guess then.

00:18:16 Speaker 2

58 years now. We had a hell of a hell of a planning.

00:18:19 Speaker 3

We had a great big wedding reception.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

And 25th wedding.

00:18:23 Speaker 2

I had a hell of a blast and 50th anniversary.

00:18:24 Speaker 3

Just like if you were getting married after inauguration.

00:18:30 Speaker 1

Oh, it's just like getting married again.

00:18:31 Speaker 3

You put a cord on. He couldn't.

00:18:33 Speaker 3

He couldn't get up because of his back.

00:18:34 Speaker 2

Now now I'm working on 100 years.

00:18:34 Speaker 3

Had to pick him up.

00:18:44 Speaker 1

Mr. Woody Dorfer, we're going to jump to about June of 1944 when you left Camp Kilmer to, as you said, a destination unknown overseas. You left to New York and boarded the Queen Mary.

00:19:00 Speaker 1

Do you like to tell us about that experience, please?

00:19:04 Speaker 2

Well, as you just said, I did left Cape Cod went to New York, boarded the Queen Mary and.

00:19:12

And.

00:19:14 Speaker 2

A lot of interesting things on the Queen Mary, but anyway, we zigzagged all the way across the Atlantic. Of course, the zigzag being to try to stay away from any Subs or not stay away if they couldn't get a beat on you.

00:19:27 Speaker 3

Removing your phone.

00:19:30

Repl.

00:19:30

It's victory.

00:19:31 Speaker 2

I arrived in England.

00:19:32 Speaker 3

Victory. You're looking forward to you.

00:19:36 Speaker 2

I'll stay July fourty 4.

00:19:41 Speaker 2

And hung around a few camps right in a little towns out in the field. We lived, and all of a sudden we get a.

00:19:48 Speaker 2

On the trucks and get a.

00:19:52 Speaker 2

More or less.

00:19:55 Speaker 2

Get to be shipped over to the to the war zone itself.

00:20:01 Speaker 2

And when we get there.

00:20:04 Speaker 2

Finally, I get on trucks until we go to the so-called.

00:20:09 Speaker 2

Area that I'm told that I am now a member of the 80th Infantry Division and from there on in.

00:20:18 Speaker 2

Course that's say about August, but August now and I spent all of August, September, October, November, December, January, February with the 80th Infantry Division.

00:20:29 Speaker 2

Always like to say that.

00:20:32 Speaker 2

As a member of the 80th in division.

00:20:36 Speaker 2

Eight division.

00:20:39 Speaker 2

My time on the line was.

00:20:43 Speaker 2

A little bit.

00:20:45 Speaker 2

Outstanding is a heavy word. That's too.

00:20:47 Speaker 2

But most amateur men didn't last that long on the line.

00:20:52 Speaker 2

Most infantrymen would last anywhere from 30 days to a little bit better because there was a lot of reasons between.

00:21:01 Speaker 2

Your feet froze frozen feet between other sicknesses, between injuries between being.

00:21:06 Speaker 2

The number of reasons pulled you off the line, so I was on the line from August.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

44 clean up to February it says to 45.

00:21:18 Speaker 2

When I was hit by a hoarder coming in on us.

00:21:23 Speaker 2

That was a pretty good span of time.

00:21:26 Speaker 2

It was a little bit of time in the air when we fell back for with core reserve for with core reserve, but that didn't last long because the balls come along.

00:21:35 Speaker 2

And with the balls happening, we were piled on trucks to went up there to help those people.

00:21:42 Speaker 2

And that's about it.

00:21:48 Speaker 1

OK, Mr. we do.

00:21:49 Speaker 1

Please continue on with your sorry about being assigned to the 80th Division.

00:21:55 Speaker 2

All right. As I said earlier, finally I was assigned to the 80th Infantry Division.

00:22:01

In.

00:22:02 Speaker 2

Fact to be exact, it's B company of the 80th Infantry Infantry Division.

00:22:08 Speaker 1

318th.

00:22:09 Speaker 2

So I was assigned that assignment.

00:22:12 Speaker 2

And stayed with the 80th Division to a little bit that was left of August, all September, October, November, December, January, February to 10th.

00:22:22 Speaker 2

When I was beat up pretty bad with a mortar and of course all this time you're talking about also includes the time Christmas Day of 1944 when.

00:22:37

This.

00:22:38 Speaker 2

Metal that in the act.

00:22:40 Speaker 2

That's probably that's Choms, Belgium.

00:22:40 Speaker 1

That was in chaos, Montgomery.

00:22:43 Speaker 1

And the events leading up to it, you are telling me that the that you guys were in the rear and then and you met General Patton and Patton addressed the 80th and.

00:22:51 Speaker 2

OK. Yeah.

00:22:54

OK.

00:22:56 Speaker 2

This Medal of Honor was bestowed upon me for accident. Occurred Christmas Day, 1944.

00:23:03 Speaker 2

And a little bit of prior that I was somewhere say August, September, October, November into part of December.

00:23:15 Speaker 2

On the front lines with the 80 division and somewhere a little in the early part of of or early part of December, we were pulled back for core reserve.

00:23:26 Speaker 2

If we figure what a break that was, because core reserve is any GI knows, it generally will pull you.

00:23:33 Speaker 2

Maybe even a week that you're back in a rest area. You do things like portable showers. Come up, you take a shower and.

00:23:44 Speaker 2

You know, you live a little bit of a life of ease, even though part of my life is after I took the shower and the next day we pull out.

00:23:52 Speaker 2

Patton was in the area and we got hit with the fact that he was bad at us because we looked like hell. We needed shave.

00:24:00 Speaker 2

Why he was shaved. So we had a shave to.

00:24:03 Speaker 2

Good so that.

00:24:04 Speaker 2

Another clear understand why you had to look good overseas, but that's besides the point.

00:24:08 Speaker 2

We caught.

00:24:09 Speaker 2

We had a shake, but make it worse. Just when you figure you're going to have some time to yourself, all the sudden the order comes down. The Apollo and these trucks somewhere around it was evening time.

00:24:21 Speaker 2

Remember that clearly.

00:24:23 Speaker 2

And we stayed on a.

00:24:24 Speaker 2

So almost all night we were being shuffled up to the area of the battle of the balls, where the 101st was trapped inside of Bastom.

00:24:34 Speaker 2

And so rather than get our core reserve, we got about a day and a half of.

00:24:40 Speaker 2

Enough to take a shower and maybe spend a little bit of nap time, and we're back on the front lines again. And that was prior to.

00:24:50 Speaker 2

The Christmas Day prior to the action.

00:24:55 Speaker 2

That guy went.

00:24:56 Speaker 2

Giving me the Medal of Honor.

00:24:59 Speaker 2

So you can say core reserve is wonderful, but it sometimes it backfires.

00:25:05 Speaker 1

Now.

00:25:07 Speaker 1

You had the.

00:25:09 Speaker 1

It was General Koenig who awarded you the Medal of Honor.

00:25:13 Speaker 1

What was the significance of General Koenig?

00:25:18 Speaker 2

Well, first of all, when all this happened and somewhere along around February 10th exactly, I got wounded pretty bad.

00:25:26 Speaker 2

Wound up in the hospital first in the.

00:25:29 Speaker 2

Hospital up front and then finally to a hospital in England.

00:25:34 Speaker 2

And at that time, I had no inkling whatsoever.

00:25:40 Speaker 2

Of anything going on about this Congressional Medal of Honor, I did know.

00:25:46

I.

00:25:47 Speaker 2

Heard from different people that a citation was being sent in for me, but I had, you know, I felt OK. Maybe a bronze star or Silver star or whatever.

00:25:57 Speaker 2

So I was in England hospital and.

00:26:01 Speaker 2

All of a sudden, the stars and stripes comes out and the guy in the bed alongside of Maine says to me something like, hey Paul, he says.

00:26:10 Speaker 2

Do you spell your last?

00:26:12 Speaker 2

And I said we'd offer WIEDORFER.

00:26:17 Speaker 2

He.

00:26:17 Speaker 2

Do you, Paul Jay?

00:26:18 Speaker 2

Offer I.

00:26:19 Speaker 2

Yeah. And he says, man, he says you just, you know, it's here in this paper here today.

00:26:25 Speaker 2

I said, well, what for?

00:26:27 Speaker 2

He.

00:26:27 Speaker 2

You just got a citation and you know it was a little unbelievable. And I I think I even said something.

00:26:35 Speaker 2

Well, what was it for?

00:26:37 Speaker 2

He I.

00:26:38 Speaker 2

I think I think I think when I get a broad star, he's Bronze star, he says.

00:26:39 Speaker 3

Oh, yes, yes, Sir. Hold on.

00:26:44 Speaker 2

Got the Congressional Medal of Honor.

00:26:49 Speaker 2

I now after you know, getting the report from a guy long inside of Maine in bed about receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor, of course.

00:26:59 Speaker 2

Kind of things started to happen and one of the things it was a little different.

00:27:04 Speaker 2

Is. I was told that somewhere along the line from Washington on clean, on over to where I was.

00:27:12 Speaker 2

They wanted to have a presentation being done a little bit different, the difference being not by the President, United States, but by some official overseas itself, right in England.

00:27:27 Speaker 2

So the results was the medal presented to me was presented by.

00:27:33 Speaker 2

General Koenig and a little bit of.

00:27:38 Speaker 2

Story to tell on it I.

00:27:39 Speaker 2

Anyway, when the day came, it was just amazing, particularly to a guy like me was absolutely amazing.

00:27:47 Speaker 2

Next thing you know, I.

00:27:49 Speaker 2

Nurses all up in Class A uniforms coming into the ward I got.

00:27:54 Speaker 2

More brass walking into the ward, you can check a stick at. I got a military band coming into the ward and I figure, Oh my God, what's going on? And all you know, inside of the hospital ward.

00:28:06 Speaker 2

It's just absolutely a very.

00:28:09 Speaker 2

And with that, finally the general come in and the presentation of the metal was done while I'm laying in bed.

00:28:17 Speaker 2

And I just thought it was.

00:28:18 Speaker 2

Was.

00:28:19 Speaker 2

It was certainly unusual, and it was certainly.

00:28:25 Speaker 2

A bit of a tear.

00:28:26 Speaker 2

Course, after the presentation was done, then I'm surrounded by the nurses and the lot of the brass and my God. You know it just.

00:28:37 Speaker 2

Things happen so fast, it's just unbelievable.

00:28:41 Speaker 2

That's about the story.

00:28:44 Speaker 1

Here we are with Alice Weedorfer and the matriarch of the Widorfer family, and she's going to tell us what she was doing when she heard about the Medal of Honor.

00:28:57 Speaker 1

Go.

00:28:58 Speaker 3

I was working in the department store and I was out on my lunch hour with my girl that I work with and we pass the newsstand and I says people were saying, oh, somebody won a great big medal.

00:29:11 Speaker 3

Somebody's our hero here in Baltimore, and I said, Gee, I said that's my fault.

00:29:16 Speaker 3

My husband.

00:29:17 Speaker 3

That was the end of.

00:29:18 Speaker 3

I went back to work and told the boss I'm leaving.

00:29:21 Speaker 3

More.

00:29:22 Speaker 3

No more work for.

00:29:23 Speaker 3

And then the reporter called me, and I didn't know what the metal was or what it meant.

00:29:29 Speaker 3

I was just all I knew that he won a medal and he was a hero and I was his wife.

00:29:32 Speaker 3

So that made me twice as happy, you know? And that he was OK. That was mostly important.

00:29:39 Speaker 3

But that's that's.

00:29:40 Speaker 3

He's a good he's a great guy.

00:29:43 Speaker 3

Shipped me now I can't tell you much more about him, but he's a really nice.

00:29:48 Speaker 3

He is very, very tolerant and very just Nice puts up with me.

00:29:55 Speaker 1

I like Mr. Lee.

00:29:55 Speaker 3

And then rose.

00:29:56 Speaker 1

You're going to continue how you are awarded the Medal of Honor and all of a sudden celebrity status was thrust upon you and go ahead and expand on that.

00:30:08 Speaker 1

How it changed your life?

00:30:10 Speaker 2

How I changed my life how I walk?

00:30:10 Speaker 3

What happened?

00:30:13 Speaker 2

How I changed my life, number one, it changed my life just tremendously. It's almost unbelievable.

00:30:23

And.

00:30:23 Speaker 2

Of course, most of it, thank God, is good.

00:30:26 Speaker 2

Some of it's even.

00:30:29 Speaker 2

Not.

00:30:29 Speaker 2

Not the best.

00:30:31 Speaker 2

One little thing I like to talk about and I don't know why it's always comes into my mind.

00:30:38 Speaker 2

When you did, when I did something.

00:30:42 Speaker 2

That was expected of me. You probably heard nothing about it at all in the newspapers, but it did something a little bit wrong.

00:30:51 Speaker 2

The newspapers blasted.

00:30:54 Speaker 2

And one story I like to tell I was.

00:30:58 Speaker 2

In a nightclub called Madison.

00:30:59 Speaker 2

No, the.

00:31:01 Speaker 2

Like not the Madison, the ambassador like.

00:31:04

Facebook.

00:31:05 Speaker 2

And a fight started out, which I got involved.

00:31:09 Speaker 2

So.

00:31:11 Speaker 2

That outcome of the fight was the cops come in and two cops had me on arms and had to to Crouch in my pants, pulled up so tight I was walking on the tip toes and walking on my toenails. Almost.

00:31:27 Speaker 2

So anyway, I was locked up for the night.

00:31:30 Speaker 2

And then the two things hubris about it.

00:31:32 Speaker 2

One up in.

00:31:35 Speaker 2

At that point, I was treated like.

00:31:38 Speaker 2

The average guy.

00:31:40 Speaker 2

When the judge come in the next day on the case, he in turn fan out my name.

00:31:47 Speaker 2

And that quick, it was such a difference.

00:31:49 Speaker 2

Now I'm.

00:31:49 Speaker 2

J We'd offered a Medal of Honor recipient and to be Paul J, we'd offer the Medal of Honor recipient walked out of that court with no hell raisins at all. Because was that.

00:32:02 Speaker 2

But the hubris part also of it.

00:32:04 Speaker 2

It did make the paper and it was another article in the paper about Medal of Honor, but and was locked up for the night.

00:32:11 Speaker 3

In jail.

00:32:15 Speaker 2

And but he was dismissed in the morning with no charge.

00:32:19 Speaker 2

And the judge was asked, did you dismiss him because he was a Medal of Honor, man?

00:32:23 Speaker 2

Course, the judge obviously said no.

00:32:26 Speaker 2

You know, he did cause the case didn't warrant any charges.

00:32:30 Speaker 2

And then the humor part of that.

00:32:33 Speaker 2

My mother spotted that in the newspaper she cut it out of the newspaper.

00:32:38 Speaker 2

My father wouldn't see it.

00:32:39 Speaker 3

And I didn't want it.

00:32:40 Speaker 2

My father spotted it in a.

00:32:43 Speaker 2

He cut it out so my mother wouldn't see it, and both of us fighting against each other trying to hide the fact.

00:32:51 Speaker 2

That you know, this incident happened. I thought it was right humorous.

00:32:55 Speaker 2

My wife didn't even want to see the article, so that's.

00:32:58 Speaker 2

Made.

00:32:58 Speaker 2

Little bit more humorous and that's the end of that story.

00:32:59 Speaker 3

I don't want that in my scrapbook.

00:33:03 Speaker 3

That wasn't too bad of a student.

00:33:03 Speaker 2

You need to.

00:33:04 Speaker 2

But I say it.

00:33:05 Speaker 2

It was fright, humorous. When I think about it, I don't know what humorous is the word, but it was right, right, funny.

00:33:11 Speaker 2

Honey.

00:33:12 Speaker 1

Well, there's a.

00:33:13 Speaker 1

Placed on being a Medal of Honor winner and that is that you.

00:33:17 Speaker 1

There's so much expected of you, and you've got to live up to this this level that you can no longer.

00:33:24 Speaker 1

Go along, being human.

00:33:26 Speaker 1

You got to be superhuman and then things happen though.

00:33:27 Speaker 2

That's.

00:33:29 Speaker 2

Sort of it. But of course, remember that opposite 2021 at that time, probably 232425 year old guy and and life was a little different than it is to me now, but you.

00:33:42 Speaker 2

They they, you, you got you suppose it.

00:33:45 Speaker 2

Well, like they say now, particularly with athletes, you supposed to set yourself up as a role model, and sometimes that can be a little difficult.

00:33:53 Speaker 2

You got you also live in life.

00:33:56 Speaker 2

And I live life.

00:34:01 Speaker 3

That's it, huh? Period. Yeah.

00:34:05 Speaker 2

Now some of the good parts.

00:34:07 Speaker 2

About the Medal of Honor, what it did to change my life.

00:34:10

Of.

00:34:11 Speaker 2

Number one, I met many and many and many.

00:34:16 Speaker 2

Persons that I wouldn't have met if we went for the Medal of Honor, I met celebrities, unbelievable, and I just to go down a few. I met quite a few presidents.

00:34:28 Speaker 2

From Kennedy to Nixon to Eisenhower.

00:34:34 Speaker 2

I met so many celebrities, from Anthony Quinn to Ella Fitzgerald and Jimmy do Randy, to Nat King Cole to more.

00:34:45 Speaker 2

Can't even think of all.

00:34:46 Speaker 2

Them the things that I never would have.

00:34:49 Speaker 2

I've been invited to affairs that I never would have been invited to.

00:34:53 Speaker 2

I invited to inaugurate all every year I'm invited to different conventions in the Congressional Medal of Honor Society Convention itself is outstanding, and that convention even have airfare, airfare paid for me both down and back.

00:35:10 Speaker 2

Paid for me down and back.

00:35:12 Speaker 2

Including my wife.

00:35:13 Speaker 2

So some of those are just.

00:35:15 Speaker 2

And nowhere in God's world would I have.

00:35:18 Speaker 2

Going through that, if it weren't for the Medal of.

00:35:22 Speaker 2

So it brought it brought.

00:35:26 Speaker 2

A hell of a lot to my life.

00:35:27 Speaker 3

A lot of good memories.

00:35:29 Speaker 2

A lot of memories.

00:35:30 Speaker 2

A lot of memories I like to live over and and of course, there's few as a site earlier.

00:35:36 Speaker 2

Glad I don't have to live over.

00:35:38 Speaker 2

But it's it's just you just can't enumerate the number of things it did to you.

00:35:47 Speaker 2

It obviously occurred in your life, banquets, in your Honor. Pete, Mia, Glen. All more meet people. Let out more, all the politicians.

00:35:56 Speaker 2

You meet more than from, you know, just on and on and on and on.

00:35:59 Speaker 3

Remember in Florida, Paul, when we flew Randy Dam, we flew Randy, then our daughter.

00:36:06 Speaker 3

She she comes in and they had a banquet, a party. And these GIS picked her up badly and threw her.

00:36:12 Speaker 3

The pool.

00:36:13 Speaker 3

She put a long evening gown and they.

00:36:16 Speaker 2

Were all Congressional Medal of Honor Band, they were roommates.

00:36:19 Speaker 3

Well, they thought she was.

00:36:21 Speaker 3

I they picked her up, you know, and and threw in the in the water like that.

00:36:25 Speaker 3

Don't know, I said.

00:36:25 Speaker 3

Oh, my Lord. What?

00:36:27 Speaker 3

Yeah, we had lots and lots of fun.

00:36:29 Speaker 2

Yeah, lots and lots of fun.

00:36:30 Speaker 3

We met all these celebrities and their Anthony Queen said to me would.

00:36:35 Speaker 3

Would you like? Would you like my autograph? And I says no, not particularly. I like that.

00:36:41

Ha ha ha.

00:36:42 Speaker 3

His face really turned.

00:36:43 Speaker 3

You know, really handsome as I don't know he.

00:36:46 Speaker 3

Too conceited?

00:36:47 Speaker 3

Well.

00:36:47 Speaker 1

There's a picture of you with Ronald Reagan, cheek to cheek as well.

00:36:50 Speaker 3

Yeah, well, he was he, right?

00:36:53 Speaker 3

His wife put her cheek real, real fast next to him.

00:36:57 Speaker 3

I.

00:36:57 Speaker 3

I don't want you. I just wanted him.

00:37:00 Speaker 3

I say it as it is everything and when I met, when I went President Kennedy.

00:37:06 Speaker 3

I told him he was a living doll.

00:37:09 Speaker 3

That's in the newspaper.

00:37:10 Speaker 2

Of all people, to tell that to.

00:37:12 Speaker 3

Well, we were.

00:37:12 Speaker 3

We were shaking my hand and his hand was so handsome and I said, Mr. President, it's an honor to be here, but you you are a living dog.

00:37:20 Speaker 2

And the president says, in whom may you be?

00:37:22 Speaker 3

And whom did you say your name was?

00:37:24 Speaker 3

He said not who but whom.

00:37:28 Speaker 1

Well, you are quite a good looking lady and your younger days.

00:37:30 Speaker 3

Well, thank you.

00:37:31 Speaker 3

Maybe that's why you know my I'm I'm.

00:37:34 Speaker 3

I think it's I'm more.

00:37:36 Speaker 3

Maybe that's why, you know, I think it has a lot to do with it.

00:37:41 Speaker 3

I'm not scared of talking nobody.

00:37:44 Speaker 3

Ain't no better than I am. You know, they're as good as me, but they're not.

00:37:47 Speaker 1

Better than me and you're very proud of your husband and not.

00:37:50 Speaker 3

You got that right.

00:37:51 Speaker 1

Not too humble about that.

00:37:52 Speaker 3

Everybody knows about Paul, but I do all the talking.

00:37:57 Speaker 3

Even at the beauty shop where I go house.

00:38:00 Speaker 3

How's your husband doing today?

00:38:01 Speaker 3

All know.

00:38:02 Speaker 3

You know, they don't know him, but they know of him. The way I talk. He's a good guy, I'm telling you.

00:38:08 Speaker 3

But then again, I'm a Good Wife.

00:38:13 Speaker 3

He would have thought me right.

00:38:17 Speaker 1

I'm sure that man.

00:38:17 Speaker 3

He would have dumped me.

00:38:21 Speaker 2

All right, little story.

00:38:24 Speaker 2

I can't help but reminisce back some some of these things are funny and some of them away, but very humorous.

00:38:30 Speaker 2

This one in Kennedy's.

00:38:34 Speaker 2

Inaugural Ball was a big, big snowy night.

00:38:39 Speaker 2

And my wife and I going there at that time, we went down Union Station.

00:38:45 Speaker 2

Went over and in fact Alice actually went into her evening gown on the.

00:38:49 Speaker 2

She went to the ladies room on the train and put the all the evening evening gown on course.

00:38:50 Speaker 3

And that girl thought I was a Princess.

00:38:54 Speaker 2

I left here with my tux on already, but she dressed up actually on a train. That's not the story we get.

00:39:00 Speaker 2

Get over there and we hop a cab.

00:39:03 Speaker 2

And we and and krabin was difficult with the snow.

00:39:05 Speaker 2

Was sliding and slipping and a lot of.

00:39:09 Speaker 2

And the CAP pull us up in front of a spot, they said.

00:39:12 Speaker 2

Here you.

00:39:13 Speaker 2

And we didn't know any better.

00:39:15 Speaker 2

We jump out of the car and we see a red carpet going down the walkway into into.

00:39:23 Speaker 3

Farmer's like.

00:39:23 Speaker 2

The you know, into the Armory and her. her and I jump on a red carpet.

00:39:28 Speaker 2

Kind of running down her and.

00:39:32 Speaker 2

Headpiece over?

00:39:32 Speaker 2

You know to grab her canopy and.

00:39:33 Speaker 3

Canada.

00:39:35 Speaker 2

And we're going out there.

00:39:36 Speaker 2

Jumped us again.

00:39:38 Speaker 2

Jumped.

00:39:38 Speaker 2

You don't belong.

00:39:39 Speaker 2

You know, we we didn't belong in that red carpet. That was for when he a president arrived.

00:39:44 Speaker 3

Way down.

00:39:45 Speaker 2

And and stuff like that, it finds out humorous later on in your life and we went up going down the red carpet.

00:39:52 Speaker 2

Went inside, but we weren't supposed to go that way. You know, that was like.

00:39:56 Speaker 3

And have that sitting in the wrong booth and.

00:40:00 Speaker 3

Starting with big shots.

00:40:00 Speaker 2

I don't.

00:40:00 Speaker 2

I don't want to go there.

00:40:04 Speaker 2

Too.

00:40:04 Speaker 2

I would be funny. Lot of views.

00:40:05 Speaker 3

That was funny.

00:40:09

And.

00:40:09 Speaker 3

Oh well.

00:40:11 Speaker 1

Mr. Widorfer, along with the Medal of Honor you received numerous other awards, amongst them the Purple Heart.

00:40:17 Speaker 1

You tell us about what happened in regards to the Purple Heart award.

00:40:23 Speaker 2

Well, as far as the Purple Heart.

00:40:28 Speaker 2

Number one, I have a Purple Heart with a cluster.

00:40:32 Speaker 2

And the first Purple Heart I got was approximately.

00:40:37 Speaker 2

Early September and that was one of those easy ones. Again, I was a piece of scrap and I'll cut right across my eye and drew blood, but no more than that. And of course that was my first Purple Heart.

00:40:52 Speaker 2

Of course, the second Purple Heart was the wounds that laid me up for about 2 1/2 years in the hospital.

00:40:59 Speaker 2

Was February the 10th?

00:41:02 Speaker 2

1945 now that one ripped me up pretty good, that was.

00:41:08 Speaker 2

A mortar came in on a Sergeant and I. We were getting ready to disperse the men and the Sergeant and I were talking when a mortar come in.

00:41:16 Speaker 2

Killed the star, the other stars and Sergeant or Harold killed. In fact, I'm a firm.

00:41:22 Speaker 2

That a lot of the shrapnel that hit me went through his body because his back was so torn up when he's laying there in the ground. But.

00:41:31 Speaker 2

On me, it got me on both legs. My left leg particularly got me.

00:41:37 Speaker 2

It was a compound fracture, most of tibia and tribulum bones.

00:41:41 Speaker 2

And it the the leg was going down like on a 45° angle.

00:41:47 Speaker 2

Also, strapping the one up into my stomach and also a piece of scrap in the one across my hand and one in here and come out here which if I don't know what this picture show it but I don't have a knuckle no more where it belongs at.

00:42:01 Speaker 2

Time when I was wounded. These two fingers here was hanging down this way.

00:42:05

Looks like they're fine.

00:42:06 Speaker 2

Yeah. And it frankly would all that for a while.

00:42:11 Speaker 2

Didn't even feel any pain.

00:42:13 Speaker 2

The man is come up and put a.

00:42:16 Speaker 2

The what is?

00:42:16 Speaker 2

What's the drug they put on your? Uh.

00:42:18 Speaker 1

Morphine.

00:42:19 Speaker 2

The patter of faded put the drug on me and I didn't feel just about no pain.

00:42:26 Speaker 2

Defensively, they strapped me onto a Jeep. A Jeep.

00:42:31 Speaker 2

Ride me back to the hospital and then I started hurting like hell and put the part that hurt with my stomach.

00:42:38 Speaker 2

My stomach was hurting my hell. The time I got back to the hospital, I was so vividly recall.

00:42:46 Speaker 2

Some priest come, he come. He came to me and I don't remember whether he said anything about right, but I know it was a few prayers. Pray.

00:42:54 Speaker 2

But I begged him to get the doctors operate on me because I'm hurting so.

00:43:00 Speaker 2

And I remember he started rubbing my head like it.

00:43:03 Speaker 2

We'll take.

00:43:04 Speaker 2

Don't worry, we'll take care of it.

00:43:06 Speaker 2

And the next thing you know, the under the knife you.

00:43:09 Speaker 2

What I mean?

00:43:10 Speaker 2

And I'm also unconsciously and that.

00:43:15 Speaker 2

That's the post to Purple Hearts 1. Was it easy?

00:43:18 Speaker 2

Was a hard one.

00:43:20 Speaker 1

The hard one puts you out of action completely.

00:43:21 Speaker 2

And why would put me out from from February the 10th and I was discharged from the army out of Walter Reed Hospital and somewhere around.

00:43:31 Speaker 2

1947 I know a month before my youngest daughter was born.

00:43:36 Speaker 1

I guess you are no longer assigned to the 80th Division once you were pulled out of combat.

00:43:42 Speaker 4

Well.

00:43:43 Speaker 1

Or how did that work did?

00:43:44 Speaker 1

Have you assigned?

00:43:45 Speaker 2

You know a lot of questions.

00:43:46 Speaker 2

Don't.

00:43:47 Speaker 2

I'm not really not embarrassed, but it's hard for me to answer.

00:43:51 Speaker 2

When I went up in the hospitals, particularly when I finally wound up over in Walter Reed, the commanding officer of me was a guy named a guy named Davis.

00:44:02 Speaker 2

That he was the commanding officer of all the wounded people in the hospital.

00:44:08 Speaker 2

We still, as far as our patches and all our we still went under to, I mean my case, the 80th Division, but my commanding officer was the the guy, the man in the hospital, you know.

00:44:20 Speaker 2

These who are reported to, and he's wanted that any problems I had, I had to go to.

00:44:25 Speaker 2

Wasn't it was? No.

00:44:29 Speaker 2

Officer from the 80th Division to handle me as an 80th Division member.

00:44:35 Speaker 1

Right now, if we could spin up a little bit after after you're released from the hospital and then you retain, you went back to civilian life as a Medal of Honor winner.

00:44:47 Speaker 1

Were always subject to a lot of interesting events.

00:44:52 Speaker 1

And and one thing that was of particular interest is you're an activity as a committee member.

00:45:01 Speaker 1

Naming of Memorial Stadium, where the Baltimore Orioles and Baltimore Colts played once back in Baltimore. And there's a picture of you attending a ball game with General McAuliffe, right?

00:45:08

OK.

00:45:15 Speaker 1

Was the 10 first airborne division commander.

00:45:17 Speaker 2

That's.

00:45:18 Speaker 2

That's the commander of the 101.

00:45:19 Speaker 1

Now you you got to you got to meet General McAuliffe.

00:45:23 Speaker 2

Quite a few times I'll tell you about the.

00:45:28 Speaker 2

#1A little instant with the general and for two the second part about that committee, the incident obviously about the general.

00:45:37 Speaker 2

We motored quite a few times between Bulver and Washington to and and both the both two of the times ago.

00:45:45 Speaker 2

Time, I think was something else 2 of the time was to go to the ball game.

00:45:50 Speaker 2

The first picture, whatever.

00:45:53 Speaker 2

Guest at the at the ball game and one of our particularly remembered driving over from.

00:45:58 Speaker 2

Now I was born and raised in Balber, but we drove from Washington to, for those are familiar with my area.

00:46:07 Speaker 2

Through Ellicott City and down through into the old Washington Blvd. And course, obviously in the Baltimore.

00:46:14 Speaker 2

And he pointed out more stills to me.

00:46:18 Speaker 2

That I ever knew existed in Berlin, I wouldn't know.

00:46:21 Speaker 2

I wouldn't.

00:46:22 Speaker 2

Naive. I knew of a few, but he knew stills and what to call Jessup's in Dorsey, Maryland. It was absolutely amazing.

00:46:32 Speaker 2

Now the other part you ask is.

00:46:34 Speaker 2

Somewhere around that time, the new stadium was built for the Oriole Barber, oriole baseball and the Baltimore Colt football team.

00:46:45 Speaker 2

The name of that stadium was up for grabs and the political pressures were so hot on one end, to name it everything from.

00:46:56 Speaker 2

Beirut was one of them to a number of other ones. You know, they they wanted to name the stadium.

00:47:03 Speaker 2

We, as a committee fought it like hell, trying to get it to be named for a memorial to the veterans.

00:47:13 Speaker 2

And we fought this.

00:47:14 Speaker 2

I guess they went on for.

00:47:17 Speaker 2

And finally, with the mayor of our city at that time, Tommy D Alessandro, we went down his office and he's true to I remember sort of particularly that time he kind of grinned because he says we won.

00:47:32 Speaker 2

We mean a committee and what do you mean we?

00:47:36 Speaker 2

We are going to accept the name you wanted, that they're going to call it the Baltimore Memorial Stadium, you know, in memory of the the veterans. So that was a.

00:47:47 Speaker 2

We were.

00:47:47 Speaker 2

Proud as committee, we wanted to name that we won, that a funny for caring it on further just recently they.

00:47:55 Speaker 2

Built 2 new stadiums in Ballmer, one for the Ballmer oils and one for the now Ballmer Ravens and the old stadium.

00:48:05 Speaker 2

They they fought knocking it.

00:48:06 Speaker 2

They finally, unfortunately, won that they did knock it down, but we kept fighting for the fact that the front of that stadium, at the size in front we wanted it moved to still be a memorial to the veterans.

00:48:20 Speaker 2

Right now, we don't know the answer.

00:48:22 Speaker 2

Stadium has been demolished.

00:48:25 Speaker 2

The message is still standing.

00:48:27 Speaker 2

We don't know where it's going to.

00:48:28 Speaker 2

We hope it goes somewhere near the new stadium.

00:48:33 Speaker 2

To the war veterans. That's it.

00:48:38 Speaker 1

Well, there's a nice photo of you that will have to.

00:48:42 Speaker 1

Photograph and scan so we can see that of you of standing in front of the memorial. The facade that you're talking about.

00:48:50

Yeah.

00:48:54 Speaker 2

You gotta look the map bed.

00:48:56 Speaker 4

OK.

00:48:58 Speaker 2

Yeah, look at the map. But I think show March is.

00:48:58 Speaker 4

OK.

00:49:00 Speaker 2

At tables.

00:49:00 Speaker 4

Shelmont OK.

00:49:02 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:49:03 Speaker 2

Now let me let me show you it another way.

00:49:08 Speaker 2

I'm going to throw that right here.

00:49:11 Speaker 2

Even the citation.

00:49:16 Speaker 2

Down here right now. Where the hell do we put it?

00:49:20 Speaker 2

EITZEL.

00:49:23 Speaker 4

OK.

00:49:24 Speaker 2

So W if you spell the same name, WIETZEL would.

00:49:24 Speaker 4

7-8.

00:49:29 Speaker 2

Weetso.

00:49:31 Speaker 2

That's.

00:49:31 Speaker 2

We'd offer pack that proposed to me and somebody told my relatives from our life.

00:49:33

It's.

00:49:37 Speaker 2

Father and mother or grand or whatever. I think it's supposed to mean people from a small town.

00:49:39

Equation.

00:49:42 Speaker 2

Supposed to be a small town, I think.

00:49:44

Should.

00:49:45 Speaker 1

Be from we door.

00:49:46 Speaker 4

Well, now we do have that in common.

00:49:48 Speaker 4

I'm a small town guy too.

00:49:50 Speaker 2

'Cause I was born, raised, born OK, and I don't. I don't think this is quite a small town, but.

00:49:58 Speaker 1

OK, if you could both step back one space.

00:49:58 Speaker 4

Are you carting down?

00:50:01

OK.

00:50:03 Speaker 1

That's perfect.

00:50:03 Speaker 4

We want to make do this for posterity.

00:50:06 Speaker 4

If you don't.

00:50:07 Speaker 4

We're going hardest discussing here.

00:50:07 Speaker 2

No.

00:50:11

What? What's going on?

00:50:12 Speaker 4

But you were born and raised in Baltimore.

00:50:15 Speaker 4

How did you get in the?

00:50:16 Speaker 4

You recording?

00:50:17 Speaker 1

Yes, Sir.

00:50:17 Speaker 4

How did you get in the 80th Division?

00:50:20 Speaker 2

Oh, that's going to be a little bit of a story, but I was crafted in.

00:50:24 Speaker 2

I went into Camp Lee VA.

00:50:26 Speaker 2

Where I went to draft.

00:50:29 Speaker 2

Finally, they shipped me to the 75th Division for Infantry training.

00:50:34 Speaker 4

I remember this now or anything, yeah.

00:50:34 Speaker 2

I remember that from the 75th Division I decided I no 75th division after I finished training.

00:50:45 Speaker 2

They needed, of all places, railroad operations battalion in Marietta, PA 'cause. It was a railroad operating unit.

00:50:53 Speaker 2

I was transferred to the don't ask me the number because I don't know railroad operating unit.

00:50:59 Speaker 2

And railroad operating the unit, I decided I wanted to be a air cadet.

00:51:03 Speaker 2

So I applied in York, PA took the exam and passed with quote flying colours.

00:51:10 Speaker 2

It did important to pun.

00:51:14 Speaker 2

Ish I went.

00:51:16 Speaker 2

Cadet went to savour University, Cincinnati OH.

00:51:20 Speaker 2

I stayed there for about 8 months or so.

00:51:24 Speaker 1

While on active duty.

00:51:25 Speaker 2

While on active duty? Yeah, I went to college.

00:51:27 Speaker 2

But then they they decided nose times that they no longer needed Flyers. They needed infantry people.

00:51:36 Speaker 2

Why would they have?

00:51:36 Speaker 4

So everything revolves around.

00:51:38

The infantry.

00:51:38 Speaker 2

Yeah. And at that time, I was the damn aid you could. Was I?

00:51:43 Speaker 2

I'm a not.

00:51:45 Speaker 2

That's a strong word, but they threw me out of the catheter 'cause. They wanted infantry people.

00:51:49 Speaker 2

If you weren't.

00:51:50 Speaker 4

About that time.

00:51:51 Speaker 2

There was a lot of.

00:51:53 Speaker 4

And push in Europe thing.

00:51:54 Speaker 2

That's.

00:51:54 Speaker 2

And they needed effort to people.

00:51:56 Speaker 2

And.

00:51:58 Speaker 4

You're not telling us the army doesn't always keep its promises.

00:52:02 Speaker 2

But anyway, they put me back from the cadets, went back to camp leave Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. They from there in turn, I went up on a boat.

00:52:18 Speaker 2

Liz, Mary going overseas. And at that time all I was was a replacement infantryman going overseas. And course after I got overseas a fetch leader, a wind up in trucks and trucks and moving and moving in trucks and truck.

00:52:34 Speaker 2

And it went up to the 80th Infantry Division.

00:52:37 Speaker 2

And I joined them as.

00:52:41 Speaker 2

I we discussed it and I keep 'cause my memory. I'm getting old I memory.

00:52:44 Speaker 2

Think I joined him in the latter part of August.

00:52:48 Speaker 2

In 44.

00:52:49 Speaker 2

And then stayed with him till February 10th, 45 when he blew the hell out of me with a mortar.

00:52:55 Speaker 2

You know.

00:52:56 Speaker 4

OK.

00:52:56 Speaker 2

And that that was showing him I was shot through the hand, both legs, stomach.

00:53:03 Speaker 2

And then I lay in the hospital for.

00:53:06 Speaker 2

Bad tune A to better than 2 1/2 years and then cut this charge.

00:53:08

Show me a.

00:53:11 Speaker 2

That's my life.

00:53:12 Speaker 2

How much?

00:53:12 Speaker 4

In a nutshell, well, let me say, since we're recording this and we're in the home of.

00:53:19 Speaker 4

Formerly a master Sergeant Paul Weedhoffer of the 80th Infantry Division.

00:53:26 Speaker 4

And we're here to.

00:53:29 Speaker 4

Speak to Mr. Weed. Offer who received the Medal of Honor.

00:53:34 Speaker 4

Near Shamont, Belgium, which was actually the Battle of the Bulge and you were trying to relieve the 101st division in Patton's Third Army attacking north.

00:53:44 Speaker 2

That's right.

00:53:46 Speaker 4

And Mr. Weidoff for.

00:53:50 Speaker 4

Receive the Medal of Honor for his actions there, and we want to begin a tradition.

00:53:55 Speaker 4

You today.

00:53:58 Speaker 4

Among the sides recording this as a part of our history of the division, we are starting a new tradition.

00:54:05 Speaker 4

It is a custom in the.

00:54:06 Speaker 4

I don't know if you're aware of it. For regiments to name.

00:54:11 Speaker 4

And have honorary colonels and honorary command Sergeant Major's now. They do this on active duty a lot.

00:54:20 Speaker 4

We haven't done it a lot in the reserves and we've not done it in the 80th Division, but we're going to.

00:54:25 Speaker 4

With you.

00:54:27

And.

00:54:27 Speaker 4

I hope you accept.

00:54:29 Speaker 4

We want to name you the honorary Colonel of the three 18th Infantry 'cause. We still have units that are designated 318th and we have developed.

00:54:41 Speaker 4

Is the first one.

00:54:43 Speaker 4

Your Commission is an honorary Colonel of the Blue Ridge Division, and I I think I'll just take the time here to read this, if you don't mind to read it to you.

00:54:55 Speaker 4

Special Commission Blue Ridge Division to all whom these presents may come. Greetings. Know ye that Reposing special trust and confidence in the fidelity, abilities and competence of Paul J Weed offer. I do hereby Commission him as an honorary Colonel.

00:54:58

Yeah.

00:55:13 Speaker 4

318th Regiment, 80th Blue Ridge Division and to be hereby, vest him with plenary and all incidental authority and powers to act in said capacity.

00:55:24 Speaker 4

And to enjoy all of the privileges benefit.

00:55:28 Speaker 4

An imulance. There was a friend of mine came up with the words of his rank and office from and after the date of the appointment.

00:55:30

Please please please please.

00:55:37 Speaker 4

The appointee will therefore carefully and diligently discharge the duties of the grade and office to which, appointed by doing and performing manner of things therein, to sound like the army to.

00:55:50 Speaker 2

And it hurt us.

00:55:51 Speaker 4

Therein, to appertaining and he is hereby commissioned to enjoy and participate in all ceremonies celebrating the achievements of the three 18th Regiment and 80th Blue Ridge Division.

00:56:03 Speaker 4

Whereof I do strictly charge and require all personnel of lesser grade to recognize this appointment and to render obedience to appropriate orders given under my hand in Richmond, VA on the day third day of January in the year of our Lord 2002 Douglas O dollar.

00:56:21 Speaker 3

They like that.

00:56:21 Speaker 4

Major General U.S. Army commanding the division.

00:56:24 Speaker 4

Please accept this from the soldiers of the 80th Division.

00:56:29 Speaker 4

And appreciation for the.

00:56:32 Speaker 4

How proud you make us as being a part of the heritage of the division. Mr. Weed offer. We appreciate your great deal and I have with me a coin. A commander's coin, which is a great tradition of the army now.

00:56:48 Speaker 4

For outstanding performance for you to carry.

00:56:52 Speaker 4

In this and we will send you information about the division and you started the tradition being the first honorary Colonel of our division.

00:57:00 Speaker 2

All right.

00:57:01 Speaker 2

Thank.

00:57:02 Speaker 3

Alright.

00:57:02 Speaker 2

Thank you very much.

00:57:03 Speaker 2

You very much.

00:57:05 Speaker 2

It's been a real life.

00:57:07 Speaker 4

I think it's significant that it was on Christmas Day 1944, you received the.

00:57:14 Speaker 4

You the action in which you have ultimately received the Medal of Honor 57 years. A little more ago. Today I was two years old. On the day you fought that two days old on the on the day you fought that action to give folks an idea.

00:57:30 Speaker 4

For my thinning.

00:57:31 Speaker 4

How long ago that's been right?

00:57:34 Speaker 4

So. Umm.

00:57:36 Speaker 4

You, I noticed you were wounded twice.

00:57:39 Speaker 2

Yes, there was.

00:57:40 Speaker 4

Was it once during that action?

00:57:42 Speaker 2

Number.

00:57:43 Speaker 2

That accident was actually no.

00:57:45 Speaker 2

I was wounded prior to that accident with a cut right across here with gravel no more than drew blood.

00:57:50

Mm.

00:57:51 Speaker 2

Easy one easy one.

00:57:52 Speaker 4

Yeah.

00:57:53 Speaker 2

And I was wounded February the 10th, which was.

00:57:57 Speaker 2

What a month and 1/2.

00:57:58 Speaker 2

That after the Battle of honour deal.

00:58:02 Speaker 2

And that when I was pretty good, I certainly earned the Purple Heart on that.

00:58:06 Speaker 4

You earned.

00:58:07 Speaker 4

I earned it on that well.

00:58:11 Speaker 4

We can stop recording now if you like, but.

00:58:15 Speaker 4

I hope you.

00:58:17 Speaker 4

Can.

00:58:19 Speaker 4

We're very proud of of your involvement with the 80th Division and appreciate it for you starting this tradition.

00:58:26 Speaker 2

Well, I thank you very much. As long as I don't have to do anymore marching.

00:58:31 Speaker 4

No, no, congratulations.

00:58:33 Speaker 4

I don't think so.

00:58:33 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:58:34 Speaker 4

You very much.

00:58:34 Speaker 2

Thank you.