

Norval Richard Williams Interview

Company I, 318th Inf Reg

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Louis Orlando)

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

Let's go here. We'll start up.

00:00:10 Speaker 1

Were you drafted or did you?

00:00:12 Speaker 1

Enlist. I was drafted.

00:00:14 Speaker 1

And what were you? Where we living?

00:00:16 Speaker 1

At the time, well.

00:00:17 Speaker 2

When I was drafted, I was in suburb of Pittsburgh, PA, where I lived in.

00:00:26 Speaker 2

That area.

00:00:28 Speaker 2

And I had to finish high school. Get a.

00:00:35 Speaker 1

Second, yeah, I'll fix it.

00:00:39 Speaker 1

I know you're just a little protester.

00:00:56 Speaker 1

Sorry for the brief intermission there, but that's the way.

00:00:58 Speaker 1

It goes.

00:01:00 Speaker 2

You could start over then.

00:01:01 Speaker 1

Yes, I can.

00:01:03 Speaker 1

Can't start over with there because it won't record back, but that's.

00:01:05 Speaker 1

Just continue on.

00:01:07 Speaker 1

It's no big deal.

00:01:08 Speaker 1

OK. So you're in, you're in Pittsburgh and.

00:01:13 Speaker 1

You're rough.

00:01:16 Speaker 1

Been drafted? What year was?

00:01:18 Speaker 2

That it was 1943.

00:01:22 Speaker 1

The war had been almost a year and a half old, pretty close to that.

00:01:23 Speaker 2

Yes, I well, I was 16 when the war when Pearl Harbor.

00:01:30 Speaker 1

OK.

00:01:31 Speaker 2

And.

00:01:32 Speaker 2

Was being in high school and wanted to finish high school so.

00:01:36 Speaker 2

When I turned 18.

00:01:39 Speaker 2

In February.

00:01:41 Speaker 2

Of 43, I had to get a six month deferment in order to complete my high school. OK, so.

00:01:45

Mm-hmm.

00:01:51 Speaker 2

That gave me time enough that by May, when I graduated from high school, I had about two weeks of freedom.

00:01:59 Speaker 2

I was already had my physical inducted and ready to go and I had two weeks between that and the time I had to report to camp, which was report meat.

00:02:11 Speaker 1

Do you recall your first days in the service? Oh, yes.

00:02:15 Speaker 1

So what did it feel like all of a sudden you're in.

00:02:18 Speaker 1

The army, right?

00:02:18 Speaker 2

When you're in the army, I mean, it's a complete change.

00:02:23 Speaker 2

With a a fancy haircut at all GI's get, I mean.

00:02:28 Speaker 2

And they give you a crew cut.

00:02:31 Speaker 2

And of course, at Fort Meade, boy, you're.

00:02:35 Speaker 2

Your office overseeing officer is nothing but a Pfc because at least he's in the army and you're just a recruit.

00:02:39

And move.

00:02:43 Speaker 2

So we were of course.

00:02:47 Speaker 2

That are issues of clothing, but not at Camp Mead course. You learn your basics like.

00:02:57 Speaker 2

Scrubbing the barracks floor with toothbrushes and.

00:03:00 Speaker 1

Is you take your basic training.

00:03:02 Speaker 2

There no.

00:03:04 Speaker 2

We were loaded up on a troop train.

00:03:07 Speaker 2

And sent to California.

00:03:10 Speaker 2

And my basic training was in an anti aircraft company there because at that time they were expecting the Japanese attack on California after Pearl Harbor.

00:03:23 Speaker 2

So therefore.

00:03:25 Speaker 2

It was bristling with an aircraft and they needed more because we were on the defensive at that time so.

00:03:33 Speaker 2

We had our basic training and anti aircraft artillery battalion.

00:03:39 Speaker 2

With 48mm buffers and we done our.

00:03:45 Speaker 2

Work out on the Mojave Desert.

00:03:48 Speaker 2

Could do our shooting at sleeves towed by wafts airplanes and.

00:03:56 Speaker 2

So we were back and forth there in bivouac, Palm Springs, different areas out there. So I spent about a year out there.

00:04:06 Speaker 2

And.

00:04:07 Speaker 2

That time.

00:04:09 Speaker 2

Of course.

00:04:10 Speaker 2

Wanting to get into the Air Force, I had all my papers ready to be transferred, but my commanding officer said. Do you have to?

00:04:19 Speaker 2

You might as well do your basic.

00:04:21 Speaker 2

In this.

00:04:23 Speaker 2

So and when the basic training was over, I went from the commanding officer and requested to transfer to the Air Force.

00:04:31 Speaker 2

And he said after the government has spent all this money training you here, why?

00:04:39 Speaker 2

We didn't want to put all that down the drain so.

00:04:43 Speaker 2

Shortly after that, they realized that we became on the offensive now and we don't need so much anti aircraft.

00:04:52 Speaker 2

We need more infantry.

00:04:54 Speaker 2

So they dissolved our whole battalion and sent us to Camp Carson, Colorado, for six weeks of infantry training.

00:05:02 Speaker 2

And therefore.

00:05:05 Speaker 2

To be sent over as replacements in the.

00:05:08 Speaker 2

Infantry to where you were needed.

00:05:10 Speaker 1

And that was where they went to. When you went into the infantry base and then where did they send you after your infantry basic, where did they ship you to?

00:05:16 Speaker 2

OK.

00:05:18 Speaker 2

While.

00:05:19 Speaker 2

Being in.

00:05:21 Speaker 2

Colorado during six week temperature training.

00:05:26 Speaker 2

Of course, that's when the day came.

00:05:30 Speaker 2

And on June.

00:05:32 Speaker 2

And then we got shipped in out of there to Camp Kilmer.

00:05:37 Speaker 2

Colorado or Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and then that was.

00:05:44 Speaker 2

We departed by.

00:05:47 Speaker 2

Convoy.

00:05:49 Speaker 2

Overseas.

00:05:51 Speaker 2

So.

00:05:53 Speaker 2

They went sailed over and landed at Greenwich, Scotland.

00:05:58 Speaker 2

And of course, an officer British officer came on board.

00:06:03 Speaker 2

And said thanks, you've thanking us for arriving. But he says, I think you're too late. The war is about over. Well, that's because they were breaking.

00:06:15 Speaker 2

Out of the hedge rose and that Normandy, and was racing across France and they of course considered it being over well.

00:06:23 Speaker 2

Was he ever wrong? So we got shipped down through to.

00:06:31 Speaker 2

A camp called in Bath, England.

00:06:36 Speaker 2

And from there we went on down to Southampton, bordered British ships, and we sailed across the English Channel. And of course, we landed at the Omaha beach too, because they had nothing.

00:06:51 Speaker 2

No docs or anything.

00:06:53 Speaker 2

To bring in so we still have to come in by landing boards.

00:06:58 Speaker 2

And passed all the wrecks and the ships that were sunk.

00:07:03 Speaker 2

During D-Day.

00:07:06 Speaker 2

We.

00:07:07 Speaker 2

First unloaded by climbing.

00:07:10 Speaker 2

Off to the side of the ship by embarkation Nets into landing craft.

00:07:15 Speaker 2

We went in and landed on the beach.

00:07:19 Speaker 2

And of course, the beachhead was actually established at that time.

00:07:24 Speaker 2

So they hiked us up the.

00:07:26 Speaker 2

The cliffs.

00:07:28 Speaker 2

And only to my big surprise there lied the cemetery where all the ones that were killed during the invasion.

00:07:38 Speaker 2

There's a site.

00:07:41 Speaker 2

To behold.

00:07:43 Speaker 2

All those white crosses.

00:07:46 Speaker 2

So as we moved on in.

00:07:49 Speaker 2

And.

00:07:50 Speaker 2

Bordered trucks, which they called the Red Ball Express, it was going to move us up because the railroads weren't back into shape yet.

00:08:00 Speaker 2

Why we passed these hedge rows? It looked like little geek.

00:08:06 Speaker 2

Where they were assembling all the trucks and jeeps and military vehicles.

00:08:12 Speaker 2

Because they sent them over there in parts and they could send more that way than putting the trucks on board ships.

00:08:19 Speaker 2

And they were assembling them right there to for their use.

00:08:24 Speaker 2

And so then we went by truck.

00:08:28 Speaker 2

Moved up.

00:08:31 Speaker 2

Where they thought they would.

00:08:33 Speaker 2

Put a scene to or an outfit to an outfit, assign us as replacements.

00:08:38 Speaker 2

Well, they had time catching up because this was the race across France after the they broke out of Saint Louis.

00:08:47 Speaker 2

Now we went through Saint Louis. All the buildings were.

00:08:53 Speaker 2

It wasn't a building that wasn't hit.

00:08:55 Speaker 2

In fact, they had to take tank dozers to make a road through for us to get through the town. That's how much rubble there was, because it had been kind of attacked back and forth, bombed by the US Air Force.

00:09:10 Speaker 2

So you can imagine the devastation.

00:09:13 Speaker 2

We went on up a couple different nights. We stopped bivouac.

00:09:18 Speaker 2

Only to move out the next day. So we finally caught up.

00:09:22 Speaker 2

To the front lines at the Moselle river. Now, the reason they couldn't.

00:09:29 Speaker 2

Go any further.

00:09:31 Speaker 2

Because our supply lines couldn't keep up with ammunition supplies and.

00:09:38 Speaker 2

Replacements.

00:09:39 Speaker 2

So they had to stop at the Moselle.

00:09:42 Speaker 1

I'm interrupting here for just a second. Now. What division were you in?

00:09:45 Speaker 1

At that time.

00:09:46 Speaker 2

OK, I wasn't in any division at this time. Now as replacements, you're going to get a.

00:09:52 Speaker 2

Sign.

00:09:52

M.

00:09:53 Speaker 2

So we didn't know. So when we got up there, we found out that we were going to be assigned to the 80th Infantry Division.

00:10:01 Speaker 2

OK.

00:10:02 Speaker 2

They said that they were up on our regiment, was up on planning, was on.

00:10:08 Speaker 2

And they had been cut off.

00:10:11 Speaker 2

And 319th regimen.

00:10:14 Speaker 2

Was coming up from Nancy, which was to the right flank of us to relieve our regiment upon.

00:10:24 Speaker 2

On Amazon hill.

00:10:26 Speaker 2

And they.

00:10:27 Speaker 2

That in the mean time.

00:10:29 Speaker 2

You fellows dig in on the edge of town because they already had a counterattack from the Germans that morning. So they said they will need us.

00:10:40 Speaker 2

But in the meantime.

00:10:42 Speaker 2

We took all our supplies.

00:10:46 Speaker 2

From her duffel bag because they said just keep 1U on.

00:10:51 Speaker 2

And wrist, other than your gas mask, your rifle and the 1U.

00:10:58 Speaker 2

Take everything else, including your impregnated gas clothing.

00:11:04 Speaker 2

And your extra uniforms, your extra shoes, combat boots and all, throw them on that big bonfire. We've got to get rid of.

00:11:12 Speaker 2

And you'll be just be moving out with what you're wearing.

00:11:16 Speaker 2

So.

00:11:18 Speaker 2

At that time.

00:11:20 Speaker 2

We're dug in on the edge of town. The 319th came through us on up, relieved our.

00:11:26 Speaker 2

Regiment 318.

00:11:29 Speaker 2

They came down that evening.

00:11:32 Speaker 2

And you never seen.

00:11:34 Speaker 2

I mean, here we are, clean shaven.

00:11:37 Speaker 2

Plain clothes. Here comes a bunch of rough looking troops which had been up there cut off.

00:11:44 Speaker 2

And so they was more than glad to see us as replacements. They needed more men.

00:11:51 Speaker 2

So we joined up.

00:11:53 Speaker 2

And our commanding officer that night.

00:11:57 Speaker 2

Said it.

00:11:59 Speaker 2

He had pulled off that hill.

00:12:02 Speaker 2

They wanted us wanted. The heart rates have been up there to pick up the arms and legs and pieces and he said no way. That's what the grace registrations for.

00:12:12 Speaker 2

And he said.

00:12:14 Speaker 2

We have seen so much of our own men being wounded and killed.

00:12:18 Speaker 2

And he heard there was a.

00:12:22 Speaker 2

On their flank, where they had killed so many Germans, he was taking this on a night patrol to raise our morale.

00:12:32 Speaker 2

Especially the the old timers to see some of the enemy that's killed.

00:12:37 Speaker 2

So he took his side out of patrol.

00:12:41 Speaker 2

In the pits of black to see the dead.

00:12:45 Speaker 2

Enemy.

00:12:47 Speaker 2

So.

00:12:48 Speaker 2

First removed out the next day and.

00:12:52 Speaker 2

Kept moving up as you normally do stand out.

00:12:57 Speaker 2

On that patrol each night to see if the enemy has moved back or see if there's any resistance.

00:13:04 Speaker 2

And the worst part of it?

00:13:08 Speaker 2

That is, you're finding that.

00:13:13 Speaker 2

It's very tiresome, as you know.

00:13:17 Speaker 2

When your two men dug in a foxhole.

00:13:20 Speaker 2

And you decide to stand guard, take turns for an hour or two during the night.

00:13:26 Speaker 2

So the other one can get some rest sleep in the bottom.

00:13:29 Speaker 2

Of the hole.

00:13:31 Speaker 2

In about a couple hours later, they'd come along and say, well, we're gonna.

00:13:34 Speaker 2

Get a combat patrol again.

00:13:37 Speaker 2

And so that means one man out of each voxel. If you're left alone, you're awake the rest of the night on guard duty. If you go on a combat patrol.

00:13:47 Speaker 2

You lost sleep because you were out all night on the combat patrol.

00:13:51 Speaker 2

So it's very weary and tiresome.

00:13:55 Speaker 2

And the next day, when you.

00:13:56 Speaker 2

Move out.

00:13:57 Speaker 2

When they give you a 10 minute break.

00:14:00 Speaker 2

By you can fall asleep on your feet.

00:14:03 Speaker 1

Did your unit experience a lot of casual?

00:14:06 Speaker 1

Please.

00:14:07 Speaker 2

Or.

00:14:08 Speaker 2

We had enough casualties that.

00:14:13 Speaker 2

Well, A12 band squad, which you never usually have a complete squad.

00:14:18 Speaker 2

But as you join the squad, you put.

00:14:22 Speaker 2

Next to the.

00:14:24 Speaker 2

Assistant squad leader retrieves at the back of the squad and you move up by blood stripes.

00:14:31 Speaker 2

And I had moved clear up and.

00:14:34 Speaker 2

Of course, you bypass the squad leader and then you take second Scott position and then you take first Scott position.

00:14:42 Speaker 2

Then you go to back to Assistant squad leader position to take his position.

00:14:49 Speaker 2

Well, when it came time.

00:14:51 Speaker 2

Going through all the positions.

00:14:54 Speaker 2

I'm still a survivor.

00:14:57 Speaker 2

Between the wounded and the ones that got killed.

00:15:01 Speaker 2

I.

00:15:02 Speaker 2

Commanding officer said. I can't give you.

00:15:06 Speaker 2

Your buck Sergeant rating at this time that you deserve.

00:15:10 Speaker 2

But he said we have brought in so many from the Air Force and they have higher ratings like tech sergeants, tech corporals and the like, he said RTO's.

00:15:22 Speaker 2

Overcrowded already, so I can't give out anymore ratings, so he said. I'm going to give you one of two choices. You either be acting.

00:15:32 Speaker 2

Squad leader at that time or?

00:15:35 Speaker 2

I'll put one of these.

00:15:37 Speaker 2

Air Force.

00:15:39 Speaker 2

Boys with the tech charge rating in charge of it, I said. Well, I think I should.

00:15:46 Speaker 2

Be better off if I take acting because.

00:15:51 Speaker 2

He wouldn't know had me dig a fox on the middle of the road. I mean, he had no infantry at all.

00:15:55 Speaker 2

And.

00:15:57 Speaker 2

So.

00:15:59 Speaker 2

I went ahead and fulfilled those duties until.

00:16:05 Speaker 2

Our division went back on.

00:16:08 Speaker 2

Supposed to go back on rest for I guess a week or two. Well, we were only back there 2 days.

00:16:15 Speaker 2

Time enough to get a shower.

00:16:18 Speaker 2

Haircut.

00:16:20 Speaker 2

And we had orders in.

00:16:23 Speaker 2

That general Patton.

00:16:27 Speaker 2

Told Eisenhower that we can move.

00:16:30 Speaker 2

My whole army, he said. The whole 3rd army.

00:16:33 Speaker 2

We didn't know where we were going. That's when the time to battle the bullets had.

00:16:38 Speaker 2

So he wanted to move the whole army up there.

00:16:41 Speaker 2

To back it up.

00:16:43 Speaker 2

And they loaded us up on trucks that night.

00:16:47 Speaker 2

And we drove all night with bright head lights.

00:16:51 Speaker 2

Now as a rule.

00:16:53 Speaker 2

You always have black eyelids.

00:16:55 Speaker 2

The sky was illuminated, lit up.

00:16:58 Speaker 2

That.

00:16:59 Speaker 2

He knew.

00:17:00 Speaker 2

Patton knew that the.

00:17:02 Speaker 2

Weather was so bad that our Air Force was grounded.

00:17:06 Speaker 2

And he knew the Luftwaffe would have to be grounded also, so he wasn't worried about it.

00:17:12 Speaker 2

Then having an air strike on us. So he shuttled his whole army back and forth up.

00:17:19 Speaker 2

Brought the trucks back and took more.

00:17:21 Speaker 2

People up.

00:17:23 Speaker 2

We went into Esterbrook, Luxembourg.

00:17:28 Speaker 2

Now our 319th Regiment went into Bastone, which you've heard about where the 101st was cut off.

00:17:38 Speaker 2

We went into Edelbrock, Luxembourg.

00:17:41 Speaker 2

We were up on the hill.

00:17:43 Speaker 2

And we had Christmas.

00:17:46 Speaker 2

A hot meal brought up by our kitchen.

00:17:51 Speaker 2

Next day.

00:17:52 Speaker 2

Overcome the P-47.

00:17:57 Speaker 2

Thunderbirds and Thunderbolts and they bombed Elderbrook.

00:18:03 Speaker 2

I mean, it was like a grandstand seat. We're right up on the edge of the hill watching the display.

00:18:09 Speaker 2

Until shrapnel from the bombs started fly up over our heads, into the trees. So we figured better get my head down.

00:18:18 Speaker 2

In the foxhole.

00:18:20 Speaker 2

So after the.

00:18:22 Speaker 2

Planes that bombed Middlebrook.

00:18:25 Speaker 2

And you could see the German anti aircraft shooting at the middle.

00:18:29 Speaker 2

But their tactics was quite clever.

00:18:33 Speaker 2

Because.

00:18:34 Speaker 2

One plane would come in.

00:18:37 Speaker 2

Release the bomb or the air and aircraft would be firing at him and one would come in right over our head, right over the treetops. And he'd do the initial bombing because they're all what's in the one going out.

00:18:51 Speaker 2

And.

00:18:54 Speaker 2

Luckily, when we went into.

00:18:56 Speaker 2

Town of Ellerbrook.

00:19:00 Speaker 2

The Germans had pulled out that night.

00:19:03 Speaker 2

So that morning when we arrive.

00:19:08 Speaker 2

Into the into the town. So we went on through the town, up on the next hill dug in in case of a counterattack. Well.

00:19:19 Speaker 2

One of our men said, you know, there was a distillery down in that town.

00:19:25 Speaker 2

It was.

00:19:26 Speaker 2

I think we ought to send a patrol back down in there because.

00:19:31 Speaker 2

If we don't go to night, the combat MP's will have a lock on it the next day. So they did and we ended up.

00:19:36 Speaker 1

Right.

00:19:41 Speaker 2

With enough bottle.

00:19:43 Speaker 2

Branded cognac on a cold winter night tasted pretty good. Warms your stomach up. But you had to be careful how much you drank, because if the Germans counterattacked, you wouldn't be able to hit the side of a barn. You.

00:19:47 Speaker 1

Good.

00:19:57 Speaker 1

When you were over there, did you stay in?

00:19:59 Speaker 1

Touch with your.

00:20:00 Speaker 2

Family at all well.

00:20:03 Speaker 2

Mail. Yes, you would write letters. How was the food? Receive letters. The food that we ate. Well, you lived on.

00:20:09

Yeah.

00:20:13 Speaker 2

C rations, or K rations, which we always preferred K rations because it came in a wax box and at least at the bottom of the box. So you could light that. It was like a candle that didn't emit any smoke and you could heat a cup of.

00:20:27 Speaker 2

Coffee over that.

00:20:29 Speaker 2

Where the sea rations.

00:20:32 Speaker 2

Can you imagine having three days of supplies of sea rations? So that means 3 heavy cans which were only consisted of beans, hash and Stew.

00:20:48 Speaker 2

You carried in the pockets of your. Unless you had a light pack, you carried in the pockets of your field jacket and the biscuits.

00:20:57 Speaker 2

And the light cans? We either ate them right away or put them in their pockets too. Now, when we would.

00:21:07 Speaker 2

Be working with the riding of the tanks and that of the 4th Armored Division.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

We would be attached to. They would have 10 and one raisins, which would be big, crates included everything Jelly and.

00:21:23 Speaker 2

I mean, we always prefer durations.

00:21:27 Speaker 1

When you were over there and you're going to leave when you were there.

00:21:30 Speaker 2

Never got to leave. Never got an R&R. I spent six months in combat, which was very unusual because I've seen replacements come the day before and they were killed the next day or so.

00:21:33 Speaker 1

Sure.

00:21:47 Speaker 2

I don't. I don't want the the good Lord.

00:21:50 Speaker 2

Had in mind for me I'm a survivor.

00:21:53 Speaker 1

Did you get? Did you get?

00:21:54 Speaker 2

Wounded over there. I didn't get wounded.

00:21:56 Speaker 2

You're very fortunate. Yeah. I got my feet frozen. And then.

00:22:03 Speaker 2

Battle of the Bulge didn't even know they were frozen.

00:22:07 Speaker 2

After we crossed the Star River.

00:22:11 Speaker 2

By pontoon boats now they shelled smoke.

00:22:15 Speaker 2

Bombs for a smoke screen that morning.

00:22:19 Speaker 2

And we were to paddle across and the wind started to pick up, and blowing the smoke screen.

00:22:25 Speaker 2

And pockets of way why they were shooting at us as we were crossing the the river.

00:22:32 Speaker 2

In fact, the fellow.

00:22:35 Speaker 2

Replacement right in front of Maine, in the bow of the boat. And I was right behind him. You hold your rifle between your legs and palate.

00:22:44 Speaker 2

And if.

00:22:45 Speaker 2

If you ever experience.

00:22:49 Speaker 2

In a boat.

00:22:51 Speaker 2

With a bunch of rookies that don't have anything they don't know nothing about. Paddle on the boat.

00:22:57 Speaker 2

And the Swiss screen coming down.

00:23:00 Speaker 2

They were paddling as hard on the port side as we were on the starboard side.

00:23:05 Speaker 2

And I was afraid the boat was going to swing around and come right out of that smokescreen. And we had been sitting ducks for the enemy on the other hillside because they were already firing at us.

00:23:18 Speaker 2

In fact, you could see the bullets hitting the water. One hit my paddle. I didn't know it till we got to the other side. And of course y'all jump out even before you get onto the land.

00:23:31 Speaker 2

Knee deep.

00:23:33 Speaker 2

The sight of my rifle cut on the.

00:23:35 Speaker 2

Pack of the.

00:23:37 Speaker 2

Soldier in front.

00:23:38 Speaker 2

For me.

00:23:39 Speaker 2

As I jumped out of.

00:23:41 Speaker 2

I reached back there and hooked the sight my rifle offered. I said, aren't you getting? Not? When I looked at him, the blood was gushing out of his mouth, so he took a bullet just before me.

00:23:53 Speaker 2

So.

00:23:54 Speaker 2

We hit riverbank, spread out. I guess maybe 6 or 8 rafts got across.

00:24:04 Speaker 2

They decided.

00:24:06 Speaker 2

Too much wings picking up they can't.

00:24:08 Speaker 2

Get that smoke screen cover.

00:24:11 Speaker 2

So the Lieutenant in charge said to spread out, and we're all going to fire and start up over that hillside.

00:24:19 Speaker 2

In which we did called fire movement.

00:24:22 Speaker 2

That kept.

00:24:23 Speaker 2

The Germans that were in the foxholes heads down.

00:24:28 Speaker 2

As we would come up on them, they'd be in the folk soul, ready to surrender.

00:24:33 Speaker 2

We didn't have enough men to take them back. We just told them one down the river bank. Somebody will get you.

00:24:39 Speaker 2

So we got to the high ground.

00:24:41 Speaker 2

And we laid there for six days and six nights.

00:24:46 Speaker 2

Our feet was already wet.

00:24:48 Speaker 2

We had no blankets, we had no sleeping bags and the temperature was 20 below 0.

00:24:55 Speaker 2

Until they got a pontoon bridge across to get trucks and equipment across to us.

00:25:01 Speaker 2

And.

00:25:03 Speaker 2

Finally, when they got across.

00:25:05 Speaker 2

I had.

00:25:07 Speaker 2

On my aberration on the fruit bar.

00:25:11 Speaker 2

It was a seed in that fruit bar that broke the tooth in my upper right, Shaw.

00:25:16 Speaker 2

And.

00:25:18 Speaker 2

Here my jaws start to swell up.

00:25:20 Speaker 2

My eyes going close so I went to my first surgeon and asked him is this kind of late to learn how to shoot left-handed? He said. Pop eye jump in that ambulance with the wounded. There's a dentist at the field hospital. They'll take care of you. So I go back here and the dentist yanked the tooth out.

00:25:41 Speaker 2

I was tagged for a tooth so.

00:25:44 Speaker 2

I said to them.

00:25:47 Speaker 2

Medic, is there any chance to get a dry pair of socks?

00:25:51 Speaker 2

He said sure, sit down there, take your combat boots off and I hollered. Make it 2. We always carried a dry pair up at her home and went.

00:25:59 Speaker 2

But when he came back and had my socks off my combat boots.

00:26:04 Speaker 2

He said you're not going anywhere, I said why? He said your feet's been frozen.

00:26:10 Speaker 2

They are, I said. Well, what do I do now? And he looked at my tag, he said. You're back there for 2:00. You got to go back to your outfit and get retagged or they'll think you went.

00:26:21 Speaker 2

Deserted or able so.

00:26:24 Speaker 2

I had to get back in the ambulance, go back up to my outfit, get retagged and then come back.

00:26:31 Speaker 2

To the field hospital and I hopped out of the back of the ambulance. The guy medic looked at my tag and he's asking me, what are you doing on your?

00:26:40 Speaker 2

Feet.

00:26:41 Speaker 2

I said I'm in the infantry. We're always on her feet, he said. Well, no more. You get on that litter.

00:26:48 Speaker 2

He said you're going to bruise your feet that much worse, he said, because they're already.

00:26:54 Speaker 2

So I got on that they put us on a troop train with all the wounded.

00:27:00 Speaker 2

Took us back to a General Hospital.

00:27:03 Speaker 2

And we were put into a.

00:27:06 Speaker 2

Ward that they called.

00:27:08 Speaker 2

Trench foot board from the First World War called Transport.

00:27:13 Speaker 2

And.

00:27:15 Speaker 2

It's where we.

00:27:18 Speaker 2

And must have slept for two days and two nights. I was so exhausted that when you would wake up.

00:27:24 Speaker 2

Find out you was in nice warm building. He was under white sheets.

00:27:30 Speaker 2

What did change so?

00:27:35 Speaker 2

I seen the doctor and the nurse come in that morning.

00:27:38 Speaker 2

Going down the other side.

00:27:40 Speaker 2

Best.

00:27:42 Speaker 2

He would say to the nurse, send us Ki to the United Kingdom or to England.

00:27:49 Speaker 2

And I said to the.

00:27:50 Speaker 2

Gee, I in the bed next to me. Boy, I hope they send me back to the United Kingdom. That'd be great. You know he said no. They're going back to have their feet emptied. Gangrene has said it. Oh, and he said I changed my mind. So.

00:28:07 Speaker 2

30 days I spent in the hospital.

00:28:12 Speaker 2

Therapy with Whirlpool bears picking marbles up with your toes to exercise to get them ready. Of course they were in a hurry to get us back online.

00:28:24 Speaker 2

And they would take us on a hike.

00:28:26 Speaker 2

Well, it was too early because the tissues die in your feet where they turn black. But the new tissues are so tender by going on a hike.

00:28:39 Speaker 2

They just your feet swell up like balloons, you know?

00:28:43 Speaker 2

So.

00:28:44 Speaker 2

It would go through that procedure until finally.

00:28:48 Speaker 2

They put us in limited assignment.

00:28:53 Speaker 2

And they knew we wouldn't be able to go back to the infantry to with our feet in that shape. So they put us into quartermaster outfits.

00:29:01 Speaker 2

And by this time.

00:29:04 Speaker 2

The war ended.

00:29:07 Speaker 2

With Germany.

00:29:10 Speaker 2

And now we are scheduled to go to.

00:29:13 Speaker 2

Japan.

00:29:15 Speaker 2

So.

00:29:17 Speaker 2

We were put into whole various quartermaster outfits. I was guarding an s s troop.

00:29:24 Speaker 2

Stockade then.

00:29:27 Speaker 2

Into bakery outfits, mobile laundry outfit.

00:29:32 Speaker 2

And finally I got into a real hit outfit which handles the food.

00:29:36 Speaker 2

And I was checking off the German prisoners would be unloading box cars.

00:29:44 Speaker 2

And a friend of mine, come along and said.

00:29:48 Speaker 2

By coming down to the motor pool tomorrow, we need truck drivers bad.

00:29:54 Speaker 2

So I.

00:29:55 Speaker 2

Reported that the motor pool Sergeant and ask.

00:30:00 Speaker 2

That he needed a driver, he said.

00:30:03 Speaker 2

We sure do. So he assigned me to a a tractor.

00:30:09 Speaker 2

Halls and trailers and we would.

00:30:13 Speaker 2

Pull them into this box, cars to unload supplies onto them, and then once while they send you down into Marseille, France to the docks. And that with these.

00:30:26 Speaker 2

And you had a German prisoner.

00:30:30 Speaker 2

Writing.

00:30:31 Speaker 2

Beside you he would get.

00:30:33 Speaker 2

Out.

00:30:34 Speaker 2

And loosen the fifth wheel on them so you never had to do anything but drive.

00:30:41 Speaker 2

So the one morning.

00:30:44 Speaker 2

I go to work.

00:30:46 Speaker 2

This German I pick up this German prisoner and he's saying.

00:30:50 Speaker 2

Mr.

00:30:52 Speaker 2

War with Japan is kapoot is over.

00:30:58 Speaker 2

I said what?

00:31:00 Speaker 2

He had the information before we did and they were.

00:31:05 Speaker 2

In the German prisoner stockade, how they get that information?

00:31:10 Speaker 2

And I said.

00:31:12 Speaker 2

How? How do you know this? He says Americans drop an egg on Japan because nobody knew what an atomic bomb and I said.

00:31:19 Speaker 1

So moved.

00:31:25 Speaker 2

How could they drop an egg on them when we drop?

00:31:29 Speaker 2

Just on.

00:31:30 Speaker 2

You people and you didn't surrender, you know. Well, then we found out later with atomic bomb.

00:31:38 Speaker 1

When you were when you were there, did you? Were you part of the army of occupation in Germany?

00:31:43 Speaker 2

Yes, after was over, I was in the army about the patient.

00:31:49 Speaker 2

And at first, he wasn't allowed to talk to any Germans. I mean, it was civilians of anybody.

00:31:56 Speaker 2

And.

00:31:57

Yeah.

00:31:58 Speaker 2

Then.

00:31:59 Speaker 2

Well, we were up in Munich, Germany.

00:32:03 Speaker 2

With this laundry outfit.

00:32:06 Speaker 2

Then we went to Marseille, France, because they had the big staying area down there. They're getting us already.

00:32:12 Speaker 2

Well, to ship something they had shipped back through the United States to the Pacific or to California. We were to go through the Suez Canal and go that way.

00:32:25 Speaker 2

But if it hadn't been for the.

00:32:28 Speaker 2

Atomic bomb.

00:32:30 Speaker 2

With with the best.