

Bob Burrows Interview

Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 317th Inf Reg

(Aug 2017, interviewed by Rishi Sharma)

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

00:00:00 Speaker 1

What is your full name, Sir?

00:00:03 Speaker 2

Robert H Burrows.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

Where and when were you born?

00:00:09 Speaker 2

I was born October 1st, 1924 Detroit, MI.

00:00:14 Speaker 1

So how old are you right now?

00:00:16 Speaker 2

I'm 92 of a 93 in a couple weeks.

00:00:20 Speaker 1

Do you feel like you're 92?

00:00:22 Speaker 2

Pardon.

00:00:24 Speaker 1

Do you feel like you're 92?

00:00:25 Speaker 2

I feel like I'm 94.

00:00:29 Speaker 2

The branch was army.

00:00:31 Speaker 1

What specific units were you a part of your division regiment company?

00:00:36 Speaker 2

Well, in the beginning.

00:00:39 Speaker 2

I went in Air Force.

00:00:42 Speaker 2

Took Air Force basic.

00:00:44 Speaker 2

Spent ten months in Palm Beach.

00:00:48 Speaker 2

At Rheem General Hospital.

00:00:51 Speaker 2

Volunteered to get out of there.

00:00:55 Speaker 2

In January of 44.

00:00:58 Speaker 2

And then February 20th of 44, I was on my way to Europe.

00:01:07 Speaker 2

Well, from there I was not assigned to any division or regiment.

00:01:12 Speaker 2

I was just a loose cannon as far as the military is concerned.

00:01:18 Speaker 2

They apparently assigned me to.

00:01:21 Speaker 2

Military, government, civil affairs.

00:01:24 Speaker 2

And that was in England.

00:01:28 Speaker 2

And in late May of 44, I was assigned to the 12th Corps G5 section.

00:01:38 Speaker 2

As a driver.

00:01:43 Speaker 2

And I drove for Major Frank Weaver will find the like Wisconsin.

00:01:50 Speaker 2

And Lieutenant?

00:01:52 Speaker 2

Train of Minneapolis, MN.

00:01:56 Speaker 2

And this was in.

00:02:00 Speaker 2

In England, then France.

00:02:06 Speaker 2

And this was through.

00:02:12 Speaker 2

I was the 80th Division, Secret Battalion, 317th Infantry.

00:02:19 Speaker 2

Headquarters Company I was S through section.

00:02:22 Speaker 1

And what was your specific role in headquarters?

00:02:26 Speaker 2

I really did not have a specific role.

00:02:29 Speaker 2

In other words, the S2 section intelligence section was very loose.

00:02:37 Speaker 2

And I, to be honest with you, I could not tell you.

00:02:43 Speaker 2

What?

00:02:45 Speaker 2

The end result?

00:02:47 Speaker 2

Would be.

00:02:50 Speaker 2

Of my particular job.

00:02:54 Speaker 2

Well, the things that I did with the battalion in particular, I was out on a patrol.

00:03:02 Speaker 2

Even drew up.

00:03:05 Speaker 2

A map of the way out to defensive position. We were in combat and why we did that. I have no idea, but it happened. If Battalion was in attack.

00:03:20 Speaker 2

We, the intelligence section, went with the rifle.

00:03:25 Speaker 2

We did not in the front lines, we did not approach them unless we ran across.

00:03:32 Speaker 2

In the town or something, you would cross paths, but basically we were with them and behind them.

00:03:41 Speaker 2

And any intelligence was sent back to the battalion seal.

00:03:50 Speaker 1

Did you take on fire enemy fire?

00:03:54 Speaker 2

I had under rifle fire machine gunfire, more artillery and mortar fire than anything else.

00:04:05 Speaker 2

The rifle fire was intermittent and probably only two or three times all the time I was in combat, but basically it was artillery that created our problems.

00:04:18 Speaker 1

And how far back would the headquarters be from the line companies?

00:04:24 Speaker 2

Well, sometimes we were back.

00:04:27 Speaker 2

And other times we're right with them.

00:04:30 Speaker 2

If we're moving up and no attack, we were right with the rifle companies.

00:04:36 Speaker 2

Not with the leading rifle company, but maybe back a hundred 200 yards.

00:04:41 Speaker 1

And what weapons did you carry?

00:04:44 Speaker 2

I turned 40.

00:04:47 Speaker 2

I traded AP 38.

00:04:51 Speaker 2

For 45 and 4th Armored Division tanker, I carried that all the time. I've picked up a carbine, an M1.

00:05:02 Speaker 2

And I had a Thompson machine gun that I used when we were in town.

00:05:11 Speaker 2

I didn't carry that in the field at all.

00:05:17 Speaker 1

What was the highest rank you achieved by the?

00:05:19 Speaker 1

You left the service.

00:05:22 Speaker 1

And where did?

00:05:23 Speaker 1

See combat in World War 2.

00:05:27 Speaker 2

Well, beginning in Luxembourg is actual combat.

00:05:32 Speaker 2

And then Germany?

00:05:35 Speaker 2

And Austria?

00:05:38 Speaker 2

That only the beginning of Austria was set back through intelligence school on May 6th.

00:05:43 Speaker 1

Talk to me about.

00:05:44 Speaker 1

Up in Royal Oak as a kid.

00:05:46 Speaker 1

Kind of things did you do?

00:05:48 Speaker 2

Well, we were in diversity.

00:05:51 Speaker 2

Anything to raise us think.

00:05:54 Speaker 2

Create a problem apparently.

00:05:57 Speaker 2

We.

00:05:59 Speaker 2

Football.

00:06:02 Speaker 2

Even laying out in the middle of field watching clouds go by.

00:06:07 Speaker 1

What was your father's profession?

00:06:10 Speaker 2

All my father worked at a factory in Detroit.

00:06:16 Speaker 2

***** steering wheel.

00:06:20 Speaker 1

Did he have a job during the depression?

00:06:23 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:06:24 Speaker 1

Did your family suffer during the depression?

00:06:26 Speaker 2

Quite a bit.

00:06:27 Speaker 1

Talk to me about the struggles that your family faced during the depression.

00:06:30 Speaker 2

Well.

00:06:33 Speaker 2

We like everybody else.

00:06:35 Speaker 2

We had our problems.

00:06:38 Speaker 2

Surviving that even.

00:06:41 Speaker 2

Rented a 11 acres.

00:06:45 Speaker 2

Out on Telegraph Rd.

00:06:48 Speaker 2

And farm for one year.

00:06:51 Speaker 2

Raised chickens and rhubarb and currents and that type of thing.

00:06:58 Speaker 2

And that's when things were really slow in the factories laid off.

00:07:05 Speaker 2

Mother worked in a restaurant in downtown Royal Oak for a couple of years that I recall.

00:07:13 Speaker 2

I can recall when we didn't have lights in the house.

00:07:17 Speaker 2

In other words, the lights were turned off.

00:07:23 Speaker 1

What were?

00:07:24 Speaker 1

First few jobs you had growing up.

00:07:26 Speaker 2

Pardon.

00:07:27 Speaker 1

The first few jobs you had growing up.

00:07:29 Speaker 2

First jobs is paper boy.

00:07:33 Speaker 2

I had a royal Look, Tribune wrote in Detroit times.

00:07:40 Speaker 1

What high school did you go to?

00:07:42 Speaker 2

Madison High school. I did not graduate.

00:07:46 Speaker 2

I finished the 10th grade and that was it.

00:07:50 Speaker 2

I felt like it do just as well on my own.

00:07:55 Speaker 1

So.

00:07:55 Speaker 2

And the independent, it was tough.

00:07:55 Speaker 1

What do you do then?

00:07:58 Speaker 2

I tried.

00:08:01 Speaker 2

Getting a job in a factory that didn't work.

00:08:05 Speaker 2

I worked in the finally, got a job with Wrigley Supermarkets in the produce department.

00:08:13 Speaker 2

And I was there for about a year and then in 1940.

00:08:20 Speaker 2

2.

00:08:22 Speaker 2

Chuck Baker, Ted Kovalenko, and myself, all teams are.

00:08:30 Speaker 2

Both certificates to 1923.

00:08:34 Speaker 2

And we got a job in a small factory.

00:08:38 Speaker 2

There was a.

00:08:42 Speaker 2

Manufacturing drills and reamers for the defense industry.

00:08:50 Speaker 2

A matter of fact, I recall one particular friend in particular that.

00:08:58 Speaker 2

English Mullen engine designation on the thing we've made the rumors to.

00:09:06 Speaker 2

Help build that engine.

00:09:09 Speaker 2

And if you can imagine kids.

00:09:12 Speaker 2

Working in a machine shop.

00:09:16 Speaker 2

It was a picnic.

00:09:17 Speaker 1

How did you hear about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

00:09:21 Speaker 2

Pardon.

00:09:22 Speaker 1

How did you hear about the attack?

00:09:24 Speaker 1

Pearl Harbor.

00:09:26 Speaker 2

We got home from church on Sunday.

00:09:29 Speaker 2

They heard over the radio that Pearl Harbor been attacked and of course I was not aware of where Pearl Harbor was or what it meant.

00:09:41 Speaker 2

So at that particular time, Pearl Harbor was way out.

00:09:47 Speaker 2

Beyond the blue?

00:09:50 Speaker 1

What was?

00:09:51 Speaker 1

Like to hear that your country had been attacked.

00:09:55 Speaker 2

Well, it really didn't mean a whole lot because we felt that so far away that it has no personal effect on us.

00:10:05 Speaker 2

At least that's the way it hit me.

00:10:09 Speaker 2

Well after.

00:10:11 Speaker 2

The Pearl Harbor attack, which was in December of 41, we were still all three of us.

00:10:19 Speaker 2

Ted and I.

00:10:22 Speaker 2

Were at various jobs.

00:10:25 Speaker 2

And in 42 is when we.

00:10:29 Speaker 2

I think it was June of 42 that we made a change on our birth certificates. When I say the certificate, we had a little card that gave our date of birth on it, we erased the.

00:10:43 Speaker 2

24 and put 23 on there to make us 18 years of age.

00:10:49 Speaker 2

This help us get that job that I was referring to.

00:10:56 Speaker 2

It was a lark, really.

00:11:00 Speaker 2

And nothing really made any sense until they start.

00:11:06 Speaker 2

Begin the blackouts. We had practice.

00:11:11 Speaker 2

Blackouts. And then and I began to think in a.

00:11:14 Speaker 2

Bit better.

00:11:15 Speaker 2

Maybe we were in hot water.

00:11:19 Speaker 2

In 42 on my 18th birthday.

00:11:24 Speaker 2

Chuck, Ted and I all went down to the federal building in Detroit and took the final exam.

00:11:33 Speaker 2

The written exam I should say for the Air Force.

00:11:39 Speaker 2

Training.

00:11:41 Speaker 2

Chuck and Ted both graduated from high school.

00:11:44 Speaker 2

I didn't and I missed the exam by one point.

00:11:49 Speaker 2

I was asked then if I wanted to.

00:11:53 Speaker 2

Enlist into the Air Corps as a gunner, and immediately I accepted.

00:11:59 Speaker 2

So they sent me down the hall for a physical and I flunked that. I was colorblind.

00:12:04 Speaker 2

Wouldn't take me.

00:12:07 Speaker 2

And after after a few minutes I went down the hall to enlist in the Marines.

00:12:15 Speaker 2

There was a sign on the door not taking enlistment at this time.

00:12:20 Speaker 2

This is 1942.

00:12:23 Speaker 2

So we went.

00:12:25 Speaker 2

I decided to wait until.

00:12:28 Speaker 2

Well.

00:12:29 Speaker 2

Chuck and Ted heard when they were going to leave.

00:12:32 Speaker 2

Were.

00:12:34 Speaker 2

Sent a letter and stated they were leaving on the 22nd of February for the military.

00:12:40 Speaker 2

So I enlisted or volunteered on the 20th of February, and I left for Fort Custer, MI, that day.

00:12:50 Speaker 2

And then from there I spent probably four or five days at Fort Custer and I was transferred then to Salt Lake City.

00:13:00 Speaker 2

Tennnes, Utah.

00:13:01 Speaker 2

For basic training and Air Force basic training and I believe the.

00:13:11 Speaker 2

12th of April.

00:13:13 Speaker 2

I left there for Palm Beach.

00:13:16 Speaker 2

And I was still Air Force and they put me in the medics.

00:13:22 Speaker 2

And I was assigned to the laboratory as a clerk.

00:13:27 Speaker 2

And we had it.

00:13:30 Speaker 2

We were at the Breakers Hotel.

00:13:33 Speaker 2

We had all the conveniences.

00:13:36 Speaker 2

Golf course, swimming pools, tennis courts, ocean, what have you.

00:13:43 Speaker 2

For relaxation.

00:13:45 Speaker 2

The hospital was just being set up and I was part of that.

00:13:53 Speaker 2

Cadre that helped set up the hospital in the beginning.

00:13:57 Speaker 2

I spent from April until.

00:14:02 Speaker 2

February of 45 at Rehe General Hospital.

00:14:09 Speaker 2

And there.

00:14:12 Speaker 2

I volunteered to get out of.

00:14:17 Speaker 2

Overseas and finally, I was released on the 20th of February.

00:14:24 Speaker 2

Of 44 and headed for Camp Shenango and.

00:14:30 Speaker 2

They're Youngstown. OH.

00:14:33 Speaker 2

And about a week later left there and headed for England, and I was in.

00:14:39 Speaker 2

I was in England the early part of March of 44 unassigned.

00:14:47 Speaker 2

And I spent.

00:14:50 Speaker 2

From March until May at Shrivenam small English town.

00:15:00 Speaker 2

Doing nothing except guard duty on.

00:15:05 Speaker 2

A field full of ambulances, half tracks and vehicles of various kinds.

00:15:11 Speaker 2

And at the end of May, I was assigned then to the 12th core and G5 Civil affairs military government as a Jeep driver.

00:15:24 Speaker 2

I received a driver's license at that time.

00:15:30 Speaker 2

And on May 6th, Major Weaver and I.

00:15:36 Speaker 2

Moved to Birmingham the morning of D-Day.

00:15:43 Speaker 2

And we spent from June 6 until about the 22nd of July in Birmingham.

00:15:53 Speaker 2

And the 22nd or 23rd we headed for the beach at Portsmouth for invocation for France.

00:16:05 Speaker 2

Arrived in France on July 25th as part of the.

00:16:12 Speaker 2

Military government.

00:16:15 Speaker 2

Major Weaver and I then spent about.

00:16:20 Speaker 2

Must have been 10 days traveling in the US sector.

00:16:25 Speaker 2

Sector of France.

00:16:27 Speaker 2

Various towns and villages.

00:16:31 Speaker 2

And one particular incident happened that hangs on that.

00:16:39 Speaker 2

One of our GIs raped and killed a French lady.

00:16:39

Oh.

00:16:46 Speaker 2

And we attended the funeral.

00:16:49 Speaker 2

And the major walked with the family to the.

00:16:56 Speaker 2

Cemetery and I follow along behind in a Jeep, but the.

00:17:03 Speaker 2

Thing that stuck in my mind is the couple of three ladies dressed in black, black veiling clothing.

00:17:13 Speaker 2

Down past their ankles have Black Hat.

00:17:18 Speaker 2

Wailed from the time we left the house until we reached the cemetery.

00:17:25 Speaker 2

Upon reaching the cemetery entrance, they stopped Whailing instantly.

00:17:31 Speaker 2

Quite eerie experience.

00:17:34 Speaker 1

What happened to the GI?

00:17:35 Speaker 2

Pardon.

00:17:36 Speaker 1

What happened to the man?

00:17:38 Speaker 1

GI.

00:17:38 Speaker 2

Oh, I don't know what happened to the GI. The I imagine that he was probably sent to prison.

00:17:46 Speaker 1

Now when you're driving around the major are you and him conversing or is it?

00:17:50 Speaker 1

Strictly you're.

00:17:51 Speaker 1

Just strictly his driver. You guys actually talk.

00:17:55 Speaker 2

Oh, I was really nothing more than a driver.

00:17:59 Speaker 2

The major assistant to the towns after the infantry.

00:18:04 Speaker 2

And the armor went.

00:18:06 Speaker 2

It took a village and we followed immediately behind and.

00:18:12 Speaker 2

Contacted the mayor and did everything in our power to assist them.

00:18:18 Speaker 2

So they became independent on their.

00:18:20 Speaker 2

They didn't depend on the US military for help.

00:18:25 Speaker 2

And that was.

00:18:27 Speaker 2

Military government's job, in other words, that was civilian part of it.

00:18:33 Speaker 2

The military part of it was in Germany.

00:18:38 Speaker 2

Well, this is.

00:18:42

In.

00:18:43 Speaker 2

I had volunteered.

00:18:46 Speaker 2

For overseas, when I was in Palm Beach.

00:18:51 Speaker 2

And for a combat unit. So they sent me military civil affairs.

00:18:57 Speaker 2

I made that in 12th floor and in October of 1944 I volunteered again.

00:19:05 Speaker 2

Took a physical.

00:19:07 Speaker 2

To get in the paratroopers or some line outfit, and I thought that.

00:19:13 Speaker 1

How do you fault?

00:19:15 Speaker 2

Doctor said I had VD.

00:19:19 Speaker 2

And I went roaring back as soon as I heard that I was supposed to have had a a VE disease, and he indicated that, well, if you have a cold or something this contest.

00:19:32 Speaker 2

Kahn test sometimes gives a positive for VD.

00:19:39 Speaker 2

So I they took another blood test.

00:19:41 Speaker 2

Wasserman test this time proved negative.

00:19:45 Speaker 2

But I was not allowed to leave the Colonel veal, the.

00:19:52

Poor.

00:19:53 Speaker 2

G1.

00:19:54 Speaker 2

I was needed there at core which.

00:19:58 Speaker 1

As a driver.

00:19:59 Speaker 2

Yes, that says driver.

00:20:02 Speaker 2

And finally.

00:20:05 Speaker 2

And the battle of the Bulls began the 16th of December of 44.

00:20:12 Speaker 2

And we heard all kinds of rumors on the 16th, 17th.

00:20:19 Speaker 2

And I went down to Colonel Veal's office on either the 7th, the 18th of the 9th and told him he couldn't keep me back now.

00:20:29 Speaker 2

And of course, he took it the right way. Not the wrong way.

00:20:34 Speaker 2

And he had me waited in his office and he said he'd be back in a couple minutes.

00:20:39 Speaker 2

And when he did come back, he told me to go in and see a general, Eddie for a commander.

00:20:46 Speaker 2

And General Eddie offered me a position of any unit in Europe that included Italy.

00:20:55 Speaker 2

And finally, I said it didn't make any difference from where I went, just as long as I could go.

00:21:02 Speaker 2

He assigned me to the second Battalion, 317th.

00:21:07 Speaker 2

Infantry, 80th division.

00:21:10 Speaker 2

And that afternoon I was on my way to Mets and I spent.

00:21:17 Speaker 2

Two or three days in myths.

00:21:21 Speaker 2

Waiting for.

00:21:24 Speaker 2

Movement of some kind because something I didn't know at that time, but the division was put on alert and they were ordered to move out on the 19th so it didn't make any sense to send me someplace.

00:21:41 Speaker 2

And they didn't know where I was going to go.

00:21:43 Speaker 2

Finally, on the 23rd major.

00:21:48 Speaker 2

Major ball of the foot jar family of.

00:21:56 Speaker 2

Lunc, Indiana. It came by and picked me up and took me up to regimental headquarters and that was on the 23rd.

00:22:07 Speaker 2

And the next morning, I spent the night at Mersh with the with the major and his driver and the next morning we went over to regimental headquarters and.

00:22:18 Speaker 2

And he dumped me off there. And battalion was cut off, so I had to wait until the battalion came in, which was on Christmas morning.

00:22:29 Speaker 2

I didn't really join the elephant until Christmas morning.

00:22:33 Speaker 2

Of 44.

00:22:35 Speaker 1

Talk to me about your first experience in combat.

00:22:38 Speaker 2

Well, really the first experience in combat was I was in patrol with one of the fellows.

00:22:48 Speaker 2

The snow was probably about 810 inches deep and beautiful cold.

00:22:54 Speaker 2

Evening. That was Christmas night.

00:22:57 Speaker 2

And we were told that there were some German patrol out there to make contact.

00:23:04 Speaker 2

It's a good thing we did not make contact because they would have seen us much sooner than we spotted them.

00:23:11 Speaker 2

Nothing came of that at all, but prior to that time with Lieutenant Crane a couple times, we ran into artillery.

00:23:21 Speaker 2

When we were up.

00:23:24 Speaker 2

Close to the front. Excuse me.

00:23:30 Speaker 2

We had.

00:23:33 Speaker 2

Incoming our till rayana and that was the closest I came prior to the.

00:23:40 Speaker 2

September or the December incident, but we were left.

00:23:45 Speaker 2

This is on the 25th Christmas Day the 28th.

00:23:49 Speaker 2

Went back out in the field.

00:23:51 Speaker 2

Spent 10 days out in.

00:23:55 Speaker 2

North of Ober, Foylin out in the.

00:23:59 Speaker 2

In the countryside.

00:24:02 Speaker 2

And we had artillery, mortar fire, sniper fire everyday from then on.

00:24:12 Speaker 1

Talk to me about the problems of German snipers.

00:24:17 Speaker 2

Well, I never spotted a German sniper.

00:24:19 Speaker 2

We got was.

00:24:22 Speaker 2

The they would fire and of course everybody would hit the deck.

00:24:26 Speaker 2

And you're just, you just did not know where they were coming from.

00:24:33 Speaker 2

And we were.

00:24:35 Speaker 2

Everybody was bundled up and trying to stay warm as well as alert.

00:24:42 Speaker 2

I can recall one time the first Sergeant was trying to relieve himself and.

00:24:51 Speaker 2

A sniper spotted him and gave him.

00:24:54 Speaker 2

And of course, that was funny as everybody else but wasn't funny to him, I'm sure.

00:25:01 Speaker 2

But those things happen.

00:25:03 Speaker 2

Incidents.

00:25:04 Speaker 2

It was a.

00:25:07 Speaker 2

We spent probably.

00:25:12 Speaker 2

10/20.

00:25:14 Speaker 2

Probably spent about 2224 days out in the field and we were back in.

00:25:25 Speaker 2

Maybe 5 or 4-5 miles in the rear.

00:25:28 Speaker 2

The other times, but we're still under artillery range and but that didn't happen all the time.

00:25:36 Speaker 2

Just whenever the crowds thought they could harass us.

00:25:40 Speaker 1

Talk to me about what? It's.

00:25:42 Speaker 1

To be the recipient of a German artillery barrage.

00:25:46 Speaker 2

That's frightening.

00:25:48 Speaker 2

Number one.

00:25:51 Speaker 2

You don't hear anything until the last second and it will hardly have time to hit the ground or get yourself undercover somewhere.

00:26:06 Speaker 2

The Screaming Mimis were the ones that.

00:26:10 Speaker 2

That were probably the most frightening and.

00:26:13 Speaker 2

In a sense that the noise that it created and that was instant and you heard that from afar off.

00:26:22 Speaker 2

And usually you could tell whether it was going to come pretty close to you or not by sound.

00:26:30 Speaker 2

But anytime that mortars, artillery or the.

00:26:35 Speaker 2

Neville wore first came in.

00:26:39 Speaker 2

It sent chills up your spine.

00:26:44 Speaker 2

Well, when they're going off around you, you're not looking, you're trying to dig him. As a matter of fact, you're not looking to see where it's coming from.

00:26:53 Speaker 2

Word hit.

00:26:56 Speaker 2

You're you're trying to protect yourself. At least I was.

00:26:59 Speaker 2

I don't know if anybody else that did it differently, because there's nothing you can do.

00:27:05 Speaker 2

Is self preservation.

00:27:08 Speaker 1

You mentioned that you were under machine gunfire.

00:27:10 Speaker 1

What do you know about that?

00:27:11 Speaker 2

Then we had that happen to us during the during the bulge and.

00:27:19 Speaker 2

Well, you get the fire and you don't know where it's coming from. The snowing like crazy wind howling and.

00:27:29 Speaker 2

Here the you could hear the shells or the bullets going by and like bees.

00:27:37 Speaker 2

And again, there's nothing you can do until you find out where it's coming from.

00:27:43 Speaker 2

And by then it's too late.

00:27:46 Speaker 2

Somebody else is creating a problem for them.

00:27:50 Speaker 2

And usually the machine guns were not.

00:27:52 Speaker 2

They were at least two or three 400 yards away.

00:27:57 Speaker 2

So there was not a whole lot you could do unless you get some ordering on them.

00:28:02 Speaker 2

Somebody could detect them and then that created the problem for them.

00:28:08 Speaker 1

What's the major difference between the German mortars and the German artillery?

00:28:14 Speaker 2

German mortar and artillery size. In other words, the artillery.

00:28:21 Speaker 2

Was much larger explosions.

00:28:26 Speaker 2

The the mortars would pop off.

00:28:28 Speaker 2

And of course they you you hear a whistleblower? That's the way it.

00:28:34 Speaker 2

It came down and there wasn't much you could do about that either, but it was noise.

00:28:44 Speaker 2

The the one incident that I was referring to you earlier happened on the 21st day of.

00:28:52 Speaker 2

Of January and there were six of us.

00:28:57 Speaker 2

In a circle waiting, the battalion was in.

00:29:02 Speaker 2

Easy and Fox Companies was moving out through the woods and George Company was.

00:29:11 Speaker 2

Right. With us right amongst us. And we were catching artillery like crazy. Really taking a meeting.

00:29:20 Speaker 2

And.

00:29:22 Speaker 2

The last round of the morning landed in our midst.

00:29:28 Speaker 2

And those five fellows died.

00:29:33 Speaker 2

And I walked away from that incident and that was a lot of the explosion I heard of many of them. And later on it was determined that.

00:29:45 Speaker 2

Was probably a railroad gun.

00:29:47 Speaker 2

That was fired from about 15 miles away.

00:29:53 Speaker 2

That created that particular incident.

00:29:57 Speaker 2

Lost.

00:29:59 Speaker 2

I know we lost 21 men because I was sent in two days later with Graves registration team to pick up the bodies.

00:30:08 Speaker 2

And we've picked up, I know 17.

00:30:13 Speaker 2

And later.

00:30:15 Speaker 2

I.

00:30:16 Speaker 2

And when I say later that was just a couple years ago, I was in Luxembourg and stopped at a farmhouse.

00:30:27 Speaker 2

Where people are supposedly.

00:30:30 Speaker 2

The family had assisted the army in retrieving bodies.

00:30:36 Speaker 2

And this family Grandfather indicated he picked up 40 bodies after we had been there with grace.

00:30:46 Speaker 2

Now, to be honest with you, I don't think that that was.

00:30:51 Speaker 2

A good statement I I think that was greatly exaggerated, but I know that we did could not have gotten all of the fellows that were hit that day because we only spent a few hours.

00:31:04 Speaker 2

And the woods looking for body, he.

00:31:07 Speaker 2

We were spread out over a mile or so.

00:31:11 Speaker 1

You mentioned five men were hit with one shell.

00:31:14 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:31:15 Speaker 1

How close were they to you?

00:31:17 Speaker 2

How close?

00:31:18 Speaker 2

Well, the nearest one was shoulder to shoulder with.

00:31:22 Speaker 2

Ernie Fuller was lying next to me and I don't think Ernie was hit with anything.

00:31:28 Speaker 2

I think the concussion killed.

00:31:30 Speaker 2

Them as I tried to get him to move, I turned him, turned him up. I saw no evidence.

00:31:42 Speaker 2

Of injury.

00:31:43 Speaker 2

No blood or anything.

00:31:46 Speaker 2

And about that time, I yelled for the medics to let them take over.

00:31:50 Speaker 1

And the other four men.

00:31:51 Speaker 2

The other four were dead.

00:31:55 Speaker 2

I didn't attest to it that day, but when I went back two days later, they were all in the same location where I left them.

00:32:06 Speaker 2

The medics couldn't do anything for them.

00:32:07 Speaker 1

They were just tore up.

00:32:09 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:32:11 Speaker 2

Except Ernie.

00:32:11 Speaker 2

Ernie was not tore up.

00:32:15 Speaker 2

That was amazing.

00:32:17 Speaker 1

Talk to me about what it was like.

00:32:20 Speaker 1

Picking up.

00:32:21 Speaker 1

Bodies with graves registration. What's the process?

00:32:24 Speaker 1

You do.

00:32:25 Speaker 2

Well, as far as the great registration I was sent.

00:32:31 Speaker 2

Assigned to take the Graves registration to the battle site that was just my job and we had two jeeps and trailer and a weapons carrier and a trailer.

00:32:45 Speaker 2

And the.

00:32:47 Speaker 2

The fellows drug the bodies through the woods into a assembly point and loaded them on the trailers and the weapons carrier. And of course they were frozen in all kinds of grotesque.

00:33:04 Speaker 2

Positions.

00:33:07 Speaker 2

It wasn't a very pleasant sight, but I'm sure the kids in the Pacific experienced that quite often in the islands because there was no place for them to go. In other words, they buried them right there on that particular spot. And then.

00:33:24 Speaker 2

They were able to even visit the grave site of their buddies.

00:33:30 Speaker 2

But I don't know if I never heard anyone else experience the same thing that I did in Europe.

00:33:37 Speaker 2

I'm sure that it probably happened, but.

00:33:42 Speaker 2

And I think the reason that it happened is because the Colonel Boydston, our commander, had been the Commandant of Corps.

00:33:53 Speaker 2

Before he went to the 80th Division.

00:33:57 Speaker 2

And the Major General Eddie knew personally knew Colonel Boydston, and he probably made a point to make sure that he got out of there and buried right away.

00:34:12 Speaker 2

And he was.

00:34:13 Speaker 2

Is buried in Luxemburg.

00:34:17 Speaker 2

There, near the city at Ham.

00:34:21 Speaker 1

So the Colonel was killed.

00:34:23 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:34:24 Speaker 1

Was he part of the five?

00:34:25 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:34:29 Speaker 2

In first Lieutenant.

00:34:32 Speaker 2

Forward observer name of Clark. I didn't know him at that time and through.

00:34:40 Speaker 2

The morning reports I was able to.

00:34:44 Speaker 2

Yet the names of the other fellas.

00:34:48 Speaker 2

Hirsch Alexander Hirsch was the colonel's radio operator, but he was listed in our morning report.

00:34:56 Speaker 2

Was Ernie Fuller as well as a Colonel?

00:35:00 Speaker 2

But I had to do some digging for tumilo Sergeant Tumul.

00:35:05 Speaker 2

Radio operator for the 313th Field Artillery Observer, and it took a number of years for me to do that.

00:35:13 Speaker 2

So I didn't find out.

00:35:15 Speaker 2

And.

00:35:16 Speaker 2

Until about 50 years later, who those people were.

00:35:21 Speaker 1

Was Ernie your closest friend of the?

00:35:24 Speaker 2

No, he was just just a comrade.

00:35:25 Speaker 1

Field.

00:35:28 Speaker 2

I was new to the battalion, so I was only there less than a month and you don't know anyone except the fellow right next to you and the fellow that I really knew was.

00:35:42 Speaker 2

Here we go.

00:35:44 Speaker 2

Kid from Cicero, IL.

00:35:49 Speaker 2

Virginia is his wife's name.

00:35:54 Speaker 2

The name escapes me right now, but he's a fellow I went on 1st patrol with on Christmas night.

00:36:00 Speaker 1

Did he survive the war?

00:36:01 Speaker 2

Yeah, he survived, right?

00:36:04 Speaker 1

Talk to me about what tree bursts are.

00:36:07 Speaker 2

Tree births are like our.

00:36:12 Speaker 2

Airverse, you're in real hot water because this spreads.

00:36:16 Speaker 2

The artillery breaks up over your head and and whoever's within that perimeters in hot water in a hurry.

00:36:26 Speaker 2

I was lucky. I was never.

00:36:28 Speaker 2

Involved in a tree burst.

00:36:31 Speaker 1

Were you ever under air bursts?

00:36:33 Speaker 2

No.

00:36:35 Speaker 2

No, the lyrics that came.

00:36:39 Speaker 2

On we had a 500.

00:36:41 Speaker 2

We estimate it was a £500 bomber, but he dropped probably about half a mile away from us.

00:36:48 Speaker 2

That was the closest ever. Had anything like that.

00:36:53 Speaker 2

We had the Air Force took over.

00:36:57 Speaker 1

And during the.

00:36:58 Speaker 1

Of the bulge. Talk to me about your living conditions.

00:37:01 Speaker 2

Living conditions.

00:37:04 Speaker 2

Well, there weren't any living.

00:37:07 Speaker 2

Survival conditions would be the better term.

00:37:11 Speaker 2

And basically, the clothes I had on are the clothes that I wore when I left core headquarters. I had wool pants. I had a wool shirt. I had underwear.

00:37:27 Speaker 2

I had a wool.

00:37:32 Speaker 2

Not a wool, but a aligned leather, not leather, but.

00:37:40 Speaker 2

A lined.

00:37:43 Speaker 2

Oh, linen jacket.

00:37:48 Speaker 2

And I had a scarf.

00:37:52 Speaker 2

My boots were those the combat boots that we had was.

00:37:59 Speaker 2

The ankle high.

00:38:02 Speaker 2

Shoe with a about a 5 inch strap above it.

00:38:06 Speaker 2

So we could tuck our pants in and.

00:38:12 Speaker 2

I had a helmet liner.

00:38:14 Speaker 2

And a wool cap.

00:38:18 Speaker 2

And that was it.

00:38:19 Speaker 2

An old blanket. Nothing else, no overcoat.

00:38:25 Speaker 1

You you don't any winter clothes any.

00:38:26 Speaker 2

No, no worries at all.

00:38:29 Speaker 1

Talk to me about.

00:38:29 Speaker 1

Cold it got during the bulge.

00:38:32 Speaker 2

Well, the coldest that guy was only about 5 below 0.

00:38:36 Speaker 2

But the the worst night I recall it was a Blizzard.

00:38:40 Speaker 2

Conditions snow blowing in the wind blowing like crazy, and it was about four or five of us.

00:38:47 Speaker 2

We will luckily got together and we worked all night long like this.

00:38:55

For your.

00:38:56 Speaker 2

Yeah, we worked this way.

00:38:59 Speaker 2

We freeze the death out here and then work your way up and in the center and drop down again.

00:39:04 Speaker 2

And I think everybody in the same boat and it was an unconscious thing.

00:39:10 Speaker 1

I don't get it.

00:39:11 Speaker 1

Were you?

00:39:11 Speaker 1

What do you mean by that?

00:39:13 Speaker 2

Well, you were half awake. In other words, they were stupor, but you're trying to keep warm.

00:39:20 Speaker 2

That's basically what it was, but.

00:39:22 Speaker 1

So what kind of tactics did you use to keep one?

00:39:24 Speaker 1

Form.

00:39:25 Speaker 2

Well, there wasn't in many taxes you could use. In other words, we were in fairly good condition physically. I was only 20 years old. Most of us are that age.

00:39:39 Speaker 2

And the late teens or early 20s, we had one fellow with us that was 42 years old.

00:39:47 Speaker 2

He should never have been with us. Tom may from Missouri, and I recall that.

00:39:54 Speaker 2

Tom was miserable. He didn't complain.

00:39:57 Speaker 2

He was.

00:39:58 Speaker 2

We did everything in our power to.

00:40:02 Speaker 2

Get him to wait in. In water, break ice or what have you. So he get French fruit get sent back.

00:40:11 Speaker 2

That didn't work too well.

00:40:13 Speaker 2

But we were in such halfway decent conditions that we survived, and that's all.

00:40:18 Speaker 1

How do you sleep when it's 5 below 0?

00:40:21 Speaker 2

You sleep for a little while and then you get cold and wake up.

00:40:26 Speaker 2

And then you get up and move.

00:40:29 Speaker 2

You'd have to do something to keep from freezing, and pretty soon you're so tired you lay down in a snow bank again and go to sleep.

00:40:40 Speaker 2

All the food, cha rations. I probably had two or three K rations in my.

00:40:48 Speaker 2

Pocket and I think I gained weight in combat.

00:40:53 Speaker 2

In other words, the K rations were sufficient with calories that.

00:40:59 Speaker 2

They.

00:41:00 Speaker 2

Us in pretty good shape.

00:41:02 Speaker 1

So after the bow of the bulge dissipated, what? What engagements do you remember taking place?

00:41:09 Speaker 2

Well, when the Siegfried Line came along, we breached the seafood line about the.

00:41:16 Speaker 2

14th and 15th of February of Fourty 5, and we spent probably about a week in that area, and we finally broke through. And this is a February, March.

00:41:31 Speaker 2

We're.

00:41:32 Speaker 2

We were in the over the line into Germany and we had various battles.

00:41:41 Speaker 2

And the whole outfit, when I say the whole outfit, I'm talking about the division.

00:41:47 Speaker 2

Was spread out and some were doing some battles. Most of them we weren't, but we were constantly moving.

00:41:56 Speaker 2

And I think it was.

00:42:00 Speaker 2

Late, we finally broke through to Kaiser's Lauder.

00:42:07 Speaker 2

About the 20th of March.

00:42:12 Speaker 2

And that's with breaking completely through the sieve line, and our next objective was the Rhine River.

00:42:21 Speaker 2

And we spent two or three days at Kaisers Lauderdale and on the 28th of March we assaulted the Rhine.

00:42:32 Speaker 2

The 317th, the Second Battalion and we lost 17 men that night on crossing the Rhine River.

00:42:42 Speaker 2

Easy and George Company took the beating on that crossing.

00:42:47 Speaker 2

I didn't have to go across that night with.

00:42:49 Speaker 2

I went over the next morning a matter of fact. The Navy took me over the next morning on one of their.

00:42:58 Speaker 2

Lcis they brought it up and after the kids had.

00:43:02 Speaker 2

Breed the east side of the Rhine River.

00:43:09 Speaker 1

But were you on the, you were obviously on the other side of the road.

00:43:09

Yeah.

00:43:13 Speaker 2

I was on the east side of the Rhine River on a building about like we're sitting right here, probably up about this high trying to.

00:43:23 Speaker 2

Stay in contact with George and easy companies. A matter of fact, I was responsible for keeping in contact with George Company and I remember Sam Cordon.

00:43:37 Speaker 2

On the radio.

00:43:40 Speaker 2

From G company and.

00:43:43 Speaker 2

He was yelling for some help because.

00:43:48 Speaker 2

I could hear the German in the background. He was yelling for help at the same time.

00:43:55 Speaker 2

And this is probably about 02 in the morning, 230 something like that.

00:44:02 Speaker 2

And finally.

00:44:04 Speaker 2

Everything what happened? They didn't make it on the on the east side. They hit a small island in the center.

00:44:13 Speaker 2

That's where they accidentally landed.

00:44:17 Speaker 2

And.

00:44:19 Speaker 2

Archer Fuch was one of them that.

00:44:25 Speaker 2

Landed on this island and he spent the night there miserable.

00:44:31 Speaker 2

But that was a tough crossing for the.

00:44:34

ADF.

00:44:34 Speaker 1

But you were on the the West side of the Rhine.

00:44:36 Speaker 2

I was on the West side in a building, a warehouse building about this high up.

00:44:41 Speaker 1

Could you see the German gunfire?

00:44:43 Speaker 2

I couldn't see.

00:44:44 Speaker 2

Just see gunfire. That's all you know.

00:44:48 Speaker 2

You could see the.

00:44:50 Speaker 2

The 20mm we did know what it was at that particular time. The kids ran into it.

00:44:59 Speaker 2

But they they took a meeting that night.

00:45:02 Speaker 1

And going back to the sacred line, what do you remember about the German defenses?

00:45:07 Speaker 2

None. There were no defenses that we ran into.

00:45:11 Speaker 2

Maybe others did, but we did not.

00:45:14 Speaker 2

We matter of fact, I was in one of their bunkers checking it out.

00:45:20 Speaker 2

It was vacant and they hadn't even occupied the thing, so it really didn't amount to much of anything.

00:45:29 Speaker 2

As far as we're concerned now, maybe other sectors, they made a defense in those areas and but we did not.

00:45:39 Speaker 2

We did not have that kind of a problem.

00:45:41 Speaker 2

Had small arm fires but nothing else.

00:45:46 Speaker 1

So were the Germans occupying the bunker zone for the small arms fire?

00:45:50 Speaker 2

Pardon.

00:45:51 Speaker 1

The Germans were occupying the bunkers of the.

00:45:53 Speaker 2

They weren't occupying, they were moving back.

00:45:56 Speaker 2

In other words, they weren't static. In other words, we were moving up and they were moving back, but they were giving, giving us fits.

00:46:02

Talk.

00:46:06 Speaker 1

Talk to me about.

00:46:07 Speaker 1

What you remember of the destruction in the towns in German?

00:46:13 Speaker 2

Well, we really didn't pay attention because everything was destructive.

00:46:18 Speaker 2

Of those tells us nothing but rubble.

00:46:22 Speaker 2

Just complete rubble stone.

00:46:25 Speaker 2

Nothing left.

00:46:28 Speaker 2

And you just move through other towns that we had no problems at all, they would no defences.

00:46:36 Speaker 2

So we just go through clean house and away we went, but were the Air Force got ahold of them?

00:46:43 Speaker 2

That's where the rubble was.

00:46:46 Speaker 2

If there was, we were a static physician like we were in Luxembourg. The small towns took a beating because both of us were pounding.

00:46:55 Speaker 2

We were pounding them.

00:46:57 Speaker 2

They were pounding us.

00:46:58 Speaker 1

You mentioned you carried a Thompson submachine.

00:47:01 Speaker 2

Only in town when we host the House.

00:47:04 Speaker 1

Did you personally go house to house?

00:47:06 Speaker 2

Yes. Yeah, all of that, everybody did.

00:47:09 Speaker 1

What do you mean about everyone?

00:47:11 Speaker 2

Yeah, ever the whole.

00:47:13 Speaker 2

You know, you thinking you gotta take one side of the street, the other fella.

00:47:13 Speaker 1

Did.

00:47:14 Speaker 1

Ever encounter Germans in the houses?

00:47:18 Speaker 2

You know just.

00:47:20 Speaker 2

Move on through.

00:47:22 Speaker 2

I can remember one house or per Sergeant, and I went through and he spotted a bottle.

00:47:32 Speaker 2

He grabbed that bottle for a drink and it was kerosene.

00:47:38 Speaker 2

But this is this is a dumb.

00:47:41 Speaker 2

Other places we phone hands we found jams and you know this kind of thing.

00:47:47 Speaker 2

Very often, but it happened.

00:47:49 Speaker 1

You ever find Germans?

00:47:51 Speaker 2

Did what?

00:47:51 Speaker 1

Did you ever come across Germans in the houses?

00:47:56 Speaker 2

Yes, there were Germans, but we didn't know soldiers.

00:48:01 Speaker 1

Oh, civilian.

00:48:01 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:48:02 Speaker 2

Yeah. No, no.

00:48:02 Speaker 1

So do you guys need to find me?

00:48:04 Speaker 2

They had moved on, in other words.

00:48:08 Speaker 2

You basically the only time we run into Germans was out in the field where they couldn't go any further.

00:48:16 Speaker 2

And the same with.

00:48:17 Speaker 2

They captured some of our people the same way.

00:48:21 Speaker 2

We had some some of our own fellows, PWS has spent.

00:48:27 Speaker 2

Few months in captivity in Germany.

00:48:34 Speaker 2

Well, we were under fire quite often, but it wasn't personal.

00:48:39 Speaker 2

Didn't take it that.

00:48:41 Speaker 2

You know, it wasn't directed at me, per.

00:48:44 Speaker 2

That's, in other words, I didn't feel that it was directed at me per SE.

00:48:49 Speaker 1

Well, that incident where the Colonel ended up dead, you could very easily ended up dead.

00:48:55 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:48:56 Speaker 1

So I mean, were there other?

00:48:56 Speaker 2

Yeah, it's an act of God, that's all.

00:48:59 Speaker 1

Were there other incidents like that that you recall?

00:49:03 Speaker 2

No, not not that close.

00:49:05 Speaker 2

No, I when we we had bought a four hour battling Castle and we had some incidents there that.

00:49:19 Speaker 2

The battalion ran.

00:49:21 Speaker 2

We captured quite a few Germans that particular day.

00:49:26 Speaker 1

What do you remember about the incidents?

00:49:29 Speaker 2

Although the one incident I recall is Bill Burns and I were out ahead of the battalion scouting.

00:49:37 Speaker 2

And we were on a residential area.

00:49:42 Speaker 2

And going down the street in the end of the block was an open field.

00:49:47 Speaker 2

And as we were passing this House, I saw some movement in the basement.

00:49:53 Speaker 2

So we just kept going until we got the end of the block and we broke into the in House to see for what we could see out ahead of us and we didn't observe anything but on the way way back I told Bill we should check it out.

00:50:08 Speaker 2

And.

00:50:10 Speaker 2

I kept cheer.

00:50:12 Speaker 2

Germans in a basement there. I went in after them.

00:50:16 Speaker 2

But that was number Big deal.

00:50:18 Speaker 1

Well, talk to me about what happened.

00:50:20 Speaker 2

Well, I just.

00:50:23 Speaker 2

Had bill cover.

00:50:24 Speaker 2

He stayed at the doorway in the back, the side door, and I went in the house and down the stairs and this basement area, and there was 16 Germans down there with.

00:50:38 Speaker 2

With their rifles and machine guns and hand grenades standing there and I poked my 40 fiver on the corner.

00:50:47 Speaker 2

And.

00:50:48 Speaker 2

I just kept moving.

00:50:51 Speaker 2

There was nothing else I could do. You know, I had to act like that. I was in control.

00:50:57 Speaker 2

And I worked my way down to the basement.

00:51:02 Speaker 2

And kept yelling for them to get out and they wouldn't move. And finally I got down to into the basement about four feet to the right and one of the fellas started to move, and then all of a.

00:51:17 Speaker 2

Sudden.

00:51:18 Speaker 2

Bill relieved him of their arms.

00:51:22 Speaker 2

Whatever they had.

00:51:24 Speaker 1

Was it 15 or 16?

00:51:27 Speaker 2

Pardon.

00:51:27 Speaker 1

15 or 16 Germans.

00:51:29 Speaker 2

I think it was 16 of them.

00:51:31 Speaker 1

OK. And did you ever use grenades in combat?

00:51:35 Speaker 2

No, never. Never threw a grenade.

00:51:39 Speaker 1

What kind of souvenirs did you pick up?

00:51:41 Speaker 2

Pardon.

00:51:41 Speaker 1

What kind of souvenirs did you pick up?

00:51:44 Speaker 2

None.

00:51:47 Speaker 2

I picked up a Luger, but that was after the war.

00:51:51 Speaker 2

Didn't want to carry a Luger round in combat.

00:51:55 Speaker 2

So I got that after the war and sent it home, but that was the only thing I brought home like a dummy.

00:52:01 Speaker 2

Should have cleaned house.

00:52:04 Speaker 2

I think a lot of the fellows felt the same way.

00:52:07 Speaker 1

You captured 16 Germans.

00:52:09 Speaker 1

Could have gotten a lot of stuff.

00:52:10 Speaker 2

If I didn't get anything, I think Bill did.

00:52:14 Speaker 2

I didn't.

00:52:18 Speaker 1

You know what other things you know, you being in headquarters, you're kind of like an everyman. Whenever they need someone to do something, you're you're kind of versatile in that sense.

00:52:28

No.

00:52:31 Speaker 2

Well, Everett.

00:52:31 Speaker 1

But what other things do they have you do?

00:52:34 Speaker 2

Well, basically.

00:52:37 Speaker 2

They didn't have me doing anything that I recall, per SE.

00:52:42 Speaker 2

My MOS at the end of the war was finally as a.

00:52:50 Speaker 2

As a.

00:52:52 Speaker 2

Hmm.

00:52:54 Speaker 2

G3.

00:52:57 Speaker 2

One operation.

00:52:59 Speaker 2

What it was, that's what my aim was. But I didn't do any of that.

00:53:04 Speaker 2

But that was just the army way of.

00:53:08 Speaker 2

Awarding somebody was in combat. They didn't know what to do with.

00:53:13 Speaker 2

All, as far as I was concerned, I was no hero.

00:53:17 Speaker 2

I was just like everybody else.

00:53:19 Speaker 2

All in the same boat.

00:53:22 Speaker 1

That incident with the Graves registration did.

00:53:24 Speaker 1

Happen more than once.

00:53:26 Speaker 1

Or.

00:53:27 Speaker 2

The greatest registration thing only happened one time.

00:53:30 Speaker 1

Did you help them look for the bodies?

00:53:32 Speaker 2

No, no. I just took him to that particular site where the Colonel was, and I think that's what their objective was anyway.

00:53:41 Speaker 2

I think that they were told to make sure they got Colonel Boydston's body.

00:53:48 Speaker 2

Big two days there's on the 23rd of January, we got hit on the 21st. They were frozen.

00:53:49 Speaker 1

How how many days is this after the initial?

00:53:59 Speaker 2

Course they were frozen stiff.

00:54:02 Speaker 2

Physicians.

00:54:04 Speaker 2

All kinds of grotesque physicians, and I didn't spend anytime looking at them, to be honest with you.

00:54:11 Speaker 2

I was not that.

00:54:14 Speaker 2

Not that anxious to look.

00:54:16 Speaker 1

Was it difficult to find?

00:54:17 Speaker 1

Spot that you were.

00:54:18 Speaker 2

No, I knew where this spot was.

00:54:20 Speaker 2

Still registers in my mind.

00:54:24 Speaker 2

I can still see it my mind today.

00:54:28 Speaker 1

And usually when you were under artillery bombardment, if you had time to dig in previously, did you put logs over your foxholes or?

00:54:37 Speaker 2

No, no, we didn't have time for that.

00:54:40 Speaker 2

The Germans had done that and we occupied some of those.

00:54:44 Speaker 2

In Luxembourg, a matter of fact that I recall a couple of holes that we occupied, that the Germans had already dug in and had logs over the top.

00:54:56 Speaker 2

They're pretty nice.

00:54:59 Speaker 2

But even write letters.

00:55:00 Speaker 2

Letters from there.

00:55:02 Speaker 2

And I did write a couple letters home from those locations.

00:55:09 Speaker 1

The incident on the 21st of January with the artillery was that the first time you saw a men around you getting hit.

00:55:16 Speaker 2

No, I'd seen him before, but never that close.

00:55:20 Speaker 2

In that.

00:55:21 Speaker 2

That kind of action, that action was tremendous that day.

00:55:26 Speaker 1

But what happened before?

00:55:28 Speaker 2

Well, as incidents like what we get an artillery barrage and it lasted maybe a minute and that was it.

00:55:37 Speaker 2

So things cleared up.

00:55:39 Speaker 2

But this one they started out on us about 8:00 in the morning and they we kept moving forward.

00:55:49 Speaker 2

And they kept peppering us until 11:00 when that last round came in. That last round is the one that cleaned house.

00:56:00 Speaker 1

I thought you were never supposed to walk in groups. I thought you were always supposed.

00:56:03 Speaker 2

We were single file.

00:56:04

To be spread.

00:56:06 Speaker 2

They were single file but we were in this command group.

00:56:10 Speaker 2

That's the reason a matter of fact. The Colonel and and the Lieutenant were looking at a map trying to determine where the artillery was coming from.

00:56:21 Speaker 2

So they could call in our own artillery.

00:56:26 Speaker 2

We were in the snow.

00:56:28 Speaker 2

Snow wasn't too.

00:56:29 Speaker 2

I think it's only about a foot deep that day.

00:56:33 Speaker 1

So this and that I mean.

00:56:35 Speaker 2

Pardon.

00:56:38 Speaker 1

It's a pretty small chance that the one shell as it's.

00:56:41 Speaker 2

Absolutely. It's an act of God, really.

00:56:42 Speaker 1

The.

00:56:45 Speaker 1

You think his time was up?

00:56:46 Speaker 2

That's right.

00:56:47 Speaker 2

That's it.

00:56:48 Speaker 1

How old were you when that happened?

00:56:49 Speaker 2

In 20.

00:56:51 Speaker 2

I turned 20 the 1st of October.

00:56:57 Speaker 1

Do you remember specifically? Other times you saw Americans getting hit in combat?

00:57:04 Speaker 2

I've seen other times, yes, and I helped carry.

00:57:11 Speaker 2

Wounded out a couple times.

00:57:13 Speaker 1

You tell me about the times that you recall.

00:57:15 Speaker 2

This is in the Siegfried Line and.

00:57:19 Speaker 2

The medics were overwhelmed, so they needed some help to carry the fellows back in, so I just helped grab one leg of the.

00:57:29 Speaker 2

Litter and we got him out of that area, back to the battalion surgeon.

00:57:37 Speaker 2

Yeah, pardon.

00:57:39 Speaker 1

How bad off was he wounded?

00:57:40 Speaker 2

Well, he was bad off that he couldn't navigate on his own. And I can recall that same fella. We got him back to Battalion aid station.

00:57:55 Speaker 2

And in a house.

00:57:58 Speaker 2

And set him on the floor and waiting for the battalion surgeon to go to work on him.

00:58:06 Speaker 2

And we catching another artillery barrage and this kid as bad as he was, he rolled off of that under a table.

00:58:15 Speaker 2

Self preservation.

00:58:18 Speaker 2

So you can.

00:58:19 Speaker 2

Gives an indication what he was thinking.

00:58:23 Speaker 2

You know, survival.

00:58:25 Speaker 1

But the men in combat who you saw getting hit, was it always from artillery or mortars?

00:58:29 Speaker 2

Yes. Yeah, yeah. Either mortars or artillery.

00:58:30 Speaker 1

You guys.

00:58:30 Speaker 1

Did you ever see?

00:58:33 Speaker 1

Do you ever see men getting by small arms?

00:58:35 Speaker 2

No, my wife.

00:58:38 Speaker 2

My wife's cousin was hit at Herford with a rifle fire and he was in the 318th.

00:58:46 Speaker 2

But I didn't know Cliff at that.

00:58:48 Speaker 2

I didn't know him and didn't even know he's in the unit until after we got married.

00:58:52 Speaker 1

Is he still alive?

00:58:53 Speaker 2

No Cliff is gone now, but Cliff got hit.

00:58:59 Speaker 2

Northeast of Erfurt, on the 10th of April.

00:59:06 Speaker 2

Rifle fire.

00:59:09 Speaker 1

With the mortars come in groups or single the mortar shows.

00:59:14 Speaker 2

Mortars usually come in with groups with fire, probably 3 or 4 of them, and dump it in.

00:59:23 Speaker 1

And what would you say is the radius of a mortar shell explosion?

00:59:26 Speaker 2

I never pay attention, to be honest with you.

00:59:29 Speaker 2

I I couldn't tell you.

00:59:32 Speaker 2

I.

00:59:32 Speaker 2

I really don't know what the radius was.

00:59:34 Speaker 1

But they were substantially smaller than the show.

00:59:36 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:59:37 Speaker 2

Yeah, they were only, what, 3 inch, 2 1/2 inch.

00:59:42 Speaker 2

Inch shells and they were two bought like that.

00:59:49 Speaker 1

When a soldier gets hit by artillery, it's not a clean wound. When a soldier gets hit by artillery, it's not clean.

00:59:54 Speaker 2

Pardon.

00:59:57

It wouldn't.

00:59:57 Speaker 2

That depends on where he is hit.

01:00:00 Speaker 2

It depends on where it hit his body.

01:00:03 Speaker 2

Sometimes it's nothing more than a scratch.

01:00:06 Speaker 2

Other times it just tear him up. You know, a chunk of shrapnel swirling.

01:00:12 Speaker 2

Just rip your guts out.

01:00:15 Speaker 2

And that's what happened on.

01:00:18 Speaker 2

With the fellows there on the 21st because it landed right in the midst of us and it just tore their guts out.

01:00:28 Speaker 2

And I know other fellows been hit.

01:00:31 Speaker 2

Nothing more than little slash.

01:00:35 Speaker 2

Virgil Meyer got hit by murder and he didn't even report it.

01:00:41 Speaker 2

You know, that's just that close.

01:00:44 Speaker 2

But.

01:00:47 Speaker 2

It depended.

01:00:50 Speaker 1

What was the toughest thing for you to go?

01:00:52 Speaker 1

During the war.

01:00:53 Speaker 1

In combat, besides the incident on the 21st.

01:00:59 Speaker 2

I think that was the the worst that that particular day is the worst one I had seen.

01:01:08 Speaker 2

I don't know of any other incident even comes close because that was so close that it had an effect.

01:01:15 Speaker 1

Your ears must have been ringing, right?

01:01:18 Speaker 2

They were the matter of fact. I didn't hear anything for a while.

01:01:23 Speaker 1

Once a while.

01:01:25 Speaker 2

Probably 10.

01:01:26 Speaker 2

Something like that? Or I finally realized what had happened.

01:01:31 Speaker 2

And there were fellows all around me, you know, they were behind me. The G company was up close and we were in the midst.

01:01:41 Speaker 2

Of this much and just the right place at the wrong time.

01:01:46 Speaker 1

So after the sieve line and after you guys kind of make it into Germany. You mentioned that you just you were always moving.

01:01:47

So.

01:01:55 Speaker 2

Yes.

01:01:55 Speaker 1

So is this are you guys walking or do you have trucks or?

01:01:58

Both.

01:02:00 Speaker 2

We we would have a skirmish.

01:02:04 Speaker 2

And things that clear up and the trucks come in and pick us, move them maybe 5-10 miles.

01:02:10 Speaker 2

We detruck and we dig in.

01:02:14 Speaker 2

And we maybe spend two or three days, even a week, in that area, constantly moving. And when that cleared up, the trucks come in again and move us we had.

01:02:28 Speaker 2

Had had another incident.

01:02:31 Speaker 2

Where the trucking company moved us.

01:02:33 Speaker 2

This was inside Germany and I can't tell you where it was, but I remember one of the truck drivers.

01:02:44 Speaker 2

One of the truck drivers raped a woman.

01:02:49 Speaker 2

And Lieutenant Sawicki?

01:02:54 Speaker 2

Cast that kid out.

01:02:57 Speaker 2

And I don't know whether he knew for sure whether he was responsible or not, but I thought a little bit untoward.

01:03:06 Speaker 2

I lost a little bit of respect for Luddreta Sawicki that day.

01:03:13 Speaker 1

Are you lose respect for him?

01:03:15 Speaker 2

The way he acted towards this trucker.

01:03:20 Speaker 2

I think he should have took the kids side until he proved one way or the other.

01:03:27 Speaker 1

What life advice do you want to give to future generations?

01:03:33 Speaker 2

Well, I don't think we can give them much advice.

01:03:37 Speaker 2

We're at a stage.

01:03:40 Speaker 2

In our history that we're in real trouble as a nation, as far as I'm concerned, we have lost.

01:03:49 Speaker 2

Our way, it seems to me.

01:03:52 Speaker 2

Even our national anthem is under attack.

01:03:57 Speaker 2

We're idiots.

01:04:00 Speaker 1

If you.

01:04:01 Speaker 1

To give me some wisdom for my life.

01:04:03 Speaker 1

Would you tell me?

01:04:06 Speaker 2

Well, I would tell you to look to God first.

01:04:10 Speaker 2

That'll settle everything.

01:04:13 Speaker 2

But again, that's our.

01:04:15 Speaker 2

We've forgotten God, that's the reason we're in the shape we're in today.

01:04:20 Speaker 1

If you can.

01:04:20 Speaker 1

Something to all the men.

01:04:22 Speaker 1

Were killed overseas in World War 2.

01:04:24 Speaker 1

Would you want them to know?

01:04:28 Speaker 2

Well, they succeeded. They succeeded in.

01:04:33 Speaker 2

Their responsibility 100%.

01:04:36 Speaker 2

They did everything they could.

01:04:41 Speaker 2

To preserve our way of life.

01:04:45 Speaker 2

And they should be thanked.

01:04:48 Speaker 2

Their families should be accredited.

01:04:51 Speaker 2

Lord's gonna take us when he's ready for us.

01:04:55 Speaker 2

Well, you're either going to heaven or.

01:04:57 Speaker 2

It's one of the other. There's no question about one way or the other.

01:05:05 Speaker 2

And you have a choice here before it happens.

01:05:09 Speaker 2

And that's where I think our problem is.

01:05:12 Speaker 2

Making the wrong choices.

01:05:14 Speaker 2

Well, I would like to be remembered as being responsible of doing what.

01:05:21 Speaker 2

Required as a.

01:05:22 Speaker 2

You are citizen and I think I accomplished that.

01:05:26 Speaker 2

There's a lot of things I failed in.

01:05:30 Speaker 2

Well, I would love them to think that I was responsible and did what was right.

01:05:37 Speaker 2

That.

01:05:37 Speaker 2

That's the thing that we should all strive.

01:05:41 Speaker 1

Thank you for your time.

01:05:42 Speaker 2

Thank.

01:05:42 Speaker 2

Thank you for your service.

01:05:44 Speaker 2

Thank you, Sir.