

Frank Gerone Interview

1st Battalion, 319th Inf Reg

(Aug 2001, interviewed by COL(ret) Grant Porter) [VIDEO: 5m, 40s]

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

00:00:18 Speaker 2

My name is Frank Aaron and was in the 319th Patagon.

00:00:25 Speaker 2

First points no 319 fifty. Excuse me, first battalion. And I think we're talking about the Sergeant Cataldi. That was broke from Sergeant to private.

00:00:40 Speaker 2

And that was around Mooresville, France, that, to the best of my knowledge, George D Patton made it to, you know, George Patton come up and inspected the arms. And he didn't like the way the gun.

00:00:54 Speaker 2

Was camouflaged.

00:00:56 Speaker 2

So my captain, Captain Salamone, had a had a had to break him to a private.

00:01:04 Speaker 2

And in the meantime, they were not for to to get a gun placement. The Lieutenant, Fred Skies and the Three 3 squad leaders and a platoon leader.

00:01:15 Speaker 2

They went up and the machine and the Lieutenant to the best of my knowledge, the Lieutenant Friskies as Lieutenant Sergeant Italy, to talk to the Germans.

00:01:29 Speaker 2

But behind the machine gonna tell him to give himself up.

00:01:34 Speaker 2

That he did the open fire. And again, I'm saying that corporate fatality was hit. Lieutenant Friskies was hit. Sergeant Frank Bolton was hit. Sergeant King was hit, and so was Corporal Hicks. Hit all of it was up there at one time. They carried out who was in the home, I think.

00:01:54 Speaker 2

I think the Sergeant King was hitting me off and I think also Frank boat Sergeant boat, my Sergeant was hit me on and they carried the Lieutenant Friskies out.

00:02:05 Speaker 2

You know on the stretcher.

00:02:07 Speaker 2

Yeah, and.

00:02:09 Speaker 2

That's the best of my knowledge on that day.

00:02:15 Speaker 1

So he is a first.

00:02:17 Speaker 1

Identified as missing in action and then he is identified as killed in action. They actually did find his body with all the others and returned his body back to him.

00:02:20 Speaker 2

Yes, yes.

00:02:27 Speaker 2

That's true, that's true. But it didn't take.

00:02:29 Speaker 2

Us long because we.

00:02:31 Speaker 2

They he was hit and they they found him soon. But of course said the way they did. They said he was killed in action.

00:02:38 Speaker 2

A few days.

00:02:39 Speaker 2

After they found him, but he was found the same day with with everybody else. I don't know why.

00:02:43 Speaker 1

He did that they just identified, took him a while to identify him.

00:02:46 Speaker 1

I guess.

00:02:49 Speaker 1

But what we have is the morning reports on that incident that that showed him as as demoted on October 2nd.

00:02:57 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:02:58 Speaker 1

And October 14th, he was listed as missing in action. But then October 20th morning report they found him. They said he changed from missing to killed in action. And the sad part of it is, is that his commanders, Jim Salomone, had to write to his wife and tell him, identify him as private.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

Capital, Solomon.

00:03:20 Speaker 1

That's all.

00:03:21 Speaker 1

And that she wrote back and asked why? Yeah. And he never got to explain it to her.

00:03:26 Speaker 2

But I understand why you would pro.

00:03:32 Speaker 2

No, he couldn't find them.

00:03:33 Speaker 2

Couldn't find her after you know.

00:03:35 Speaker 2

He had he had to.

00:03:37 Speaker 2

Do it because the general told him to break.

00:03:39 Speaker 2

Them.

00:03:39 Speaker 2

And he had to break. But he was going to get his stripes back again because he well.

00:03:45 Speaker 2

They claim it well.

00:03:46 Speaker 2

I think he's had the authority to.

00:03:48 Speaker 2

To it.

00:03:49 Speaker 2

He has the authority to to reinstate them again after a couple of days, but they found out. You know what they did find or of course.

00:03:56 Speaker 2

It was too.

00:03:56 Speaker 2

Late. Thank you. No, just.

00:03:58 Speaker 1

OK. Well, thank you very much Mr. not.

00:04:01 Speaker 2

Telling me our river story.

00:04:05 Speaker 1

About it.

00:04:07 Speaker 1

You go ahead if you.

00:04:08 Speaker 1

Want to tell us this?

00:04:09 Speaker 2

What?

00:04:11 Speaker 2

The same thing as equal. I had a I went off with a machine gun. We had 13 guys, I think with 13 to 14 to the boat and they were firing at the the the tanks and all was firing across. We went down supposed to be quiet. We went down.

00:04:13 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:04:28 Speaker 2

With the with the.

00:04:29 Speaker 2

All our all.

00:04:30 Speaker 2

Our gear and all. We're gonna have the boat we started going across and here comes another boat.

00:04:37 Speaker 2

Nothing in it and nothing. And it hits our boat and over we go. And of course it was not white, but still, no. We lost three guys that time and I would. I would have to throw all my gear off, you know, I couldn't carry nothing. And this here fellow totally flip, couldn't swim. So I grabbed a hold of him.

00:04:56 Speaker 2

It was, you know, flounder. And I said, take it easy. We'll get you in on the temple. He had a more he was carrying water shells. So I.

00:05:03 Speaker 2

Took that off him.

00:05:05 Speaker 2

We got out and then we walked back.

00:05:07 Speaker 2

In a minute.

00:05:09 Speaker 2

Yeah, I said. What? They just walked there. I said, yeah, I said that.

00:05:12 Speaker 2

Was a might well.

00:05:15 Speaker 2

And we had to go over.

00:05:16 Speaker 2

The next.

00:05:16 Speaker 2

Day. That's the best of my knowledge.

00:05:20

Are you are you working the the budget could order and got that.

00:05:22

Fuel box.

00:05:24 Speaker 2

Yeah, next.

00:05:25 Speaker 2

So once we got to the first date.

00:05:30

There's.

00:05:30

He didn't. He didn't get over to her, so he had to come back.

00:05:32 Speaker 2

He had come back over. Thank you.

00:05:34 Speaker 1

Thanks a lot.

00:05:39

Yeah, that's.