

Charles Parker Interview

Company B, 318th Inf Reg

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Dwight Merritt Davis)

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

00:00:00 Speaker 1

What is your full name, Sir?

00:00:02 Speaker 2

Charles Glen Parker.

00:00:05 Speaker 1

Where and when were you born?

00:00:08 Speaker 2

Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

00:00:12 Speaker 2

January 6, 1925.

00:00:16 Speaker 1

How old are you right now?

00:00:17 Speaker 2

92.

00:00:18 Speaker 1

Do you feel like you're 92?

00:00:20 Speaker 2

Yes, I do.

00:00:23 Speaker 2

It didn't really come from.

00:00:25 Speaker 2

The combat experience.

00:00:29 Speaker 2

But I have had.

00:00:33 Speaker 2

Open heart surgery.

00:00:36 Speaker 2

5 bypasses.

00:00:39 Speaker 2

I've had two artificial knees.

00:00:43 Speaker 2

And.

00:00:48 Speaker 2

It's just.

00:00:50 Speaker 2

My legs aren't very good anymore, even though I belong to.

00:00:57 Speaker 2

What they call cardiac rehab at which is a.

00:01:02 Speaker 2

Partnership that the YMCA in Bloomington, IN where I live, lives with a hospital there, IU Health.

00:01:14 Speaker 2

And.

00:01:17 Speaker 2

They go there three days a week.

00:01:21

Uh.

00:01:24 Speaker 2

Do.

00:01:26 Speaker 2

Write a new step machine.

00:01:29 Speaker 2

And.

00:01:33 Speaker 2

Walk the 7th of a mile.

00:01:36 Speaker 2

I can still barely do that.

00:01:39 Speaker 1

What branch of the military were you in during World War 2?

00:01:44 Speaker 2

I was in anti aircraft artillery when I first started.

00:01:49 Speaker 2

In the infantry.

00:01:51 Speaker 1

What?

00:01:52 Speaker 1

What regiment and what company were you in during your overseas duties?

00:01:57 Speaker 2

That the 80th Division, three 19th edition, company G.

00:02:01 Speaker 1

And what was your specific role in Company G?

00:02:05 Speaker 2

I was in a rifle company.

00:02:08 Speaker 2

The BAR.

00:02:10 Speaker 2

Be carried that 20 LB rifle.

00:02:18

Uh.

00:02:19 Speaker 2

It was the only automatic weapon at that time.

00:02:24 Speaker 2

During World War 2.

00:02:27 Speaker 2

That was in every platoon.

00:02:33 Speaker 1

Were you a replacement or were you an original member?

00:02:36 Speaker 2

I was a replacement.

00:02:37 Speaker 1

When did you join the outfit?

00:02:40 Speaker 2

January 22.

00:02:44 Speaker 2

1945.

00:02:47 Speaker 1

Were you ever wounded?

00:02:48 Speaker 2

I was.

00:02:51 Speaker 2

February the 22nd, 1945.

00:02:56 Speaker 1

That took you out of the war.

00:02:58 Speaker 2

Pardon.

00:02:58 Speaker 1

The wound took you out of the war.

00:03:01 Speaker 2

No it didn't.

00:03:05 Speaker 2

But.

00:03:07 Speaker 2

When I went got back to the aid station.

00:03:11 Speaker 2

They also found out that I had trench foot.

00:03:17 Speaker 2

Wish I eventually ended up in a hospital in England.

00:03:24 Speaker 2

And I was in there for.

00:03:29 Speaker 2

The last part of April?

00:03:32 Speaker 1

And what was the highest rank?

00:03:34 Speaker 1

Achieved by the time you left the Armed Services, corporal.

00:03:38 Speaker 1

Now you said.

00:03:40 Speaker 1

You were born in Ohio.

00:03:41 Speaker 1

You grow up there.

00:03:43 Speaker 2

I did.

00:03:43 Speaker 1

Talk to me about growing up in Ohio.

00:03:49 Speaker 2

Well, I went to high school.

00:03:52 Speaker 2

Shreve, Ohio.

00:03:55 Speaker 2

Which is a very small town.

00:04:02 Speaker 2

Played basketball and football.

00:04:06 Speaker 2

No football, basketball and baseball.

00:04:12 Speaker 2

That's all sports we had.

00:04:17 Speaker 2

I was.

00:04:19 Speaker 2

President of the junior and senior class.

00:04:24 Speaker 2

Also, I was president of the Student Council.

00:04:32 Speaker 2

No.

00:04:33 Speaker 2

We had.

00:04:36 Speaker 2

Our senior class was consistent.

00:04:39 Speaker 2

33 people.

00:04:46 Speaker 2

And.

00:04:47 Speaker 2

My son, always kid me about we could have our reunions.

00:04:53 Speaker 2

We could hold those in a phone booth.

00:04:58 Speaker 1

Talk to me about the Great Depression.

00:05:02 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:05:06 Speaker 2

Well, we didn't have a lot of money to the family.

00:05:11 Speaker 2

My dad had a job.

00:05:14

And.

00:05:17 Speaker 2

All the.

00:05:19 Speaker 2

He was never unemployed, but the job.

00:05:22 Speaker 2

No job paid very much.

00:05:26 Speaker 2

And people don't believe now when I tell him that.

00:05:31 Speaker 2

I can remember when I was a kid having to take the rent down, rent money down to the landlord.

00:05:40 Speaker 2

The rent money was \$10 a month.

00:05:44 Speaker 2

And if he wanted to raise it a dollar a month, my dad was looking for a place to move.

00:05:53 Speaker 1

How did you hear about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

00:05:58 Speaker 2

I remember hearing it over the radio.

00:06:01 Speaker 2

That Sunday morning.

00:06:06 Speaker 2

You know as well as 16, I guess.

00:06:10 Speaker 1

What was that like to hear?

00:06:13 Speaker 2

Well, I I probably as a 16 year old didn't think a lot of it although.

00:06:22 Speaker 2

The national.

00:06:24 Speaker 2

We had a National Guard outfit in a little town.

00:06:27 Speaker 2

I.

00:06:27 Speaker 2

They had already left town before that and was activated.

00:06:34 Speaker 2

So we did have a little.

00:06:38 Speaker 2

Knowledge of the fact that things weren't real great.

00:06:43 Speaker 1

So just going forward a little bit, you're sent overseas in a replacement cadgery.

00:06:51 Speaker 1

How do you end up with the 80th?

00:06:54 Speaker 2

I have no idea.

00:06:56 Speaker 2

I think they were just actually looking for everybody needed recruits and I do know that when we did.

00:07:09 Speaker 2

Join that.

00:07:11 Speaker 2

The guys told us that just a day or two before that they had a lot of casualties, which was that battle to liberate Notre Naughter.

00:07:24 Speaker 2

A little town near in Luxembourg.

00:07:27 Speaker 1

Talk to me about your first experience in combat.

00:07:33 Speaker 2

Well, the.

00:07:35 Speaker 2

Day we got there.

00:07:42 Speaker 2

They told us to.

00:07:44 Speaker 2

To go upstairs in this building where find someplace to lay down, go to sleep.

00:07:52 Speaker 2

And before we even had a chance, before I even had a chance to do anything, somebody come in and they'd been I and three or four other guys had been assigned to a platoon, apparently who was on an outpost.

00:08:07 Speaker 2

Of this little town.

00:08:10 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:08:11 Speaker 2

And a.

00:08:15 Speaker 2

We had to pack up and then we went right out there and.

00:08:23 Speaker 2

Next thing I knew, I was in the second floor of this House on guard duty.

00:08:28 Speaker 2

For two hours or three hours, whatever it was.

00:08:36 Speaker 1

Talk to.

00:08:37 Speaker 1

About your first time taking on enemy fire.

00:08:47 Speaker 2

The first time.

00:08:49 Speaker 2

We were in a little town of.

00:08:54 Speaker 2

Overlooking the our river, which is the boundary between Germany and Luxembourg.

00:09:01 Speaker 2

And we.

00:09:06 Speaker 2

And artillery barrage came in there.

00:09:13 Speaker 2

Both artillery and screaming Mimis.

00:09:20 Speaker 2

And.

00:09:23 Speaker 2

That was the first.

00:09:27 Speaker 2

Well, I wasn't here, but the guy that was right close to me, we were outside a building and.

00:09:38 Speaker 2

You had a little.

00:09:40 Speaker 2

He's the first guy that I knew.

00:09:42 Speaker 2

They got hit.

00:09:45 Speaker 2

And it was minimal.

00:09:49 Speaker 2

A little piece of shrapnel in his neck, which?

00:09:53 Speaker 2

He left that day to the aid station and he came back to our platoon the day I left.

00:10:04 Speaker 1

Talk to me about some of your experiences engaging with the Germans and the firefights that you're platoon to get into.

00:10:13 Speaker 2

You know.

00:10:16 Speaker 2

We didn't really get into any because I think our platoon or our company was in reserve.

00:10:23 Speaker 2

A lot of the time that I.

00:10:26 Speaker 2

Over there.

00:10:27 Speaker 1

That right?

00:10:28 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:10:31 Speaker 2

So my experience.

00:10:35 Speaker 2

I always felt I was very, very lucky.

00:10:41 Speaker 2

I did everything I was told to do when I was told to do it.

00:10:48 Speaker 2

And the way I was supposed to do it, at least I thought I did.

00:10:53 Speaker 2

Weapon the BAR.

00:10:56 Speaker 1

You carry that your entire time.

00:10:58 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:11:01 Speaker 1

Were there any times that you guys had to set up the bar?

00:11:07 Speaker 2

Not really.

00:11:16 Speaker 1

Like I know from my understanding of the BAR, it's used both as a defensive and an offensive weapon.

00:11:23 Speaker 1

So the BAR man's going with The Rifleman.

00:11:27 Speaker 1

And if they needed any covering fire, the BAR can do.

00:11:32 Speaker 1

Like a machine gun.

00:11:33 Speaker 2

Right.

00:11:34 Speaker 1

Did you?

00:11:35 Speaker 2

Well, you know, it's not like a machine gun.

00:11:42 Speaker 2

Because you could really only fight.

00:11:47 Speaker 2

Well, the clip held 20 rounds.

00:11:50 Speaker 2

That you could fire those out of there before you get to your finger off the trigger.

00:11:55 Speaker 2

But you're only supposed to fire that thing 3 or 4 rounds at a time.

00:12:02 Speaker 2

You fired first.

00:12:03 Speaker 2

You do. The barrel would be gone.

00:12:06 Speaker 2

All the rifling would be out of the barrel.

00:12:10 Speaker 2

Hacker say no.

00:12:13 Speaker 1

Talk to me about.

00:12:15 Speaker 1

Were there many times you you?

00:12:16 Speaker 1

On German artillery.

00:12:20 Speaker 2

No.

00:12:28 Speaker 2

No.

00:12:31 Speaker 2

Like I said, most of the time I'm sure that we were on reserve.

00:12:37 Speaker 2

The time.

00:12:38 Speaker 1

Did you have to go on any patrols?

00:12:40 Speaker 2

I did.

00:12:42 Speaker 1

What do?

00:12:42 Speaker 1

Remember about the patrols that you went on.

00:12:45 Speaker 2

Well, I always thought about it this way.

00:12:49 Speaker 2

It was a night patrol.

00:12:52 Speaker 2

And I understood that most guys.

00:12:56 Speaker 2

Really didn't like.

00:12:57 Speaker 2

It's about as dangerous a thing as we could do.

00:13:02 Speaker 2

We were told that we were not supposed to take any prisoners.

00:13:09 Speaker 2

I don't know how far we had walked.

00:13:13 Speaker 2

When we left, well, first of all.

00:13:18 Speaker 2

I was scared.

00:13:21 Speaker 2

But I wasn't.

00:13:24 Speaker 2

As scared as.

00:13:26 Speaker 2

Because they what they did is.

00:13:31 Speaker 2

Platoon Sergeant came around and said Call My Name with two other guys.

00:13:37 Speaker 2

You're going to night patrol, so I didn't have time to think about it.

00:13:43 Speaker 2

We got out there.

00:13:45 Speaker 2

I have no idea how long or how far we had walked.

00:13:49 Speaker 2

And the first thing I knew we heard.

00:13:54 Speaker 2

Guys talking.

00:13:57 Speaker 2

They were coming right to have us.

00:14:02 Speaker 2

And like I say, we were told we're not gonna take on any prisoners.

00:14:08 Speaker 2

Oh, what does that leave you?

00:14:15 Speaker 2

But you have to kill him.

00:14:19 Speaker 2

And you know, they walked right up onto onto us.

00:14:24 Speaker 2

That we waited until they got right at us.

00:14:30 Speaker 2

And we scared the bud Jabbers out of them.

00:14:33 Speaker 2

We had them on the ground.

00:14:36 Speaker 2

And disarmed, I think before their hearts started beating again.

00:14:42 Speaker 2

Now.

00:14:44 Speaker 2

I don't remember too much about what happened.

00:14:49 Speaker 2

I think there was maybe one of them could speak English.

00:14:55 Speaker 2

We took them back with us and what happened to them? I have no idea.

00:15:02 Speaker 2

But I think the reason that we were supposed to not take any prison, we had no way to watch them. No way to keep them.

00:15:12 Speaker 2

So what happened to them?

00:15:14 Speaker 2

I have no idea.

00:15:16 Speaker 1

Do you think they were killed?

00:15:17 Speaker 2

I doubt.

00:15:19 Speaker 2

It I didn't hear any shots fired really close by the rest of the night.

00:15:26 Speaker 1

You mentioned you saw the man close to you get hit in the neck with a piece of shrapnel.

00:15:32 Speaker 1

Were there other times that you saw men around you getting hit from small arms or shrapnel?

00:15:37 Speaker 2

The day I got hit, we had lost.

00:15:41 Speaker 2

I don't really remember how many but but.

00:15:45 Speaker 2

I think probably four or five, maybe more, that I really don't know. 'cause, we're pretty well scattered out.

00:15:54 Speaker 2

And.

00:15:58 Speaker 2

I do know that when we had no first aid, Kai with us.

00:16:06 Speaker 2

And when?

00:16:08 Speaker 2

Came up and got us a an ambulance.

00:16:13 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:16:14 Speaker 2

It filled the.

00:16:17 Speaker 2

Damn.

00:16:20 Speaker 2

I laid across the top of the hood.

00:16:24 Speaker 2

I think there were four or five and could be more.

00:16:30 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:16:34 Speaker 2

Of the ambulance, the vehicle they brought up, there was a weapons carrier.

00:16:40 Speaker 2

Which is his next biggie hero and a Jeep.

00:16:45 Speaker 2

And they loaded everybody in.

00:16:53 Speaker 2

The.

00:16:55 Speaker 2

I had to lay across the I had no idea who they were, but I had to lay across the top of the hood to hang on to whatever I could to ride that. And I don't know how far was Rd. that thing back to the aid station.

00:17:11 Speaker 2

But I do remember this that on the way back.

00:17:16 Speaker 2

The 4th Armored Division had tanks lined up bumper to bumper, getting ready to take off.

00:17:24 Speaker 2

For as far as I could go, this was just in the edge of Germany a little ways.

00:17:33 Speaker 1

And.

00:17:35 Speaker 1

Before we get into that incident.

00:17:38 Speaker 1

Describe to me what's it like to have German artillery going off around you.

00:17:44 Speaker 2

Well.

00:17:47 Speaker 2

I always said that.

00:17:51 Speaker 2

The.

00:17:54 Speaker 2

Rifle fire or the small arms.

00:17:59 Speaker 2

As long as you could hear him, they weren't gonna hurt you.

00:18:05 Speaker 2

But the artillery it was like to whom it may concern, because you could, if you were close by, you were gonna get hit.

00:18:16 Speaker 2

And.

00:18:25 Speaker 1

What was the difference between the German artillery and the German mortars?

00:18:33 Speaker 2

Well, I don't really know.

00:18:36 Speaker 1

In the time that you were with the 80th, they breached the Siegfried Line, right?

00:18:42 Speaker 2

No.

00:18:45 Speaker 2

We did that.

00:18:46 Speaker 2

It had been breached, yes, but not where we were.

00:18:51 Speaker 1

So just explain to me you know, but when you join the division on the 22nd of January and until the time that you were wounded on February 22nd, what was the area that you guys covered?

00:19:04 Speaker 1

Were the major battles.

00:19:06 Speaker 2

Little just a very end of the battle of the bulge and then.

00:19:13 Speaker 2

They took us back there for about two or three days.

00:19:20 Speaker 2

At.

00:19:21 Speaker 2

First couple days of February, then they moved us up to close to the German border.

00:19:30 Speaker 2

In preparation to cross and over into.

00:19:35 Speaker 2

Germany across the our river.

00:19:38 Speaker 1

What do you remember about the river crossing?

00:19:41 Speaker 2

Or do I ever?

00:19:44 Speaker 2

I don't think anybody.

00:19:49 Speaker 2

I don't know of anybody in our platoon who had ever made a river crossing like that.

00:20:00 Speaker 2

Couple days before we did that.

00:20:04 Speaker 2

We made a practice crossing of the Sour River.

00:20:11 Speaker 2

And we had absolutely no problems.

00:20:15 Speaker 2

The instructions were that.

00:20:19 Speaker 2

When we got to the cross, the river do not grab hold of any trees or any anything to keep moving that boat right up on the shore, right up on the Bank of the river.

00:20:34 Speaker 2

Well, we tried three days to cross that river.

00:20:41 Speaker 2

Now this is February the 9th.

00:20:44 Speaker 2

Was the last time and I really knew he was going to cross that river regardless of what. But the river was flooded.

00:20:57 Speaker 2

The current was very swift.

00:20:59 Speaker 2

The engineers could not build a bridge across there.

00:21:05 Speaker 2

Due to most Cran of the river and the artillery.

00:21:11 Speaker 2

Umm.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

So we.

00:21:15 Speaker 2

We rode into his assault boats.

00:21:19 Speaker 2

We got over within.

00:21:21 Speaker 2

I know it was within at least the length of the boat.

00:21:26 Speaker 2

We go by some overhanging trees.

00:21:31 Speaker 2

Guy in the upper left hand corner, left front corner of that boat.

00:21:38 Speaker 2

Grabbed ahold of a tree limb.

00:21:42 Speaker 2

The vote goes.

00:21:44 Speaker 2

Dumped us all in the water.

00:21:53 Speaker 2

I knew that there was at least.

00:21:56 Speaker 2

One guy that was in that boat that I knew who could not swim.

00:22:03 Speaker 2

I had when I was in an aircraft artillery.

00:22:11 Speaker 2

I had been an instructor.

00:22:15 Speaker 2

In.

00:22:20 Speaker 2

Or fair Aquatics?

00:22:24 Speaker 2

Survivor swimming.

00:22:28 Speaker 2

And the first thing I knew somebody and I have no idea who was on my back.

00:22:36 Speaker 2

We went down under.

00:22:39 Speaker 2

I got him off of.

00:22:41 Speaker 2

Came back up.

00:22:43 Speaker 2

Know whether or not was the same guy.

00:22:45 Speaker 2

I do not know, but somebody got ahold of me again.

00:22:49 Speaker 2

Went down again.

00:22:51 Speaker 2

I got him off.

00:22:54 Speaker 2

Could not get back up.

00:22:57 Speaker 2

And I apparently was fighting it too much.

00:23:01 Speaker 2

But I.

00:23:02 Speaker 2

I have no idea how far I went down that river underneath the water.

00:23:07 Speaker 2

But I knew I could not hold my breath anymore.

00:23:11 Speaker 2

I finally said to hell with.

00:23:13 Speaker 2

I'm going to drown.

00:23:17 Speaker 2

When I did that, I relaxed and I popped up out of that water like a cork.

00:23:25 Speaker 2

Swam over to the bank.

00:23:28 Speaker 2

Cut out. I sat there for.

00:23:33 Speaker 2

I have no idea how long.

00:23:36 Speaker 2

Till I could get my breath and move out ahead.

00:23:41 Speaker 2

Trouble finding my platoon 'cause. I really didn't know where was that.

00:23:47 Speaker 2

It's still dark.

00:23:51 Speaker 2

But.

00:23:54 Speaker 2

Now there I lost my glasses.

00:23:57 Speaker 2

I lost my helmet.

00:24:02 Speaker 2

Of course, I was pretty well. Water soaked.

00:24:06 Speaker 2

And.

00:24:12 Speaker 2

I told.

00:24:14 Speaker 2

Some girl last winter at that cardiac rehab, ***** was complaining about being cold, I said.

00:24:22 Speaker 2

Don't know what cold is.

00:24:27 Speaker 1

What happened to the other men?

00:24:30 Speaker 2

Well, there were.

00:24:33 Speaker 2

I do not know whether they were all out of the same boat I was in.

00:24:37 Speaker 2

But that night you were.

00:24:41 Speaker 2

In.

00:24:43 Speaker 2

Ground. They were first recorded as.

00:24:48 Speaker 2

Mia.

00:24:50 Speaker 2

And later on I think.

00:24:53 Speaker 2

Most of that I know of, I think, was found scattered along the river there someplace.

00:25:00 Speaker 1

And which river was this?

00:25:02 Speaker 2

The our river.

00:25:03 Speaker 1

Did you?

00:25:04 Speaker 1

Did you take part in the Sour river crossing?

00:25:07 Speaker 2

I did.

00:25:07 Speaker 2

We used that as a practice cross.

00:25:10 Speaker 1

So during the hour river crossing.

00:25:14 Speaker 1

Did you take on any fire when you were crossing?

00:25:18 Speaker 2

While we were so busy, I don't really know.

00:25:21 Speaker 2

I think I.

00:25:23 Speaker 2

Don't know they had the smoke screen up or not with when we did that, but.

00:25:29 Speaker 1

So you go back.

00:25:30 Speaker 1

You're on the enemy side of the bank right after you.

00:25:35 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:25:36 Speaker 1

So and you're sitting there after that, what do you do?

00:25:41 Speaker 2

Well.

00:25:42 Speaker 2

Like I said.

00:25:45 Speaker 2

We were still in reserve.

00:25:48 Speaker 2

Because most of the fire that was there had to come from artillery.

00:25:52 Speaker 2

It was dark when we were crossing now.

00:25:59 Speaker 2

That whole area, I'm sure that the Germans.

00:26:05 Speaker 2

Artillery had every bit of that river registered.

00:26:11 Speaker 2

Because they had they built.

00:26:14 Speaker 2

That Siegfried line in the late 30s or early 40s.

00:26:19 Speaker 1

Well, I just wanted to know though, like that, that night after your incident in the water and you go and you lost your stuff and you're sitting there soaked. What happens to you and the rest of the rest of the men?

00:26:35 Speaker 1

Like, do you go?

00:26:36 Speaker 1

To the American side of the river.

00:26:39 Speaker 2

We.

00:26:45 Speaker 2

Hi.

00:26:48 Speaker 2

Well after daylight I think where I remember now we were.

00:27:04 Speaker 2

We walked up to the next town up the road there, which was amanding and and.

00:27:12 Speaker 2

We.

00:27:14 Speaker 2

Stayed into.

00:27:18 Speaker 2

A bunker? That was.

00:27:21 Speaker 2

A part of the siege free line.

00:27:25 Speaker 2

And we stayed there, I think.

00:27:31 Speaker 2

The morning.

00:27:31 Speaker 2

We must have been there for two or three days.

00:27:35 Speaker 2

But.

00:27:41 Speaker 2

I know I served guard duty.

00:27:45 Speaker 2

A good big share that time.

00:27:47 Speaker 1

Did you have any experiences against German tanks?

00:27:51 Speaker 2

No.

00:27:52 Speaker 1

Do you have any experiences with German land mines?

00:28:00 Speaker 2

No, I didn't.

00:28:01 Speaker 2

I know they were around there and I know.

00:28:04 Speaker 2

I but that was a big.

00:28:06 Speaker 2

I was concerned about when I got out of that water.

00:28:11 Speaker 2

And wandering around there in the dark, trying to find it the rest of my platoon.

00:28:19 Speaker 2

Because I.

00:28:21 Speaker 2

There was a lot of them there.

00:28:25 Speaker 1

You eventually found your platoon.

00:28:27 Speaker 2

I did.

00:28:29 Speaker 1

They were all soaked as well.

00:28:33 Speaker 2

No, the the rest, the guys that I found didn't have a problem with the boats.

00:28:40 Speaker 1

How many men were in a boat?

00:28:42 Speaker 2

I think there were 12. I think there are 10 infantry and two engineers.

00:28:47 Speaker 1

And did you have any experiences with the German Luftwaffe?

00:28:52 Speaker 1

Do they strafe your area?

00:28:54 Speaker 2

Never saw a German airplane.

00:28:55 Speaker 1

And tell me the story about how you were wounded.

00:28:59 Speaker 1

Me through the beginning. What happened?

00:29:04 Speaker 2

Well, we had.

00:29:07 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:29:11 Speaker 2

Moved up to.

00:29:16 Speaker 2

Little town of uh.

00:29:21 Speaker 2

I'm not gonna remember that name.

00:29:25 Speaker 2

Anyhow, there.

00:29:27 Speaker 2

A anti tank gun who had knocked out.

00:29:32 Speaker 2

At the Sherman tank.

00:29:35 Speaker 2

The tank gun was in Obergeckler.

00:29:39 Speaker 2

And.

00:29:44 Speaker 2

We were.

00:29:46 Speaker 2

Assigned to try to get up there and clear that tank out or the.

00:29:53 Speaker 2

Tank gun.

00:29:56 Speaker 2

Out and.

00:30:01 Speaker 2

We had to walk.

00:30:03 Speaker 2

Probably.

00:30:08 Speaker 2

1000 yards or so across pasture fields and so forth and and.

00:30:18 Speaker 2

Well, that morning we found some other and I don't know who they.

00:30:22 Speaker 2

Some other outfit had they were leaving that little town of over Geckler or the vicinity.

00:30:30 Speaker 2

And.

00:30:32 Speaker 2

They had trouble getting in there.

00:30:34 Speaker 2

Never did.

00:30:35 Speaker 2

So we had just gotten a new.

00:30:41 Speaker 2

Platoon commander, second Lieutenant.

00:30:46 Speaker 2

And we started off in a different direction than we walked, maybe.

00:30:52 Speaker 2

500 yards and the Germans that were left.

00:31:00 Speaker 2

To and I'm sure they were just left to delay us because.

00:31:06 Speaker 2

The that.

00:31:09 Speaker 2

Tank gun did not fire a shot.

00:31:13 Speaker 2

And we were in a.

00:31:16 Speaker 2

Past your field with no cover and they we walked right up onto.

00:31:21 Speaker 2

And they opened fire on us, and all we did was hit the ground and lay there.

00:31:32 Speaker 2

And.

00:31:35 Speaker 2

Be laid there all.

00:31:38 Speaker 2

I pray I I don't know whether it was at noon when this first air, when it happened to us, but I know we had no aid men and they didn't.

00:31:50 Speaker 2

There was no.

00:31:51 Speaker 2

Men got up there until.

00:31:55 Speaker 2

Shortly before dark.

00:31:59 Speaker 2

And.

00:32:01 Speaker 2

When I laid, the vehicle got up there, one of those Germans came out from.

00:32:07 Speaker 2

Were dug in in a little gully down there.

00:32:13 Speaker 2

In front of us.

00:32:15 Speaker 2

One of those Germans walked out.

00:32:16 Speaker 2

There with.

00:32:17 Speaker 2

Big white flag and he told those eight men he says, get those guys out of there right away.

00:32:26 Speaker 2

And that's what they did.

00:32:28 Speaker 2

And then what happened there that night? I don't know.

00:32:34 Speaker 1

Where were you wounded?

00:32:37 Speaker 2

I got a piece small arms in my arm.

00:32:42 Speaker 2

Yeah, rifle.

00:32:45 Speaker 2

That's all I had.

00:32:48 Speaker 2

That's all I remember hearing.

00:32:51 Speaker 2

When when they ambushed us.

00:32:55 Speaker 1

So your platoon was going through an open field.

00:32:59 Speaker 2

So we had no cover.

00:33:00 Speaker 1

And across the field there was this anti tank gun.

00:33:06 Speaker 2

The anti tank gun was in the little town.

00:33:10 Speaker 1

Which was across the field, right?

00:33:12 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:33:13 Speaker 1

Did you see the German personnel?

00:33:15 Speaker 2

No.

00:33:17 Speaker 1

So you guys are just walking in the?

00:33:18 Speaker 1

How far apart are each one of you pretty scattered?

00:33:22 Speaker 2

We were.

00:33:25 Speaker 1

Do you see the Germans firing at you?

00:33:28 Speaker 2

We.

00:33:29 Speaker 2

We we couldn't see him.

00:33:30 Speaker 2

I couldn't see him because all primarily their heads were sticking up.

00:33:38 Speaker 2

Because there was a little Creek or a little.

00:33:45 Speaker 2

Dip.

00:33:46 Speaker 2

A terrain there where they were hiding or dug in.

00:33:52 Speaker 2

Just defending and I know that's all they were doing is trying to delay.

00:33:59 Speaker 2

While they moved back.

00:34:01 Speaker 1

So.

00:34:06 Speaker 1

What did it feel like when you were hit?

00:34:11 Speaker 2

Well, it hurts.

00:34:13 Speaker 1

W where in the arm?

00:34:15 Speaker 2

Just above the elbow.

00:34:17 Speaker 1

Left or right arm.

00:34:19 Speaker 2

Right arm.

00:34:21 Speaker 2

I had no problems, I told the I told my assistant bami.

00:34:28 Speaker 2

Man, that when I left, I said I'll see you in the morning. 'cause, I figured David.

00:34:37 Speaker 2

Just get a.

00:34:39 Speaker 2

Patch it up a little bit, they'd send us back.

00:34:42 Speaker 1

Did it go through the bone or just the?

00:34:43 Speaker 2

You know, just a pledge.

00:34:45 Speaker 1

OK.

00:34:47

And.

00:34:48 Speaker 2

I was very, very lucky.

00:34:51 Speaker 1

Did you lose a lot of blood or no?

00:34:55 Speaker 1

So you're laying there for about 7 hours.

00:34:58 Speaker 2

Well, maybe not quite that long.

00:35:01 Speaker 2

3 or 4 now well.

00:35:05 Speaker 2

You were scared most of the time or all of the time when you were in combat.

00:35:14 Speaker 2

How many?

00:35:14 Speaker 2

How many Germans were in that group?

00:35:17 Speaker 2

Don't know but.

00:35:19 Speaker 2

Probably not more than a squad of 10 or 12, if there was even that many.

00:35:29 Speaker 1

And when you get.

00:35:29 Speaker 1

Back to the first aid station.

00:35:33 Speaker 1

What happens?

00:35:39 Speaker 2

Well, they just.

00:35:43 Speaker 2

First day one thing they did was.

00:35:46 Speaker 2

We had just been issued.

00:35:50 Speaker 2

I call shoe packs.

00:35:53 Speaker 2

Boot with rubber bottom and leather top.

00:35:59 Speaker 2

That was a pretty recent issue.

00:36:02 Speaker 2

Because.

00:36:04 Speaker 2

Frozen feet and trench foot was.

00:36:10 Speaker 2

Pretty prevalent.

00:36:13 Speaker 2

And I think I probably got the French foot trench foot from.

00:36:19

Uh.

00:36:21 Speaker 2

For the start of it.

00:36:24 Speaker 2

I dip in the our river.

00:36:28 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:36:30 Speaker 2

They took those off of us, then they.

00:36:37 Speaker 2

That's what they found out.

00:36:38 Speaker 2

I had trench foot so they just put a dressing on the wound and from there on.

00:36:48 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:36:51 Speaker 2

It was just.

00:36:53 Speaker 2

Treatment. Most of the treatment for the trench foot was just time.

00:37:01 Speaker 1

And by the time by that.

00:37:03 Speaker 1

The war was over.

00:37:06 Speaker 2

Not quite, I spent.

00:37:10 Speaker 2

From February till.

00:37:15 Speaker 2

Latter part of April in the hospital.

00:37:18 Speaker 2

Then I was sent back to France and I was in.

00:37:25 Speaker 2

A replacement depot.

00:37:28 Speaker 2

When the war ended.

00:37:31 Speaker 2

And that I was reassigned.

00:37:35 Speaker 1

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

00:37:55 Speaker 2

Well, the news today.

00:38:00 Speaker 2

I know that.

00:38:06 Speaker 2

It really alarms me more than.

00:38:10 Speaker 2

A lot of other people.

00:38:13 Speaker 2

Because I can see.

00:38:18

Uh.

00:38:23 Speaker 2

I could remember that a lot of the stuff that's going on today happened.

00:38:28 Speaker 2

When I was still in high school.

00:38:32 Speaker 2

And.

00:38:37 Speaker 2

The stuff that's happening over there in Korea is probably the to me is probably the most.

00:38:45 Speaker 2

Dangerous thing.

00:38:49 Speaker 1

What would you?

00:38:50 Speaker 1

To say to all the men who were killed overseas in.

00:38:53 Speaker 1

War.

00:38:53 Speaker 1

What would you want them to know?

00:39:03 Speaker 2

But I don't know that I could just answer that right off the top of my head.

00:39:15 Speaker 2

But I feel sorry for every last.

00:39:17 Speaker 2

Of them.

00:39:20 Speaker 2

Well, I hope they think that I've.

00:39:24 Speaker 2

Lived a good life.

00:39:27 Speaker 2

Been a good dad. Been a good husband.

00:39:37 Speaker 2

Their good grandfather.

00:39:40 Speaker 2

And I'm.

00:39:44 Speaker 2

Looking very much forward to having a new, great, great granddaughter.

00:39:54 Speaker 2

The predicted date of her birth is January 3rd.

00:40:02 Speaker 1

Any last words?

00:40:05 Speaker 2

No.

00:40:07 Speaker 1

Thank you for your.

00:40:08 Speaker 1

And thank you for your service.

00:40:09 Speaker 2

Thank you.