

Melvin Rund Interview

HQ, 317th Infantry Regiment

Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Gail Lowry)

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

My name is GAIL Lowry. I'm with Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana. Today is Thursday, June the 26th, 2003. I'm at the Greenwood Public Library in Greenwood, IN with Mr. Melvin F run. RUND. Mr. Run, why don't you start by telling me if you were drafted or did you?

00:00:29 Speaker 1

List.

00:00:30 Speaker 3

Well, I was drafted, but I was about ready to go in without being drafted. OK, yeah.

00:00:38 Speaker 1

You were drafted into the army then. OK. Would you have chosen the army or would you have chosen a different military branch if you hadn't been drafted?

00:00:48 Speaker 3

How's that man?

00:00:49 Speaker 1

Would you have chosen the army if you hadn't been drafted, or would you have chosen Marines or Navy or?

00:00:56 Speaker 3

Well, I'd probably chose the army, yeah.

00:00:58 Speaker 1

OK, OK. So where were you when you were?

00:01:03 Speaker 3

I was living in Brown County, Nashville. Well, that's where I went in, OK?

00:01:09 Speaker 1

And what were you doing at the time that you were?

00:01:13 Speaker 3

Drafted I was working on a poultry farm. They wanted to get me help, but I said no.

00:01:18 Speaker 3

I want to go.

00:01:21 Speaker 1

OK. So tell me when you were drafted, where did you go?

00:01:25 Speaker 3

I went to Fort Harrison.

00:01:29 Speaker 1

Tell me about that. What happened there?

00:01:31 Speaker 3

Well, we got processed there and then sent back home for a while and then we were shipped to Nashville, TN or not Nashville, but the.

00:01:42 Speaker 3

Tullahoma TN Camp Forest, Tennessee it's no longer a camper.

00:01:48 Speaker 1

Was that for basic training? OK, tell me about basic training.

00:01:50 Speaker 3

Yeah.

00:01:54 Speaker 3

Well, we had trained on expensive range and and uh.

00:02:00 Speaker 3

Had all kind of shooting different guns and grenades and pistols and everything and.

00:02:10 Speaker 3

Then after that.

00:02:11 Speaker 1

Well, tell me, let's do a little bit more about basic training. What do you remember about some of your officers and some of your fellow colleagues soldiers?

00:02:22 Speaker 3

Yeah, well.

00:02:23 Speaker 3

We run an obstacle course and and I was passing them all up and I looked up to go over that wall, stepped on a big rock and sprained my ankle, and that was into me. I run my head in that thing. I was doing pretty good. I didn't. I don't take off so fast, but.

00:02:43 Speaker 3

I wind up. I'd go pretty fast, run pretty fast.

00:02:47 Speaker 1

What do you remember about your superiors at at basic training your officers?

00:02:53 Speaker 3

Well, most of them I like pretty well. I can't remember all of them. I do several of them.

00:03:01

MHM.

00:03:01 Speaker 3

Some of them I had real nice ones and some wasn't the best in the world.

00:03:06

Yeah.

00:03:07 Speaker 1

Do you remember feeling stressed?

00:03:10 Speaker 3

Stress.

00:03:12 Speaker 3

Not as much in as I got in in the combat and got bombed and chilled all time.

00:03:19 Speaker 1

OK, so where did you go from basic training?

00:03:22 Speaker 3

Where did they go?

00:03:24 Speaker 1

After basic.

00:03:25 Speaker 3

Well after basic training they moved us. They can't Phillips Kansas. I didn't know it till after the war was over. We were supposed to went to Africa. I think it was a fight in the Pacific someplace.

00:03:39

OK.

00:03:40 Speaker 1

What did you do in at in Kansas?

00:03:43 Speaker 3

Well, we had that desert maneuvers in the desert.

00:03:50 Speaker 3

Close to California.

00:03:52 Speaker 1

How long were you there?

00:03:57 Speaker 3

I'm not sure, not too long. They need this in Europe, so they changed the rules and sent.

00:04:03 Speaker 3

Us to Europe.

00:04:04 Speaker 3

And when we went to Europe, we, the Germans, weren't supposed to know, we was there. Say we went as a ghost division. That's why they never mentioned it or seen much right up in the paper about us.

00:04:17 Speaker 1

OK.

00:04:18 Speaker 3

Far as the.

00:04:20 Speaker 3

Losing men we had close to 18,000 casualties and.

00:04:27 Speaker 3

And about 4000 were dead out of that many. That's quite a few. In one division, there's only two or three divisions lost more men than us.

00:04:37 Speaker 3

The 9th is one M and and the Fourth Armored Division said they'd rather be with us because we can move faster than any of the rest and.

00:04:46 Speaker 1

You were with the 80th, you said 80th Infantry Division. Tell me about your trip from the states over to Europe. What do you remember about that?

00:04:48 Speaker 3

Yeah.

00:04:56 Speaker 3

From the states over there to Europe, well, we.

00:05:03 Speaker 3

Landed at Scotland and the yacht ready to go across. But when we went went from New Jersey over we went on the Green Queen Mary. The second biggest ship. We didn't have much to eat. I think 1 prune and some bad coffee to see the the British furnished the food.

00:05:15 Speaker 2

MHM.

00:05:23 Speaker 3

Or they like to starve is going over so.

00:05:28 Speaker 3

When we got there, then we finally got ready to go over.

00:05:34 Speaker 3

To fight. So when I went to France.

00:05:39 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:05:40 Speaker 3

I was under General Montgomery, the British General Montgomery and.

00:05:49 Speaker 3

Where you went, where the the hedgerows was, they're still fighting in the hedgerows in France.

00:05:55 Speaker 3

I can't remember all them, little towns.

00:05:59 Speaker 1

What was your responsibility when you arrived in Europe? What? What did you do?

00:06:05 Speaker 3

Well, I supposed to be a cook, but it's only a Pfc and I've done everything but cooking. If they needed to volunteer. As always, the first one to volunteer.

00:06:15 Speaker 3

And.

00:06:16 Speaker 3

And.

00:06:17 Speaker 3

How I come to be turned in for the Bronze Star and whenever they get it, we change company commanders. One got killed in in two or three of them and they changed the fast and and I never didn't know their names in combat. You very seldom ever see the company commander unless he calls you and that wanted.

00:06:38 Speaker 3

Wanted something done. He always called me and he said you're the only one I ever see a work. And when they come around and said you're always busy doing something.

00:06:47 Speaker 3

So.

00:06:51 Speaker 3

After the war was over.

00:06:54 Speaker 3

I I can you want me to tell you the battles or something, man?

00:06:59 Speaker 1

Yeah, let's, let's just go tell me. What? What did you do exactly when you were first got to Europe? What was your job assignment?

00:07:09 Speaker 1

And just tell me some of the types of things that you did. If you got pulled in for different jobs.

00:07:14 Speaker 3

Yeah, I was supposed to be cooking, but I've never done much cooking.

00:07:25 Speaker 3

I already know.

00:07:27 Speaker 3

We went.

00:07:30 Speaker 3

There.

00:07:33 Speaker 3

And.

00:07:36 Speaker 3

O&M.

00:07:39 Speaker 3

Hedgerows, you know, heard about the hedgerows. That was really some rough going in there and there.

00:07:42 Speaker 2

OK.

00:07:46 Speaker 1

So you were that was combat right there, OK?

00:07:49 Speaker 3

Yeah.

00:07:51 Speaker 3

Yeah, that's where we dug in and fought them. It's pretty rough. And then when we got out of France.

00:08:00 Speaker 3

And went to Germany. We got into some pretty rough stuff.

00:08:03

MHM.

00:08:05 Speaker 3

His company commander was a Mexican. He was a real smart guy, but.

00:08:07

OK.

00:08:10 Speaker 3

You take the older man. They couldn't only take a lot of that combat stuff and.

00:08:16 Speaker 3

Anytime he had a dangerous job or something he wanted done, I got the job because he thought I was one of the best.

00:08:23 Speaker 3

Ones he had.

00:08:23 Speaker 1

So you saw a lot of combat, OK?

00:08:25 Speaker 3

Yeah, and.

00:08:27 Speaker 3

So while we are there.

00:08:30 Speaker 3

They was.

00:08:32 Speaker 3

So many Germans did around his foxhole, he wanted me to get a Jeep driver and I got a Jeep driver and a crew to help me pick him up. And while I say are talking to him.

00:08:44 Speaker 3

He the German scientist I was back of a big tree.

00:08:49 Speaker 3

And he they shot a mortar at this.

00:08:53 Speaker 3

Tree and it just busted.

00:08:56 Speaker 3

Splinters all around me and they said if it had went all see it went down in a steep hall and went all they timed it.

00:09:04 Speaker 3

Less than 1/2 a second. I've been dead. If it went off when they intended it to and it killed everybody around there, they said. But that steep Haller fell in save me. They said the angels or something must have been looking out for.

00:09:17 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:09:19 Speaker 3

Us.

00:09:19 Speaker 1

Did you have a good luck charm at all? Did you take anything over with you that? No.

00:09:25 Speaker 3

I always figured I'd come back.

00:09:27 Speaker 3

And and when they needed something done.

00:09:32 Speaker 3

Somebody got shot at hurt, as always. The first one there. They they go get him and that and that's how, after the war was over, they didn't give out enough medals. So they voted me as the one should get them because I was always helping out as more of them Medicare.

00:09:37

MHM.

00:09:52 Speaker 3

Also helping them so one day.

00:09:56 Speaker 3

They wanted volunteers to go up in in one of these little Piper Cubs. It had no seat belt, no parachute, and I volunteered. And they had one more guy had volunteered. They wanted some guy for me to go with a field artillery. So I was one that volunteered.

00:10:02

OK.

00:10:16 Speaker 3

And while I was up there, I probably saved that pilot and the other pilots life that the Germans was in that he said to look up all the time. And I look looked down and up. I heard that noise up there above my head is coming.

00:10:33 Speaker 3

And.

00:10:35 Speaker 3

The Germans was in this silo. Silo looks like an old barn, but it was tore down and they had on their big guns and shooting up through there. And I could hear that it coming over over my head. I looked

up and that pilot would have never seen it. He said to look down all time. Well, I looked up. I heard it and seen. Where was it coming from? I.

00:10:54 Speaker 3

Said.

00:10:55 Speaker 3

There we better turn around and get out of the way. Here come RB17. It was all shot up running on one motor. I didn't believe it. They could, but they say he made it back. We got out of their way and both of us. And he, he told me. Now if I get hit.

00:11:03

Uh-huh.

00:11:16 Speaker 3

You're going to have to bring this down if it's still running. I had gotten my pilot license pretty quick, said take him two sticks and bring it down.

00:11:21 Speaker 1

Oh, my God. Yeah.

00:11:26 Speaker 1

But you didn't have to.

00:11:26 Speaker 1

Do that. No.

00:11:28 Speaker 1

Thankfully.

00:11:30 Speaker 3

I imagine they already worked them people over and that silo he probably reported it when he got back. I never did see him, no.

00:11:37 Speaker 3

More after that.

00:11:37 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:11:39 Speaker 3

I was always doing something dangerous.

00:11:42 Speaker 3

And another time we was a.

00:11:46 Speaker 3

In our foxholes.

00:11:48 Speaker 3

And boy, everybody was eating dinner.

00:11:52 Speaker 3

And I was in a little thicket. And these other guys got out. It was a sunny day and.

00:11:59 Speaker 3

Here.

00:12:03 Speaker 3

Big Shell are coming. The big artillery shell boy. I mean, it was really whistling and it dropped. I couldn't believe what I seen. I run down there. I was the first one to get to it. It dropped in the middle and guys and just throwing mud all over it and go off. It was like a dude. It was supposed to went off. And then.

00:12:22 Speaker 3

And they were saying, by the way.

00:12:24

Oh.

00:12:25 Speaker 3

It throws mud all over and just dug it well, like we're we're.

00:12:28 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:12:30 Speaker 1

What? What do you remember about the food?

00:12:34 Speaker 1

The supplies the food.

00:12:37 Speaker 1

This food and supplies that you had while you were there in Europe, was it sufficient?

00:12:42 Speaker 3

Yeah.

00:12:43 Speaker 1

Your food.

00:12:45 Speaker 1

What you ate for dinner? For lunch?

00:12:49 Speaker 3

A base.

00:12:50 Speaker 1

Now the food and when when you were in the army in Europe?

00:12:54 Speaker 3

Ohh, what time was it?

00:12:55 Speaker 1

Yeah. Do you? How do you remember it?

00:12:57 Speaker 3

Well.

00:12:59 Speaker 3

The cooks would cook once in a while when they ain't too bad. They combat in the front line and the.

00:13:06 Speaker 3

It wasn't too bad when the then but.

00:13:10 Speaker 3

A lot of them didn't like to eat K rations and stuff all time.

00:13:14

Yeah, yeah.

00:13:16 Speaker 1

Did you have enough like boots and clothes? Was that sufficient?

00:13:24 Speaker 3

Yeah, I think so. Why wouldn't you be?

00:13:25 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:13:28 Speaker 3

Our masks are.

00:13:31 Speaker 3

Not based on the supplies on hit. Get that stuff. No one else could get it. He probably stole it some.

00:13:40 Speaker 3

Ohh, he was the character.

00:13:43 Speaker 1

And you said there were a lot of casualties.

00:13:45 Speaker 3

Ohh yeah.

00:13:47 Speaker 1

Did you lose friends?

00:13:48 Speaker 3

Ohh yeah.

00:13:49 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:13:50 Speaker 3

It's Christmas Day and the bowls that was in the in the bowls.

00:13:56 Speaker 3

Three of my buddies got killed. An airplane came down and killed them guys and bombed us. I could have tucked and and got him with my rifle, but I know what I thought. Then I wouldn't think about it being the German plane. So he come back to circle and I knew he dropped his bomb, so I took him one and this.

00:14:16 Speaker 3

Tempted to that he he took off and I never did see him anymore.

00:14:21 Speaker 3

In.

00:14:24 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:14:28 Speaker 3

Some of the the towns that we took, the bigger ones was Nurnberg and Castle and Hereford and through there and and close to I think it was close to Nuremberg.

00:14:36

OK.

00:14:41 Speaker 3

The 101st Airborne was a a garden.

00:14:45 Speaker 3

The way off that the Germans had stored gold and all that stuff in there.

00:14:52 Speaker 3

In.

00:14:55 Speaker 3

And I never did know what was in there.

00:14:58 Speaker 3

Of course, you don't know what goes on, just like.

00:15:01

MHM.

00:15:03 Speaker 3

That burned the boats one night.

00:15:06 Speaker 3

That officer had done the moving around. He's always getting lost.

00:15:11 Speaker 3

And when I went through this range town, I thought.

00:15:14 Speaker 3

What on earth happened?

00:15:17 Speaker 3

And we couldn't take a voucher for it, fill up full of water, and we noticed them French kids and then looked at us kind of stupid and and didn't hover for candy like they always do so.

00:15:33 Speaker 3

That night I lay there, I couldn't sleep.

00:15:37 Speaker 3

Well, I say there's something wrong. I hear the Germans shall see that you can live longer if you can make it 2 weeks. You know who's the shooting and who? Which one? Which there was a short sell this shell sound different, outgoing and ingoing. I can hear the German shells coming this way over my head. And the Americans are going that way.

00:15:58 Speaker 3

The way I thought, boy, there's something wrong here.

00:16:02 Speaker 3

See how I got this went in, wouldn't know what was going on. We had guys that hollered, boy, that's my bond to paying for it. You know that. Here. Hear that shooting? They said, buddy, I said German to shoot and you better get down, yeah.

00:16:05

Right.

00:16:16 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:16:19 Speaker 1

Let's see.

00:16:23 Speaker 1

Do did you?

00:16:26 Speaker 1

Did you keep up with any of the men that you served with after you got out?

00:16:31 Speaker 3

Well, I did for a while and you know, they died and disappeared. And I had all their address and one guy took my address list and I lost the address list, and now I finally found out here.

00:16:46 Speaker 3

A few weeks ago, about one guide I was in with all time one of my best buddies in Texas. He's a big Wheeling in the.

00:16:56 Speaker 3

80S Division Association, now the alumna like in.

00:17:03 Speaker 3

I seen his name in there. He didn't know about it too long ago. You know, I used to go to the things when my buddy. It was 11 when him and found out he was still alive. And I wrote him a letter and he took his computer and he got my phone number. Talked to me for about two hours and I wondered what happened to him.

00:17:21 Speaker 1

Oh, that's great.

00:17:23 Speaker 3

And he went, got his, got wounded his big toe load off. And I don't know what on he was in the hospital in England for three months.

00:17:31 Speaker 1

OK.

00:17:33 Speaker 1

So you went from Scotland to France?

00:17:36 Speaker 1

To Germany.

00:17:37 Speaker 3

Yeah. OK. And then?

00:17:40 Speaker 3

Luxembourg and the Bogen in Austria.

00:17:45 Speaker 3

Austria was a beautiful country.

00:17:47 Speaker 1

How long were you in Europe?

00:17:50 Speaker 3

I was in the.

00:17:52 Speaker 3

From uh.

00:17:55 Speaker 3

July.

00:17:57 Speaker 3

Or.

00:17:58 Speaker 3

See.

00:17:59 Speaker 3

July 44. I believe it was till December the 5th of 45.

00:18:01 Speaker 1

OK.

00:18:06

OK.

00:18:09 Speaker 1

Do you remember any any particularly funny or humorous event while you were over there?

00:18:22 Speaker 3

Doing something funny.

00:18:28 Speaker 3

And he laughed at them young guys and he thought, well, there's this is if they can't stay up there in line and you know when he never could get him up there. So one night he's always having a gun. And I told him guys I'll pull a Gooding on him all said we'll get shot I said no you won't I'll pull pull a string.

00:18:49 Speaker 3

He was the kids belly goat with wheels on the big beard in that room we stayed in and I pulled it and I told all get in the room. Boy, he forgot he even had that pistol. I said. See, I told you we wouldn't get shot.

00:19:05 Speaker 1

Let's see. Do you? Did you get any leave? Did you get to go on liberty at all?

00:19:10 Speaker 3

Not very many. I was supposed to went to Switzerland on a pass and I never did get to make it because I got sent home before that and oh oh, I went to.

00:19:22

OK.

00:19:25 Speaker 3

A few places.

00:19:27 Speaker 3

Of all the countries I was in at.

00:19:30 Speaker 3

France is the worse than I ever seen.

00:19:35 Speaker 3

And you take that big Audubon.

00:19:39 Speaker 3

That the slave labor bill that was a beautiful highway and our Air Force killed ever cook I.

00:19:46 Speaker 3

Think.

00:19:46 Speaker 3

Herman said they'd be an old man. They had old guys for the job and they'd have horses and A and a burner back there, and they put.

00:19:56 Speaker 3

Charcoal, wood or whatever they had to fire it up. Cook them? Yeah. Boy, had it been a slow way to do it. They killed him. They was his horses dead. And people and miles and miles. Air forces wiped them.

00:20:09

Hmm.

00:20:10

Yeah.

00:20:11 Speaker 1

What did you do for entertainment?

00:20:15 Speaker 3

Ohh not much of anything, you didn't have time much entertainment.

00:20:20 Speaker 1

OK, let's see.

00:20:23 Speaker 3

I wished I had kept a door and had a way too, but we can.

00:20:28 Speaker 2

Deer story the deer. The deer.

00:20:31 Speaker 2

The one here.

00:20:35 Speaker 3

Oh, oh, you want me to tell you about what happened the day the war ended in?

00:20:41 Speaker 3

Europe.

00:20:42 Speaker 3

We decided.

00:20:44 Speaker 3

To go hunting three of us.

00:20:47 Speaker 3

So.

00:20:48 Speaker 3

One guy said he'll take the left side and I'll take the middle and this other guy take the right side.

00:20:56 Speaker 3

Well.

00:20:57 Speaker 3

The first time I'd done a stupid thing is all laying down. They're about 40 to 50 deers in a big circle. That's the way they lay down and they're just thick over. I don't see other farmers could raise anything. So I shot in there and big Buck. I probably hit some of them. No doubt. They're hard to kill.

00:21:18 Speaker 3

So.

00:21:19 Speaker 3

We wanted some fresh meat. You.

00:21:21 Speaker 3

Know.

00:21:22 Speaker 3

And.

00:21:23 Speaker 3

We had a real good butcher in the outfit, he butcher, and he done that before he went into service. That was one of my best buddies and I don't know what ever happened to him. I wrote him for years and he disappeared. The guys in his hometown, so they don't know whatever happened.

00:21:38 Speaker 3

To him.

00:21:39 Speaker 3

He might have went back to this lobby. That's where his folks.

00:21:45 Speaker 3

Got him a wife and he never did. Like if she was that ugly thing I ever seen. Couldn't blame him. And he had the pretty sisters. So.

00:21:59 Speaker 3

The next time two young deers boy this the King's good to eat and you know it's this. Had a buck had two little horns so I took good aim and put it right through that deer's heart. It went clear through and out. It's hard and you couldn't tell that thing had been hit.

00:22:18 Speaker 3

It wasn't a bleeding, I guess so.

00:22:21 Speaker 3

That dough and that buck, both of them, they stand under head, just like guys that tack on two boxers. All of them are kicking at my head and I couldn't shoot them or only had 6 shells.

00:22:34 Speaker 3

I think and I was just the duck, and I wore out too, a ducking the whole time and I couldn't hit very good. But I tore that.

00:22:43 Speaker 3

Those.

00:22:44 Speaker 3

Shooting point blank, they call out it toward the dose hippo just floored it slide. And you know that though, despite me on one leg, like nothing happened so.

00:22:57 Speaker 3

They that buck finally got weak after a while and I'd run out of shells, I was going to have to take my rifle and hit him. So I happen to think I had a little Russian pistol in my pocket and I fixed it so it would shoot made the hammer Tucker fall and fixed it and had one little 22.

00:23:15 Speaker 3

Short and boy, I took good aim, took him 20 and down and went and they left me alone. Boy, I thought I'd have it.

00:23:25 Speaker 1

So did you have fresh meat that night?

00:23:28 Speaker 3

Yeah, they finally got us some beef. You couldn't tell it was good. Yeah.

00:23:39 Speaker 1

I bet. I bet, yeah.

00:23:42 Speaker 1

So how did you feel the day the war ended?

00:23:45 Speaker 3

Oh, he's pretty thrilled, I'll tell you.

00:23:50 Speaker 3

It's like a Japanese said.

00:23:53 Speaker 3

The head doctor, that was the best thing that ever happened to Japan in this country because they is aiming to fight till everybody was dead. But after they've seen that they decided.

00:24:06 Speaker 3

That scared him out.

00:24:09 Speaker 1

Where did you go after you left Europe?

00:24:13 Speaker 3

After left your well, I came in to Attleboro and was this George?

00:24:18 Speaker 3

Yeah.

00:24:19 Speaker 1

And what did you do after the war?

00:24:21 Speaker 3

Well, I worked for a while at Fort Harrison, but I didn't stay there too awful long.

00:24:27 Speaker 3

And then.

00:24:30 Speaker 3

I went to.

00:24:34 Speaker 3

Lilies and I stayed there two years and then I left and went to.

00:24:40 Speaker 3

International Harvester and then I left there and went to Chrysler. Yeah.

00:24:44 Speaker 1

OK.

00:24:46 Speaker 1

So did you work for Chrysler? For most of your career?

00:24:49 Speaker 3

Well, I was 61. I I was laid off a lot there because I didn't in at the at the head, but.

00:25:01 Speaker 1

Did you ever use the GI Bill?

00:25:04 Speaker 3

Yeah, but yeah, I went a while, but it was kind of hard on me. I was married then and had a little kid. I've been in high school 13 years. Only thing I didn't like. What they told me. I had to take. They said I passed higher in the.

00:25:15 Speaker 2

MHM.

00:25:24 Speaker 3

In mechanics and anything in.

00:25:27 Speaker 3

They wanted me to be an engineer and I I wasn't good enough. Math. I had four teachers in grade school. I'd have been better off to stayed home.

00:25:37 Speaker 3

I didn't learn anything in English and.

00:25:41 Speaker 3

Oh, I'm telling you, I had one man, teacher and two women that I've been better off staying home.

00:25:48 Speaker 3

I hate to say that, but that's the truth.

00:25:51 Speaker 1

Do you belong to any veterans organizations? Do you belong to any veterans organizations?

00:25:57 Speaker 3

Yeah, I do.

00:26:01 Speaker 3

American Legion and uh.

00:26:05 Speaker 3

Where is the is the.

00:26:10 Speaker 3

A disabled American veteran, I should have joined that.

00:26:15 Speaker 3

Veterans of foreign wars I never did.

00:26:22 Speaker 1

How did your experience in the military?

00:26:26 Speaker 1

Affect your thinking about.

00:26:28 Speaker 3

War. Well, I would never talk about it till this here last war. Come along. I never told nobody about it, but I seen where we made a bad mistake cause the people thought people in war.

00:26:42 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:26:44 Speaker 3

Was on a vacation or something? They thought it was nice, you know? But every time them protesters like in the Vietnam War and they didn't do that in World War 2. In the same way. Now on this war that just gets the more veterans killed than anything on this Earth by protesting against them, you go against them.

00:27:05 Speaker 3

You're going against your own country and your own people. You might as well move over and help them and know where you stand.

00:27:14 Speaker 1

How did your military experience affect your career?

00:27:20 Speaker 3

Well, it makes you a better worker.

00:27:24 Speaker 3

More this one if you don't have this one, you don't have nothing. You got to have this one.

00:27:30 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

00:27:31 Speaker 1

What did? Did you know him, Mrs. Run before he went to the war? No. OK, what do you remember? How long was it when you met?

00:27:39 Speaker 2

Oh, I met him in the 4240 when he got out 45 when he was looking at the.

00:27:44 Speaker 1

OK, what do you remember about his thoughts about the war?

00:27:48 Speaker 2

He didn't talk a lot about it, so they got out. He left it as a cook out of Fort Harrison and he cooked out there all the time.

00:27:55 Speaker 2

And then I met them.

00:27:55

Yeah.

00:28:00 Speaker 3

Most veterans wouldn't talk about it.

00:28:02 Speaker 4

MHM.

00:28:02 Speaker 2

He had talked for the last year.

00:28:06 Speaker 1

MHM.

00:28:09

Yeah.

00:28:10 Speaker 1

Yeah. Yeah. So there's nobody that you really have kept up with from your 80th infantry.

00:28:16 Speaker 2

Since you tried.

00:28:19 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

00:28:20 Speaker 2

He did go to communion. He did. He did.

00:28:24 Speaker 2

I really enjoyed it. Yeah. But then the guy died.

00:28:30 Speaker 3

In one building one night.

00:28:33 Speaker 3

And you couldn't hear enough. Now that I think that was a castle. Where was that?

00:28:38 Speaker 3

And you couldn't hear that last noise. And when I woke up the next morning.

00:28:43

Yeah.

00:28:44 Speaker 3

They was Germans, dead. The land by my window outside and we couldn't hear. But I know, I think. What was in there? There was an old German woman that took care of the place. Said get that big boat open.

00:28:58 Speaker 3

I'd like to have some money out there, and we even got about to open that thing up.

00:29:04 Speaker 3

It had the German payroll, I think in it's why they was trying so hard to retake us. Boy, we'd all God kill him. And he came on in there on us and we found him \$13 in coins and said here. Yeah, that that was laying on the floor in it. I'm pretty sure that was the Germans vote.

00:29:13

Yeah.

00:29:25 Speaker 3

I come past Hitler's home in ostrich. It was a big old house.

00:29:32 Speaker 2

Brought his car home. I think you brought a guitar home with him, giving you a guitar. You brought that guitar home with?

00:29:37 Speaker 3

You. Oh, that was a that wasn't from Germany. Someone left it, it added. But he went off and left. And they said here, take this thing if you want that thing. And I got the name as one congressman on there from Kentucky.

00:29:41 Speaker 2

Oh, that wasn't.

00:29:47 Speaker 2

I hadn't heard about it.

00:29:52 Speaker 3

My brother told me.

00:29:54 Speaker 3

He was in the service and he died about two years ago. He was older than me.

00:29:59 Speaker 3

When I was in Tennessee, I'd go down and spend my time and as far as.

00:30:05 Speaker 3

Entertainment with him on the weekend and the Air Corps had better each and.

00:30:09 Speaker 3

Then they did.

00:30:09

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:30:12 Speaker 1

Well, what else do you remember? Anything else about your time overseas? How did you feel about how the war was waged?

00:30:20 Speaker 1

Anything you wanted to add?

00:30:24 Speaker 3

Well.

00:30:27 Speaker 3

I I don't really know to tell you the truth about it.

00:30:31 Speaker 3

But.

00:30:33 Speaker 3

As far as then a war was fought more even under Hitler. As bad as he was, a war was fought more square. It ain't square at all over in Iraq, but I'd hate to be in the war like that where you don't know who your enemy is.

00:30:50 Speaker 4

MHM.

00:30:51 Speaker 3

Lugar's liable to get killed over you.

00:30:53 Speaker 3

Know.

00:30:55 Speaker 1

He just got back Tuesday. Yesterday, Tuesday. Yeah, he's back. Yeah. Yeah.

00:30:56 Speaker 2

Back before they got back. OK. Thank you.

00:30:58 Speaker 2

Back.

00:31:02 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:31:05 Speaker 1

Strange stuff, yeah.

00:31:08 Speaker 1

Well, what would you like to add? Anything else Mrs. Ron? Has he left anything else out that you remember from his time there?

00:31:16 Speaker 2

I can't remember anything that really nothing else.

00:31:23 Speaker 3

Oh, our outfit always did think that they killed the PAT and the purpose I wasn't far from where he got killed. They run into him at truck and smashed him and didn't hurt no one else. And I heard later that someone killed him and I.

00:31:38 Speaker 3

We always thought it was the cover up.

00:31:42 Speaker 3

He was supposed to be pretty honest and he had money and he didn't want to do nothing crooked, and that's what they what we thought he knew.

00:31:50 Speaker 3

See. He was born with the good of your money and it it didn't mean nothing to him. Someone I think in in our outfit. Some outfit and the Germans had a little deal. They split and that money was in that at the 101st was the.

00:32:08

Hmm.

00:32:08 Speaker 3

The garden. That's what we thought about it. We can't prove it, but it looks that way. Why did both them guys get killed?

00:32:11 Speaker 2

Hmm.

00:32:19 Speaker 3

Looks funny, don't it?

00:32:23 Speaker 1

Well, is there anything else you want to say to your grandkids that might hear this someday?

00:32:28 Speaker 3

It might do.

00:32:30 Speaker 1

To say to your grandchildren that might hear this someday, hear this interview.

00:32:35 Speaker 3

Oh.

00:32:42 Speaker 2

Right.

00:32:44 Speaker 3

Hey.

00:32:44 Speaker 2

Knows so much about the war. I don't know where everybody go. Go in or not. Now. The grandkids, your grandkids. Would you want them to go in the service?

00:32:53 Speaker 3

Except to say him, I ain't going to tell him, but I tell him a few things. What to watch for and what to do. You can't do bad things while you in, that's for sure.

00:33:05 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:33:05 Speaker 3

You will pay the price. The Lord may have you not go.

00:33:10 Speaker 1

Teaches you discipline. That's for.

00:33:11 Speaker 1

Sure.

00:33:12 Speaker 3

Like as a kid in my class and school.

00:33:16 Speaker 3

He always tried to keep out of the service. He'd done everything to keep out and he said he'd never come back. Something told him he never come back and he didn't. If you don't have faith, you know you're gonna be a goner. Seem.

00:33:28 Speaker 3

So over the bows I heard, he stepped on the landmine. It blew him up. When they oh, I know one that I didn't tell. I didn't tell.

00:33:38 Speaker 3

Him about that.

00:33:40 Speaker 3

Back there when we was on our first one of the first breaks during the war.

00:33:49 Speaker 3

The Lord or somebody must have been with me then too. They sent me down to get some water.

00:33:56 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:33:57 Speaker 3

The heat the mess gets out and clean them.

00:34:00 Speaker 3

And while I was gone, the engineers are supposed to. Our engineers are supposed to give us a demonstration on.

00:34:09 Speaker 3

Land mines. What to do? I'd already seen what they've done and I've seen a cow step on one of them and when nothing left that cow blowing the bank off so.

00:34:19 Speaker 3

This.

00:34:22 Speaker 3

There was 20.

00:34:24 Speaker 3

Uh.

00:34:26 Speaker 3

23 land mines upper in A2 story brick building over across the street. Morissette.

00:34:35 Speaker 3

So some guy I don't know if he done it on purpose or accidentally.

00:34:40 Speaker 3

They set them land mines, 23 of them.

00:34:43 Speaker 3

All.

00:34:44 Speaker 3

And it tore that building up.

00:34:46 Speaker 3

And I actually went off and left that guy and.

00:34:50 Speaker 3

I looked way up there in a big high tree was working. There was a guy dead that about to fall on.

00:34:57 Speaker 3

Me.

00:34:57 Speaker 3

Hanging down like that and it was lodged up there.

00:35:02 Speaker 1

In France.

00:35:04 Speaker 3

I can't remember the town, what that was.

00:35:08 Speaker 3

I wished I'd had a daughter. I could tell care, named them to him just a little place.

00:35:14 Speaker 1

So you did you ever keep a diary?

00:35:16 Speaker 1

While you were over there.

00:35:17 Speaker 3

No, I wished I could.

00:35:19 Speaker 3

We was lucky. We carried our stuff with us. Really. I don't see how them little guys could carry all that stuff.

00:35:22 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:35:27 Speaker 4

Yeah, what?

00:35:29 Speaker 3

Boy, it's hard to carry on.

00:35:31 Speaker 1

How heavy was your pack? What? What? What? What did you have to carry?

00:35:35 Speaker 3

Well, I carried my gun and duffel bag and clothes and mess kit and then I had a.

00:35:41 Speaker 3

Little.

00:35:42 Speaker 3

Little heater, little gasoline heater about like that. She like it would match and.

00:35:48 Speaker 3

Took your step on it.

00:35:50 Speaker 3

Funny thing.

00:35:53 Speaker 3

I'll tell you, funny one I pulled on that one officer. I never did like to be with him anyway. He's always getting lost doing something. So he took me off. I didn't have no drivers license finally took me off. I was with him for a long time and.

00:36:09 Speaker 3

The guy took my place. See, he had a.

00:36:13 Speaker 3

The driver's license them guys that drove me. Jeeps were corporals.

00:36:18 Speaker 3

And he ran up German roadblock and got shot. All their faces showed this.

00:36:25 Speaker 3

Guy one day he was always in a big hurry, you know? And he he he wanted everything right now. So get that.

00:36:34 Speaker 3

Egg 10 egg heated up real quick. I turned on the stove, forgot the bunch of hole in it, bowed up and bowed his head off. But mad at me that that was one officer and I didn't like to be around. Now that Mexican was.

00:36:54 Speaker 3

My best buddy that company commander, see.

00:37:00 Speaker 3

My commander has changed so much and I couldn't keep up with them. I didn't even know it was at the last ones I had. They just right and left.

00:37:10 Speaker 1

Things moving fast, yeah.

00:37:12 Speaker 3

So.

00:37:15 Speaker 3

All of them in the company voted to give me the Bronze Star. They said they didn't give out enough. See, we could come home soon.

00:37:22 Speaker 3

And.

00:37:23 Speaker 3

They're the ones that got them and and they voted me.

00:37:27 Speaker 1

OK.

00:37:28 Speaker 1

Quite an honor. That's quite an honor by your fellow.

00:37:31 Speaker 3

Yeah, all of them did. There's another little Sergeant. Probably would have got it because me and him are always doing dangerous things.

00:37:40 Speaker 3

So he had a higher rate than May hit have come there again.

00:37:45 Speaker 3

I was a corporal at that time at 5, about same thing.

00:37:51 Speaker 2

As if they tell about the ship you was on, you didn't like the.

00:37:53 Speaker 2

Ship you came over on the.

00:37:55 Speaker 3

Oh yeah, the Queen Mary we had.

00:37:58 Speaker 3

Oh, about 27255000 I believe.

00:38:05 Speaker 3

24,009 the Queen Elizabeth was bigger. I think the guy told me that it's 27 down. See, that was double loaded.

00:38:14 Speaker 3

We come back on one of them little victory ships. Boy, that's something else. After being on that big one. But we had better eats. It was American.

00:38:21 Speaker 3

Chips, yeah.

00:38:24 Speaker 1

How long did it take you to get back?

00:38:27 Speaker 1

Do you remember?

00:38:27 Speaker 3

Ohh.

00:38:30 Speaker 3

I'm not sure how many dead days it probably.

00:38:35 Speaker 3

Heaven right down my edges. I'm not sure.

00:38:37 Speaker 4

Yeah.

00:38:38 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:38:39 Speaker 3

The Queen Mary mowed a lot faster than one airplane.

00:38:45 Speaker 3

Say hello with the Queen Mary and then all them guys out there, them British guys or their guns is ready to shoot because it wasn't American planes and.

00:38:54 Speaker 2

Mm-hmm.

00:38:55 Speaker 3

But it never bombed us or nothing.

00:38:58 Speaker 1

Interesting.

00:39:00 Speaker 2

Bringing.

00:39:03 Speaker 1

Were you able to communicate with your parents via mail? Do you remember writing letters?

00:39:11 Speaker 3

Back then, it only costs \$0.03 to send the letter.

00:39:15 Speaker 3

Home to your first.

00:39:15 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:39:16 Speaker 1

Did you do that?

00:39:18 Speaker 1

Did you get mail also?

00:39:21 Speaker 3

Yeah, I think it.

00:39:22 Speaker 3

Did then yeah, I remember right.

00:39:25 Speaker 1

How often did you write to your?

00:39:28

Parents.

00:39:28 Speaker 3

Whenever whenever I got a chance or right, right home.

00:39:34 Speaker 1

Do you remember what kind of letters you got back?

00:39:38 Speaker 3

Ohh yeah.

00:39:42 Speaker 3

It is almost worried about.

00:39:44

Me.

00:39:46 Speaker 2

Victor ever write to him?

00:39:48 Speaker 2

It's really nice.

00:39:48 Speaker 4

And Victor and your brothers, your younger brother.

00:39:50

Didn't ever.

00:39:50 Speaker 4

You have a right thing.

00:39:52 Speaker 2

He Victor didn't write, did he was probably younger. Victor didn't write, did.

00:39:56 Speaker 3

He he was just a little kid there.

00:40:01 Speaker 4

Ohh I know one thing. When you were over there, did you know if Delmer was still alive because he was right in the middle of it too your?

00:40:09 Speaker 4

Brother, your older.

00:40:09 Speaker 4

Brother, did you know?

00:40:10 Speaker 3

He didn't go over things, ain't never went over.

00:40:15 Speaker 3

He would, if he stayed in that outfit.

00:40:19 Speaker 3

He he joined up right away. His first girlfriend is in age 2. She died and he joined the.

00:40:29 Speaker 3

Yeah, he would have been over there with me in the 5th Division. That was the one that Mickey Rooney was in.

00:40:37 Speaker 3

You've heard of him?

00:40:39 Speaker 1

Mackey, Rooney.

00:40:40 Speaker 2

I don't.

00:40:42 Speaker 3

You're not oh.

00:40:45 Speaker 3

I talk about people all the time and they look pretty old to me. They look as old as me. I wasn't born and I don't know about that. Your memory slips older you get.

00:41:00 Speaker 3

See, I've had two cancers. That's what I went this morning. I got two different kind of cancer. And if I and they got on the right track, I'd have been dead. I wouldn't have lived another week.

00:41:15 Speaker 3

I drank that in sugar and they gave me pro plate and then they put me on their mother.

00:41:24 Speaker 3

OK, great.

00:41:24 Speaker 1

All right. Well, is there anything else you wanted to add about your military experience?

00:41:30 Speaker 2

OK.

00:41:34 Speaker 3

Only thing I know it's a good experience for everybody, but some people can't handle it or do something bad. A lot of them do something bad and I I know guys that shot theirselves a purpose to get out of it, but they some of them got court Marshall and busted.

00:41:52 Speaker 3

We had a Sergeant. That wasn't no good.

00:41:56 Speaker 3

And he shot one guys and.

00:42:00 Speaker 3

Christmas present his girlfriend Gary.

00:42:04 Speaker 3

Had a hair tonic bottle and he shot it with a pistol. Always getting drunk, shooting the guys head and everybody got rid of him and he got him court martial.

00:42:17 Speaker 3

Yeah, I've seen one guy shoot himself in the foot, so he get out of it.

00:42:22 Speaker 1

Well, thank you for this opportunity to interview you. We appreciate it. I'm going to go.

00:42:26 Speaker 3

Yeah, I enjoyed talking to you. Now I'm. I'm sorry. I can't remember all them. Things like you should.

00:42:27 Speaker 1

Ahead and turn the machine off.

00:42:32 Speaker 1

Oh, you remember quite a bit.

00:42:34 Speaker 3

Yeah.