

## **Donald Schoo Interview**

633rd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion

*(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by unknown)*

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

00:00:18 Speaker 1

I want to talk to you about my participation in World War 2.

00:00:23 Speaker 1

Start off with. I was drafted in 1943.

00:00:29 Speaker 1

That was April of 43.

00:00:33 Speaker 1

And I was sent to Fort Eustis, VA, to take my basic training.

00:00:40 Speaker 1

I was in Fort Eustis, VA, for about 1314 weeks, and from there I was sent to Massachusetts. And after I got my clothing and all of my shots and everything.

00:00:57 Speaker 1

I was sent to England.

00:00:59 Speaker 1

Went to England on a boat called the Mauritania.

00:01:02 Speaker 1

Was an English ship.

00:01:05 Speaker 1

Held about 14,000 troops and it was really a really a nice ship.

00:01:10 Speaker 1

When we got to England, we were there for two or three days.

00:01:16 Speaker 1

Getting climatized and getting.

00:01:20 Speaker 1

Their orientation and our barrage numbers and.

00:01:23 Speaker 1

And once we got settled there, we started training.

00:01:28 Speaker 1

We were training for the Normandy invasion and we trained six days a week.

00:01:35 Speaker 1

12 or 14 hours a day and we seen most of England because we were on the move.

00:01:44 Speaker 1

The time I was with an 600 and 33rd anti aircraft.

00:01:50 Speaker 1

Unit and this was the unit that we used.

00:01:54 Speaker 1

Next, with four 450 caliber machine guns on them, each gun, we had them set for firing about 650 rounds per minute.

00:02:07 Speaker 1

So that's a lot of lead.

00:02:10 Speaker 1

After we got most of our training finished, then we went into amphibious training, jumping off barges and into the English Channel and getting ready for the Normandy invas.

00:02:25 Speaker 1

I must say that all the time that I was in England for.

00:02:28 Speaker 1

A year?

00:02:29 Speaker 1

That we were treated really were treated nice in England.

00:02:37 Speaker 1

Then came the time for the invasion. On June the 4th.

00:02:41 Speaker 1

We loaded onto barges and.

00:02:46 Speaker 1

Went out to end to the English Channel because we were supposed to land on Omaha Beach on the 5th day of June 1900 and Fourty 4.

00:02:58 Speaker 1

Big Storm came up and so we couldn't land.

00:03:03 Speaker 1

So we bobbed around out in the English Channel for another day and on the about midnight on the 5th of June.

00:03:14 Speaker 1

They ordered. They told us that we were going to land the next morning.

00:03:20 Speaker 1

So on June the 6th, probably about, I think it was the sun had just come up and it was probably about 6:00.

00:03:28 Speaker 1

The morning.

00:03:29 Speaker 1

We.

00:03:31 Speaker 1

Got ready to land and we were on small ships and we had to go over to the side of the ship down rope ladders and onto a flat top boat and what?

00:03:44 Speaker 1

Don't know what they call it, but it was like.

00:03:47 Speaker 1

A about the size of a football field.

00:03:50 Speaker 1

And all of our half rats were on this boat, this flat top.

00:03:55 Speaker 1

So we got down there and we got on to the our half tracks.

00:03:59 Speaker 1

And it wasn't too bad until we just we got about.

00:04:05 Speaker 1

50 or 75 yards from shore, and all hell broke loose.

00:04:12 Speaker 1

The big ships out in the and the channel started firing at the beach and the airplanes were going over bombing the beach and it was just nothing but chaos. Ships going in every direction.

00:04:27 Speaker 1

Just to give you some idea, I think they said there were over 6000 vessels that were in the Normandy invasion and it seemed like there were enough vessels out there that you could almost walk across the English Channel.

00:04:43 Speaker 1

It was that thick.

00:04:45 Speaker 1

Well, we finally did get in to Omaha Beach.

00:04:48 Speaker 1

Easy Red was our section and.

00:04:53 Speaker 1

We got.

00:04:54 Speaker 1

We didn't have any trouble getting off the barge and we drove off the barge and we got in about maybe 20 yards and we hit a landmine and it blew my part of my front end off of the off of the half track.

00:05:09 Speaker 1

And there we sat.

00:05:10 Speaker 1

So we fired our machine guns as much as we could until we were almost out of ammunition and we were firing up into the hills ahead of us. And some captain came along.

00:05:24 Speaker 1

I think he was with the second Rangers. I'm not sure of that and everything that I tell you.

00:05:30 Speaker 1

The as the truth, but it may not be in sequence as it happened because I I don't remember.

00:05:37 Speaker 1

I remember it happening, but I don't remember the sequence of this. Captain came up and asked if we could help him and we said, what do you need? And he said.

00:05:47 Speaker 1

Up in front of us about 304 hundred yards, there was a big pill box.

00:05:53 Speaker 1

And his men were pinned down by this pillbox, and they couldn't move.

00:05:58 Speaker 1

So he asked us if we could.

00:06:02 Speaker 1

Fire at that pillbox and keep them.

00:06:06 Speaker 1

From shooting at his men for a few minutes till they could move and get in and and knock that pill box out.

00:06:15 Speaker 1

We said, well, we're a little low on ammunition, but we'll do what we can do.

00:06:20 Speaker 1

You tell your men that as soon as we start the fire, they move.

00:06:24 Speaker 1

Because when we quit firing, we're out of ammunition. We're done.

00:06:29 Speaker 1

So he said.

00:06:30 Speaker 1

So he went up and and that when he got up.

00:06:34 Speaker 1

A ways why he gave us the high sign to go ahead and start firing.

00:06:38 Speaker 1

We fired at the pill box and kept him quiet and his men went up and they they blew the pill box up.

00:06:48 Speaker 1

They didn't do too much damage to the pillbox, but they did throw grenades in through the the small slits in the sides and I assume it killed everybody in the pillbox, but that was my first experience of on Normandy beach. That was my first assignment.

00:07:06 Speaker 1

And then we had a couple of men injured, but not too seriously.

00:07:11 Speaker 1

Then we went around to the other vehicles that were on the beach and we scavenge for ammunition to see if we could find some more ammunition.

00:07:20 Speaker 1

Which we did and we couldn't move of course, but just luckily.

00:07:26 Speaker 1

Or unluckily for the tankers, there was a tank that had been knocked out.

00:07:30 Speaker 1

A few feet from us. And so we.

00:07:34 Speaker 1

We had a little protection from this tank and it was sitting there burning and and I don't know what happened to the crew, whether they got killed or what. But anyhow we use that for protection.

00:07:46 Speaker 1

We were on the beach and all the infant was terrible. The smoke and the fire and the yelling, and it was just.

00:07:56 Speaker 1

A complete chaos and everyone was trying to get their objective taken and and work where they could, but some of them didn't do it.

00:08:08 Speaker 1

We were on the beach for about 3 days actually, before we really got. We got up on the beach.

00:08:15 Speaker 1

Were about 3 days before we got off the beach.

00:08:18 Speaker 1

We got into the orchards and there was all kinds of orchards, plum orchards, I believe.

00:08:24 Speaker 1

And some apple orchards. And we got off the beach and went into the orchards and then dug in there and we were being shelled at all all the time that that we were with the infantry now because our half track was still sitting on the beach.

00:08:41 Speaker 1

And after about 5 days then we got hot meals and.

00:08:48 Speaker 1

New clothing we had to have new clothing because the clothing that we wore were impregnated with some kind of a chemical and this chemical was supposed to be for poison gas. If we were gassed.

00:09:03 Speaker 1

This was supposed to protect us from.

00:09:06 Speaker 1

Poison gas, but they were.

00:09:09 Speaker 1

They were the fatigue that we had.

00:09:12 Speaker 1

Were heavy and like a heavy canvas, and they smelled terrible and they were itchy.

00:09:19 Speaker 1

And so we discarded these clothing and got some new fatigues and jumped in the river and washed off a little bit, and it felt a lot better. But up until this time we hadn't had anything.

00:09:34 Speaker 1

Substantially really to eat, we were living on Kay rations mostly, and we had no coffee at all.

00:09:42 Speaker 1

Was some nest Cafe and the.

00:09:45 Speaker 1

And the rations. But we had no place to eat water for the because we couldn't have a fire or anything.

00:09:52

So.

00:09:53 Speaker 1

We just.

00:09:55 Speaker 1

Stored them until and we used them up later.

00:09:59 Speaker 1

After we got in at the orchards and then we got orders to move on out and we got down the road a little ways and we came to the hedge rows.

00:10:10 Speaker 1

Now the hedgerows were really something terrible. They were really.

00:10:15 Speaker 1

Really terrible.

00:10:16 Speaker 1

The hedgerows in France.

00:10:19 Speaker 1

Were we were told that they were hundreds of years old and they were about 6 or 8 feet thick and 11:50 feet high, and they were so thick that our tanks.

00:10:33 Speaker 1

Wouldn't go through.

00:10:35 Speaker 1

Them they.

00:10:35 Speaker 1

They couldn't penetrate these hedgerows.

00:10:38 Speaker 1

So what did we do?

00:10:39 Speaker 1

Well, somebody got the bright idea of putting blades on the front of tank Dozer.

00:10:47 Speaker 1

Tank dozers are bulldoz tanks with bulldozer blades on the front of them.

00:10:54 Speaker 1

And so they put steel teeth.

00:10:57 Speaker 1

They call them on the front of these tanks and they ran into these hedgerows.

00:11:03 Speaker 1

And had to hit them two or three times and then raise the raise. The hedge roll up by the roots and make holes in the hedgerows.

00:11:11 Speaker 1



And as soon as then we found.

00:11:13 Speaker 1

As soon as the tank went through the hedge roll, why in the next?

00:11:18 Speaker 1

Which was the fields were all small.

00:11:22 Speaker 1

And then the next hedge row there were Germans, of course, and there was.

00:11:28 Speaker 1

A infantryman and they had.

00:11:32 Speaker 1

Machine guns and and machine pistols and and that. And so we weren't having too much success with.

00:11:39 Speaker 1

So we got the bright idea of as soon as the tank went through the hedge roll to open up with these machine guns.

00:11:48 Speaker 1

And spray the next hedge roll and put a shell down in each corner.

00:11:53 Speaker 1

Row where their machine guns were.

00:11:56 Speaker 1

Seem to work pretty good because.

00:11:59 Speaker 1

We were getting a lighter fire after that and.

00:12:04 Speaker 1

So.

00:12:06 Speaker 1

We got so that when the when the tank would go through the hedge roll and get on the other side and we would have mortar crews drop mortars into the field behind where the Germans were and so that way.

00:12:21 Speaker 1

As soon as the tanks broke through and the Germans broke and ran back, they would run back into the next.

00:12:27 Speaker 1

Field and they were met there by our.

00:12:31 Speaker 1

So we really chewed them up pretty good with those.

00:12:34 Speaker 1

With those mortars.

00:12:35 Speaker 1

Well then after we got through the hedgerows, which was?

00:12:40 Speaker 1

A terrible fight, we.

00:12:41 Speaker 1

We lost quite a few men in there right after we got out of the hedgerows and then we got another half track and.

00:12:52

Yeah.

00:12:54 Speaker 1

Some.

00:12:54 Speaker 1

Couple more men to a couple of our men went to the hospital and but we they weren't hurt. Too bad.

00:13:01 Speaker 1

But we got a new half track and then we started moving in through the small towns and the farming communities and that and the way we do that was that we go down the road and these little towns are are only two or three miles apart.

00:13:19 Speaker 1

And each town is is small.

00:13:22 Speaker 1

1800 maybe or or 600 small villages.

00:13:27 Speaker 1

And so we found out that the French would, if the Germans had left their town, the French would put sheets in their upstairs windows.

00:13:36 Speaker 1

And if we saw sheets in the upstairs windows, we knew that we could go into town and that the Germans had left.

00:13:42 Speaker 1

So, but if they weren't sheets in the windows, then we would send up a patrol in to the town. Now, either if we had tanks with us, we'd send a tanker to into the town and.

00:13:57 Speaker 1

Draw fire and if they didn't draw fire then.

00:14:01 Speaker 1

We were OK, but if they did then we would go in with our half track and shoot the shoot the place up and shoot it.

00:14:09 Speaker 1

That that moved, and usually it didn't take long for the Germans to understand what we were doing.

00:14:17 Speaker 1

And when we get to a small town.

00:14:21 Speaker 1

Our our observers that we had in the front would tell us about the time we were entering the village. On one side, the Germans were leaving the village on the other side.

00:14:32 Speaker 1

Now this went on for some time and then about the first week in August.

00:14:39 Speaker 1

We were with the 5th core at this time and.

00:14:45 Speaker 1

We were attached to the to the 1st and 29th.

00:14:50 Speaker 1

We worked with the 29th Division more than anyone else, but after this.

00:14:57 Speaker 1

We were.

00:14:58 Speaker 1

We were attached to the 80th Division, which had just come in at this time.

00:15:03 Speaker 1

In August and the 3rd Army and General George.

00:15:09 Speaker 1

And then things started to really percolate for us.

00:15:13 Speaker 1

We really got to moving.

00:15:15 Speaker 1

We were moving from town to.

00:15:17 Speaker 1

We take four or five towns in one day and then we would come to a town and and.

00:15:24 Speaker 1

Find billets or find some place to to sleep and and we'd have hot meals and get regressed up and check our equipment and sometimes after about a week we would stop and take a day off and just to make sure that our guns were all working.

00:15:42 Speaker 1

And our equipment was was working and at one time we had.

00:15:49 Speaker 1

Orders to go into this one village.

00:15:53 Speaker 1

And shoot the place up because there were snipers in there and the snipers were given the infantry boys a lot of trouble.

00:16:00 Speaker 1

And so we went on to this crossroads.

00:16:05 Speaker 1

Had our maps and.

00:16:08 Speaker 1

So we got and and.

00:16:10 Speaker 1

Were supposed to go with two of us.

00:16:12 Speaker 1

Were.

00:16:12 Speaker 1

Two half tracks supposed to go in.

00:16:15 Speaker 1

At a certain hour.

00:16:17 Speaker 1

And so we were sitting there waiting and the other half drank didn't show up. So we said well.

00:16:22 Speaker 1

It's time to move so.

00:16:25 Speaker 1

He must have broke down or something, or run into problems. So we'll we'll blame ourselves.

00:16:31 Speaker 1

So we went into this town and we shot things up and the church steeple. We usually put a few rounds into that because that's where the snipers would hang out in the highest park in town.

00:16:45 Speaker 1

And so anyhow, when we circle around through the town and got out of there and we got back to the crossroads where the other half track had just pulled up and so.

00:16:54 Speaker 1

I think we both said it about the same time.

00:16:57 Speaker 1

You been?

00:16:58 Speaker 1

So we started checking our maps then and we found out that we were in the wrong town.

00:17:05 Speaker 1

They had gone to the to the town.

00:17:07 Speaker 1

One side we gone on the other.

00:17:10 Speaker 1

And we had shot up the wrong town, but we said, well, if you don't tell the Colonel, we won't tell him.

00:17:15 Speaker 1

I don't think he ever found out that we shot a town up that was already occupied, so that.

00:17:22 Speaker 1

That that happens in war and when we got with the 80th Division, the 3rd Army, then they changed our spec numbers from anti aircraft to infantry support.

00:17:39 Speaker 1

Because aircraft we we didn't hardly ever see any aircraft anymore during the invasion of that.

00:17:46 Speaker 1

Up until this time, we had only seen four or five German aircraft.

00:17:51 Speaker 1

And they were on the run, but we were then classified as infantry support and.

00:18:00 Speaker 1

And we were at river crossings, roadblocks, Rd. marches.

00:18:08 Speaker 1

Wooded areas and and flashing out snipers and all that, and we helped the infantry out. And when we had a problem, if we had a if our half track broke down or something then we would go with the infantry themselves for a couple of days until they they.

00:18:24 Speaker 1

Our equipment.

00:18:27 Speaker 1

Snipers, we just have a lot of trouble with.

00:18:30 Speaker 1

And.

00:18:32 Speaker 1

They would be in upstairs of large buildings and fire edge and they they could really drive you nuts and so they would call us in to to a town where they had snipers and we'd go in and they would.

00:18:48 Speaker 1

Usually spot us and usually let us know about where the snipers were and we would go in there. And I remember one time we checked, we cut the church people right off with the with fire into that and we just checked it right off and there were a.

00:19:02 Speaker 1

Of snipers up in and there.

00:19:05 Speaker 1

So we used.

00:19:07 Speaker 1

We used to give the snipers a lot of trouble and what used to make us mad about snipers was that the snipers used to target practice on our medics.

00:19:17 Speaker 1

Now our medics, as you know, had.

00:19:21 Speaker 1

A helmet like ours, but on this both sides and in the front they had a big large circle with a Red Cross in it and more times than not I saw.

00:19:34 Speaker 1

A medic laying in the road or laying in the ditch with a whole right in the middle of that circle were some sniper and used him.

00:19:42 Speaker 1

Or a target and.

00:19:45 Speaker 1

We had an unwritten law that you didn't take snipers prisoners. If some guy give the drug you nuts for a couple of days.

00:19:55 Speaker 1

Shooting at you and you couldn't get out. Even all of a sudden he'd come running out of the building with his hands up.

00:20:02 Speaker 1

They'd shoot him right there on the spot.

00:20:04 Speaker 1

They wouldn't.

00:20:05 Speaker 1

They wouldn't monkey with him at all because he they they were really bad.

00:20:14 Speaker 1

Now the freedom fighters.

00:20:17 Speaker 1

The FFI were called Freedom Fighters and they were civilian personnel, and they'd come around to us and bake food and ammunition and explosives, and we usually had at least a case of TNT with us, and we give them half of it.

00:20:36 Speaker 1

And some they didn't.

00:20:40 Speaker 1

Want too much food, but they wanted more or less.

00:20:43 Speaker 1

Uh. Ammunition and umm, some but rifles.

00:20:49 Speaker 1

They were always after rifles and when they were around we were always told to make sure you know where your rifle is because when they left they take it with them.

00:20:57 Speaker 1

'D steal anything that wasn't tied down.

00:21:00 Speaker 1

So we used to encounter them once in a while.

00:21:07 Speaker 1

The lad, the I think the worst time in a firefight when you have a when you have a firefight, the worst time is just a few minutes before you go into the fight because you get all apprehensive and the adrenaline starts flowing in that. But after you get.

00:21:24 Speaker 1

A fire fight and things are moving and everybody's shooting and hollering.

00:21:28 Speaker 1

And that.

00:21:31 Speaker 1



You find that it isn't so bad.

00:21:34 Speaker 1

You're so darn busy that you don't have time to worry about. If you stop to worry about what's going to happen or what isn't going to happen, then you can get into trouble.

00:21:45 Speaker 1

And so you're trained to do this.

00:21:48 Speaker 1

You're trained to do everything on the spur of the moment. If you and when you're in a firefight, you don't have time to stop and think of what you're going to do next.

00:21:58 Speaker 1

Know what you're going to?

00:22:00 Speaker 1

Do next because if you don't do what you're supposed to do, or if you hesitate, it could cost you your life and the life of your crew. So.

00:22:11 Speaker 1

We were most of the crews were pretty good buddies and they worked 100% together and the better you work together, the better it was for all of you.

00:22:23 Speaker 1

One thing you know a lot of people ask me were you?

00:22:27 Speaker 1

Hurt or.

00:22:29 Speaker 1

Injured or that I say yes I was.

00:22:32 Speaker 1

Different times I was knocked down and knocked out and from shell fire and all that.

00:22:37 Speaker 1

I learned one thing in basic training. If there was anything that I really learned.

00:22:42 Speaker 1

Was that that was to keep your head and your \*\*\*\* down, and I really did learn that.

00:22:48 Speaker 1

I think that contributed to my survival.

00:22:53 Speaker 1

Uh.

00:22:54 Speaker 1

Combat is a very lonely place.

00:22:56 Speaker 1

It's very lonely place when you're setting in a combat zone and you're you're waiting to move or or waiting for orders of that. Things can get awfully, awfully upsetting.

00:23:10 Speaker 1

And it's really, really bad.

00:23:13 Speaker 1

We come now to the Moselle river as just S, just South of Mets.

00:23:21 Speaker 1

They were having problems there and they'd sprayed for a two or three days to cross the Mozzarell River and they hadn't had had much progress because the Germans were on a hill.

00:23:33 Speaker 1

Just the other side of the river and they had the high ground and they could see every movement on the river.

00:23:39 Speaker 1

So we tried smoke and we tried at night and everything else, but nothing seemed to happen.

00:23:46 Speaker 1

So we went down there and we set up four or five guns.

00:23:51 Speaker 1

I don't remember which, but we got them all set up along the riverbank during the night.

00:23:56 Speaker 1

And.

00:23:57 Speaker 1

Thing in the morning we opened up.

00:24:00 Speaker 1

And I remember precisely on that one fire mission we used to call them fire missions, and that one fire mission, my gun crew fired 79,000 rounds of ammunition.

00:24:15 Speaker 1

Now that's an awful lot of lead.

00:24:18 Speaker 1

The infantry moved in from the sides and they moved in with only a couple of slight casualties and they took two of two or three 100 prisoners in that. And so that was really a starting of our.

00:24:33 Speaker 1

Of our of our.

00:24:36 Speaker 1

Encounters with the with the enemy. It's really intriguing to sit up there in that machine gun.

00:24:44 Speaker 1

With all four guns blasting and you can see how the head of it and you see those Germans running in every direction and falling in every direction. Union knowing that you're really helping those guys up there that are 300 yards ahead of you.

00:25:01 Speaker 1

We used to think we had it bad until we realized that the worst.

00:25:08 Speaker 1

Of job in the army.

00:25:11 Speaker 1

In combat is to combat medic that poor guy is really, really because when you get shelled or mortar or anything and someone gets hit or gets hurt and they start hollering for the medics, you can stay in your hole and keep your head down.

00:25:27 Speaker 1

That medic.

00:25:29 Speaker 1

Has got to get up and he's got to go. So that is really.

00:25:34 Speaker 1

A bad bad thing.

00:25:37 Speaker 1

A lot of times when we were eating our meals, we do our own cooking. When we were out on the on on.

00:25:44 Speaker 1

Road and we'd stop.

00:25:46 Speaker 1

It didn't make any difference what time of day it.

00:25:49 Speaker 1

It was when we got hungry or when we had time and we would stop and we make we open up two or three cans of beef Stew or something and cook it and.

00:26:01 Speaker 1

We always notice that whenever we stop some of these, a lot of these little French or German.

00:26:06 Speaker 1

We were.

00:26:08 Speaker 1

These kids would come around and they'd stand and watch us and they wouldn't ask us for anything.

00:26:14 Speaker 1

We knew they were hungry.

00:26:16 Speaker 1

We knew that the kids were hungry and a lot of times while we were getting the food prepared.

00:26:22 Speaker 1

Guys would take their mess kits over and and feed these feed these kids and go without themselves. And if we had anything leftover, why we would put it in a couple of cans or something and and let these kids take it home to their.

00:26:39 Speaker 1

Mothers or fathers or whoever else was at home.

00:26:46 Speaker 1

On December the 16th, 1900 and.

00:26:50 Speaker 1

4 was really a bad day.

00:26:55 Speaker 1

You call it a bad air day.

00:26:57 Speaker 1

The Germans counterattacked, which was the starting of the Battle of the Bulge.

00:27:04 Speaker 1

They hit us with 250,000 men, 1900 artillery pieces.

00:27:13 Speaker 1

And God only knows how many tanks and other pieces of equipment we had.

00:27:18 Speaker 1

And we had 75,000 troops that we had at the time because we were still licking our wounds from the Horicon forest.

00:27:28 Speaker 1

Although I was not.

00:27:29 Speaker 1

In the work on forest, a lot of the people around me were and a friend of mine from Pennsylvania who was a prisoner of war later told me that in the horrifying forest, his unit lost.

00:27:45 Speaker 1

4000 men in six days that just give you an idea how bad the Horicon forest was.

00:27:56 Speaker 1

After, after the Battle of the ball started and we everything was in disarray, we were low on ammunition. We were low on food.

00:28:06 Speaker 1

Still had our summer clothes on.

00:28:08 Speaker 1

Didn't have any winter underwear.

00:28:11 Speaker 1

Or heavy.

00:28:13 Speaker 1

Or heavy coats and the weather turned bad.

00:28:17 Speaker 1

There was a really a bad snow storm come up and it got down to 1820 below 0, which was really, really bad.

00:28:27 Speaker 1

And.

00:28:28 Speaker 1

What made me what made matters worse is that all of our batteries were scattered all over and we didn't have any communications and we didn't know where anyone was at except us.

00:28:43 Speaker 1

We went down this side. Rd. A little bitty path Rd. with our half track and we were trying to get.

00:28:52 Speaker 1

Some place where there was some American troops so.

00:28:54 Speaker 1

We could.

00:28:57 Speaker 1

Reorganize.

00:28:58 Speaker 1

Well, anyhow here again.

00:29:02 Speaker 1

My driver pulled off the road and Bango, we run into a landmine and.

00:29:10 Speaker 1

It.

00:29:11 Speaker 1

Damage the half track and put us out of Commission, so it wasn't much we could do. It was getting to be evening and so we said decided that well, the best thing to do, I guess, is to.

00:29:24 Speaker 1

Where?

00:29:25 Speaker 1

Were and we were right in.

00:29:28 Speaker 1

A Evergreen forest like and so we.

00:29:34 Speaker 1

Went in and we couldn't start a fire, but we went in and cut a bunch of tree branches off of these fir trees and we made us a shelter and we got into that on out of the wind and and tried to keep.

00:29:49 Speaker 1

Warm.

00:29:51 Speaker 1

Well, about I don't know what time it was.

00:29:53 Speaker 1

Was in the middle of the night.

00:29:55 Speaker 1

I woke up.

00:29:57 Speaker 1

And my feet and my hands and everything were frozen.

00:30:02 Speaker 1

My ears. So I woke everybody up and and we get up and move. Started moving around. Well, about that time it was getting daylight and so we said, well, we've got to do something.

00:30:13 Speaker 1

So we took the pine vials that we had put around in a circle there and tight and we said we've got to get some heat before we all freeze to death.

00:30:23 Speaker 1

And so we set fire to these these.

00:30:27 Speaker 1

The branches and we got a pretty good fire going and we heated some snow and we we got some nest cafe and we had some hot coffee.

00:30:37 Speaker 1

Well then, we couldn't move to our half track. So we took the guns off the half track and.

00:30:42 Speaker 1

And dismantled it and.

00:30:45 Speaker 1

We I don't remember whether we set it on fire or anyhow we we we we blew it up I guess and we took the guns and and threw them off in the gutters and dismantled them, dismantled them and threw them off in the ditches.

00:31:00 Speaker 1

Couldn't use them.

00:31:01 Speaker 1

Well, what really made us feel?

00:31:04 Speaker 1

And we only went up the road about two miles when we come into a little village, and there were some other people there, and there were some tankers there from the 4th Armored Division. And these guys were lifesavers.

00:31:17 Speaker 1

They were invited us into a house there to have some breakfast and we had some some breakfast and got warmed up and thought out and.

00:31:29 Speaker 1

As much as possible.

00:31:31 Speaker 1

And it was really.

00:31:32 Speaker 1

Well, then we left there and a couple days later we were.

00:31:37 Speaker 1

About the same situation was getting dark and and we.

00:31:41 Speaker 1

We were trying to get off the roads, so I went into this House to look for a place to stay for the guys and I went in there and there were 2-3 Germans laying on the floor in our sleep.

00:31:55 Speaker 1

And so I went back out and I got a couple of guys and we went back in the house and we woke them up.

00:32:02 Speaker 1

And.

00:32:04 Speaker 1



They had their guns stacked in the corner of there, so we took the guns away from them and we got some.

00:32:12 Speaker 1

I think we got some beef Stew from those tankers, couple of cans and so we heated that up and we made some coffee and we shared it with the Germans and we talked. We sat up and one guy was awake all night and we sat up and 1:00.

00:32:28 Speaker 1

Them could speak English.

00:32:30 Speaker 1

And they were really they were real nice.

00:32:32 Speaker 1

They were warm ock to the regular army guys. They weren't s s or anything.

00:32:38 Speaker 1

And so we got along.

00:32:39 Speaker 1

And the next day, while we turned them over the M PS and and sent them back to.

00:32:46 Speaker 1

The to the rear and for them the war was over.

00:32:51 Speaker 1

About this time, there was a thing called the Melody Massacre, and it was right near where we were at and the Melody massacre if anyone was there or seen the Melman a massacre or seen the location of the Melman a massacre.

00:33:07 Speaker 1

Will tell you.

00:33:07 Speaker 1

That the Melmani massacre did not happen at Melmani.

00:33:11 Speaker 1

It happened at a small town called Buena.

00:33:15 Speaker 1

And that the reason is called the Melmani massacre is that there is a large or not a large, but there was a sign there and it said Melman.

00:33:26 Speaker 1

It had been shot up and it meant that Melmani was 3 miles down the road and at this crossroad where the the bodies were all laying was the small town, real small town 4-5 hundred people.

00:33:42 Speaker 1

And it.

00:33:42 Speaker 1

Bonet is really worthy German.

00:33:47 Speaker 1

For the massacre happened.

00:33:53 Speaker 1

I want to talk here about the s s.

00:33:57 Speaker 1

S s were very easy to distinguish because they were black uniforms and you never saw.

00:34:06 Speaker 1

S s Prisoner of war because they were automatically shot on site.

00:34:11 Speaker 1

One time we did.

00:34:16 Speaker 1

Someone had a bunch of prisoners and there was an s s man among them.

00:34:20 Speaker 1

And the other prisoners wouldn't have anything to do with them.

00:34:23 Speaker 1

So I went up to the guy and I reached in my boot and I pulled my knife out of my boot and went over to him with and I was going to cut his collar off because I was going to get the Insignia off his collar and this.

00:34:34 Speaker 1

Hero. He fainted.

00:34:36 Speaker 1

He fell flat on his back and fainted because he thought I was going to cut his.

00:34:41 Speaker 1

And probably if it'd been one of the other guys, they would have.

00:34:46 Speaker 1

We had an Indian in our outfit named Avant and he did cut a guy's throat.

00:34:52 Speaker 1

A prisoner of war, he walked right up to the guy and and the guy was arrogant or something, and Avon cut his throat. And so.

00:35:02 Speaker 1

This is what he thought I was going to do during the battle of the bows, we were told.

00:35:09 Speaker 1

It was true that there were German troops in American uniform.

00:35:15 Speaker 1

That were infiltrating our lines and disrupting communications and just changing street signs and road signs and and things like that. And to be on the lookout for these people, what we found out later that it was crazy to ask.

00:35:32 Speaker 1

Stop.

00:35:35 Speaker 1

Some G is and ask them who's Babe Ruth and crazy things like that.

00:35:39 Speaker 1

Because those guys were well versed in this and they knew they knew.

00:35:44 Speaker 1

What was going on and who was on 1st and and what the capital of the United States was and that they knew all of these answers, but one tanker told me.

00:35:55 Speaker 1

That the way that they find out whenever there's.

00:35:59 Speaker 1

A in doubt if they're Germans or Americans, or whoever they are.

00:36:04 Speaker 1

They always say look at the guy and say drop your pants and check his underwear.

00:36:13 Speaker 1

And they found out that the German soldiers that had American uniforms kept their their German underwear.

00:36:21 Speaker 1

So if you found a guy with German underwear, you knew he was a German. But usually when they done that, they said that they right away, they would admit that they were Germans.

00:36:31 Speaker 1

And if they admitted right away that they were Germans, they were shot right on the.

00:36:35 Speaker 1

By.

00:36:36 Speaker 1

They weren't taken back or anything. If there was doubt, if there was any doubt about it, they always turned to the guys over to the M PS because you didn't want to shoot some poor innocent GI. But some guys, some of the Germans.

00:36:52 Speaker 1

I understand had their Insignia is wrong and one guy had Sergeant stripes and major leaves on his shoulders and the same and he said he was a Sergeant major.

00:37:04 Speaker 1

And so.

00:37:06 Speaker 1

That didn't work.

00:37:07 Speaker 1

And so those guys were shot on site. They didn't get around.

00:37:11 Speaker 1

I have a story about a guy, a friend of mine and I. We went into this town and they were having trouble with the German tank that was in the town and he was up behind a big building there I think was like a bank or something that.

00:37:25 Speaker 1

Was a kind of a small town.

00:37:28 Speaker 1

And he would stick his nose out from behind his bank, turn the gun and fire two or three times down the road. And then he would back up behind the building where he couldn't get at him.

00:37:37 Speaker 1

And they were having a heck of a time trying to get into town. And so.

00:37:42 Speaker 1

My buddy says well, let's go in and try.

00:37:44 Speaker 1

Get him, he says.

00:37:47 Speaker 1

Grab that bazooka there and we'll we'll go and see if we can get him.

00:37:51 Speaker 1

So I got the bazooka and we went in around behind and help a couple of blocks and around the corners and we went up this alley and sure enough, there he sat this great big Tiger tank.

00:38:03 Speaker 1

Oh, was he beautiful?

00:38:05 Speaker 1

So anyhow, we got up not too far behind him and I got the the bazooka up on my shoulder and I said OK.

00:38:16 Speaker 1

Load her up.

00:38:18 Speaker 1

And he said load her up, he said.

00:38:21 Speaker 1

Do you?

00:38:21 Speaker 1

I said put the shell in there, he says.

00:38:24 Speaker 1

Thought you had the shells.

00:38:26 Speaker 1

And here we are, right behind this big Tiger tank.

00:38:29 Speaker 1

We got a bazooka all ready to go and no ammunition.

00:38:33 Speaker 1

So he said, well, we got to do something.

00:38:35 Speaker 1

So he looked in his bag and he didn't have any grenades, but he did.

00:38:39 Speaker 1

A smoke grenade.

00:38:41 Speaker 1

So we pulled.

00:38:42 Speaker 1

A smoke grenade out and we went up and threw it up on the back.

00:38:46 Speaker 1

The tank and oh it.

00:38:49 Speaker 1

Something terrible was a yellow grenade and it really started smoking well. The Germans in the tank got a whiff of the smoke and seen the smoke, and so they came out with their hands up and surrendered because they thought their tank was on fire.

00:39:03 Speaker 1

So we captured this tank crew and then.

00:39:07 Speaker 1

We got a.

00:39:09 Speaker 1

We got a some ammunition and we blew the tank up and and some people say, well, why didn't you use the tank against them? And we just, I'm not getting in a German tank.

00:39:21 Speaker 1

Having the having my people shooting at me.

00:39:24 Speaker 1

So anyhow, we did get a German tank crew that that tank.

00:39:33 Speaker 1

On April 11th 19145 I was in the town of Weemeyer, Germany.

00:39:43 Speaker 1

And we were there for taking a break or getting some equipment.

00:39:50 Speaker 1

Reconditioned or something. And anyhow they sent word around to the different companies that they needed some truck drivers and so.

00:40:00 Speaker 1

A couple of us went down and we said well.

00:40:04 Speaker 1

You know we.

00:40:05 Speaker 1

I never drove a truck in my life, but I said I'll, I'll volunteer. And so says, what do you need?

00:40:10 Speaker 1

They had these trucks here about 10 or 12 trucks lined up.

00:40:14 Speaker 1

And they.

00:40:14 Speaker 1

All loaded and they were loaded with medical supplies and blankets and all kinds of stuff.

00:40:22 Speaker 1

And so.

00:40:24 Speaker 1

Friend of mine he.

00:40:26 Speaker 1

Well, I'll drive and you be my partner. And I said OK.

00:40:30 Speaker 1

So we got in the truck and we drove each.

00:40:32 Speaker 1

Well, first of all, they they told us where we were going.

00:40:36 Speaker 1

We're going down this one Rd. about 4-4 miles 3-4 miles and there's a concentration camp there.

00:40:43 Speaker 1

And we were going down there to bring some supplies to these prisoners.

00:40:49

So.

00:40:49 Speaker 1

When we got down there, the first thing I saw was it was a large place.

00:40:53 Speaker 1

All was big.

00:40:55 Speaker 1

And it was.

00:40:58 Speaker 1

A big wrought iron.

00:40:59 Speaker 1

Big wrought iron fence at the entrance.

00:41:02 Speaker 1

And.

00:41:04 Speaker 1

Some printing. I don't know what it said, but anyhow just to give an example how big it was at one time it housed 120,000 prisoners at the time that we were there.

00:41:17 Speaker 1

Understand there were about 60 to 80,000 there at that.

00:41:21 Speaker 1

Time well anyhow, we drove in the front gate.

00:41:25 Speaker 1

Did not think too much of.

00:41:26 Speaker 1

We in a convoy drove in through the front.

00:41:30 Speaker 1

We got in there right at the gate and the MP stopped us and asked us a shoulder fair invvation.

00:41:37 Speaker 1



And said OK, you have a load of blankets. You go such and such and turn and he goes where to go.

00:41:44 Speaker 1

So we didn't think much of it and we got back in the truck and we started driving.

00:41:48 Speaker 1

Got about two blocks.

00:41:50 Speaker 1

And all of a sudden there.

00:41:51 Speaker 1

Stacks of dead bodies.

00:41:54 Speaker 1

Naked dead bodies in the was humongous. It was.

00:41:56 Speaker 1

Now.

00:42:01 Speaker 1

On you can't. You can't describe it.

00:42:04 Speaker 1

And so there.

00:42:05 Speaker 1

There were GIS running around there and they were throwing up and trying to help these people, so we finally got where.

00:42:11 Speaker 1

Were going.

00:42:13 Speaker 1

And we there were some other people there and they started unloading the blankets.

00:42:18 Speaker 1

And we helped them unload the blankets and. And so we walked around while they were unloading our truck. And we were looking.

00:42:25 Speaker 1

We couldn't talk to these people because they were talking to us, but it was in foreign language.

00:42:31 Speaker 1

I don't know what they were speaking, but anyhow we were told then at the gate we were told that don't give the prisoners anything to eat.

00:42:41 Speaker 1

And if you give them something to drink, hold the container yourself, and let, don't let them hold it, or they'll they'll chug along it and.

00:42:50 Speaker 1

Get sick.

00:42:51 Speaker 1

But if you want to give them cigarettes or something, go.

00:42:53 Speaker 1

But nothing else because they said if you feed them, they they are in such bad shape that if you give them something to eat.

00:43:02 Speaker 1

Kill him.

00:43:03 Speaker 1

So we give.

00:43:05 Speaker 1

In fact, we wanted to get the hell.

00:43:07 Speaker 1

Of there.

00:43:08 Speaker 1

So we got our truck unloaded and we walked around a little bit and looked at the looked at the bodies and looked at the old people laying around and sitting around and.

00:43:19 Speaker 1

And.

00:43:20 Speaker 1

The only crime that these people committed that they were Jews, it was all Jews in this concentration camp, which was called Buchanan.

00:43:30 Speaker 1

So we drove back out of.

00:43:32 Speaker 1

We went back to Weymire and we parked our truck and and the guy says welcome back in about an hour and we'll have another.

00:43:41 Speaker 1

For you.

00:43:42 Speaker 1

We said yeah, OK.

00:43:44 Speaker 1

We went down.

00:43:46 Speaker 1

And back to our headquarters and went in to see the company commander and we asked if we could see him.

00:43:51 Speaker 1

Said sure. So we went in and he said what?

00:43:54 Speaker 1

What's the problem you need?

00:43:56 Speaker 1

So we told him that what happened down there.

00:44:00 Speaker 1

He says.

00:44:01 Speaker 1

We're not going back, captain.

00:44:04 Speaker 1

Well, you gotta go back.

00:44:05 Speaker 1

Said we.

00:44:06 Speaker 1

We're not going back. So we told. I says hell, it can't be that bad.

00:44:10 Speaker 1

And I'll tell you what he said. I'll, I'll.

00:44:12 Speaker 1

I'll take your.

00:44:13 Speaker 1

So he got in the he went back down there and he got in one of the trucks and he drove it back down there.

00:44:20 Speaker 1

And a day or so later, the company commander called, called US in and he said.

00:44:27 Speaker 1

I just wanted to tell you that I took your run on Buckland Wald and he said that when I came back from there I did the same thing you guys did.

00:44:37 Speaker 1

I refused to go back and he says if you don't want to go back there, you don't have to.

00:44:43 Speaker 1

And so we didn't go back there.

00:44:46 Speaker 1

And if I live to be 100, I'll never forget.

00:44:50 Speaker 1

That I spent in Buchenwald concentration camp, and if anybody in this world doesn't think that the Holocaust happened, all they got to do is ask me and I'll tell them.

00:45:03 Speaker 1

And it really happened because.

00:45:05 Speaker 1

I was there.

00:45:11 Speaker 1

Later we found out that the Commandant of this camp, the commander of this camp, was a woman.

00:45:19 Speaker 1

Isaac, her name was, and they called her the \*\*\*\*\* of Buchenwald.

00:45:26 Speaker 1

And in her office, they found.

00:45:30 Speaker 1

Two skulls that they had highly polished sitting up on the Mantel piece and she had two or three lamps in her room that were the lamp.

00:45:41 Speaker 1

Were made of skin.

00:45:44 Speaker 1

With tattoos in them. And that's the kind.

00:45:47 Speaker 1

A woman.

00:45:48 Speaker 1

That Ira Koch was and the nice thing about it was that they captured Ira Koch before she could get out of the camp.

00:45:57 Speaker 1

And I understand that she was put to death.