

Robert Walker Interview #1

317th Inf Reg (S-2/Intelligence Officer)

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Mary Jane Robinson)

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

00:00:02 Speaker 1

Today is July 9th, 2002 and I am meeting with Robert Walker to discuss his experience in World War 2.

00:00:12 Speaker 1

As we begin, Robert, if you could simply identify yourself, your name, birth date, let's go with that in the beginning.

00:00:21 Speaker 2

My name is Robert Ann Walker.

00:00:23 Speaker 2

I was born on July the 19th, 1915, and you're the only lady I ever told that to. Because I'm getting a little bit shaky.

00:00:31 Speaker 2

About that birthday business.

00:00:33 Speaker 2

And I was born in Laredo. And the way to go to Texas, which is on the Mexican side of the border because my father was in the Texas Border Patrol under Jack.

00:00:44 Speaker 2

Blackjack Pershing, who then was in the army against Pancho Villa, and we had the same border control problem. Then that we have now.

00:00:55 Speaker 2

Yes. And Dad was down there as an illicit man in the, and that's when I was born. Because my mother traveled and you were allowed to do that if you were married, you could travel with the unit. Anyway, that's who I am and what I did in World War 2 was to serve.

00:01:16 Speaker 2

As a replacement, fill in officer with the 80th Infantry Division which is being mustered.

00:01:24 Speaker 2

In Tullahoma, TN at Camp Forrest, which doesn't exist today, it was just the training center, but.

00:01:34 Speaker 2

There were thousands of troops being put together there and I was one of those who had graduated from OCS at Fort Benning and had been in Camp Robertson in Arkansas as arranged, also briefly. And finally I was fed into the.

00:01:52 Speaker 2

System and I became a member of the light weapons.

00:01:58 Speaker 2

Platoon in the company and soon. Don't ask me why, but I was plucked out of all this.

00:02:06 Speaker 2

To take part in Tennessee maneuvers now, I don't want to stray too far because that's no.

00:02:10 Speaker 1

OK, we won't.

00:02:12 Speaker 1

I do want to know though too.

00:02:15 Speaker 1

Your serial number. Do you remember that?

00:02:17 Speaker 2

Ohh boy.

00:02:19 Speaker 2

Let's hold that in abeyance because.

00:02:22 Speaker 1

We will add that later.

00:02:23 Speaker 2

The expert on that just left.

00:02:26 Speaker 1

OK. And you did identify the the unit you were?

00:02:30 Speaker 2

In the 80th Temperature division.

00:02:32 Speaker 1

You're hooked up, remember?

00:02:34 Speaker 2

I have very, very few visuals, but I do have this that we wear.

00:02:40 Speaker 2

To reunions, and that's the patch. It's called the Blue Ridge Mountain division. And the reason for that is and there are the mountains. Most of the recruits in World War One were from Pennsylvania and the upper eastern part of the United States. And that's this is the Appalachian area. And boy, they're very proud of that.

00:02:40 Speaker 1

Huh.

00:03:02 Speaker 2

Coming from Indiana, I wasn't one of those, but we alone. Fine. OK.

00:03:06 Speaker 1

Good. And then you said you graduated from OCS and when was the?

00:03:11 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:03:12 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

Well, that was. Let's see. I came back from Hawaii, and it must have been in.

00:03:19 Speaker 2

The latter part of 41 in the early part of 42.

00:03:24 Speaker 2

And a very strange thing happened. They had 65,000 men at Camp Walters, Texas, being trained as infantry riflemen and machine Gunners.

00:03:34 Speaker 2

And I bumped into a Sergeant on the train coming from Indiana to Texas.

00:03:41 Speaker 2

And I said, excuse me, Sir. And he said no, no, no, no. You don't say, Sir, to stripes. You say that for the bars. And we struck up a rather amiable conversation. He said, do you know anything about compasses?

00:03:54 Speaker 2

Do you ever camp? And I said, oh, sure. And he didn't say much more about it. But when I got to Texas, everyone was assigned. There were 750 men on that train, and I was left hanging with two men from Tennessee and everyone else had been assigned. And then one day, my name was called out, and they were filling up.

00:04:15 Speaker 2

A special company for comp.

00:04:18 Speaker 2

That.

00:04:19 Speaker 2

Scouts.

00:04:21 Speaker 2

Well, I didn't know this at first, but we waited and waited for three more weeks to fill up the company.

00:04:28 Speaker 2

That that company as a prerequisite.

00:04:32 Speaker 2

Had to have men with a minimum of 110 IQ. I knew nothing about this, so I sat next or sat slept next to the Superintendent of anti erosion projects for Colorado, for instance, a wonderful man. And on the other side was a farmer from Iowa. A brilliant fellow, but we had professors.

00:04:53 Speaker 2

One from Georgia, who was a real character. I'll never forget it, but.

00:04:57 Speaker 2

They were all at least 110, and as you can imagine, the conversation was never dull. Anyway, we went through three months of training there, very highly specialized, excellent teachers.

00:05:09 Speaker 1

And you still didn't know the qualifications of that IQ were part of it.

00:05:13 Speaker 2

No, huh? No, they really didn't care. They were such great people anyway, as the army would do it, there were six carloads of infantrymen, riflemen and machine Gunners, and two carloads of combat scouts.

00:05:32 Speaker 2

And when we got to the West Coast at Fort Ord, there was a tremendous storm, lightning flashing, they switched the thing and the six carloads of Methuen who were supposed to be replacements there for the 27th New York.

00:05:46 Speaker 2

National Guard division were sent to Fort Lewis, WA and the two carloads of specially trained men were dumped off, but we were not welcomed. They didn't need us because our jobs call for immediate placement in minor ranks in non Commission officers, Corporal, Sergeant and so forth. They didn't have any of those. No, those were.

00:06:06 Speaker 2

Fulfilled. Well, they never went to the troubles, turning around The Rifleman were accepted in Washington and 2nd Division, and so then the next thing I know, we're on our way to save Hawaii when it was strafed and we got there immediately after the Japanese attack.

00:06:25 Speaker 2

And that's when I got in an argument one day with an officer. And he said, well, you think you're so good. I'll send you back to Officer School.

00:06:32 Speaker 2

And that's how.

00:06:32 Speaker 2

It happened, so I went back and not really.

00:06:33 Speaker 1

Huh.

00:06:39 Speaker 2

The major one night we were out on a special project.

00:06:44 Speaker 2

We really used our training in Texas to good effect.

00:06:48 Speaker 2

And he said, why didn't you go back to Officer School? This was about 6:00 at night.

00:06:54 Speaker 2

And I said, well, I filled out some paper, Sir, and I never heard anything more about it.

00:06:58 Speaker 2

And there was a long sentence, he said. Well, we just cleaned house and we sent back 110.

00:07:04 Speaker 2

Why weren't you on that list? I said. I have no idea. And the next thing is voice changes. Let me see your dog tags.

00:07:12 Speaker 2

And I had been over the 10th name from the top. The list was mine, and they had sent back a William Walker in my place. And so I went back to Fort Benning and I would. I had to go through three examinations. And it was interesting. But they I went back and anyway.

00:07:32 Speaker 2

When I got there, this fellow had flunked out the second week. Yeah. Yeah, he was.

00:07:36 Speaker 1

Well.

00:07:38 Speaker 2

And I enjoyed my three months done. I really did. I just I thought Fort Benning was a great experience.

00:07:46 Speaker 1

And you came out then at.

00:07:48 Speaker 2

What rank second? That's where you start.

00:07:53 Speaker 2

So.

00:07:54 Speaker 1

Late 41, where were you on Pearl Harbor Day?

00:07:56 Speaker 2

Those.

00:07:58 Speaker 2

I was in probably Fort Dix.

00:08:03 Speaker 2

Getting ready to.

00:08:07 Speaker 2

It's a staging area to get on the Queen Mary to go overseas.

00:08:11 Speaker 2

And I know that this I was not overseas because.

00:08:18 Speaker 2

I had a date with my wife in New York.

00:08:22 Speaker 2

And I it was impossible, because that's. I remember it that that's where I was in New York City and I'd never been to New York City. So I asked my boss, who was the G2 of the division. I was the assistant G2 at that time.

00:08:37 Speaker 2

And I said, look, I got a date with my girl.

00:08:42 Speaker 2

I'd like to take you some different places in New York, and of course he was a New Yorker.

00:08:47 Speaker 2

And he said just a minute he wrote out a little notebook pad. We went to some of the most wonderful place ever. I never would have found them. I mean, crazy places like Tonys, this fellow practice. Yogi, ISM.

00:09:00 Speaker 2

And every night at midnight, he'd stand the doorway of his brownstone. And he'd play. Yes, I had nest. We have no bananas on his violin. At midnight. Every.

00:09:12 Speaker 2

That's that's it. And then we went to hear or see Sid Caesar and I'm adding cocoa up on 54th St. The little place up on the 2nd floor and then on and on and on. And we saw Roger Dangerfield on the 19th floor of the business building when he was just getting started. And, Oh yes, it was.

00:09:30 Speaker 1

Wonderful.

00:09:32 Speaker 2

Wonderful. But it was brief and.

00:09:35 Speaker 2

And it was just about time to go and.

00:09:37 Speaker 1

When the actual day. How? Who told you? How did you find out? Pearl Harbor. Who? What were you doing?

00:09:39 Speaker 2

Yep.

00:09:44 Speaker 2

Uh, well, everything was hustle. Bustle on the train, you know, right down to the earth degree. And I think we got it from the general information.

00:09:55 Speaker 2

Distribution of the information you know from I was on the general staff at that time.

00:10:00 Speaker 2

I've come up quite a bit and I really can't tell you why I got along with people and I like what I was doing and of course that basic training, it didn't do me any harm because I was more or less an expert at cartography and they needed somebody who was good at maps.

00:10:20 Speaker 2

We'll get to that later because it really played a very important part and when we get into Europe.

00:10:26 Speaker 2

And that, anyway, very soon we, I didn't know we were going on the Queen Mary. Everything was very, very hush hush.

00:10:34 Speaker 2

But we did, and I was named what was a publicity officer. Everybody had a rank and this was nothing. And I was walking down the deck. And one day I heard this voice from a very dark little cubby hole doorway. Hey, look here for a cup of tea. And these were the English people who ran the ship.

00:10:54 Speaker 2

And I've read my first Canteen Cup full of English tea and the way they make.

00:11:01 Speaker 1

On the Queen Mary.

00:11:02 Speaker 2

Ohh brothers, they pour heavy milk in it, almost cream and then about 16 teaspoonful of sugar and it was the most nauseating drink.

00:11:13 Speaker 2

White, sweet, gooey tea.

00:11:17 Speaker 1

Not what you've been drinking in New York.

00:11:21 Speaker 2

I I never had a cup of coffee in my life. I got in the army. That was all it was to drink coffee anyway.

00:11:28 Speaker 1

You shipped out on what day? What?

00:11:31 Speaker 2

I think this must have been.

00:11:34 Speaker 2

Just about d + 1 and we took us 4 here. No, it didn't take US 4 and here it takes four days to get across and it was a normal crossing. I mean everybody was pleasant, but we were very apprehensive, you know, with all these ships around us.

00:11:50 Speaker 2

And everybody was on edge waiting for something to happen which didn't, but he could.

00:11:56 Speaker 1

You presented this to me, not on the tape. So we need to get on the tape that you shipped out in the Queen Mary, 15,000 men.

00:11:59 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:12:05 Speaker 2

Oh, yes, yeah, that that see the the ship had been transferred or transformed.

00:12:11 Speaker 2

From a luxury liner to just a form of transportation. So men were sleeping on boats which were hanging from, you know, hammocks and so forth that never exists on the Queen Mary. But that's how we got all the men on the ship and to feed them and all that it did the job and.

00:12:31 Speaker 2

Did a wonderful job as far as I'm concerned it was a real experience.

00:12:36 Speaker 2

When I talk to other people who were transported, they were not as as fortunate.

00:12:43 Speaker 1

Queen Mary.

00:12:44 Speaker 2

Yeah, but anyway.

00:12:46 Speaker 1

You know something that most young Americans, even Americans my age I have found, are not aware that there were U boats so close to American shores that they were right off the coast of Florida and all the way up. And none of us knew that.

00:12:59 Speaker 2

Yeah, that's right.

00:13:03 Speaker 2

I was astounded to find it out myself, because though I read a book, I forget what it was, but it's from the German angle.

00:13:12 Speaker 2

And they laughingly pulled up along the New Jersey coast, and they could see the Ferris wheels going and the people driving by and amusement parks. And they would just sit there until the liner came by. I'm talking about a freight liner, an oil tanker, and that would be a beautiful silhouette.

00:13:31 Speaker 2

Between the bright lights and mainland, and they put a perfect bead on that thing and sink it. Just like that. We gave away hundreds of ships. The Gulf of Mexico is filled with hulks that they shot down in our gulf.

00:13:47 Speaker 2

With about 6 submarines.

00:13:49 Speaker 2

In the logo.

00:13:51 Speaker 1

And who would know?

00:13:52 Speaker 2

No. Or we were poorly prepared, poorly prepared.

00:13:57 Speaker 2

And.

00:13:57 Speaker 1

What were your thoughts on the way over there? Were you full of trepidation on the way over to Europe?

00:14:01 Speaker 2

No, no, I really wasn't.

00:14:04 Speaker 1

What did you think you were going to find there?

00:14:07 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:14:09 Speaker 2

When we got there on the way.

00:14:11 Speaker 1

On the way, what were you thinking? What was the mood on the ship?

00:14:13 Speaker 2

Well, everybody was not moral. They weren't. They were in good spirits. Some man boys just hadn't grown up and they were apprehensive and fearful and would have been that way at home. You know, it's on a dark night. When he walked into the black room.

00:14:35 Speaker 2

But most of the men were perfectly willing. You know, we're all in this together. And there's a great unified feeling. And it was grateful to be a part of. I tell you the truth. It existed throughout. We had a lot of Esprit de corps. There was no turning back. And, Gee, I wish this, you know, I want to go home. Nah.

00:14:55 Speaker 2

None of that.

00:14:55 Speaker 1

Well, tell me too about the service at that time.

00:14:59 Speaker 1

Did they tell the men where they were going? So you never knew that we're going here On this date? And this is our job.

00:15:02 Speaker 2

No.

00:15:06 Speaker 2

No, no, no. That was a time of very, extremely tight security and there were posters. I don't know whether you remember seeing them, probably not too young, but it was a picture of Uncle Sam. And he said keep your lips closed. You just don't.

00:15:22 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:15:26 Speaker 2

Gossip or talk?

00:15:29 Speaker 2

Just don't you know what you're talking about?

00:15:31 Speaker 2

And whatever you're talking about could be detrimental, so don't say anything.

00:15:36 Speaker 1

So you must have some strong opinions about our media now telling everywhere what we're doing.

00:15:41 Speaker 2

Oh, I do. Oh, yes, I do. I think this national disgorgement of what's bad about our country and what's bad about the nation, the globe.

00:15:53 Speaker 2

If it weren't for rather and all the other two, Brokaw.

00:15:58 Speaker 2

We wouldn't have that stuff and we don't need it. It's unnecessary and it isn't complementary to the country. I don't think it is.

00:16:08 Speaker 2

And it's absolutely against what I believe in.

00:16:14 Speaker 2

I don't think we should be communist, sort of a closed off world, but I just don't think we have to wear everything on our sleeve every 96 o'clock.

00:16:25 Speaker 1

Right, I agree.

00:16:27 Speaker 1

So.

00:16:28 Speaker 1

I want to know, I think it would be best if we can do somewhat.

00:16:33 Speaker 1

Chronological order of events upon arriving in the Queen Mary.

00:16:39 Speaker 2

OK, now things.

00:16:42 Speaker 2

Well, I I don't remember much about Scotland, except I was absolutely floored.

00:16:47 Speaker 2

To think that we would have gone around, you know, I expected we might have landed in London.

00:16:52 Speaker 2

Napoleon the portrait along, but that that was unwise. That wise thing was to go up around and come in that very secluded Firth of Clyde and no resistance. I don't know where the other transports went, by the way. They didn't go in there. Only the Queen Mary one.

00:17:12 Speaker 2

Yep.

00:17:12 Speaker 1

Were they protecting? Perhaps their ship?

00:17:15 Speaker 2

They were. That was our convoy.

00:17:16 Speaker 1

I mean, not because it was war, but because it was the queen.

00:17:19 Speaker 1

Mary.

00:17:20 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:17:21 Speaker 2

It was a convoy and then the destroyers were their convoy. To protect them. It didn't always work, but in our case it worked perfectly. They didn't lose anybody any. No, not one. No, not that I know of. Maybe there were some of the outer perimeter, but I've never heard of it.

00:17:32 Speaker 1

Incident.

00:17:39 Speaker 2

Anyway.

00:17:41 Speaker 2

Then we went to an English Manor.

00:17:44 Speaker 2

Called petty pool.

00:17:47 Speaker 2

It wasn't.

00:17:48 Speaker 2

A very elegant home, but it was a big, you know, English countryside home.

00:17:56 Speaker 2

And that was my first experience.

00:18:02 Speaker 2

Learning some different terminology that is not exactly in the American vocabulary, such as the throne room. Well in England, the throne room got its name because.

00:18:15 Speaker 2

The water cloud is on a high elevated. You go up at least in this place two or three steps and I guess the effect is to get a better gravity flow of the water.

00:18:28 Speaker 2

And that's where the thing came from. In American languages. Throne room. Well, one by one I began to catch on with their name for the elevators. And, you know, the lift instead of, you know, etcetera. And it was most interesting. I didn't meet many English people because most of our work was at the headquarters.

00:18:49 Speaker 2

Planning and just many messages and justice getting things in order, ready to go. And we had to go.

00:18:55 Speaker 1

And the 15,000 men are still on the Queen Mary.

00:18:58 Speaker 2

No, no, no. All dispersed all over.

00:19:01 Speaker 1

England, you mentioned that you went to a.

00:19:02 Speaker 1

Country house. When you say we.

00:19:03 Speaker 2

That's Peter pool.

00:19:06 Speaker 1

How many?

00:19:07 Speaker 2

Well, that well, I would give a guess.

00:19:10 Speaker 2

That was the division headquarters staff and all the related people who reported that such as artillery and tank command and so forth.

00:19:20 Speaker 1

So everybody in in planning went to them, OK.

00:19:23 Speaker 2

Yes, yes. The pedicle was the center now at that time, everything was under the jurisdiction of shape, which was Eisenhower.

00:19:33 Speaker 2

And any orders we got came from chaff.

00:19:39 Speaker 2

And the only orders we got were planning and training, you know, exercise every day. There were no orders at that time because the big move was just beginning.

00:19:55 Speaker 2

And that happened to Southampton in the southern part of England.

00:19:59 Speaker 2

Well, we motored down there and I think, well, I don't think I know we were on a what they call an LSI landing ship infantry, if you can imagine a barge.

00:20:10 Speaker 2

Oh, about 35 or 40 feet long. And perhaps uh.

00:20:15 Speaker 2

2025 feet wide.

00:20:18 Speaker 2

And the front end would drop down and the thing would be guided from the rear by the helmsman, who guided with the.

00:20:29 Speaker 2

A wheel and he got into the water.

00:20:34 Speaker 2

Supposedly we thought we were going to go up on the beach, drop the front and just walk right up there, and that's not exactly the first impression. It was a kind of a rough crossing. I don't know that the seas were more than two or three feet, but it seemed like they were 10 because the size of the gunnels on this thing were not very deep.

00:20:54 Speaker 2

And all the men were hanging over the side, you know, looking, peering into the murky future. And when we got there.

00:21:03 Speaker 2

My first impression of the war was rather sickly. Well, there were all kinds of metal barricades the Germans had sunk into the water. Folks, you just couldn't do this. You couldn't run on the beach. They knew that would be done. And they were well prepared to stop it.

00:21:08

No.

00:21:24 Speaker 2

And then when you were caught in this thing, then would come down this murderous fire.

00:21:29 Speaker 2

And justice practically wipe out whatever people were trying to disgorge themselves from this hundreds or thousands of but.

00:21:38 Speaker 2

But what really got to me was my first experience of seeing an arm hanging off of one of these pieces of metal or a leg here, or what remained of a part of a torso and all of a sudden I thought, Oh my God.

00:21:52 Speaker 1

Now, did and you knew they were soldiers?

00:21:55 Speaker 2

They were dead. Just pieces, yo. Yeah, Armen Armen. That was my first.

00:21:56 Speaker 1

I know.

00:21:56 Speaker 1

Death they.

00:21:57 Speaker 1

Were our men.

00:22:00 Speaker 1

That has been a dark time.

00:22:02 Speaker 2

Well, no matter what you're prepared for. You know, even when they try to tell you when you're sticking the bayonette into a bag of hay and a bug.

00:22:13 Speaker 2

Kill. Kill. You know, it's tough to do that. I don't want to kill anybody.

00:22:19 Speaker 2

And you just had to make your mind that.

00:22:22 Speaker 2

Either you were going to kill or be killed, but when you see this, it's already been done.

00:22:29 Speaker 2

Now what?

00:22:31 Speaker 2

Yeah, that's my first.

00:22:31 Speaker 1

Plan at death related to the.

00:22:33 Speaker 2

On Omaha Beach and believe me.

00:22:36 Speaker 2

That we spent the first night we were not by any means the wave that went in that took the beach.

00:22:44 Speaker 2

But we got into an apple orchard the first night, and the Navy had a whole slew of battleships off the coast with 16 inch guns.

00:22:55 Speaker 2

And they fired relentlessly with these huge.

00:22:59 Speaker 2

Shells.

00:23:01 Speaker 2

Into a town called Saint Louis. It's it's often used in crossword puzzles. St. period lo.

00:23:09 Speaker 2

And apparently they had had some.

00:23:12 Speaker 2

Information tells us different, which was excellent, that the Panzer divisions that have been stationed the area to protect that area pans are being armored divisions. German. There were two of them and they.

00:23:25 Speaker 2

Crossing each other.

00:23:27 Speaker 2

And the next day, about 11:00, we arrived in Saint Low and we were on our way now in.

00:23:35 Speaker 2

And that was the first time it dawned on me that these great.

00:23:41 Speaker 2

Panzer divisions that we've heard so much about Ramel crossing Africa and all this stuff.

00:23:48 Speaker 2

Suddenly I see horses hoops.

00:23:51 Speaker 2

The hoof that was always left.

00:23:53 Speaker 2

Or the hub from a wagon rail.

00:23:57 Speaker 2

Yes, the tanks were propelled with fuel, but they were fed and supplied by horse and wagon trains. Now that shocked me.

00:24:07 Speaker 2

And the mud that dug this up.

00:24:10 Speaker 2

They were complete. The horses were gone, the wagons were gone. They were just stuck. Done. They had no opportunity to escape at all, didn't have a speed, didn't know how to get out of the mud. They were just stuck and they were blown to bits.

00:24:24 Speaker 2

That was the second lesson, then, as we proceeded the third.

00:24:29 Speaker 2

Way back in the louver we always stress don't stay on the road.

00:24:35 Speaker 2

Because the enemy has the map and you are on the map, that road is on your territory.

00:24:42 Speaker 1

You're on the map.

00:24:42 Speaker 2

Stay off the road if you're on the road. They know exactly where you are. So in France we were on the road. We forgot and I was walking along as an observer.

00:24:53 Speaker 1

Say.

00:24:54 Speaker 1

Tell me when you say we were walking on. How many? How many?

00:24:57 Speaker 2

Our troops.

00:24:59 Speaker 2

Well, this would be.

00:25:00 Speaker 1

With the your immediate group.

00:25:02 Speaker 2

Well, this was not mine because.

00:25:05 Speaker 2

I my boss told me to go down and get a feeling for how we were doing at the front, you know? So it did. And I was walking along with these soldiers in the company. Now we're looking at probably, oh, a thing from here to 200 yards.

00:25:26 Speaker 2

Now.

00:25:27 Speaker 2

And maybe we're looking at 25 or 35 men scattered on the road.

00:25:34 Speaker 2

That was a lousy decision.

00:25:37 Speaker 2

I'm standing next to this boy.

00:25:39 Speaker 2

And the next thing I know, he has no head.

00:25:43 Speaker 2

And his body was spurting quarts of blood.

00:25:48 Speaker 2

As he his body danced up and down, but there was no more head. It was blown off of the shell.

00:25:55 Speaker 2

Tucker.

00:25:56 Speaker 2

That was my third observation and I yelled. Get off the road and they dove for the ditches, just like they've been told to do back in maneuver, but we forgot.

00:26:07 Speaker 1

And yourself?

00:26:08 Speaker 2

Included. Oh, yes. Oh, yes, absolutely. I became the more of this had happened, the more animalistic you get you live, you know, you hear things that you don't hear ordinarily, but they're different sounds, you know that they're not friendly. It took me, oh, I would.

00:26:28 Speaker 2

They.

00:26:29 Speaker 2

Three or four months when the whole thing was over and I came home when someone slammed a screen to our oven to jump out of their chair. You know, to me that's a different sound. And I had to reacclimate myself to uh.

00:26:41 Speaker 2

Find out that it was a screen door. Well anyway, on and on.

00:26:45 Speaker 1

You're in the ditches now. You're off the road.

00:26:47 Speaker 2

Now we get into an assignment.

00:26:52 Speaker 2

And we were assigned to General George Patton's Third Army.

00:26:56 Speaker 2

The idiot division.

00:26:58 Speaker 2

And we became.

00:27:02 Speaker 2

General patents.

00:27:04 Speaker 2

Favorite this is the regimental Insignia that I was in at first before I got into the division. This is the 317th.

00:27:13 Speaker 2

More about that in a minute.

00:27:17 Speaker 2

Anyway, the edit division became his front infantry division.

00:27:23 Speaker 2

Now the 4th Armored Division.

00:27:26 Speaker 2

Was a crack armored division and they just obliterated anything in front of them. We followed.

00:27:34 Speaker 2

And we were supposed to obliterate what they had and obliterated.

00:27:37 Speaker 1

And Robert, were you on foot or were you in chiefs? What were you doing? And were you walking all the?

00:27:40 Speaker 2

And this is.

00:27:43 Speaker 2

Oh.

00:27:44 Speaker 2

I had my own Jeep.

00:27:46 Speaker 1

You had your.

00:27:46 Speaker 2

Yeah, also.

00:27:48 Speaker 2

Let's back up a bit.

00:27:50 Speaker 2

There's assistant G2. No, no, no, no. I beg your pardon. I I have my own Jeep.

00:27:55 Speaker 2

As when I was a member of the division staff, I was the Knight G2.

00:28:01 Speaker 2

When night fell, I was the intelligence officer of the whole division. Until daylight. No matter what went on, I was it anyway.

00:28:08 Speaker 1

Did you sleep?

00:28:10 Speaker 2

Now.

00:28:11 Speaker 2

Except in the daytime and in the daytime is when you move. That's right. I got the short end of the stick and it didn't take me long to figure that out. But anyway, this is a great, great group of men and everybody was gung ho. We had a marvelous general, a great G3.

00:28:32 Speaker 2

Marvelous D2D3 is the general staff officer who plans our move.

00:28:39 Speaker 2

Our American Troop D2 is always planning the enemy. What are they doing? Who are they? Where are they from? That was our job and I had to interrogate prisoners. And. Well, I'll tell you more about that a minute anyway. And that's what D2 and D3 mean. D4 was supplies, food, ammunition and.

00:28:59 Speaker 2

Vehicles and the fire was military government, which didn't mean much until the latter part of the war.

00:29:06 Speaker 2

And G1, of course, the commanding officer. Well, anyway.

00:29:11 Speaker 2

We you said how do we move well with the 4th Armored Division, we really begin to loosen up the German forces. I mean, we really begin to batter them.

00:29:23 Speaker 2

And we went through southern France, and Patton was held then for commander at ages. Will that anything stop?

00:29:33 Speaker 1

Did you all love him?

00:29:36 Speaker 2

I would have to say all is a word. You are you using a little too liberally? Yes.

00:29:46 Speaker 2

Because we had by a halfway through the war, we had formed a slogan that General Pat would fight the last drop of our blood.

00:29:57 Speaker 1

I understand.

00:29:59 Speaker 2

And I was in two personal encounters with the man.

00:30:03 Speaker 2

And neither one brought me much admiration.

00:30:08 Speaker 2

Briefly, he's deceased, so there's no harm telling you this. We were in a bombed out Castle. It was just the the thing was a ruin, really.

00:30:17 Speaker 2

And it was raining, and it was a terrible cold, foggy day, and we were at the pretty much a point where we were exhausted.

00:30:28 Speaker 2

And here comes Patton with his entourage.

00:30:31 Speaker 2

Which means 30 young officers with the highly polished boots and putties.

00:30:38 Speaker 2

And they step out and we'll all watch them looking like these characters are bald, you know.

00:30:43 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:30:44 Speaker 2

And they step out in the mud, which is about that deep. And look at those boots.

00:30:51 Speaker 2

And we just and anyway the general patent comes in and he wants to use the telephone.

00:30:59 Speaker 2

And Beetle Smith was his cheapest test. Well whenever he left the.

00:31:04 Speaker 2

3rd army headquarters.

00:31:06 Speaker 2

Beetle Smith took over. He was the man to run it until Patton came back.

00:31:12 Speaker 2

Well, he want to talk to him. Tell him where he was and report in. And he went through all this through the switchboard, you know.

00:31:19 Speaker 2

And maybe you've seen the movies. They're a little leather telephones. Field telephones. Yeah. OK, he yanked this in his hand, and he Will Smith.

00:31:29 Speaker 1

Right, Beetle Smith was.

00:31:30 Speaker 2

Yes, back at headquarters. OK. No, he didn't have his patent heads. Ohh yeah, very High Street.

00:31:37 Speaker 1

This is so important because you're saying this because you heard it. How many?

00:31:39 Speaker 2

Well.

00:31:41 Speaker 2

Oh yeah.

00:31:42 Speaker 1

People are around converted.

00:31:43 Speaker 2

Oh, about. Well, there were about 40 of us gathered in this room, and the rain was seeping down, you know, and leaking through the roof and every all eyes around this man, he's trying to get Smith.

00:31:56 Speaker 2

His chief of staff and.

00:31:59 Speaker 2

Well trained 2 damn it didn't give me 3.

00:32:04 Speaker 2

What do you mean? Something 3495 off and get it. You tell that son of ***** when I get back, I'm gonna ream him from end to end and he rips the phone off the wall, throws it on the floor, stomps out of the place, and here go all the little guys after him with the mud.

00:32:21 Speaker 2

On their boots.

00:32:24 Speaker 1

This is priceless.

00:32:25 Speaker 2

When when they went out, we just all just smile. It's gonna take them hours to clean those boots, that's all. But I get back to how you moved. We went 150 miles a day on trucks.

00:32:45 Speaker 2

6 by 6 trucks keeping up with the 4th Army. Now you say well.

00:32:51 Speaker 2

How can you do that?

00:32:53 Speaker 2

You can't go 150 miles and absolutely clean out. No, you didn't clean out everything. We bypassed these little towns and there maybe 15 Germans left in there. OK, then we had the Super clean up. You know, we'd be alternate this and they'd stay back and they would capture these men or kill them.

00:33:12 Speaker 2

Depends if they offer.

00:33:14 Speaker 1

The attitude about that. But why would they?

00:33:18 Speaker 1

Dot.

00:33:19 Speaker 1

Well, I I know the rules of the Treaties and all that, but was there talk of that as you're moving, just forget bringing them along. Just kill them.

00:33:22 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:33:27 Speaker 2

No, you're not supposed to do that.

00:33:30 Speaker 2

But if they.

00:33:32 Speaker 2

Are belligerent.

00:33:34 Speaker 2

And it looks like they're going to be you're going to be it if you don't.

00:33:39 Speaker 2

That's it. They have no choice. But we didn't do a lot of that. We captured awful lot of them. And you know, it was over for them and they knew they were being steamrollered. And the further we got in this, the more we got into a different type of soldier.

00:33:57 Speaker 2

Now.

00:33:59 Speaker 2

When we got into outsourcer rain.

00:34:02 Speaker 2

Which is the extreme eastern edge of France. You're just getting into Germany now. One day the phone rang from the regimental commander.

00:34:14 Speaker 2

Hank Fisher, Henry Fisher.

00:34:17 Speaker 2

And he was crying on the phone.

00:34:19 Speaker 2

Openly crying.

00:34:21 Speaker 2

And my boss put his hand on the phone, he said walk.

00:34:26 Speaker 2

Get your stuff and get out and keep paying company for a couple of weeks. All his staff or either killed, captured or wounded and he hasn't got one face that he can recognize and he says he knows you and he wants to know if he can have you and just go on down. I never came back. I became an originalist too.

00:34:46 Speaker 2

And that was another world. Now we're really getting into it because, well from division headquarters now you're a regimental.

00:34:50 Speaker 1

Tell me.

00:34:54 Speaker 2

And regimental there's battalion and company and that's it. And you were you pretty much are.

00:34:59 Speaker 1

So you're out there.

00:35:01 Speaker 1

Did you want to go?

00:35:03 Speaker 2

And to make a difference to me really now I.

00:35:06 Speaker 1

You were leaving a lot of people that were.

00:35:07 Speaker 2

Important to you? Sure they were. Yeah. The cheapest staff. Our division, Max Johnson, was a teacher at West Point. He had a lot of regard from him, and I did he too. And the general. Every morning he came in. Alright locker. He had it. Saw it off.

00:35:23 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:35:24 Speaker 2

Well, Nigel. Well, Sir, the enemy crossed the line here. Well, what happened when he cross?

00:35:31 Speaker 2

Well, Sir, not much. Not much. What do you mean, not much? Be specific. He was a real bushy eyed guy. And he, you know, I I knew he was going to ask these questions. So I had a.

00:35:45 Speaker 2

I had an answer for him and it was very every morning he come in there and sit down there at 7:00 in the morning and I had to go through the whole night. What happened some nights is very boring. Nothing happened. And then some nights all hell broke loose. And you had.

00:35:59 Speaker 2

To tell.

00:36:00 Speaker 2

Them. So anyway, I never came back when I went down.

00:36:03 Speaker 2

Here.

00:36:05 Speaker 2

Because.

00:36:07 Speaker 2

That was the most disorganized, screwed up regimental headquarters I had ever seen in my life. The mess.

00:36:16 Speaker 2

And having been up on the other end of it.

00:36:21 Speaker 2

I made great strides in straightening things out almost overnight. Within two weeks we were a different outfit and I heard from my boss that division says, hey, this is just something.

00:36:34 Speaker 2

Well, I'll tell you how far that went.

00:36:38 Speaker 2

I was leaning up against a 9mm and a tank gun.

00:36:44 Speaker 2

At Christmas time, I think it was the day after Christmas and the reason we were leaning up against it is they left the motors running and the fumes. The warm fumes came out.

00:36:57 Speaker 2

And this guy was Lieutenant. Currently, he's a battalion commander.

00:37:00 Speaker 2

And yeah, we were chatting in and he said, well, why don't we have a piece of fruit cake, Bob?

00:37:07 Speaker 2

And I said, fine. So he reaches on, he's been sitting on this thing for a week. And this fruit cake was about an eighth of an inch thick. He said my mom sent me this. He broke it in half for me and the motors. And, you know, here there eating his fruit cake. I'll never forget that. And.

00:37:25 Speaker 1

Christmas. What? What year? Christmas. What year?

00:37:26 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:37:27 Speaker 2

I'll add it by about 43. Yeah. And I, I peeked around the tank, you know, because they they had a line.

00:37:37 Speaker 2

Out here as a defensive position, but I saw some activity off in the distance.

00:37:44 Speaker 2

And I said, let me borrow your fingerless this minute.

00:37:48 Speaker 2

And then put the field glasses on there. And it was a farmhouse.

00:37:52 Speaker 2

And there are about 35 Germans right around the back of the farmhouse, all being put, sent through a chow line. They were having lunch.

00:38:02 Speaker 2

A new meal and there were also 3 tanks. They were all from tankers.

00:38:08 Speaker 2

Parked behind that farmhouse.

00:38:10 Speaker 2

And I said, hey, wait just a minute.

00:38:14 Speaker 2

I got a little job to do and I went back to my Jeep and I had a 294 radio, which is a huge thing mounted in the back.

00:38:23 Speaker 2

And you probably heard stories about this Opal Baker Roger out and all that garbage, which I thought was ridiculous.

00:38:33 Speaker 2

And I picked the thing up and I said, ****, that was my boss, the division, the G2.

00:38:40 Speaker 2

I said this is a headache too. That was my.

00:38:44 Speaker 2

Name you know.

00:38:46 Speaker 2

They said yeah, headache. What's up? I said you got a map.

00:38:50 Speaker 2

I want to tell you I think I got a target now. He was an old artillery man, graduated from Dartmouth from the ROTC program in artillery. And I knew that.

00:39:01 Speaker 2

And I said now look, ****, you take this down very carefully and I gave them the asthma, you know, and and I gave him the coordinates, longitude, latitude.

00:39:10 Speaker 2

And I said, OK, now you tell you guys to bring down fire and I'll tell you how effective.

00:39:16 Speaker 2

And he says just a minute. And he yelled over to the forward observer, giving the coordinates.

00:39:23 Speaker 2

Anything you heard with those familiar sounds I talked about like?

00:39:32 Speaker 2

Neither the shelves come on and next thing.

00:39:37 Speaker 2

I said just a minute, ****, just a minute.

00:39:41 Speaker 2

OK, no more tanks.

00:39:44 Speaker 2

I don't see.

00:39:45 Speaker 2

Really walking around and the barn has disappeared.

00:39:49 Speaker 2

Lunch has been served and is over.

00:39:53 Speaker 2

And he says, hey, wait a minute, Bob.

00:39:55 Speaker 2

Do you know what you just did?

00:39:57 Speaker 2

You broke the code.

00:40:00 Speaker 2

I'm going to tell General McBride I said you dirty dog. No, he said. I think this is something we ought to know about.

00:40:07 Speaker 2

And believe me, the whole division within three days dropped Obel Baker I was on when everybody said, hey, Al, listen to me and we use open voice.

00:40:19 Speaker 2

Now when you think about it, how many Germans are going to be listening to understand English? The whole division changed in three days and we use open voice.

00:40:29 Speaker 1

Just by speaking what you meant.

00:40:31 Speaker 2

Yeah, sure.

00:40:33 Speaker 2

You know, if you call the guy Al, they don't know who, Al.

00:40:35 Speaker 2

Is and how could they?

00:40:38 Speaker 2

Ever find out? Well. Anyway, that was it and that.

00:40:41 Speaker 1

Satisfying and proud you must feel for that.

00:40:44 Speaker 2

Not all day's work, really.

00:40:47 Speaker 2

Mary Jane, it really was just that. Look, so many things happened that you didn't have time to get into.

00:40:54 Speaker 2

That for the next thing that happened to me at this level, I got an INR fortune. INR stands for intelligence and reconnaissance the 15 men.

00:41:07 Speaker 2

You would not want one of them as a friend. They were all cutthroats. Back in real life. I mean, they were cutthroats.

00:41:14 Speaker 2

And they were dangerous people. But for us, they were the eyes and ears of the regiment. To me, I was the boss.

00:41:23 Speaker 2

We had armored put on their jeeps.

00:41:26 Speaker 2

I had a 50 caliber air cooled machine gun welded in the back on them.

00:41:33 Speaker 2

And when they went to town, they always operated between 10 or 15 miles.

00:41:38 Speaker 2

In front of the entire regiment in front.

00:41:44 Speaker 2

Then when they go in a small town, they come to the road, they get this big Jewish guy sitting back this Jeep with his 50 shoot the windows at all the houses and he go out and he'd come back, turn around, go through it again. But you didn't see one person, not one soldier, nobody.

00:42:04 Speaker 2

And then the radio gone.

00:42:05 Speaker 2

Sadden Hoover downs clear. Maybe one or two.

00:42:10 Speaker 2

Shall we go on? I said. Go on. We'll take care of the wonders too.

00:42:15 Speaker 2

And that that guy was so good, I got him a battlefield commotion. That promotion.

00:42:21 Speaker 2

He was, I think, proof he operated at least six months toward the last part of the war, the second Lieutenant.

00:42:30 Speaker 2

And all kinds of anything I can get for him. The decoration he got.

00:42:34 Speaker 1

Well, two questions. First, the people you were saying were not nice people, but they became very important like him.

00:42:42 Speaker 1

Were they gathered together because of their qualities and character?

00:42:46 Speaker 2

Well, I don't know because I inherited them. See, when I came down from division till they were there.

00:42:52 Speaker 2

But I had met with him and I said, look guys, we got a job to do.

00:42:58 Speaker 2

You know what your job is? I am supporting you in any way I can. We're going to army.

00:43:05 Speaker 1

Like they could have been criminals at home.

00:43:07 Speaker 2

One guy. You won't believe this. He was Jewish.

00:43:11 Speaker 2

Nothing. I mean, that doesn't mean a thing.

00:43:15 Speaker 2

Who fought in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish War against the Germans.

00:43:20 Speaker 2

And when he came to us.

00:43:23 Speaker 2

He transferred himself. He just walked into his headquarters in Europe. He had a leather satchel with all of his papers in there.

00:43:32 Speaker 2

Which he thought were official. They didn't mean a thing to us. They were all his records being in the Spanish German war and fought in Spain. You remember that? OK. He was in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. That guy was in the God. He was awful. It's awful.

00:43:51 Speaker 2

I had a oh, he was married to beautiful. He showed me a picture of his wife. Beautiful gal back in Brooklyn. He had a little daughter.

00:44:00 Speaker 2

And the third time I got him cleaned up from syphilis. I said, look, this is your last last time next time.

00:44:10 Speaker 2

I'm just going to let you go.

00:44:12 Speaker 2

And you'll never go back to this person and you're blowing your whole life. Well, I think that finally got through to him. But anyway, now we got much more to.

00:44:21 Speaker 2

That thing.

00:44:24 Speaker 2

That took place in Bavaria. That's the only visual I have that I can point to and to. That's nonchalant Stein.

00:44:36 Speaker 2

That's the castle.

00:44:38 Speaker 2

Built by the Mad King Rudolph of Bavarian.

00:44:44 Speaker 2

The interesting thing about this is we came in the night before in a little town down the base by the name. This is the Alps, by the way. This was all full of the Alps.

00:44:55 Speaker 1

But what a sight. When you first laid eyes on me.

00:44:57 Speaker 2

Well, this is what happened. The advance party. We're standing there at the bottom with the flashlight and you don't go this way or that way. And so we stayed in field Marshall von Leeb's home, right down the very bottom and little town called Fusion FUSEM.

00:45:15 Speaker 2

There's small town, beautiful town at the fully Alps in Bavaria. What more can you ask for? However, in the morning, bright sunshine, blue skies. I open my eyes and I see these Spears. Now I've been

told that Walt Disney copied this. It looks like that's what he did. That's where he got the idea. So I closed my eyes and open again.

00:45:36 Speaker 2

It just seemed unreal, but the third time I yelled for the deep dive.

00:45:40 Speaker 2

And we found the contour Rd. which you have to follow up the mountain, it didn't come straight at all. It goes with the contour of the terrain, you know? And I parked the Jeep right in front of the door there. Right there. Yeah.

00:45:53 Speaker 1

Right.

00:45:54 Speaker 1

Oh.

00:45:56 Speaker 1

We should say that what we're looking at is like a pen and ink sketch of the castle.

00:45:59 Speaker 2

Well, that's.

00:46:00 Speaker 2

It's it is Munchausen, Stein. And today it's a state museum. Now look.

00:46:07 Speaker 1

And not destroyed by.

00:46:08 Speaker 2

I pulled no, not one, no. I pulled the bell pull here.

00:46:09 Speaker 1

Nothing was hurt.

00:46:14 Speaker 2

And this door has a little window in it. About like with three or four bars on it. And this old man comes across the courtyard here with a long leather apron and a Tyrolean hat with a feather on it. Yeah.

00:46:30 Speaker 2

And as it opens the door 9 out of Smithville Mark and I just reached out about 45 and I said.

00:46:39 Speaker 2

Open the door. Yeah, we became friends. I didn't know.

00:46:41 Speaker 1

Who did you think was in?

00:46:45 Speaker 2

I don't know.

00:46:45 Speaker 1

So you went up here. You didn't know who was there.

00:46:47 Speaker 2

No, no, I just.

00:46:49 Speaker 1

Who'd you bring up with you?

00:46:51 Speaker 2

My Jeep drive.

00:46:53 Speaker 1

The two of you drove up through the castle.

00:46:53 Speaker 2

Listen, a lot of stupid things, believe me anyway, he takes me up to the third floor. Oh, the whole castles. Matter of fact, he took me the whole thing. He's the only guy there on the 3rd floor, they had a ballroom.

00:47:07 Speaker 2

Beautiful ballroom.

00:47:09 Speaker 2

And.

00:47:11 Speaker 2

He told me that in 19330, Rudolph's prodigy was Wagner.

00:47:17 Speaker 2

He lived there.

00:47:19 Speaker 2

And he gave a program in that ballroom for Hitler in 1933. So he was extolling the virtues of it and all this. And we got out of the ballroom. And I said, what all, what's all this? The the They had an Esplanade around here. I don't think they can point it out, but you could look off to this side.

00:47:41 Speaker 2

In the backside, down here into the valley and all these things were choked with huge crates.

00:47:48 Speaker 2

They didn't want to talk about it. They didn't want to talk about it. But I looked at 1:00 on Monday. See this LOUVERE?

00:47:55 Speaker 2

Well, one of the things when you're in intelligence, Colonel. Cocktail Ch who was the G2 of the 3rd Army puts out things watched for this things have been looted.

00:48:09 Speaker 2

This was all the stats, all the stature from the Louvre was stashed in that castle.

00:48:10 Speaker 1

Of the art.

00:48:13 Speaker 1

All the art.

00:48:16 Speaker 2

And I captured the single handedly. So anyway I get I couldn't wait to get down the deep and I got on the radio and I call 3rd Army and they have a Fine Arts department. I should give me fine.

00:48:27 Speaker 1

Arts a Fine Arts department.

00:48:29 Speaker 2

Oh yeah. Oh, they knew they were going to bump into this someday, so they send out two jeeps and they painted the color of that paper out kind of kill these guys. And they had the sirens going, you know, and here we are all down here on the camouflage. Yeah, everything is OD, which is dark green.

00:48:48 Speaker 2

And then I said shut those things down. Ohh, they were so excited. Like kids on Christmas morning.

00:48:54 Speaker 2

And they made me put a 37 millimeter. I didn't put it there. I had the company come in and do it.

00:49:01 Speaker 2

A 37mm and a tank gun at that front entrance and we had a squad of men live there.

00:49:08 Speaker 2

And we had to feed them 24 hours a day until we moved down the area to protect.

00:49:13 Speaker 1

To protecting us.

00:49:14 Speaker 2

Yeah. Or you couldn't get it out of there. The Venus Demilo was in there, and the crate for Davenas Demano was from here. They're at the Wicker chair over there. And the wood. The planks were that thick. These crates were.

00:49:28 Speaker 2

Dude.

00:49:30 Speaker 2

You're going to see how they get him up there. Russian Polish slave labor. Push it up the side of the mountain all around there, across the courtyard, up this laborious stairway.

00:49:43 Speaker 2

They didn't care. I mean, if they just.

00:49:47 Speaker 2

Like slaves, Russian, Polish labor.

00:49:51 Speaker 1

How did you find that out?

00:49:54 Speaker 2

Later on they asked me how are you going to get them out? And I said, well, you got to ask the Germans how they got them up there and that's how they found them. They got.

00:50:03 Speaker 2

Up there.

00:50:05 Speaker 1

What?

00:50:05 Speaker 2

But anyway, we went on from this thing. He has another place.

00:50:12 Speaker 2

About 15 miles I I'm guessing 15 or 20 miles South. Excuse me. I really picked up a cold yesterday.

00:50:23 Speaker 2

Called slash linderhof. I have beautiful photographs of it.

00:50:28 Speaker 2

See he. He spent money like water. It took 40 some years to build this thing. And the peasants all around here were bled white all their lives to build it. And also the other one slushed liner off.

00:50:41 Speaker 2

And that one was inspired by his visits to France to Louis 14.

00:50:48 Speaker 2

And it has. The gardens are in the form of Florida Lee, and they have a beautiful.

00:50:55 Speaker 2

Gilded fountain in the back that shoots a spurt of water every 20 minutes, 150 feet in the air.

00:51:03 Speaker 2

And it's a gorgeous it's entirely different. It's very, very French, everything dainty, gorgeous.

00:51:11 Speaker 2

And our stupid soldiers.

00:51:14 Speaker 2

And Candelabra?

00:51:17 Speaker 2

They thought they were solid gold. They were absolutely plastered, gilded, and they broke them off.

00:51:23 Speaker 2

You know, do what are you?

00:51:25 Speaker 2

Going to do.

00:51:27 Speaker 2

We had one captain who tried to steal a truckload of chairs from the dining room at Schlussee Inhofe.

00:51:36 Speaker 2

And he was 60 miles down the road worth, I guess, forty of those chairs.

00:51:43 Speaker 2

He was going to ship my home.

00:51:45 Speaker 2

You can't imagine what people do, and it's dumb. Of course he caught the guy and threw him in the bargain. But dumb dumb things anyway.

00:51:57 Speaker 1

You're obviously in a position of quite a bit of authority now and you haven't told me where. Where are you? What's your rank now?

00:52:06 Speaker 2

Captain.

00:52:07 Speaker 2

And.

00:52:11 Speaker 1

Oh.

00:52:12 Speaker 2

The job I had which.

00:52:15 Speaker 2

The table of organization calls for.

00:52:19 Speaker 2

I should have been a major, but again, getting back to Colonel Fisher.

00:52:24 Speaker 2

Oh boy, here's another story.

00:52:27 Speaker 2

He and I go all like that. I have no regard for him. None whatsoever. Even the.

00:52:33 Speaker 2

West Point graduate that he was a poor example and he washed out when he went on to try and get the license to fly.

00:52:42 Speaker 2

As a West Point Officer and he washed out, he did make it anyway. He was a poor, poor, poorer, commanding officer.

00:52:52 Speaker 2

So I never got my majority. However, I was offered the majority if I would stay in for another two years.

00:53:01 Speaker 2

And I said, you gotta be kidding. I want to go home and get married.

00:53:07 Speaker 2

And I am not interested in your offer.

00:53:10 Speaker 2

Well, they said you better think about it. Well, they almost put the.

00:53:14 Speaker 2

He dog this was from 5th Army in Chicago because I was an intelligence officer and they you don't just walk away, you know anyway.

00:53:25 Speaker 2

On with this thing. Now let me think now we're we're in the lower part.

00:53:35 Speaker 2

On the Tigre light.

00:53:37 Speaker 2

And this is way, way down from Luxembourg, where the Germans broke through.

00:53:43 Speaker 2

And it's like 150 miles South.

00:53:48 Speaker 2

And I had. Now we're back now. The regiment I had a first Lieutenant.

00:53:57 Speaker 2

Who was in charge of a Tiger patrol? Now all they had to do?

00:54:02 Speaker 2

Was to patrol on the other side of the river, which was the sacred line.

00:54:07 Speaker 2

And tell me what's going on. And then I'd write the report and I'd send it up to division so far.

00:54:14 Speaker 2

He lied to me for two solid weeks like.

00:54:20 Speaker 2

How heavy transports have been heard?

00:54:23 Speaker 2

And could have been tanks, they weren't sure, but the tread sounded like they clank. Clank, clank. You know, trucks don't make that sound.

00:54:31 Speaker 2

And I finally got suspicious and I thought.

00:54:35 Speaker 2

You know, I don't believe this guy. I just something rotten about it.

00:54:40 Speaker 2

So will it get dark?

00:54:42 Speaker 2

You're gonna say no. You gotta believe. Yeah. You didn't do that. I did.

00:54:47 Speaker 2

I was determined I was going to find out if he was telling the truth, so I went across the river.

00:54:52 Speaker 2

And I went up and this huge noise that heard there was grass growing that high. There have been no vehicles there.

00:55:01 Speaker 1

What was his motive? He just didn't want to move.

00:55:04 Speaker 2

Oh, I forgot. There was a barn down there.

00:55:07 Speaker 2

Other they all cried upstairs. They went to sleep and then morning they get together and said here's the story. And here's what we know. They lied. See what I was going to court martial.

00:55:15 Speaker 1

What did you do?

00:55:20 Speaker 2

Because as I went up through the sacred light, they had not been occupied for months.

00:55:25 Speaker 2

They were moldy. The doors were rusty, and I finally yelled his name. And of course he wasn't there. But I I I hit about eighty of these things, you know, kicked open the door and had Benny by there. There was this dank.

00:55:42 Speaker 2

Moldy and Moss growing, you know, and all these telling me was a lie. So I came back and I was reading when they gave it to the court martial.

00:55:51 Speaker 2

And when I got back our headquarters in the farmhouse.

00:55:56 Speaker 2

And I walked in the room and I knew something was wrong because everybody was standing around and there was Max Johnson, the chief of staff of the division.

00:56:07 Speaker 2

They turned, he said. Where in the hell have you at?

00:56:10 Speaker 2

Well, Sir, I crossed the river. He turned around to Colonel fishes. You let him go out by himself.

00:56:17 Speaker 2

Here.

00:56:18 Speaker 2

You have got to talk now. That's beside the point.

00:56:21 Speaker 2

What happened was he came down to tell us.

00:56:27 Speaker 2

That the Germans were going to plan a breakthrough electric car.

00:56:32 Speaker 2

So what does he do? He turns to mean. He says there's one man that can take him up there who knows how to read a map.

00:56:41 Speaker 2

There are two truckloads of maps outside, Captain.

00:56:45 Speaker 2

I will be in the railroad building in Luxembourg and I will see you in Luxembourg.

00:56:52 Speaker 2

Hopefully with a division behind you tomorrow at 7:30 in the morning.

00:56:58 Speaker 2

That I said.

00:57:00 Speaker 2

Are the maps all the way to Luxembourg?

00:57:03 Speaker 2

Yes, captain. 2 truckloads.

00:57:11 Speaker 2

Can we get the word out to all the companies and the battalions to get all their fuel and this is going to be non-stop as far as I'm concerned we don't stop.

00:57:21 Speaker 2

We're just going to peel off.

00:57:22 Speaker 2

The back of the truck.

00:57:24 Speaker 2

He said whatever you do, I'll see you at 7:30.

00:57:27 Speaker 2

So I got.

00:57:29 Speaker 2

I didn't look at Fisher.

00:57:33 Speaker 2

I said OK.

00:57:36 Speaker 2

And I said to my Jeep driver, you better get a couple of extra cans of gas and put them on the back.

00:57:44 Speaker 2

And here we go. So I got off the map and we did it roared, roared, roared. We didn't stop. You know what time we got there? 4:30 in the morning.

00:57:56 Speaker 2

And had military police out there, they had what they slit eyes they cover up the whole thing down to this. And it's just a slit of light. And of course, you hear them again, you get like an animal. And I can see those things in the dinosaur stop.

00:58:13 Speaker 2

And they got out.

00:58:16 Speaker 2

And I said.

00:58:18 Speaker 2

Is there a password?

00:58:21 Speaker 2

No answer.

00:58:24 Speaker 2

I said what's the password?

00:58:27 Speaker 2

And a guy walked toward me.

00:58:31 Speaker 2

Who the hell are you?

00:58:33 Speaker 2

I said I've got the 80th Division on the road behind me, stretched out and I must report to the railroad headquarters building and speak to Max Johnson or generally Brian.

00:58:49 Speaker 1

By 7:30.

00:58:51 Speaker 2

Oh, no right then.

00:58:53 Speaker 2

And he said you follow me.

00:58:56 Speaker 2

So I got in his Jeep and we drove and you'd think we're on Times Square, New York, this marquee outside of this thing head. So I don't know how many light bulbs move it up, just like Broadway.

00:59:09 Speaker 2

It was the railroad headquarters building and upstairs was Omar Bradley and.

00:59:16 Speaker 2

Joel McBride.

00:59:18 Speaker 2

Max Johnson.

00:59:20 Speaker 2

And then what are we going to do, you know?

00:59:21 Speaker 2

Were.

00:59:24 Speaker 2

And then I walked in the lobby, right? Yeah. I can't believe that you're these MP's. Perfectly impeccable.

00:59:33 Speaker 2

White cotton gloves and you've been eating sandwiches made of white bread sliced on an angle. And I look like something out of a sad sack, you know, 430.

00:59:47 Speaker 2

And.

00:59:48 Speaker 2

They said then the question begins. What do you want to say?

00:59:52 Speaker 2

I said I want to see Max Johnson or I want to see General McBride.

00:59:58 Speaker 2

Just a minute.

01:00:00 Speaker 2

I said just leave the sandwich here. So he turned her off. He went upstairs. He came down, he says.

01:00:08 Speaker 2

They said you wouldn't be here till 7:30.

01:00:10 Speaker 2

I said you tell them we're here now. It's 4:30. They can't believe it.

01:00:16 Speaker 2

I said, did you tell him? Yes, Sir.

01:00:19 Speaker 2

What they going to do about it?

01:00:21 Speaker 2

They're plotting it right now.

01:00:23 Speaker 2

They're changing all their plans.

01:00:26 Speaker 2

I said keep the sandwich and I would turn around and walked out and went back down to the Jeep and I said we gotta wait a while. By 10:00 that morning.

01:00:35 Speaker 2

I'll never forget this.

01:00:38 Speaker 2

Remember the guy that gave me the fruitcake? Well, his first Sergeant had picked out a beautiful apartment in Luxembourg.

01:00:47 Speaker 2

Going to be for you, Colonel.

01:00:49 Speaker 2

Away by 10:00 he was moving his men through the forest in the position in foxholes, and we spent the most miserable part of that winter.

01:00:59 Speaker 2

When that breakthrough came through.

01:01:02 Speaker 2

And we were, let's see. It was like a trough.

01:01:06 Speaker 2

And we were on the South edge of that trough and we were coming through here and that was my first introduction to nebelwerfers.

01:01:14 Speaker 2

Which is a.

01:01:17 Speaker 2

While it does more damage psychologically than it does physically, with the noise it makes, it comes down and makes a weird thing like it's a kind of like a mortar shell. It's fired up in the air and then when it comes down it makes this weird noise which psychology scares you out of your wits.

01:01:39 Speaker 2

And.

01:01:41 Speaker 2

I had a good friend Jones, who was our engine.

01:01:44 Speaker 2

He he just lost his mind. Yep. He recovered in a couple of days, but that night he just went bananas. When this thing was being fired all night.

01:01:54 Speaker 1

Why hadn't you heard it?

01:01:55 Speaker 1

Sure.

01:01:56 Speaker 2

It was a kind of a selective thing. It wasn't widely used. It wasn't.

01:02:02 Speaker 2

They're kind of a weapon that you could kill people with. It was more concussion than noise than deadly fire.

01:02:05 Speaker 2

Yeah.

01:02:12 Speaker 2

Ah.

01:02:12 Speaker 2

Never, never warfarin. Right. And then never heard one before anyway.

01:02:19 Speaker 2

Uh, we learned a better lesson.

01:02:21 Speaker 2

There.

01:02:23 Speaker 2

We had a train outside this House. It was a farmhouse.

01:02:27 Speaker 2

And we were in the basement. The cellar.

01:02:30 Speaker 2

Dirt seller.

01:02:32 Speaker 2

And we had.

01:02:35 Speaker 2

Latrine outside.

01:02:37 Speaker 2

Well, again, going back to the story about the roads, you just have to learn the hard way.

01:02:43 Speaker 2

When you go outside.

01:02:45 Speaker 2

We put up a sheet.

01:02:47 Speaker 2

Which blended with the snow?

01:02:50 Speaker 2

But the sheep was that far off the ground.

01:02:52 Speaker 2

And they could see.

01:02:55 Speaker 2

And we lost three guys. We didn't kill them. They were wounded.

01:03:01 Speaker 2

But we had to drop the sheet to.

01:03:02 Speaker 2

Ground.

01:03:03 Speaker 2

We learned the hard way.

01:03:05 Speaker 2

And so it went.