

Andrew B. Zamba Interview

Company B, 702nd Tank Battalion

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Charles B. Jennings)

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

00:00:12 Speaker 1

Today is February 26, 2009.

00:00:18 Speaker 1

The interview is taking at Butler, PA Veterans Memorial Center.

00:00:24 Speaker 1

The interview with is with Andy Zamba, who was born in August 20, Nineth 19.

00:00:32 Speaker 1

23.

00:00:34 Speaker 1

The interviewer is Chuck Jennings.

00:00:38 Speaker 1

Mr. Zamba's branch of service was United States Army 3rd Army.

00:00:45 Speaker 1

Beneath infantry division.

00:00:47 Speaker 1

7:02 AM battalion Company B, third platoon.

00:00:55 Speaker 1

The rate that he achieved was private.

00:01:00 Speaker 1

To Sergeant and was up for a battlefield Commission when he was wounded.

00:01:06 Speaker 1

He fought in central Europe.

00:01:09 Speaker 1

In operation cobra.

00:01:12 Speaker 1

Argentina forest gap, Argentina.

00:01:17 Speaker 1

I'm sorry.

00:01:18 Speaker 1

Mozilla crossing the ZAR.

00:01:22 Speaker 1

Relieving of the epetrone.

00:01:27 Speaker 1

The.

00:01:30 Speaker 1

Ardennes offensive.

00:01:32 Speaker 1

The 60 line you want you to Germany.

00:01:39 Speaker 1

Could you tell me a little bit?

00:01:42 Speaker 1

You what you did before you entered the army?

00:01:48 Speaker 2

Well, I was an engineer.

00:01:50 Speaker 2

I went to, went to school at Penn State, and I graduated as an industrial engineer.

00:01:58 Speaker 2

And of course this was.

00:02:03 Speaker 2

1950.

00:02:07 Speaker 1

That came after you got.

00:02:09 Speaker 1

Out of the service. Yeah. OK.

00:02:13 Speaker 1

Where did you take your basic training? At Indian Town Gap and the first day in the army?

00:02:15

Any.

00:02:20 Speaker 2

I got the measles.

00:02:22 Speaker 2

And I was sent from the.

00:02:25 Speaker 2

My unit, so I was waiting for, which was the Air Force.

00:02:34 Speaker 2

Unit and.

00:02:38 Speaker 2

The.

00:02:40 Speaker 2

3rd Army wanted.

00:02:46 Speaker 2

I can't think of his name.

00:02:49 Speaker 2

My commanding general.

00:02:57 Speaker 1

In the 3rd Army 3rd Army.

00:03:00 Speaker 1

Patent.

00:03:01 Speaker 2

Pat General Patton yes, General Patton.

00:03:05 Speaker 2

We stood on a guard for him, and when he addressed his assembled troops at.

00:03:12 Speaker 2

The about 8 + 30 and made a speech to him to I think he had 6000.

00:03:22 Speaker 2

Soldiers that he addressed.

00:03:28 Speaker 2

And.

00:03:31 Speaker 2

Eventually fought with them all through the all through the war.

00:03:39 Speaker 1

After this, did you?

00:03:43 Speaker 1

Get assigned to a tank unit then or.

00:03:46 Speaker 1

How did you come to be in a tank unit?

00:03:49 Speaker 2

I was.

00:03:50 Speaker 1

I was waiting for.

00:03:54 Speaker 2

Air Force training down at Sarasota, FL and the General Patton sending an order for.

00:04:05 Speaker 2

Seven to form the 702nd Tank Battalion. And they didn't have enough people at Sarasota for to fill it out. So they use the cadre at Sarasota, FL.

00:04:21 Speaker 2

As.

00:04:23 Speaker 2

The people they needed.

00:04:24 Speaker 2

And phoned into the 702nd tank of the tank.

00:04:30 Speaker 2

Which operated with the 80th Infantry Division.

00:04:34 Speaker 2

In.

00:04:35

I.

00:04:38 Speaker 1

You take your training at where in Kansas do you recall?

00:04:42 Speaker 2

Well, the actual firing line ammunition is.

00:04:53 Speaker 1

Live finding ammunition. I'm sorry.

00:04:57 Speaker 2

I feel was flatland and.

00:05:03 Speaker 2

That's where we took our live fire ammunition training.

00:05:11 Speaker 1

You reach normality on D + 30.

00:05:16 Speaker 1

And.

00:05:18 Speaker 1

What was your first assignment?

00:05:21 Speaker 2

Bullet in a English community building and I was out.

00:05:30 Speaker 2

Talking to the.

00:05:33 Speaker 2

To bobbys that the Sergeant of the Guard and I was out looking over my troops and.

00:05:47 Speaker 2

Suddenly, there was a fleet of airplanes that.

00:05:53 Speaker 2

Standard us all and.

00:05:58 Speaker 2

It had a BD day.

00:06:00 Speaker 2

We all were sure it was D-Day, so this was d + 30 because D-Day was.

00:06:09 Speaker 2

Before.

00:06:11 Speaker 2

We got into it.

00:06:13 Speaker 1

OK, your assignment did.

00:06:15 Speaker 1

Did you have some trouble up in the hedge real country?

00:06:17 Speaker 2

Yeah, well, the.

00:06:24 Speaker 2

Governments used to cut.

00:06:27 Speaker 2

One path into a hedge row, and then they they they use them as anti tank traps.

00:06:33 Speaker 2

They lit a number of tanks, go through and then hit the last one so that they couldn't go through back out the same way they came in.

00:06:42 Speaker 2

And that was a tank to any tank truck.

00:06:46 Speaker 2

And we sent one one of our tank companies into battle.

00:06:55 Speaker 2

And they knocked out four.

00:07:00 Speaker 2

They're not about 5 or tanks.

00:07:03 Speaker 2

And they wanted us to send more.

00:07:08 Speaker 2

In air and.

00:07:14 Speaker 2

Well, I I.

00:07:17 Speaker 1

Cut they they wanted to send more in and your commanding officer refused.

00:07:23 Speaker 2

So.

00:07:25 Speaker 2

They said that he was.

00:07:31 Speaker 2

He could be shot for refueling in general order.

00:07:35 Speaker 2

An order of a general officer.

00:07:38 Speaker 2

And.

00:07:40 Speaker 2

They took him to headquarters company and.

00:07:46 Speaker 2

They told us that he was given a courts bar shown and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

00:07:54 Speaker 2

And.

00:07:57 Speaker 2

For refusing direct order over General officer in combat.

00:08:02 Speaker 2

And later I found out that.

00:08:07 Speaker 2

Writing from.

00:08:10 Speaker 2

The Argentine, the Maginal line and Zigfly line to the breakthrough at.

00:08:20 Speaker 2

The Jones made at.

00:08:23 Speaker 2

On the, I think it was.

00:08:25 Speaker 1

Or it ends front.

00:08:26 Speaker 2

Yeah, ardens.

00:08:29 Speaker 2

And uh.

00:08:31

Yeah.

00:08:33

Dad.

00:08:34

Yeah.

00:08:38 Speaker 2

He told us to get there established main line of resistance, contact the enemy, establish mainline resistance and.

00:08:55 Speaker 1

Did you?

00:08:56 Speaker 1

Did you lose a friend? And how did you?

00:08:58 Speaker 1

Oh, it's hedge row country.

00:09:00

Yeah, well.

00:09:02 Speaker 2

The.

00:09:04 Speaker 2

The the hedge role that.

00:09:09 Speaker 2

We got into was.

00:09:13 Speaker 2

Any tank trap.

00:09:14 Speaker 2

And.

00:09:17 Speaker 2

The general in charge.

00:09:22

Yeah.

00:09:23 Speaker 2

Wanted to send the rest of the tank company through that.

00:09:29 Speaker 2

Thank any tank trap.

00:09:32 Speaker 1

And you had to send your.

00:09:33 Speaker 1

In.

00:09:34 Speaker 2

And yeah, they ordered me to send my one platoon.

00:09:40 Speaker 2

And.

00:09:43 Speaker 2

One of my best buddies was in that platoon and.

00:09:49

Yeah.

00:09:50 Speaker 2

They were caught in that 10th tank trap.

00:09:53 Speaker 2

So we lost one of my best buddies there.

00:09:58 Speaker 1

And uh.

00:10:00 Speaker 1

Then there's a breakthrough, right?

00:10:02 Speaker 1

And you had to do a large flanking movement to Argentine fillets gap.

00:10:10 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:10:11 Speaker 2

Well.

00:10:13 Speaker 2

We got word that we could go with full headlights at night time and go from the.

00:10:23 Speaker 2

Magical Ziegfeld line to.

00:10:29 Speaker 1

You are normally at that time, right?

00:10:32 Speaker 2

Well.

00:10:32 Speaker 1

Yeah. And you, you flank up to Throne Ridge.

00:10:37 Speaker 2

D + 30.

00:10:38 Speaker 1

Yeah, it's only Ridge you'd like.

00:10:41 Speaker 2

Domino's.

00:10:42 Speaker 1

Yes. What did you do there? Well.

00:10:46 Speaker 2

We we found that we were on high ground looking down at the German 8th Army that was trying to get back to its home and.

00:10:57 Speaker 2

What we had them trapped.

00:11:02 Speaker 2

And you could pick your target.

00:11:05 Speaker 2

And target I chose was a truck full of.

00:11:09 Speaker 2

Soldiers rather than shoot at a any tank.

00:11:15 Speaker 2

Or shoot a tank or something.

00:11:16 Speaker 2

Because soldiers.

00:11:20 Speaker 2

For five targets.

00:11:23 Speaker 1

And.

00:11:25 Speaker 1

Basically you just shot until you're you ran out of shells.

00:11:29 Speaker 2

Yeah, that's right. And in fact.

00:11:33 Speaker 2

As I had one most of the machine guns were being loaded.

00:11:40 Speaker 2

And I only.

00:11:41 Speaker 2

I had left was the one in the 76 millimeter cannon, which was World War One adoption.

00:11:51 Speaker 2

To our tanks.

00:11:54 Speaker 2

And.

00:12:01 Speaker 1

You shot the last shot then or.

00:12:08 Speaker 1

Did.

00:12:09 Speaker 1

Did you fire the last shot out of your ammunition?

00:12:12 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, the, the, the, the only gun that had an ammo in it was the 76 millimeter cannon.

00:12:20 Speaker 2

So I hit the van with.

00:12:22 Speaker 2

A1 shell.

00:12:24 Speaker 2

From the cannon and.

00:12:28 Speaker 2

It.

00:12:33 Speaker 2

That man, this was about 7:00 one morning.

00:12:36 Speaker 2

When we started the attack and.

00:12:41 Speaker 2

Hit him with a that 76mm shell around.

00:12:47 Speaker 2

The the hip and.

00:12:50

Yep.

00:12:51 Speaker 2

It took away his leg and his privates, and he lay there from 70 clock in the morning till 7:00 that night when we were coming back to refuel and reload ammunition.

00:13:03 Speaker 2

And.

00:13:05 Speaker 2

Then he was still alive, barely. So I asked the medics to take care of them.

00:13:15

Yeah.

00:13:17 Speaker 2

As we cosmetics were pinned down before we took off.

00:13:23 Speaker 2

And then.

00:13:24 Speaker 2

They didn't make the attack with us.

00:13:27 Speaker 1

OK.

00:13:29 Speaker 1

Then.

00:13:32 Speaker 1

You moved on after.

00:13:34 Speaker 1

That was pretty personal, wasn't it?

00:13:36 Speaker 2

Yes, I lost one of my best buddies in that attack.

00:13:41 Speaker 2

And because of.

00:13:44 Speaker 2

The general.

00:13:49 Speaker 2

Made me send the direct troops through there.

00:13:51 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:13:55 Speaker 1

You moved after.

00:13:57 Speaker 1

You moved to a river crossing on the West side of the river.

00:14:01 Speaker 2

Ammo SELLE, Mosel, Moselle. Mosell river. Yes.

00:14:07 Speaker 1

And.

00:14:08 Speaker 2

River.

00:14:08 Speaker 1

What did you do there?

00:14:11 Speaker 2

Well, we ran out of gas, so we did trouble rigging.

00:14:18 Speaker 2

Gas up to us. So we had to use the tanks in in a defoliade position and fire indirect and.

00:14:29 Speaker 2

I.

00:14:33 Speaker 2

Set up the tanks for indirect fire.

00:14:36 Speaker 1

And.

00:14:38 Speaker 1

My understanding was that there were troops falling back through your position.

00:14:43 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:14:45 Speaker 2

And.

00:14:50 Speaker 1

The the. Basically your opponent held the bridgehead.

00:14:57 Speaker 1

From the Germans.

00:14:58 Speaker 1

Taking captured.

00:15:01 Speaker 2

And was only slightly damaged and we were sending.

00:15:06 Speaker 2

We sent armored units through on that bridge and then along side of it we built a another bridge that was under 2 feet of water.

00:15:18 Speaker 2

They so that.

00:15:23 Speaker 2

If the the the main bridge that was intact was some German.

00:15:33 Speaker 2

German Jews there remaining planes from the Air Force to try to knock out that bridge in the meantime and.

00:15:45 Speaker 2

We played a bridge.

00:15:48 Speaker 2

Right next to it underwater and went over that bridge to when I was stuck on.

00:15:56 Speaker 2

We leave a bridge about two feet underwater and the tanks were able to get through it, even though.

00:16:04 Speaker 2

Some of them got through before and that bridge that was intact.

00:16:09 Speaker 2

That they set use the most of their Air Force.

00:16:15 Speaker 2

To try to knockout that bridge.

00:16:22 Speaker 1

Call.

00:16:25 Speaker 1

What was life in a tank like?

00:16:29 Speaker 2

Well.

00:16:35 Speaker 1

What was life in a tank like?

00:16:40 Speaker 2

Well, we had one burger stove that we used to get sea rations, bacon and sea ration cans and.

00:16:52 Speaker 2

That one burger stove supplied to me with bacon and a former.

00:17:02 Speaker 2

Have my motor. My motor blew up and I had to have it replaced. So while I was on this with this farm in this farm field, got to know the the local farmer and.

00:17:17 Speaker 2

And his family. And they invited us.

00:17:20 Speaker 2

They took good care of us.

00:17:24 Speaker 2

They told me how to.

00:17:26 Speaker 2

Bacon and eggs for breakfast every morning by putting the eggs in the.

00:17:33 Speaker 2

In sand and then putting.

00:17:38 Speaker 2

Stop. No, not scroll.

00:17:45 Speaker 2

I put lime water in.

00:17:50 Speaker 2

In sand over over the eggs and I preserve the eggs and the eggs wouldn't roll around and break, so I was able to have bacon and eggs for breakfast every morning.

00:18:03 Speaker 2

With the sea rations.

00:18:05 Speaker 1

Life wasn't always that good.

00:18:07 Speaker 2

Buzz.

00:18:07 Speaker 2

No, not quite.

00:18:11 Speaker 1

Sleeping on the ground or hot hug?

00:18:12

Yeah.

00:18:15 Speaker 2

We there's.

00:18:15 Speaker 2

Room to to lay an attack because of space.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

Restrictions. So we always slept nearby the tank and I went to, went to bed one night and my body melted the snow underneath the my snow. Pat my.

00:18:39 Speaker 2

Snow bag.

00:18:42 Speaker 2

And.

00:18:44 Speaker 2

I froze. Then in the morning it got colder, cold, much colder. And I was a prisoner in my own.

00:18:53 Speaker 2

Sleeping bag.

00:18:55 Speaker 2

It was frozen to the ground.

00:18:59 Speaker 1

I think that you got your.

00:19:00 Speaker 1

Bag back.

00:19:01 Speaker 2

Yeah, I got it back.

00:19:05 Speaker 1

What was it like when you came back from an action that you had to refuel and rearm?

00:19:12 Speaker 1

What did you have to go through?

00:19:13 Speaker 2

A lot of work.

00:19:15 Speaker 2

That all the ammunition came in crates.

00:19:19 Speaker 2

I forget how many rounds were in each crate, but we had to knock the crates apart.

00:19:25 Speaker 2

Wooden crates and then pass up the ammunition from the ground up to the tank and then down into the tank.

00:19:37 Speaker 2

Towards.

00:19:41 Speaker 2

And.

00:19:44 Speaker 2

All.

00:19:45 Speaker 2

All the ammunition had to go that way and and tort has always opened when we were making an attack because.

00:19:56 Speaker 2

The Periscope's limited our vision sideways. You'd so we never buttoned up the tanks. We always made an attack with the the top of the tank. And but.

00:20:12 Speaker 1

Wasn't that due to air flow through the motor 2?

00:20:15 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, that's to get air to the engine.

00:20:22 Speaker 2

And.

00:20:25 Speaker 2

We had.

00:20:27 Speaker 2

For when we first started the action, we had air air cooled.

00:20:37 Speaker 2

Round.

00:20:44 Speaker 1

Airplane engines I.

00:20:45 Speaker 2

Thought yeah. Yeah.

00:20:50 Speaker 2

I forget the name of the.

00:20:53 Speaker 2

And they were air cooled.

00:20:59 Speaker 2

And all there came through the turret.

00:21:03 Speaker 2

We to get on a beach, we use snorkels to keep the water out of the engines and then when we got on a beach, why then we?

00:21:15 Speaker 2

Dumped the snorkels off and were able to move on land.

00:21:20 Speaker 1

What was it like loading gas well?

00:21:25 Speaker 2

All the gas was passed up through the turret.

00:21:29 Speaker 2

In five gallon gas cans and all the ammunition was in these crates and they had to be knocked apart and then the ammunition passed up through and put in the.

00:21:45 Speaker 2

In the slots on the sides of the tank and.

00:21:51 Speaker 2

We used to use.

00:21:56 Speaker 2

We used to get.

00:21:59 Speaker 2

Supplies, sometimes from.

00:22:04 Speaker 2

The people we conquered and.

00:22:15 Speaker 2

I.

00:22:17 Speaker 1

OK.

00:22:18 Speaker 1

Let's move this.

00:22:21 Speaker 1

Go on after after that, after you got your motor repaired and you recall where you went to next.

00:22:36 Speaker 2

Hard to template gap.

00:22:39 Speaker 1

No, we we we moved on from that point.

00:22:44 Speaker 1

I.

00:22:48

After.

00:22:51 Speaker 1

There is a number of actions that you were involved in.

00:22:56 Speaker 1

Where some here your platoon was.

00:23:00 Speaker 1

Heavily put on by the Germans do.

00:23:02 Speaker 1

Recall any of that.

00:23:05

Yes.

00:23:06 Speaker 2

And one of the officers made me send my.

00:23:10 Speaker 2

Best tank crew.

00:23:12 Speaker 2

Through the mine field.

00:23:16 Speaker 2

And when they when they tank hit the mine, why it flew about 100 feet in the air and the bus?

00:23:18

And.

00:23:27 Speaker 2

The only remains of the the crew inside was the upper torso. No heads.

00:23:38 Speaker 2

One of my best buddies was in that.

00:23:41 Speaker 1

At that time you moved on to the ZAR SAARSAR is.

00:23:49 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:23:50 Speaker 2

Those French names I not too familiar with, but.

00:24:01 Speaker 1

Do you recall a time?

00:24:05 Speaker 1

Delay our juvenile.

00:24:11 Speaker 1

In November 8th, do you remember time by the name of VILE?

00:24:19 Speaker 1

A UVALE.

00:24:23 Speaker 2

To will, I guess do well.

00:24:26 Speaker 1

You call.

00:24:27 Speaker 1

You call anything about that particular engagement.

00:24:34

You know.

00:24:35 Speaker 2

No, I have trouble recalling that.

00:24:38

OK.

00:24:38 Speaker 1

Well, we'll just move on.

00:24:42 Speaker 1

Uh.

00:24:44 Speaker 1

It around that time.

00:24:48 Speaker 1

Were you promoted to something?

00:24:50 Speaker 2

Yes, I was going to. I was.

00:24:55 Speaker 2

Well, first I was.

00:24:58 Speaker 2

A private and apoc.

00:25:01 Speaker 2

Sergeant and staff Sergeant.

00:25:05 Speaker 2

And.

00:25:08

Now.

00:25:10 Speaker 2

Finally got my own tank and became a tank commander with with a platoon of tanks.

00:25:18 Speaker 2

And I was.

00:25:19

Is.

00:25:21 Speaker 2

Awarded a battlefield Commission.

00:25:25 Speaker 2

And a certain general's office.

00:25:28 Speaker 2

Took it away because I was no longer physically fit after my shrapnel.

00:25:32 Speaker 1

Yeah, from your injury.

00:25:36 Speaker 1

Did you shortly after you got your promotion, did you go to USO show?

00:25:41 Speaker 2

Yeah, well, there was always a USO show going on.

00:25:47 Speaker 2

The people in Hollywood put those shows on the.

00:25:54 Speaker 1

Do you remember Marlene Dietrich?

00:25:56 Speaker 2

Yeah. Well, they, they they had a bunch of Hollywood performers, almost always with the troops to to bring their when they were on.

00:26:10 Speaker 2

The recreation.

00:26:13 Speaker 2

When he took recreation.

00:26:13

I.

00:26:18 Speaker 1

Do you remember how you came to?

00:26:20 Speaker 1

When you brought store.

00:26:24 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, we this was the inside Germany already.

00:26:29 Speaker 2

And.

00:26:31 Speaker 2

So.

00:26:34 Speaker 2

You made an attack one day in the infantry.

00:26:37 Speaker 2

Infantry were pinned down and.

00:26:43 Speaker 2

I made the attack because there was no.

00:26:47 Speaker 2

Direct fire.

00:26:49 Speaker 2

They didn't have any 80 eights.

00:26:51 Speaker 2

TOOIN on us.

00:26:55 Speaker 2

And so I just start off and picked off the houses 1 by 1 until I surrendered.

00:27:03 Speaker 2

This was in Germany already.

00:27:06

Yeah.

00:27:07 Speaker 1

The time stamp was uh.

00:27:09 Speaker 1

Martin St. Martin.

00:27:13 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:27:16 Speaker 2

So I remember I forget some of the names of the towns but.

00:27:23 Speaker 2

We went, we went to Luxembourg.

00:27:30 Speaker 2

And during the night, why we after we conquered the movement, the Germans.

00:27:36 Speaker 2

Why then, the civilians came back into town, but they always sent them out at night time because.

00:27:45 Speaker 2

For their protection.

00:27:50 Speaker 1

And did you?

00:27:51 Speaker 1

Partake of anything when you found it.

00:27:56

I'm not.

00:27:57 Speaker 1

Did you find some beer?

00:28:00 Speaker 2

Oh yeah.

00:28:03 Speaker 2

And I took some rounds out of the.

00:28:07 Speaker 2

Holes for the beer where the round.

00:28:09 Speaker 2

Have been.

00:28:09 Speaker 2

And put bottles of liquor in there.

00:28:14

Thank you.

00:28:20 Speaker 1

Then.

00:28:24 Speaker 1

There was a Maginot line in Siegfried Line.

00:28:27 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:28:28

'S.

00:28:30 Speaker 2

We were up there when suddenly we got a we were knocking out the dragon steep cement.

00:28:39 Speaker 2

Barriers.

00:28:41 Speaker 2

Concrete barriers blowing them up when we got.

00:28:44 Speaker 2

Urgent call.

00:28:46 Speaker 2

To go to the.

00:28:51 Speaker 2

They said the Germans broke through our lines and.

00:28:55 Speaker 2

They didn't know where where we were, they how far they.

00:28:59 Speaker 2

So my orders were to leave off what I was doing up there when come with full headlights and everything that we had air power and.

00:29:10 Speaker 2

It could come with full headlights and run.

00:29:13 Speaker 2

Back to the.

00:29:15 Speaker 2

Where the Jones broke through and established mainline of resistance.

00:29:20 Speaker 2

So I took it took my tank.

00:29:24 Speaker 2

Platoon with.

00:29:28 Speaker 2

It's four and a half mile an hour speed.

00:29:32 Speaker 2

The of the tank and I was told to go back and contact the enemy and establish the main line of resistance, which I did.

00:29:40 Speaker 1

You run across the town that was.

00:29:47 Speaker 1

ETTIEBRUCK.

00:29:48 Speaker 2

Edelbrook, Luxembourg.

00:29:52 Speaker 1

You recall anything about that particular engagement?

00:29:56 Speaker 2

Well, we captured the town.

00:30:00 Speaker 2

And.

00:30:06

Robert said.

00:30:07 Speaker 2

We let the civilians in during the day, but we always got got about at night time because.

00:30:17 Speaker 2

It's hard to.

00:30:18 Speaker 2

Tell civilians from from soldiers.

00:30:22 Speaker 2

At night.

00:30:24 Speaker 1

Did you find any Germans in?

00:30:27 Speaker 1

Not uniform, but in civilian clothes, yes.

00:30:33 Speaker 2

The all the.

00:30:38 Speaker 2

The civilian politicians.

00:30:43 Speaker 2

Are there and?

00:30:53 Speaker 1

They find they you find some germs and civilian clothes trying to get out.

00:30:57 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:31:00 Speaker 1

Do you recall what you did with them?

00:31:01 Speaker 1

Send them back.

00:31:04 Speaker 2

Well, they, they, they dressed up, you know, civilians.

00:31:10

And.

00:31:11 Speaker 2

Here there.

00:31:14 Speaker 2

I think I forget the name of the the.

00:31:18 Speaker 2

Commander of that outfit.

00:31:21 Speaker 2

They they.

00:31:23 Speaker 2

This was in an edible book, Luxembourg at the time.

00:31:29 Speaker 1

And.

00:31:33 Speaker 1

You're supporting infantry unit.

00:31:38 Speaker 1

Do you recall number of them with the number was 318th?

00:31:42 Speaker 2

Yeah, 318th Infantry regiment.

00:31:46 Speaker 1

And they supported your tanks? Yes. How did they support your tanks?

00:31:54 Speaker 2

Well, they when they climb on the backs of our tanks and we made it.

00:32:01 Speaker 2

With entered the town, whatever our objective was.

00:32:07

Yeah.

00:32:07 Speaker 2

And.

00:32:13 Speaker 2

They made it coordinated attack with us.

00:32:18 Speaker 2

Say, sometimes they get pinned down and we had to make the attack anyhow. If there was no 80 eights around so but.

00:32:18 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:32:36 Speaker 1

Well, let's we'll go on to.

00:32:40 Speaker 1

Bello de la den. Do you remember anything about the battle? They are den.

00:32:47 Speaker 1

Pushing the germs back out, does any major engagements come into mind?

00:32:56 Speaker 2

That was the Battle of the Bulge.

00:33:00 Speaker 2

And.

00:33:02 Speaker 2

Orders were to contact the enemy and establish mainline of resistance, which we did.

00:33:12 Speaker 1

Basically you around that time, after the battle of Bulge, you were against the zigzag line again.

00:33:19 Speaker 1

Did you have anything to do with rockets?

00:33:22 Speaker 2

Oh, I got.

00:33:23 Speaker 2

I got a little.

00:33:25 Speaker 2

I got.

00:33:26 Speaker 2

Order to go back to the Ripple double.

00:33:30 Speaker 2

And pick up some equipment for about for my tanks. I got to the Ripple Depthle and found out that they were going to put 60 rockets on my tank.

00:33:42 Speaker 2

So.

00:33:44 Speaker 2

And they gave me two.

00:33:49 Speaker 2

Report is from the.

00:33:54 Speaker 1

Stars and stripes.

00:33:54 Speaker 2

Stars and stripes to go with me. All to see how these rockets were used, but rockets at that time were not too accurate.

00:34:09 Speaker 2

And this order that I picked up at the Ruffle double.

00:34:17 Speaker 2

Was instructions on how to use them.

00:34:23 Speaker 2

And but when we came to use them, why some some of the Rockets would land didn't go the distance they were supposed to go.

00:34:32 Speaker 2

They could possibly hurt.

00:34:36 Speaker 2

Other friendly troops. So I had to determine how how.

00:34:43 Speaker 2

Reliable it could be and work from that.

00:34:47 Speaker 2

So we did that.

00:34:51 Speaker 2

And then I had.

00:34:52 Speaker 2

Two fellows from the.

00:34:59 Speaker 1

Right stars and strikes.

00:35:00 Speaker 2

Stars and stripes.

00:35:02 Speaker 2

With the old times.

00:35:05 Speaker 1

Once you cross the Rhine, what did you do with those rockets?

00:35:09 Speaker 2

Well, we we we captured the bridge intact. So most of it intact.

00:35:16 Speaker 2

And then we built another bridge right alongside that bridge and.

00:35:22 Speaker 2

They tried to knock us out with their Air Force or the remnants of the Air Force.

00:35:28 Speaker 2

And.

00:35:29 Speaker 2

We we even shot down a German airplane with one of my type.

00:35:41 Speaker 1

After you cross the Rhine.

00:35:44 Speaker 1

Did the resistance get worse or did it get better?

00:35:49 Speaker 2

Without no.

00:35:54 Speaker 2

They.

00:35:54 Speaker 2

They were going back to their homeland to protect the homeland and.

00:36:04 Speaker 2

So the fighting got more serious.

00:36:09 Speaker 1

Did they?

00:36:11 Speaker 1

Was there?

00:36:11 Speaker 1

A lot of mines and teller mines.

00:36:14 Speaker 2

They they they used to booby trap everything, trees and roads and houses and.

00:36:23 Speaker 1

Why was that so hazardous to you? Well.

00:36:28 Speaker 2

To go over the tripwire would blow up in your face.

00:36:36 Speaker 1

Is it that you had to go out and?

00:36:38 Speaker 1

With your infantry.

00:36:38 Speaker 2

Record order with the infantry so that there wasn't anything 4 1/2 feet vertical.

00:36:47 Speaker 2

That could turn a tank on his back.

00:36:50 Speaker 2

So I went out with infantry reconnaissance units all the time before every battle.

00:36:57 Speaker 2

And that was a very dicey job.

00:37:02 Speaker 1

Did you ever get shot at?

00:37:04 Speaker 1

On.

00:37:04 Speaker 2

Oh, we were, yes.

00:37:06 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:37:07 Speaker 2

And.

00:37:10 Speaker 2

But then one day, the sunshine through all the clouds.

00:37:15 Speaker 2

Then our Air Force.

00:37:18 Speaker 2

Came out in force and we had air superiority and they cleaned up all the stragglers.

00:37:26 Speaker 2

We captured the German 8th Army almost intact.

00:37:33 Speaker 2

We were.

00:37:35 Speaker 2

At Dalmi Ridge.

00:37:37 Speaker 2

And your target was choosing which to shoot that truck full of soldiers or.

00:37:47 Speaker 2

Small or light tank or?

00:37:50 Speaker 2

Any target you wanted you could pick.

00:37:53 Speaker 2

That's where we captured Germany's army.

00:37:57 Speaker 2

We were retreating when you?

00:38:01 Speaker 1

When you were across the line.

00:38:04

I.

00:38:07 Speaker 1

Come. It's towards the end of the end.

00:38:10 Speaker 1

The war.

00:38:12 Speaker 1

Did you run across any?

00:38:15 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, the most horrible sight I ever saw.

00:38:15 Speaker 1

Camps.

00:38:20 Speaker 2

There's the people that they, they they put in.

00:38:24 Speaker 2

They trick the people into thinking they were going to take a shower and they and they said that they shave their heads and they even use the the hair.

00:38:36 Speaker 2

From these prisoners to see these civilians that they they murdered.

00:38:42 Speaker 2

And that was.

00:38:44 Speaker 2

So the worst thing I ever saw in my life.

00:38:49 Speaker 1

What was the smell?

00:38:49 Speaker 2

What? Yeah, the smell of death was all over.

00:38:50 Speaker 1

Did you smell it before you got there?

00:38:54 Speaker 2

There are all sorts of animals and people dead. They cut their hairs to shave their heads.

00:39:01 Speaker 2

Save the hair to to.

00:39:06 Speaker 2

For their purpose for.

00:39:09 Speaker 2

Any purpose that you could use here?

00:39:12 Speaker 2

They shave their heads and then they told them never go and get a, get a shower and here they were, gassing them as as before they killed them.

00:39:23 Speaker 1

As you proceeded on into Germany even further, did you come by a wounded or had what happened there?

00:39:31 Speaker 2

Well.

00:39:38 Speaker 1

Did you get wounded in your tank?

00:39:41 Speaker 2

Yeah, that I got hit by shrapnel. Yeah, and.

00:39:46 Speaker 2

Then I was.

00:39:49 Speaker 2

Put on the kitchen or a German house. I was put in a kitchen of a German house on the table in its German house that was under artillery fire at the time.

00:40:01 Speaker 2

That's when I got hit.

00:40:03 Speaker 2

Shrapnel. And then there was a wonderful American.

00:40:11 Speaker 2

Captain.

00:40:14 Speaker 2

That took did this delicate brain surgery on me and saved my life.

00:40:22 Speaker 2

And.

00:40:28 Speaker 2

On the kitchen, on this German table.

00:40:32 Speaker 1

Then you were sent back to Richmond, VA.

00:40:33 Speaker 2

Yeah, that's where I recuperated from my head wound and.

00:40:41 Speaker 2

In Richmond, they had.

00:40:44 Speaker 2

They were taking head cases and.

00:40:48 Speaker 2

And.

00:40:55 Speaker 1

What was the outcome of your wound?

00:40:58 Speaker 2

Well, I had two portions of two lobes of my brain on the right side of my head removed.

00:41:04 Speaker 1

And your left side would happen to it.

00:41:06 Speaker 2

And my left side was paralyzed because the the nerves crossed down and around your neck.

00:41:13 Speaker 2

And.

00:41:15 Speaker 2

So I was paralyzed on my left side.

00:41:16 Speaker 1

Go away.

00:41:19 Speaker 1

Then they let you go out of the.

00:41:21 Speaker 1

At that time.

00:41:22 Speaker 2

Well, they said I was no longer qualified.

00:41:27 Speaker 2

Well, I I was awarded a Battlefield Commission for the work I did and.

00:41:34 Speaker 2

They said I was no longer qualified for that TO and.

00:41:41 Speaker 2

Yet I got a bonstar medal for.

00:41:46 Speaker 1

After you came.

00:41:47 Speaker 1

Was it difficult to find a job?

00:41:49 Speaker 2

Yes, because I was paralyzed on my left side most.

00:41:53 Speaker 2

The time, yeah.

00:41:55 Speaker 1

And then at that after that time you went to school?

00:41:59 Speaker 2

Yeah, I decided that, they said.

00:42:01 Speaker 2

Back to.

00:42:02 Speaker 2

Let's I couldn't remember family or friends, so they suggested that I try school at the college level first.

00:42:11 Speaker 2

And.

00:42:13 Speaker 2

Because I wasn't fit to do any.

00:42:16 Speaker 2

Because I was partially paralyzed on my left side.

00:42:20 Speaker 2

So I went to school.

00:42:23 Speaker 1

And that took you five years?

00:42:25 Speaker 2

Took me 5 years going to school because if you left your trailer camp they had.

00:42:34 Speaker 2

It in State College, PA they had.

00:42:40 Speaker 2

A.

00:42:40 Speaker 2

Setting up bombs and everything for.

00:42:44 Speaker 2

The.

00:42:46 Speaker 2

Returning soldiers.

00:42:49 Speaker 2

And so I got in on.

00:42:51 Speaker 2

GI Bill and.

00:42:53 Speaker 2

I went to school for five years, kept that trailer going.

00:43:00 Speaker 1

At that time, after you came out of college, where did you get your degree in?

00:43:07 Speaker 2

Oh, I got it. In industrial engineering and in order to maintain your house at the college.

00:43:15 Speaker 2

Why you had to go to school?

00:43:16 Speaker 2

So I went to school for five years.

00:43:20 Speaker 2

Till I got pretty well.

00:43:22 Speaker 2

Healed and and.

00:43:28 Speaker 2

I got a terrific education at Penn State.

00:43:33 Speaker 1

And you got a job as an industrial engineer for 21 years.

00:43:37 Speaker 2

Yeah, 21 years.

00:43:39 Speaker 1

You recall where?

00:43:41 Speaker 1

You worked.

00:43:42 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:43:45 Speaker 2

Well, I lived in in a trailer camp right in State College, and in order to stay there, you had to continue to go to school.

00:43:54 Speaker 2

I went to school for five years.

00:43:57 Speaker 2

Took subjects that were easy, and if you read a book, you know the answer and the log with some engineering classes I had.

00:44:07 Speaker 2

Which requires a lot more work.

00:44:11 Speaker 1

After you retired, did you find another job?

00:44:17 Speaker 2

Yes, I.

00:44:19 Speaker 2

Used to make wire rope for Johnny Robbins Corporation.

00:44:24 Speaker 2

And which was later bought out by somebody else. But at the time was John, a roblem corporation. I worked for them for 21 1/2.

00:44:37 Speaker 2

Years.

00:44:39 Speaker 1

And at age 70, did you find another job?

00:44:41 Speaker 2

Yeah, I found another job job that I liked I worked for.

00:44:46 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:44:48 Speaker 2

Cabin Medical corporation.

00:44:51 Speaker 2

At 70, I got that job.

00:44:54 Speaker 2

Because I was feeling good and.

00:44:56 Speaker 2

I liked the work that we were doing and.

00:45:01 Speaker 2

Since then, why?

00:45:04 Speaker 2

Worked until.

00:45:08 Speaker 2

They they left the the business.

00:45:13 Speaker 1

Well, I certainly thank you for the interview.

00:45:16 Speaker 1

It's been very.

00:45:17 Speaker 1

Thank you very much Massimo.

00:45:18 Speaker 2

Thank you for letting me.

00:45:22

Much.

