

Clarence Canfield

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Question: As I said this is just you and me chatting.

Answer: Just off the shoulder.

Question: Ah, first of all, Clarence R. Canfield.

Answer: Um hm.

Question: And um, check to make sure my mike is down there too, and do you have a nickname?

Answer: Yeah, Corney.

Question: And where did that come from?

Answer: From up on the hill in Tumwater. Canfield to Cornfield and then Corney.

Question: I gotcha

Question: Ah, tell me about when you were in the service what was ah, if you do this, start just a real simple one, first of all that says my name is and when I enlisted I enlisted in what branch and where you got started.

Answer: My name is Clarence Canfield from Tumwater and I didn't enlist, I was drafted in August 11th, 1944 and ah, took basic in Camp Roberts, California

Answer: Signed up for the Paratroopers which may have saved my hind end because about two weeks before we finished basic training they got a letter from Fort Benning that they didn't want any more Paratroopers. And the four of us that had signed up, stayed around camp there for an extra month while the people we trained with came home for 10 days and then they shipped us back to ah, Fort George Mead, Maryland. And ah, we processed through there, got all new clothes, and up to Camp Shanks, New York, stayed there for a week or 10 days, cold as all get out in January.

Answer: And ah, got aboard the Queen Mary and five days later we were in Scotland. But it took as long to fill the Queen Mary and empty it, as it did to go across. Only five days going across the Atlantic and ah, it took five days to load and five days to unload so they got two trips a month.

Question: Was it all military people?

Answer: Yep. All replacements, infantry replacements. As far as I know it was infantry and anyway, I asked one of the crew members while we were on it how many men were aboard and he said 22,000 troupes and 1,100 man crew.

Question: My.

Answer: And I knew it was the Queen Mary but, and you could only see beyond a third of the ship at a time. You had a red, white or blue button and that's the only part of the ship you could be in, they had guards that actually stopped you. And ah, while we were going across I had a chance to look down in the engine room and um, the men down there looked like ants, ah I betcha it was at least 80 feet to the bottom of that thing. Just stairs and stairs and stairs

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going down. And ah, when we landed in Scotland I was on it four days, that kept me four days out of combat, and finally, I think it was the fifth day, I got off and got on a little train and about 5:00 at night, it was dark, getting dark and it pulled out and it had so many cars the poor little train could just barely make it, just chug, chug, chug up the hill. And the cars over there you sit facing the outside they just, you face the side windows so you could watch and look out I guess. Anyway, and there was running boards on 'em, and this little train was going up this hill and it wasn't over three or four miles an hour and it was just pulling for all he was, and it was almost dark out, you weren't allowed to smoke or any lights of any sort, and I saw this figure jump up on the running board and about that time the door opened up and he stuck his head in and says "Have you got any gum chum, have you got any gum chum" (laughs). But he didn't even wait for an answer, he just slammed the door and jumped off, I don't know, I don't know why (laughs). He wanted a stick of gum.

Question: How old were you when you got...

Answer: Eighteen, eighteen. When I got out?

Question: No when you went in.

Answer: Yeah, drafted at eighteen.

Question: So what were you doing before you got drafted? Do you remember the day that, did you get a notice from the mail, or how did you find out?

Answer: Yeah. Oh yeah you get a notice in the mail from Uncle Sam. We request your presence. But ah, all during high school, all the time I was in high school the second World War was going on. I think I was in high school maybe three or four months before Pearl Harbor. And so, I knew I was just cannon fodder, and my grades reflect it, they reflected it. I mean, there wasn't very much to do in high school because everything was for the war effort. And ah, the younger generation and all the people who went through it don't realize what it constituted to get the steel to the right place for the ships and get the brass parts there and the compasses and the propellers and everything to coordinate everything for as many ships as they were building, I imagine they were building 300 ships a year, maybe more than that.

Question: So that's interesting, I mean, 'cause I guess that is one thing that we don't talk a lot about, is, you know, the war wasn't here, I mean, the war was over there.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: But what was it like here? I mean you're eighteen years old, you're in high school, probably what a senior in high school or something...

Answer: It was what?

Question: You were probably what a senior in high school before you got...

Answer: No, all the time I was in high school the war was going on.

Question: So what, how aware of, as a high school student, how aware were you of the war? I mean what was your concept?

Answer: Well I even went up in the capital building and spotted airplanes as an airplane spotter to let somebody older work in the shipyards or something. And there was a lot of us in

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high school up there and had to call in out to the airport when we spotted an airplane flying around. As a matter of fact, that's the only time I've been up in top of the capital building.

Question: So what did you have to do, you went up there, like for an hour shift or something?

Answer: I imagine it was a couple of hours, I don't remember for sure.

Question: Was it something that ah, the war was something you feared? I mean was it something you were afraid of, or was it so far removed in your mind that, I mean even though there's...

Answer: No, no, you knew you were going to end up there. Ah, and thank goodness quicker than I thought it would because ah, the U.S. was, and Britain were up against the wall. They could've taken us over if they'd a had a mind to, if they'd a been smart enough to try it. And done it at the right time. I just saw a program this week on how England staved off Hitler, but ah, if he'd a taken France and immediately jumped on to England then he could've swallowed 'em up, and then the U.S. would've been alone.

Question: Yeah. Yeah it's interesting when you really understand what one thing could've changed...

Answer: And you can't imagine taking an invasion fleet through submarine for 3,000 miles to try to take England back (laughs).

Question: So you and your buddies, when you were, so you were all through high school the war was going on, you had the potential for being drafted, correct?

Answer: Not until... no I didn't get 18 until after I was out of high school.

Question: And did you had to be 18 to get drafted?

Answer: (Nods head).

Question: But so you, as you were getting near that, there was a fear between you and your buddies of ooh, are we going to be the ones...

Answer: No because so many of the classmates had enlisted already, left and enlisted. Some and ah, I forget, you could leave high school to enlist and then come back to high school when the war was over. And a lot of them did. And there were several of them I played football with and what not, that went through basic training they waited to get drafted just like I did (laughs). Course I only played football in my senior year.

Question: Now then, I'm trying to remember, you then worked at ah, oh you went to the shipyards.

Answer: Went where?

Question: You worked at the shipyards?

Answer: Yeah, during the war, yeah. As a junior in high school, junior and senior, during the summer months. Yep, course I had to tell them I wasn't going to go back to school and then I quit and went back to school.

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Question: Oh so you could get on for the summer?

Answer: Yeah, they're not going to hire you just for three days, or three months, two and a half, three months.

Question: So what was that like, working in the shipyards?

Answer: It was very interesting to me. The fellow I was working under was a ship fitter and he'd been over in Bremerton and he knew ship fitting. He knew how to stretch metal, he knew how to shrink it whatever it took to, um we were working on what you called a shell gang which was the sides of the ship. And ah, that man was so good that he and I, and he was doing it, all I did was run for parts for him, or go get this guy and go get that guy, but ah we did more work on swing shift than days and graveyard put together.

Question: So what type of, what type of ships were they building up at, is it Todd? Is that who's in Tacoma, Todd Shipyard?

Answer: Todd Pacific, ah they were cargo ships but they also made some tankers out of them in the same hull and ah, some aircraft, baby flat tops 550 foot flight decks on them. And they were more or less, I think, to take the airplanes from the United States over to the South Pacific. See they could run 'em 5,000 miles by ship and ah, and be in the war zone and then that airplane had 5,000 less miles on it when it got there.

Question: Yeah, yeah.

Answer: And they were taking 50, 80 maybe 50 or 80 of 'em at a time which...

Question: So where did, where did you go to high school then?

Answer: Right here in Olympia, Olympia High School.

Question: So you grew up, ok, in Olympia

Answer:

Answer: And we're having our 55th class reunion this Saturday.

Question: Oh wow, oh really, oh wow.

Answer: Up at the Elks Club.

Question: Hum. So what was, what was Olympia like while the war was going on? I mean, how did life change here? What are things you had to do or couldn't do or...

Answer: Well they even changed the curriculum in high school to where you had to and awful lot of calisthenics and obstacle courses and what not. They were getting you prepared and, physically, and hopefully mentally. And ah, and I really think they did a real good job. Ah, apparently almost all the teachers were exempt from having to go in the service because it was a necessary occupation. By the way we have some of our teachers that are still coming to our class reunion.

Question: Really.

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Answer: And this is the 55th class reunion (laughs).

Question: Wow.

Answer: Forty-four to ninety-nine is 55 years.

Question: Ah that must have been a good year to be teaching then if they're still ah, h

Answer: ..

Answer: Well this fella is only 10 years older than I am.

Question: Well that's right. You kind of lose that prospective when you're a kid you...

Answer: Yeah, I didn't think he was 27 years old when I was 17 but he must have been.

Question: Hah.

Question: Well did, ah, um, did rationing and things like that effect Olympia during the war? I mean, was there gas...

Answer: Oh yeah.

Question: What was that?

Answer: You only got four gallon of gas a week with an A card. Now if you had to go to work and your work was ah, war-oriented, well then you could go to the ration board and be allotted more gasoline, and tires when you needed 'em. And what everything, was rationed right down, food, I don't really know of anything that wasn't rationed.

Question: So did you have to go wait in lines? Or how did they handle all...

Answer: Yeah they... and you only got so much meat per month, per week and so much butter and ah, it wasn't very much (laughs). But it was enough to subsist on. And then the, of course England had been up against it so much longer than we had and when the GI's got over there and when they had got a chance to go into town they'd went and order a sandwich and the waitress would ask what they'd wanted to drink, really all they had to drink was water or tea, they had their choice (laughs). But the GI's would say, I'll take a glass of cocoa please and then the waitress would say "Cocoa, why the bloody blooming Queen don't drink coco

Answer: " (laughs)

Question: Oh.

Answer: But they were just pulling her leg. (laughs)

Question: So you ah, oh that was the other question. So when you were working at the shipyard, a lot of women working there at that time?

Answer: Yeah, oh yeah. And an awful lot of blacks came up.

Question: How did that work out?

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Answer: That's why Tacoma, there's so many in Tacoma today I think. It worked out real well, there was no, although I think they were discriminated against in that ah, none of them were welders that I remember. And they did chipping, and what in the world do you call that here, where they were buffing rust and what not, I forget what they called them.

Question: So even though they were needed, there was still a very...

Answer: They kept

Answer: .. not discrimination was in full, non-discrimination was in full swing at that time. They had few more rights than they did when they were slaves. And ah, might interject, went over in Czechoslovakia I had a real good friend from Georgia in the Army, the war was over and we were just laying on our bunks one weekend. Well we had one colored boy in high school here by the name of John Hamilton in 1943, 43, 42 and 44, and ah, I told this guy from Georgia, I don't know why we started talking on the colored situation, but anyway I asked him I said George, I said what would you say if I told you I went to school with a colored boy. Oh, he said, you didn't. And I said yeah it was high school in the county, I said, if he was going to go to school he had to go to... By God if he'd a been in Georgia he wouldn't a went to school, he said. I said, well I said he was a pretty good basketball player and football player too. My God you let him play sports! I said yeah, I said he helped the school. And I said in his junior year he was class president. My God Canfield, he said, what kind of school do you got up there (laughs). Well then about 30, 35 years later the National Guard went down to summer camp down in Fort Benning, Georgia, and I don't know if he's still alive or not but I called up a friend of his and mine, and ah got a hold of him at six o'clock that night and he said, are you going to have any time off? And I said yeah, I said I usually get the middle weekend off. Boy if he said, he said if you do, he said, you call me up and I'll come down and get you. Well he was 80 miles away but he came down on middle weekend and picked me up and took me up to his place. And this fella that I had that conversation over in Czechoslovakia with, he come over. And so we weren't together two hours when I asked him, and this was just, I would say within two years of Martin Luther King got killed, and ah, I asked him, I said George, I said, do you remember the conversation we had when we, about the colored people from when we were laying on our bunks over in Czechoslovakia? Yeah Canfield, he said, I do. He said things are different today but he said, not everybody likes it. He said, not all the whites like it and not all the blacks like it, but they are different today.

Question: Was, when you were in the service was there discrimination too?

Answer: Oh yeah.

Question: I mean was it very segregated?

Answer: Yeah. Ah when, they integrated when I was in the Korean War. And the fella that I talked to last week back in Indiana, he and I were the first two tank commanders over in Korea to get colored men in our crews. I got a man by the name of Bradley from Kentucky. And he was dark.

Question: But in World War II they...

Answer: No, they segregated them then.

Question: Hm.

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Answer: But most of the colored soldiers were under white officers. And ah, that must have been good duty being the only white officer there. But it was just like poor Bradley, there was him and another guy, were all there were in our company when they integrated in Korea so, I guess it evened itself out (laughs).

Question: What, um, so where were you first stay, where did you first see active duty then? So you got on the ship and you headed to Scotland...

Answer: Then we went to, 18 hours from Scotland to South Hampton, England, got on an old meat boat, because it had meat hooks and rib trays, and took us across the channel to Le Havre, France. And we worked our way up the pipeline, and finally got to the 94th infantry division. And ah, luckily they took us up to a little old town in Germany, I don't know what the name of it was for sure, and ah, was in these, mess hall was already there and the supply room was there and they told us what houses to get into and we went in there. And that evening when we went to bed and about midnight here come the rest of the company back off the Rhine River, they'd made the rat race to the Rhine. And boy they came in there and they, they shouted us out of those beds (laughs) because they'd been on the road for two, two, two to three weeks, fighting steadily on what they called the rat race to the Rhine. They were moving 10, 15, 20 miles a day.

Question: Wow.

Answer: And they had the Germans on the run and they kept it that way. And they ah, kind of ironical part of it is, I got acquainted with a warrant officer that is now stationed out at Tumwater National Guard Army, and he has the history, the division, the division history on what the Reserve, Army Reserve is out there now. Think it was the 70th division, infantry division. And I give him my division history book and he gives me this, which is nothing but mimeographed sheets but it's still the history of that division and come to find out, they were within, we were within 10, 15 miles of each other and they were pushing the Germans east and we were pushing them south. And they got in the (laughs), in the pincher. There was an awful lot of dead horses and what not over there, and men, but ah wasn't anything to see.

Question: Were you constantly scared, I mean what's, what goes on in your head? I mean you're 18-years-old, you're in a country you've never been, a bunch of people you don't know...

Answer: But you learn quick. I was lucky. I went to a weapon's platoon which is just barely back behind the riflemen, their in support of the riflemen with machine guns and mortars, but little 61 millimeter mortars, 60 millimeter mortars. And ah, yeah, you gotta be scared, but you've been trained to do things automatically and to act ah, to the best of your ability. Not necessarily act like you're not scared, but to do your job while you were scared. And that, that's what your basic training is about really.

Question: So does it become a normalcy then? I mean where, it's like a job?

Answer: Well, yeah, almost. But those that are, some of them that are at it long enough, they're just kind of in a daze. They're not necessarily shell-shocked -- ah two or three days rest and they come out of it. But a lot of it is during war, or during combat you don't get much sleep, you're lucky if you get sleep. Cause if you've got the enemy on the run you got to keep 'em on the run if possible. They always want you to take the higher ground. And um...

Question: So what was it, a day like then, I mean I know it changed every day but...

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Answer: Well I, see I was lucky enough not to see the worst of it. The war was almost winding down. We had, we had 'em in what they called the rear pocket. They moved up and took the Rhine River and they come back and we were only two or three or four days then we went to Tienville, France and around Luxembourg up to the north on what they called the Ruhr pocket, and it was, I don't know if you studied it or not, but the rear pocket was, had the Germans surrounded in a pocket 60 miles long and 30 miles wide, rough estimates. And G3 said that there was something like 130,000 krauts in there and when they finally broke it up and got out of there, there's a 460,000 krauts in there or something like that. Enormous number, an awful lot more than they said there was. And if I'm not mistaken they got 17 generals out of there. So that kind of broke the back of the German army right there, that pocket, that ah, they still had to fight their way into Czechoslovakia and what not, but it was easier because the end was in sight. They could see the handwriting on the wall too and all you got to do is live 'til the end and you're home-free.

Question: Is that the way you thought?

Answer: Yeah.

Question: I mean you definitely...

Answer: We went up and we stayed on the west side of the Rhine River while the Germans were over in Dusseldorf on the east side. We could watch, cross the river, one time I was watching a guy riding a bicycle down a path alongside the river over there and he must have hit a mine because next time he was upside down on the bicycle, 10 feet in the air.

Question: Wow.

Answer: I never did follow him down, he must've come down and hurt himself because his back was, it looked like he was lying on his back.

Question: Did you...

Answer: And we did pull, we pulled a dead German woman out of the river, the German commander or I don't know whether he was a coroner or what he was, but they got in touch with him and he came down with a little pony wagon and coffin, and this woman had been in the river for at least four or five months she was... Moss was growing on her. But we found her and we turned her in. And he took pieces of her clothing and what not and a shoe, don't know how long she had been in the river or where she went in at. But he tried to get some identifying pieces of her clothing and shoes and what not just in case somebody could identify her by those. Hard telling where she was buried.

Question: Was there order, by that I mean, I mean you've got all these troops or was it just ah, was it kind of chaos you were part of?

Answer: It was order. You just waited to get the next orders. You, now, (laughs) when we were in Kreifeld just before we got up across river from Dusseldorf there, they're pretty close together, the word was out that you didn't shoot any animals or anything like that. Well this town of Kreifeld was completely, there wasn't a civilian in it. As a matter of fact, my best buddy over there, I think he was four years old when his mother died and he was only six or seven when his dad died so his older sisters raised him, and he didn't know much about his family life and when we were in Germany there all you could write was somewhere in France or somewhere in Germany, you couldn't tell them where you were at. But he gets this letter from his older sister while we were in Kreifeld and she says if you ever get in Kreifeld,

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Germany look up some of our relations. Well there wasn't any relations around there, there wasn't any civilians in town. But there was 28 of us, the whole weapon's platoon was living in this four bedroom house I think it was, pretty good sized house. And ah, it was in March, the war was open in May, over in May, and pretty cold, and this 130, 40 pound pig ran across the backyard, one of the guys dunked it with an M-1. And it took us about three or four hours to skin that thing. We didn't have any pliers to grip the, the hide with and while we were skinning it was just fat, and we're with bayonets and jack knives, it's a wonder it ever got skinned. And you knew, we knew we weren't supposed to do it. There was an order out against it. But anyway, we cut it up and put it on a table and laid it on a clean bed sheet, covered it with a bed sheet, and it wasn't there boy we had a pork shoulder roast in the oven and four cherry pies, we found pies in the basement and ah, some saurer kraut. And then a guy by the name of Wilbur Reib was cooking, he had an apron around him, and he was cooking on a cold stove of all things, and a knock came at the front door. And it's the company commander and the major from the medics. And I thought my God we're really gonna get it now 'cause they're gonna to find that meat. Well they wanted to come in and inspect the billet Wanted to see how many were living in this house and what kind of conditions they were living in. And ah, the war wasn't over yet. And anyway, they inspected all the building and they come down the hallway and it was about two steps up into the kitchen and they lifted up that sheet and saw all that meat and just dropped the sheet again and took the two steps up into the kitchen again and ah, this Wilbur Reib, somebody said, one of 'em said boy that sure smells good, and old Reib said yeah, he said we're gonna have pork shoulder roast and cherry pie for dinner, are you staying for dinner sir? And this major even said, boy he said I'd like to he said, but I've got other things to do (laughs). And we never did get any repercussions out of finding that meat. I thought sure we'd get raked over the coals but as far as know nothing ever happened. And I've been with the company, my company commander several times at these reunions and I never really brought it up. I should ask him sometime (laughs).

Question: So there was, with all the fear and all the unknown, here is a pretty kind of normal part of life going on.

Answer: Oh yeah, somewhat. And anything that was comedy was appreciated. Ah, either in actions or in words. Ah, it's much better to laugh at times like that then to let 'em eat on you.

Question: Did, now you said where you were you had a house, you, so was it like you came into town and you looked...

Answer: Yeah, into the town of Kreifeld.

Question: and you just found a house, how did they...

Answer: Well that, it was the one that wasn't hit. There wasn't too many houses left there that weren't hit.

Question: So everybody's gone so you set up post.

Answer: Yeah. Then right after the war, the war was over, we moved into Dusseldorf, what they call Dusseldorf Eller and we moved people out of a, well four houses. It was really a six-plex and three other big houses -- two and three, two and three story houses -- just for these same 28 men that were living in that one house all alone. Everybody had a room or two when we were in this Dusseldorf Eller. But our platoon sergeant, when we moved into this area, that's where he said we were going to set up. And he just went up and told the

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Germans, you've got one hour to get out of here, and they started crying but what, whatcha gonna do?

Question: Well, is it different then, um ah, like with the Albanians and all that, they talk about them coming in and trashing and destroying and all that, it sounds like you weren't doing that, you were just...

Answer: No but the artillery and bombers were doing it though. You should see pictures of Dusseldorf right after World War II. Nothing but burnt out hulks.

Question: Yes well but, but that was when it was, when they were fighting against armed people correct?

Answer: Um hm.

Question: I mean, they were bombing it and doing all that. By the time you got there though, you weren't coming in and saying lets destroy all the, I mean most of them were gone anyway, but lets destroy the businesses, lets destroy their houses...

Answer: We didn't destroy anything that wasn't necessary.

Question: So you moved into a house and you wanted a comfortable place to live.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: So you took care of it and cooked and cleaned and fought a war.

Answer: Well quite often the, if there was enough dishes, they went out the window rather than to wash 'em (laughs).

Question: Well some things will never change. Hah.

Question: So were you pretty ah, communication wise, were you aware of what was happening in the war as a big picture?

Answer: Pretty much because you've got Stars and Stripes, the Stars and Stripes paper every day or two. And on a comment on that, there was a good cartoonist by the name of Bill Malden that drew pictures of infantrymen as they were Willie and Joel, he called 'em, and ah, and he drew several cartoons that were against the officers and some of 'em went to Ike and told him, they said, ah you better get on him we don't like that. And Ike said no, you leave him alone he's the best morale builder I've got. So he wouldn't let 'em clamp down on him. One of the cartoons was these two officers going out at two o'clock in the morning, or about two o'clock in the morning and they get to a fork in the path and it says officer's latrine 210 yards, EM latrine 30 yards (laughs). Well, at two o'clock in the morning which one are going to go to (laughs). Things like that.

Question: So there was as much of a delineation as the movies have made of officers and the lower ranked people, or was there?

Answer: No, no, no the officers in combat they get pretty tame because sometimes they've got their back to you, and everybody's got a weapon almost (laughs). So you can't let too many people get too mad at you.

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Question: So was there a camaraderie then within the 94?

Answer: Definitely. Yeah, if men had been together back then, there was something like 550 this year in Spokane for the 50th year anniversary of the association or 50th reunion of the association. I belonged to the 94th Infantry Division Association and they had their 50th reunion in Spokane this year.

Question: Is it a unique bond?

Answer: Oh yeah, just like brothers.

Question: Different than any other association you've ever had, I mean the circumstances you...

Answer: Yeah, I regard them as differently than the people I worked with all my life and ah, they're every bit as good if not a little better than those I went to school with, and I've been to four or five reunions from school, high school. I enjoy them both but I feel a little closer to those that you were in combat with.

Question: So that was...

Answer: Or around. I wasn't in that much combat really but.

Question: How long were you in? You went in in '40, 1940...

Answer: August 11th, 1944.

Question: And you got out...

Answer: When the war was over on the 5th of May 1945. And I didn't get home and discharged until 2 July, '46. I was in the Army of occupation. Yeah I was in 22 months and 22 days, that time.

Question: So in that very short time the bond that was built with ah...

Answer: Oh yeah.

Question: Now lets talk about that. The vision we have of the war being over is the sailor kissing in Time Square and the Ticker Tape Parade and all that, the war's over...

Answer: Yeah, it was, we were all glad, and of course, you knew it was coming ah, over there in Europe more so than they did, it ended quicker in Japan than it did over there because it's winding down over there, ah really got em on the run, and there's nothing they can do, their supplies cannot be replenished because their factories are all shot and their railroads are shot and everything else. Where in Japan they were in Okinawa fighting fiercely, some of the worst fighting over there, and then boom, they drop two bombs and that's the end of it.

Question: So what was it like for you then? I mean you said it kind of tailed down. Was it one day there was a war and the next day there wasn't a war or...

Answer: Well yeah, but you knew it was going to be that way because you could see it coming. But everybody over in Europe had to sweat out going to the South Pacific. And a lot of

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them did. Some of 'em were around by India and what not on their way to the war in the Pacific when it ended. I don't know as any of 'em really ever got over into combat or not from World War II but they were, they were giving them a little break and then they were loading 'em onto ships and they were, we were ready to go over and finish that one. And it was, it was ready to wind down because there was just Okinawa and Japan but they thankfully, they had planned on losing a million men invading Japan and when they dropped the two bombs Japan succumbed and that, you might say saved a million lives, American lives right there. Some people don't think the bomb was right but boy I do. I may be one of 'em that was saved, I don't know.

Question: 'Cause you would have been going over.

Answer: Could've been.

Question: Yeah, hah. You had a lot of lucky things all along -- a little extra time here in school and...

Answer: Yeah. Yep. Because a lot of 'em that I went through basic training with got killed in the South Pacific. One right here from Tumwater, Wayne Wilson, went to school with him.

Question: What do you think the message is for future generations, I mean from World War II, what as it gets, to some extent for some kids, I'm 40, and I mean I understand World War II but again I was even at my age removed from it and now you look at these kids that are you know, 15, 16 and next generation's coming, what's the message for them?

Answer: Well I think the message should be that everybody should put at least a year or two years in the military service before the time they're 20, 21 years old. Ah, if it's anything like it was when I was in (laughs), they would learn a lot. The main thing they'd learn is how to get along with others. And ah, course at the time I was in there wasn't much tolerance, tolerancy for drugs and what not. Ah, I didn't, I have been around them in the military but I was never approached to use 'em or never wanted to use 'em, but ah, and I presume it isn't that way today.

Question: Was there a lot of drinking in World War II?

Answer: Oh yeah and I did my share. And there's a lot of booze in German, in Europe. The French loved their wine, that was one of the cartoons that Willie and Joel saw there's these great big vats of wine and there's bullet holes in 'em and the wine is streaming out, and Willie tells Joel he says, them dirty scoundrels, them atrocity committing hunns (laughs). Because they wrecked their wine (laughs).

Question: Killing the wine.

Question: What um, do you think the war has a message, I mean, that's a hard one because you know in school nowadays, even when they built the memorial, I mean there was this big debate of it glorifying war, which is not at all what the memorial is, is of, it is recognizing the people who served, that lived, that died, that served abroad, that served here, is there a message from World War II?

Answer: Yeah. It's a, the most cooperative time the U.S. has ever known. I'll use the word cooperative because everybody was working towards one end. And four years, if you look at the production records, on tanks, on trucks, because we were supplying Russia also, with not only tanks and trucks we were supplying them with sheets of steel and sheets of

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aluminum so they could build their own and everything they wanted because they were saving American lives. And you had the, I don't know how many, bureaus and boards, of Office of Price Administration and Rationing Boards and the people that had control of movement of all this material, it just seems stupendous and they did a marvelous job. And the railroads had to do one fantastic job to get what was needed in Portland, Oregon from Ohio and the Pennsylvania steel mills, get it out here so they could build ships in Oregon. And ah, it was just all over the U.S. that way. And ah, don't forget they had to build a lot of trains for Europe for Narrow Gauge and ship 'em over there. And all of these things had to be coordinated at New York harbor and what not. It just, when you look at the size of it, it was fantastic. And there was, the population of the United States was only 140 million at that time. I don't know what it is today, 200, 230 million I guess. Um, course we don't really realize how much a million is but ah, it was an awful lot of man hours and loss of sleep and what not during those four war years. Not only on those that were in the military and training and what not but those that were backing 'em on the production lines.

Question: How do you think it changed your life? I mean what do you, had you have not had to gone, served and been in war and all that, did it have an effect on you?

Answer: I'm sure it did. My dad was a logger and I suppose that's what I'd end up being, I don't know. Although I like carpentry and what not, but I didn't end up being a carpenter either.

Question: Hm. Is it something you put out of your mind?

Answer: What?

Question: World War II.

Answer: Oh, no.

Question: Oh really. It's constantly there?

Answer: Yeah, I talk about it every day. And it must have effected me beings I saw so much less combat than most of 'em, the majority of 'em, must have effected me less than the majority. But then it's just, you can turn it around the other way, I tried to recruit people for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and ah, they said no, I'm through with it, I'm trying to forget it, and forget about me.

Question: I'm going to make an assumption here, you're proud to be an American.

Answer: Oh yeah.

Question: You still take your hat off when they raise the flag, and ah, do you hold animosity towards, was the war against a person?

Answer: No.

Question: Or was it to protect America? I mean how do you...

Answer: The war was against a regime, in both fronts, ah we changed their way of living. Ah, I don't say democracy's the best there is but it's just about the best they've found, solution they found so far. It isn't perfect but it's closer than most of 'em. And ah, I don't know once you beat a country down and give 'em a chance at democracy they seem to take a

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hold of it. See I was over in Japan for the Korean War only four or five years after the second World War after they beat the Japanese down and they, ah, really loved their freedom, I'll put it that way, that's about all I can say. And the women over there got more free because they were beat down, they didn't amount to anything prior to the end of World War II. And that wasn't why we fought 'em, to free the women but that's one of the advantages that women get I guess.

Question: So you don't, you don't harbor any animosity towards ah...

Answer: Towards the people?

Question: Yeah.

Answer: Nope.

Question: I mean did you, did you even think it, 'cause, I mean you talked about you went over to fight against a regime, is that kind of the way you thought about it in your head too while you were over there?

Answer: Yeah they, it was a Hitler's and the Nazi's and we had several films during, during the first part of our Army life, that Why We Fight was, and there's six or eight films there that told you why we were fighting 'em, and showed us pretty much what they were doing. Ah, we didn't hear all the atrocities that ah, that the Germans were doing but I think it was more so than what I had planned on. And I had a chance right after the war to go to huh, Dachau and I passed it up 'cause I talked to someone who that been there and they said it is not the least bit nice.

Question: You're talking about immediately after the war.

Answer: Well no. 'Cause I went to Czechoslovakia for six months right after the war, in September I think and I came out of Czechoslovakia in January or February and that must have been the time, yeah that would be the time, so it'd be maybe six months after the war. I got into Munich, near Munich and they said if you want to go to Dachau you can put in for it, no.

Question: Have you had any interest in going back? Ah, or have you been back?

Answer: I'd like to go back and see some of the places I'd been before. Ah, I kept, reminded my company commander here two or three years ago. He didn't, course he didn't know I was there, he didn't know me from Adam (inaudible), but we'd got pretty well acquainted since, and ah, we were in this, looking across the Rhine River at the Germans and we had to, weapons platoon had a shingle pulled out of a barn, lifted out of a barn and they were up in the loft of the barn and they could look over both dikes on the, see that river was diked pretty heavy, and we had our machine guns set up on the top of the dikes and the mortars behind the dikes and the infantry in front of the dikes down on the riverbank. And dug in, and ah, so the OP was in this barn and there was only one house on the other side, big two, two and a half story house ah, very close to the river, that was the only house that was over there. And somehow if you looked at the left hand corner, now this is probably looking I'd say five or six hundred yards at it, but if you looked at the left hand corner at the ground, you could just see the top of the vehicles going into the basement on that thing every once in a while. And ah, we watched it for a while. I don't know who spotted it, you could only see maybe two or three or four inches of this, I don't know if they were all the same kind of vehicle or what, I couldn't really tell what kind of vehicle they were but you could just see

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movement there. And ah, they watched for a while and then they called back to CP and got this Captain Butter up there, he wasn't captain at that time he was a lieutenant, and ah, he come up and he watched for a while and he said ah, he said that's too much activity there, he said, there's something going on in that house. So he laid out his maps and ah, he had double E8 telephone there, and he got his CP, his headquarters and he said give me regiment, so they put 'em into regiment, he said give me division, and they got division, and he said give me divarty, and that's division artillery. And they put him right into the gun pit and you heard him say fire mission, fire mission! And ah, he had his grid coordinates on the map all figured out. When he called in he told 'em what map was on and what the grid coordinates were and pretty soon you hear on the way! kaboom! Right over the phone you know. And we waited and we waited and here's six, seven, eight sets of eyes looking out through this little hole, and ah, I was clear in the back of course 'cause I was just a private (laughs). And we waited and we waited and we, even the old man who ah, had been in the war all the way though he said for God's sakes, he said, it's a lost round. And ah, he said I can't believe it. And all of a sudden that house just exploded and set a fire. The very first round he hit it right on the money, or the artillery did, just from what he told 'em. And that house burned all night. But we never did go and see what was hit.

Question: I was gonna say, you never found out what was...

Answer: Well we went up from there up to a little town of Meundelheim on the other side of Dusseldorf, this was on the south of Dusseldorf and we had to move up when they tell you gotta go someplace, you gotta go. So we never did know what activity was taking place in that house but we got rid of it (laughs), with one round, I can't, I couldn't believe it.

Question: Ha, wow.

Answer: And I don't know whether it was a 105 or 155 shell. It looked to me like probably a 155 'cause it was quite an explosion.

Question: H

Answer:

Answer: And ah, I bumped into him two or three or four years ago and he said yeah, he says I really lucked out that day (laughs).

Question: So when he's doing it he says ah I knew it.

Answer: He was a very good, or very conscientious man. He lives back in Virginia right now, just south of Washington DC, retired colonel now out of the Army, but he was only a lieutenant, first lieutenant then and I found out before I got to the company they were moving up and they moved up to a certain position and there was a pill box there well it was getting dark so everybody moved into the pill box and then secured it, put a security around it and what not. And ah, when he was in there he got an order to do something else, take some other or look at something else or something, and he only took half of the platoon with him and left the other ones there because they had their, some of their stuff in there. And ah, when he was gone on this other mission a German tank come up and put the muzzle right up against the door of that pill box and said surrender or die. And so half of his platoon was captured and then even after the war was over he became company commander which entitled him to railroad tracks or captain bars but he wouldn't take 'em until he found out that all those men were ok, they were released from prison camps and they were all ok, then he would take his captain's bars.

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Question: Wow.

Answer: But ah, at that time he, he sure seemed like a lot older than five years older than I was -- he was only 23 and ah, I was an 18-year-old kid, he sure...

Question: Did, so it is true what they say that the war made a lot of young kids grow up real quick.

Answer: Oh yeah, especially if you're not lucky enough to live through it.

Question: H

Answer: ..

Answer: And in Czechoslovakia we had the Russians coming across. There was supposed to be a 20 mile buffer zone between the Americans and the Russians. And the Russians were taking over Czechoslovakia at that time because I got acquainted with a tailor who had 50 Russian uniforms cut out and he was to sew 'em together and I asked him how much he was getting paid, and he could speak German and I can speak a little German and, ah he said no, I don't get paid nothing, he said, they just told me to do it. And that was right in the town we were living in. I don't know when the Russians came in and got those, how they got those uniforms to 'em, they may come in by Czech.

Answer: Wow.

Question: But ah, never did find out how he got the uniforms (laughs) or the cut out pieces to put together. And then occasionally the Russian soldiers would come over and they'd buy a broken watch for \$35 or a sun tan shirt, everything was \$35, I don't know why (laughs). Well they, they had unlimited supply of money, their script which was, it didn't look like money it was just war time money. But all their serial numbers started with zero and I was told that they, when they got ready to go some place they picked up condoms and, and a stack of money, all the money they wanted and, and their pass, at the last. But anyway we would catch 'em and then we'd take 'em up to a Marionbat or someplace up northern part of Czechoslovakia by Jeep. The guys, and the guys said that they'd take 'em up there and the Americans were guarding on one side of the bridge and the Russians were, and he said they'd march 'em across that bridge he said, and when them Russian guards got a hold of 'em they'd take 'em back behind the guard shack and shoot 'em. Because they weren't supposed to be in our sector, and they didn't want 'em to find out how the American soldier was living.

Question: Hm, wow... wow, huh.

Answer: So you'd think that would kind of cut down but I bet there was four, five or six came over in our area while we were there, six months.

Question: Hah.

Answer: And just 'cause the war ended doesn't, doesn't mean that that's the end of the war because a lot of 'em in Czechoslovakia which was supposed to be the end of the war, ah, this Czech man found a German rifle grenade and he's packed it down a gravel road, street, in this town, a little town of El Henyas. And ah, and he dropped it at his feet and it went off at his feet, boy it sounded like an artillery round. We were in the chick, living in the chicken house right next door and we run out there and he's sitting in the middle of this street with a

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his pants halfway blown off, and gravel blown into his legs bad, and one piece about the size of a 22 right in his throat. And while he's sitting there stunned, he's (breathes), and the bubbles are coming in and out of that throat and there was a doctor that lived right across the T of the street, and he come up there, and I presume he was a doctor, he was giving him a shot anyway, with a needle, and his hands were shaking just something fierce. I don't know whether he was a full fledged doctor or what. Anyway, they, we put him on a stretcher on a Jeep and it was 26 miles to the hospital or something like that, but he died on the way, he didn't make it to the hospital. And I think maybe if they'd a taken him with his head down, kept his head down where he wasn't breathing all that blood into his lungs, I bet you he died of drowning himself.

Question: H

Answer: So you said, even though the war was over it wasn't over.

Answer: No, see, a piece of shrapnel could have come through that chicken house and killed somebody there far as that goes. And it ended up killing him. That was the only person that was hurt really. And there was only about 200, 250 people that lived in this town, little town. One of the unique thing I remember, they were threshing their oats and they had, looked to be an eighth to a twentieth horse, not a eight horse, an eighth of a horse, a little tiny electric motor with a fan on it and they were nippin' the oats into that fan to thrash 'em. And they had big canvases stretched around and I guess they'd been doing that way for years. But it's 50 cycle current over there so you can use anything that we'd had wouldn't have worked (laughs). But at that very same place I saw them plowing with a horse and a cow side-by-side, plowing with a hand plow. And we had a carpenter's shop across the street from that chicken house we were living in and the blacksmith, there was a blacksmith and a carpenter's shop side-by-side, and the blacksmith big, pretty good sized man about 28, 30 years old, he could speak German so I could converse with him, 'cause I spent six months in Czechoslovakia and I didn't learn six words. I didn't want to. But he and I could get together pretty good and I could understand what he was doing. Well, he and his helper beat out a horse drawn plow, I would say it was a 16-inch plow, and ah, he had to make the bolts to fit and everything else. And the carpenter's shop next door made the wooden handles for it out of oak and a pretty good looking job. But he was two days at it and he set it out in front of the shop and he had \$7.50, that's what he wanted for the plow, \$7.50. And I presumed he got it, I don't know, I never watched that much but that was an awful amount of labor.

Question: That was after the war ended or...

Answer: No, no that probably be four or five months after the war ended.

Question: Oh ok.

Question: So life started to work its way back to quote normal.

Answer: After a fashion. Well that part of Czechoslovakia didn't see much war. There wasn't any great amount of fighting. I don't know where that poor farmer found that rifle grenade.

Question: Hm.

Answer: 'Cause we didn't find. Well of course we were only on out post there, we were guarding against the Russians we had that, buffer zone.

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Question: Well I appreciate your time.

Answer: Well, I hope I've given you a little...