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Question: You were in sort of a tough situation, what did you do, did you get between the German's and the French?

Answer: Oh yeah, we had to make them our prisoners, instead of the prisoners of the crowd, and so forth. But every once in awhile some woman in the crowd would come out from the crowd with her umbrella or something and bash one of them over the head. Nobody was really badly hurt but it was an awkward situation. Memorable that people would do that. You don't know what these guys had done to the people in the city and then they marched off 4 or 5 women that the French people had shorn their hair. It was well before.. popular now you find women with their hair that short so that was a French problem didn't have to get involved in.

Question: Probably some pretty scared German soldiers there huh?

Answer: Yeah, I don't know. They were glad to see us, I remember that.

Question: So when did you meet up with the main army that came from Normandy?

Answer: Well, we didn't do that. We stayed on the flank. The other heavier forces, this was the 7th army coming north. Patton was no longer with the 7th army he had gone out of there. General Patch I guess was the army commander at the time. They went up north. I wasn't with that element so I don't know when they met. We did go later up that valley, the Rhone Valley I think is the name, and we passed miles and miles of destroyed German convoys. It's almost indescribable. If you could take the World Trade Center and lay it out laterally on a road side it probably would be something like that but literally miles of vehicles and trains and tanks. The bodies had been removed at that time. And that was the air force, the Air Corp I got to say.. in those days that was able to do some of the strafing there because they were held up in certain passes and what not. But we did that in later in the fall in December in fact our units were moved from the Alps, maritime which is north of the Riviera where we were in the mountains and hills there.

Question: So when the landing there in southern France there were fire fights and things weren't there I mean there was the Germans

Answer: There was, one of the fights we got involved in, I forget the name of the city, it was a German officer's candidate school there and our particular unit got involved with that and it was a pretty stiff fire fight. These were German soldiers that had done a good enough job to be sent to their officer's candidate school. The German's are pretty tough fighters so it wasn't the case of them ringing the school bell or out of school they were armed and defending the area and so there were that kind of fire fights and others around too. It wasn't a walk in the sun although they sometime refer to that as the "champagne campaign".

Question: When you read about it even to this day was it necessary or you know.

Answer: Of course, the original planning was that they be simultaneous and that would have been a lot better but they ran out of landing craft and other problems that set them back until they could recycle the landing craft there.

Question: So that was the first time you had been shot at then was after that landing?

Answer: Yeah, really.

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Question: So was that different from seeing the devastation in Italy to that you said you knew you were in a real war when you saw the devastation in Naples, but at that point you must have been sort of. Were you prepared for it or?

Answer: Oh yeah, I think so. The a, it was, you know, not many different than we'd been promised really. I still remember the first dead German soldier that I saw. Some kind of a courier runner. Motorcycle with a side car on it and he'd been shot and careened over into the tree. Very very dead. That probably made an impact on me. The first American soldier I saw was dead, also made an impression on me. One of the biggest impressions was Dr. Spits, wasn't really a doctor he was our platoon medic. Bernard Spits, he being the only medic he had crosses on his helmet, red crosses on the white circles on his helmet and we were going for a little city.. street fighting in Le Muy, France, ducking into corners, doorways and things and by golly there was a helmet spattered inside with blood, a hole in and a hole out, just right through the helmet and he had been dragged away apparently because he wasn't there but his helmet was and you knew he'd been shot through the head and ducked in the next place and there was Bernie getting his head bandaged because the bullet had gone inside, hit the liner of the helmet and traveled around the helmet and gathered enough speed to go out the other side making enough splinters of the helmet liner to cut his forehead and to get blood out there. I was never so happy to see somebody in my life as to see him there with his head bandaged. But I can remember the moment that I saw the helmet and said my gosh and so there were those awakenings along the way, but I think I'd better move along with this war a little bit because I'm taking too much of your time.

Question: No, no, no, we have lots of time.

Answer: Then we were relieved and in December we went up the Rhone Valley just as a passenger so to speak. We were on the 40 and 8 boxcars that they have in Europe famous from World War I. 40 men or 8 horses went into those cars, 40 and 8. And they didn't put 40 of us in there fortunately. We were all counting that wondering if there would be more but it was full, you couldn't lay any more people on the floor sleeping on sleeping bags. One of the cars caught on fire and there was no communication from car to car and it was a long train I can remember that. We would go around corners and you could see that the flames were coming back towards our car. We were behind the flames and of course the air was rushing backwards and we decided we were going to have to get out of the car and you'd think that'd be pretty easy for paratroopers to get in the doorway and make an airborne jump but every time we'd get ready to jump some additional tracks would go past or a switch handle would be standing up there and nobody wanted to jump into one of those but finally the engineer looked back going around a curve I guess and found that one of his cars was burning so we didn't have to leap out of there but I can remember that part of that trip. Then we went to Le Havre, Franc, all the way to the coast. Went back to England, I say back, I shouldn't say back because we'd never been there yet, but that's back as far as an infantryman is concerned, and we went into a containment area and that belonged to one of the airborne divisions and we were getting our uniforms. Our uniforms were going to be issued and we were going out on the town there were all kinds of rumors that we were going to go back to the United States and form a new unit to go back to the Pacific. You know how everybody thinks of a good story and then run it up the flag pole and see if its saluted as they'd say but before we got the uniforms cleaned and pressed we were re-marshaled and flown back to the continent because the Battle of the Bulge had broken out so we went to the Battle of the Bulge. We caught some of the latter trucks going out from the 101st area and for awhile were attached to the 101st and the Bastogne area. That was a grim

Question: You weren't in Bastogne though?

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Answer: No we were attacking to get into Bastogne.

Question: After it had been surrounded? So that must have been a whole different ball of wax for someone to run into?

Answer: Yeah, it was. We'd been in the snow in southern France. One of the problems of being a paratrooper is that we had a separate uniform a different uniform and we were very proud of that the combat uniform. I mean, not the dress uniform, the baggy pants with the side pockets which has been assimilated by modern day army or high school boys and pocket, jacket was a coat thing with separate belt on it. And we were proud of it and that's why people joined the paratroopers because they wanted to be above and beyond and the parachute boots were precious things worth fighting for. I don't think anybody would fight to the cutting of a throat maybe but they'd fight to raw bone to keep their jump boots, then we went back to the Bulge and had these light uniforms and they began to lose those. The supply of those uniforms was being taken over by the regular field jackets and field pants and jump boots. We still had our jump boots but they were getting in short supply otherwise you'd have to wear flat buckle things and look like an ordinary soldier or leg as we used to call the ordinary soldier, still do. You're either a paratrooper or a leg. There isn't anything in between.

Question: What is the biggest thing about the Bulge or what do you remember about it?

Answer: Well, we had some tremendous fights there but the biggest thing I remember about it is that that was the end of our battalion. We had sufficient casualties both by fighting, by wounding, or killed, plus some bad trench foot cases, that we didn't have enough people to muster a battalion anymore and rather than send replacements to an independent battalion they took the independent battalion and made them into replacements for airborne divisions, the big ones. So we so when we the 17th airborne division was the third division that went to Europe, the third airborne division. The 82nd, 101st were already there. The 17th went over and we had these odds and sods battalions that I mentioned from Italy so essentially most of them went into the other units and our unit went into the 17th airborne division. They were brand new. They flew over at the same time we did. So when we were taken still in the 101st Bastion area but in that part of Belgium.

Question: So was that 2 1/2 months of pushing German's back, is that what, so did you get sent there right after the Bulge began?

Answer: Say that again.

Question: You left England back to Europe right after the Bulge began?

Answer: No, this is all Bulge fighting I'm talking about, which lasted into January and into the 1st part of February was still.

Question: You fought all through the Bulge then?

Answer: Uh huh, and the thing that I remember most was the fact that we had so many casualties for that. One of the things I remember was we were in a little town, I don't remember the name of the town anymore, because we called it Rigamort, but it was a name like Renamont or something like that, that gave way to the grim humor of Rigamort and we had a lot of casualties there and we had to get pulled out of there and did. This was after, about the time the breakthrough to Bastogne was accomplished then we were attacking to cut

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off the German's that were retreating to that point and we were still in the snow, so cold, and it was a rough time. I can remember the first big meal we got there. We had a lot of food because we had so many casualties and evacuated people that we had a battalion's worth of food for a few people to eat. We just rotated around the line back to the head of the chow line eating our way back to the chow line so we ate and ate and ate great food we got.

Question: You say you parachuted into Germany did you?

Answer: Yeah after the Bulge was over for everybody we came back and kind of got together with our new unit and we did some training. This was in Chelons France, Chelons Sur Marne And while we were doing that training there one day I came down with a malaria problem that I picked up obviously when I was down in Sicily maybe possibly Italy but most probably in Sicily because we took atabrine we didn't know we had any problems there but anyway I got put into the hospital and was in the hospital. I remember this guy was little but tough looking doctor who wore the 17th airborne patch on his shoulder . He went down the line sending people back to duty, back to duty, you stay, back to duty, and he went passed me and I hadn't finished the malaria cure yet so I got passed by and left there and I realized it was the only place left to have an airborne operation obviously he is throwing them out for something. And that's Germany and that is the personal target all of us had to jump into Germany and I was going to miss it after all this trouble so I left the hospital early which is to say I went AWOL, stole a pair of coveralls, I still had my jump boots because we put those underneath the feet of the bed in the hospital so nobody could take them. (inaudible jump boots and went back got hitchhiked a ride to the unit, got there just in time to get on trucks taking us to the airfield and got some outside clothes issued and some gear and I wasn't with any Pathfinder unit at this time, just a regular soldier, and I didn't have any underwear I remember that. I cut my pajamas off to use as underwear, hospital pajamas I still had on, so I jumped into Germany in my jammies you might say. Kids get a kick out of that when I tell them that. And then it was a great day on the field. I've never seen such an inspiring sight in my life even to this day and I've gone through a lot of parades, demonstrations, March of the Tall Ships on 4th of July and so forth.

Question: What was so inspiring about it?

Answer: It just to look out the door of an airplane that you are flying along at several thousand feet and every direction you look there are other columns of airplanes, bombers, and planes towing gliders,

Question: So it was that big of an operation?

Answer: I've forgotten, I should have brought notes I know how many, I've looked it up in research how many airplanes they had and how many soldiers they had but there were 15,000 soldiers and different units and different airplanes and gliders with equipment and I just I've never been so proud to be an American as I was, even the British planes were almost all built in America and you can't imagine the power that projected and besides that they had the fighters and the bombers blowing up the drop zone that we couldn't see at the time. You could see the rest of it there. It is an amazing thing. It's you see some of this on television shows but you can't imagine how it is in real daylight not on a screen and you are there you are part of it and what a tremendous feeling a daylight operation. It wasn't dark anymore. It was ten o'clock in the morning that we jumped. Then we stayed there for awhile and participated in the rural pocket clean up and then because I hadn't completed my malaria cure I after on the 24th, it was March 24th the jump, on April 24th I was struck with my malaria drill again. They put me in the hospital, various hospitals, on the way evacuations and so forth but I left Germany on the 8th of May and that was the first day I wasn't a teenager. When I

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tell the story on veterans day the kids relate to that fact that this is just a teenager I was and as they say the last half of the war from '43 on was fought by mainly by youngsters on both sides of the war and I was proud that I could be there and proud to come home.

Question: When did you get back home?

Answer: I got back home in a very short time because they wanted to clear all the hospital channels to bring our prisoners through the hospital channels that were being released at that time. So went quickly flew from a forward hospital area after the fever had been broken to Paris, stayed overnight in a Paris hospital downtown, and by the time the fever is broken you feel pretty good and go out and take a little stroll in Paris go back to the hospital. Fly all the way to England. The next day spent 3-4 days in England, put on a boat, sent back to the United States with about six other ships, I think there were 7 in the convoy, and came into New York harbor as the first convoy after VE Day. The time of that is the second most memorable day coming into New York harbor coming passed the statue of Liberty which I'd never seen before just amazed to see it go past. All the boats came out; the New York Rockettes were dancing on top of one of the ships they use to tour the harbor there and they everybody that had a boat with gasoline in it were out to meet the ships, circle around them, wave, fireboats shooting their hoses into the air. Back on the Manhattan skyline there were still enough windows you could open in those days and people would be waving sheets. The whole skyline would be shimmering with sheets there. So many stories you hear about people coming back from Viet Nam that never got a chance to get that feeling. I wish you could bottle that feeling and sell it. So my war was over went home and married that girl and went to school.

Question: So did you marry her right after you got back?

Answer: Yes, well I got back in May but I still had time I had to spend in the hospital to get cleaned of the malaria and then came home and got registered for school and gave her the ring and said we'd have to get married and I kind of thought we'd have to wait a couple of years until I got established in school and she said it will be January 16th on my father's birthday, January 18th I should have said that on my father's birthday and so that was it. We got married and we went to school together and she supported me by being a secretary and well she didn't really support me, she supported not to the extent that she did more than I did but I got my GI money and then I went out and got a separate job so I could make just \$10 a month more than she did. You got to exert yourself a little bit. And then we graduated. I did the graduating, but she did a lot of the work for it. And they lived happily ever after.

Question: Quite a story.