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Question: What about um, Southern France?

Answer: Well we went into Southern France and ah, it was, it was a pounded beat up mess when we got there. They hadn't, well as I said we went across the side of a sunken ship to get off our ship to get onto the docks at Marseille. Marseille itself was badly battered during the war. Um coming up, that's the only part of Southern France I saw at the time was in and around ah, Marseille and ah Aix-en-Provence. And ah then we loaded up our convoys there and moved up the Rhone River valley, up to the combat zone. But Southern France in operation Dragoon ah, took quite a pounding. And there was some very bitter fighting down there again with the 36th and 45th divisions. When they finally broke through, and part of the first French Army had gotten in also and went up on the left flank of the 7th Army. Ah, it was a serious battle zone and there was a place just north of Marseille where the Rhone River and the highway and the railroad and everything go through a cut. Um it's a quite a canyon area six or eight miles a place called Montpellier, well the Germans were over here, the French were on their left flank pushing them this way, they had to go through that cut. A task force of Americans came up on this side with artillery and tanks and everything and as the Germans went through that cut, they slaughtered them by the thousands. Ah that was one of the major battles in that part of the ah, theatre of operations at the time. And when we went through there, there still all till through that cut literally thousands of destroyed trucks and tanks, horses, horse wagons, dead krauts still all along the road -- it was just a mess. Ah you would have thought that it would have been, it was about I'm guessing now about a three weeks to a month after they the actual battle, and it was still a just one horrible battle zone. And what a horrible introduction to the war. I mean I remember the first dead soldier I saw in the ditch. I took my scout corporal out who was sitting behind me in the Jeep, and I pulled him out and told him to get in the last truck in the convoy, make sure everybody in the convoy saw that dead body, to just to make sure they knew that now we're in a war zone and we were playing for keeps now. And ah (laughs), when we went into position that night believe me their eyes were big and the digging was was, much more profound, much easier, you didn't have to urge the guys to dig that hole they were going to spend the night in a little deeper maybe. It was an interesting transition from being on the boat for eleven days for example and, and getting off and that long hike up to the Bivouac area and finally getting our equipment and loading up the guns and all that. Ah, it brought the war to home. Ah, gosh I wish I'd had a camera then but I didn't. But dead horses, dead horses by the, literally by the thousands, and you didn't, we thought the German Army was a mechanized army. Baloney, it was a horse drawn army.

Question: Hm.

Answer: They had horse drawn artillery, they had horse carts for supply, they had everything else. And another time we saw that was after we broke out and broke through the Siegfried line and went in to Germany on the 15th of March, ah, we landed in this little town of Katzweg just outside of Saarbrücken and the next day the division organized a task force of a battalion of infantry motorized, a company of tanks and a battery of artillery, my battery. And our orders were to go as far as we could, hopefully go all the way to the Rhine River, which was about 80 miles away. And by golly, we did. We went right through the middle of a disorganized German army in one day. And we stopped just west of a place called Ludwigshafen, right on the Rhine River. And going through there, here again, thousands of horses alive and dead for this "mechanized" German army.

Question: Hm.

Answer: It was really interesting. I ah, and they encountered the same thing in Normandy when the, after the big break out at the, they finally made the big break out in

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Normandy, horses all over the place. And you heard and read of nothing but mechanized German Blitzkrieg army. Well, baloney, they had a, they lived on horses.

Question: Wow, huh you see that, see that's yeah...

Answer: It was amazing, amazing.

Question: As you went through Europe and all that and this war's going on, is there normalcy? I mean you go through a town that's been bombed...

Answer: Well, once we got into Germany you found an awful lot of destruction in the bigger cities that had been bombed, Ludwigshafen, Mannheim, not Heidelberg, Heidelberg was not bombed at all. Ah but just outside of Heidelberg there were a lot of war industries and in one interesting thing we found just south of Heidelberg, four hospitals, and right in the middle of the four hospitals, the big ammunition plant. Ah it wasn't bombed because of the four hospitals. But ah, when we'd go into, when we were in the break through area ah, and this happened all the way up and to the Rhine then and especially after we crossed the Rhine River ah, if you'd go through a town or a village, if the white sheets were hanging out of the windows, in the village then nothing was done. No bombardment or no shooting or anything to speak of, because the populous agreed that the war was over with and that was it. If there were no white sheets out we'd usually lob a few shells in and, to get their attention, and if the white sheets didn't pop out then pound the hell out of 'em because there usually were combat troops there trying to resist your forward movement. Ah this happened, especially with George Patton, um, with his first or third army, but it, every unit did the same thing once they got into Germany, white sheets were out, forget it, bypass it, keep going. No white sheets, give 'em a few rounds, if the sheets came up, bypass it, forget about it, if they didn't come out pound the hell out of 'em. It worked every time.

Question: So did people play fair?

Answer: Well it, what was it, would it be playing fair or would it be die hard or maybe the unit that's in that town, defending that town, was tied in to an SS unit. They never put out the white sheets.

Question: But that's what I mean. I mean they could've put out a white sheet.

Answer: Sure yeah.

Question: But so I mean they...

Answer: Oh if, if, oh I see what you mean...

Question: That's what I mean by fair.

Answer: Yeah if they put out the white sheets we didn't blast 'em.

Question: But ah, in the other way around, I mean, they didn't trick you and put the white...

Answer: Yeah, I can't speak from experience about that, I'm sure that happened. I'm sure it happened. But generally at that stage of the war, March and April and the war ended on the 8th of May, if the white sheets came out they were left alone. And it was a gentlemen's agreement, a mutual agreement to, ok, the war is over for me so go on from here. Ah, there

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were instances, of course, where soldiers surrendered, officers surrendered and then they'd pull a pistol out of their pocket and blast away with it. Well that, they would get blasted but in the meantime somebody gets killed.

Question: Yeah.

Answer: (laughs) We were in, right toward the end of the war, we were in the town, I think that last battery position picture, a place called Baltmansweiler, and ah, my battery was in position shooting south, we had a, attached to each firing battery, you had a ah, anti-aircraft detachment, a 40 millimeter gun, trailer mounted, and a quad-50, a 50 caliber, four 50 caliber machine guns mounted on a trailer, we called 'em quad-50's. Well the quad-50 I had sitting out here on the right flank of the battery, and we're shooting this direction, he's out here, my CP's over here, the phone rings "Lieutenant, the whole German army is going past us on the right down here, they're coming out of the woods!" I said well what are you doing? I said, why don't you shoot at 'em? So he swung that quad-50 around and didn't shoot into 'em, three or four hundred men, he shot over their heads. And boy the hands went up and the guns went down, we rounded up that day, we rounded up about 600 prisoners, a field artillery unit. Now that's not what we're in business for (laughs). But by golly we did. And if I had told him shoot down that line of men, I don't know how many he would have killed but, that was on about the 27th of April. The war's practically over but these guys were, they came out of the woods and they were walking down towards the town which is back here, and ah, they could've done an awful, they could've wiped us out if they'd a wanted to. 'Cause there were, all together there were about 600 of 'em and they were fully armed. But they were infantry men, they didn't have any support weapons or anything but they could sure made it awfully hot for us if they'd a hunkered down and started shooting at us. But that quad-50, that got their attention in a hurry. Oh wow! It was just amazing.

Question: Changed some shorts.

Answer: Yeah. It's just amazing, 'cause those 40, 50 calibers, they make an awful racket and of course they shoot a hell of a slug too, about that big.

Question: Now our view, my generation, my view, is ah of the end of the war is Life magazine, it's the news reels, it's Ticker Tape Parades at Time Square and all that. Where were you when the war was over and what, what was it like for you?

Answer: Believe it or not, as I told you I, well no, maybe I didn't tell you but ah, on the 29th of April, two days later, our division was pinched out of the lines, we were, by the 103rd infantry division, and they continued down south and they wound up down in Innsbruck, Austria

Answer: And we were pinched out and turned back toward a city of Stuttgart, Germany, which was then occupied by the French. See the French in the last, ah I guess it was the Alter Agreement, they were dividing up Germany into sectors, British, American and Russian, for the occupation period. No French zone of occupation. The French captured Stuttgart, they said we're going to stay here until a zone of occupation is delineated for the French government, for the French army. So we turned around and we stayed outside of Stuttgart for, oh golly, about ah, until about the first of June. Well when that happened my battery was in a beautiful little town ah, what the heck, Schondorf, and ah, ah, our mission then was, our combat mission was over, and our mission was to control the displaced persons that were in and around that area that the Germans had enslaved -- there were Poles there were Russians, French, you name it, they were all there -- and we had three DP camps to control and hopefully provide food for and water and police and so on. And that's not a mission for a

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combat outfit either. But we were there for about three weeks while, as soon as the war, we got into that stage, I talked my boss into, my battalion commander into letting me go to England to see my brother. And by golly, I went from battalion back to division and division to Corp and Corp to Army and I managed to get to Le Havre. And I got on a boat and went to England and I got to Kenneth's 8th Army group on about the 3rd of May. So it took me four days roughly to cover that short distance. And ah, on the 5th of May I flew a mission with him right back to Stuttgart and our are

Answer: We went all the way to Leipzig but we ah, we went and found my battery in Schondorf and dropped a sack of candy on 'em (laughs). And ah, when I got back to the battery we were talking and one of the kids said did you hear about that B-17 that crashed just out of here? I said what do you mean, crashed. Well he dropped some stuff on it and we got some candy then he crashed just east of here. I said, crashed hell I was in that airplane (laughs). You were! But we had a wonderful trip. We were in the air nine hours. We went all the way to Munich and then onto Leipzig, dropped paper bombs on Leipzig, turned around came back and went flew down the Rhine River to Cologne and circled Cologne for a while and then went back to England. That was the 5th of May, on the 8th of May, which was VE day I left England in a B-17 and went to Berlin. The fighting in Berlin had ended the day before, if you remember. Yeah we, that was only an eight hour mission but we did the northern part of Germany, and ah, orbited Berlin and then came back. And that night my brother and I went down to London, and we were in Trafalgar Square for the huge celebration on VE day, the 8th of May. The next day he flew an airplane to the States and was going back to organize a B-17 ah, or B-29 outfit to go to the Pacific and I left and went back to the continent. I got back to my battery on the 11th of May.

Question: So one day there's a war, the next day there's not a war, I mean...

Answer: Just like that.

Question: And so what happens to you then?

Answer: Well we sat there outside of Stuttgart for those several weeks and that was an amazing situation. The French, the occupation troops in Stuttgart were Moroccan, the goons they called 'em, Moroccan soldiers, and they had a fantastic system. They had a guard on every street corner, on every building of any size, just guards everywhere. Well the way they run a guard, lets say you're on post and I'm going to relieve you, well the corporal card brings us up and in order for you to be relieved you stick your weapon in the air and pull the trigger. Then I, and then you fall behind me and I go over and I take the post, I load my weapon, pull the trigger, load it again and now I'm on post. So you've got three rounds coming out of two rifles, all over that city every two hours, it sounded... and people got killed by the falling bullets, Americans, Germans, some French, it was the darndest thing I've ever experienced in my life. It at every two hours it was the war all over again.

Question: Huh.

Answer: Well we stayed there and finally the politicians worked out the zone of occupation for the French and ah, they moved out of Stuttgart and the 100th division moved in. Our division headquarters was in beautiful Kassern up on, which is today the Eucom, European Command Headquarters, has been for the last 50 years, well no has been since ah, 1967 when the French kicked the Americans out of France. But ah, we stayed there and our occupation zone for my battalion was southwest of Stuttgart and one of our batteries of all things was the guard battery for the Mercedes-Benz factory, which is just southwest of Stuttgart. And the C battery had that job and they stayed there, oh about two months. We

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were the rest of the battalion were in a little town called Herrenburg and ah, ah, we were in training all this time after the war because our division was supposed to go to the Pacific. We were one of the category one divisions. We were scheduled to make the landing along with a bunch of other divisions on the Canto Plain, where Tokyo is, and that landing was scheduled for March of '46. And ah, of course the atom bomb dropped and the war ended and we went from category one to category four occupation. And we, then you rotated home on the basis of how many points you had. If I had 81 points, if I had had 85 I would have gone home in August of '45. As it is I didn't get home until December of '45. Well I actually got home on the 11th of January '46. But ah, points were given for decoration, for months, years of service, months of combat, battle stars, ah things like that. (laughs) I've often said if that's a little scar I got from a shell fragment from one of my own guns incidentally, if I had gone and let the battalion surgeon put a band-aid on it I would have gotten home four months earlier, 'cause that was a purple heart wound. I did it myself so I didn't get the purple heart (laughs). But ah, what the heck, I'm glad I didn't.

Question: During the war did you know you were a part of history?

Answer: I think we did.

Question: I mean was that a concept?

Answer: I think we did, I think the thinking people did. And there was a lot of talk, my golly what have we done! There really was among the thinking people ah, a lot of barracks discussion type sessions, you know bull sessions. But ah you bet. We knew that we had overcome something which it could have been the ruination of our country and our society as we knew it, as we, as we ah, experienced it. You bet, I, looking back on it, of course, in retrospect my golly, 55 years ago I was involved in something that really was the salvation of, of civilization as we knew it. What if the Germans had have conquered England and conquered Russia and then been able to turn their full fury on the United States or the Western hemisphere? Um, in many respects they were so far ahead of us in weapons development that it wasn't even funny. The jet airplane, the ah, not the atomic bomb, we were ahead in that, but that's the only one that you could say. But the jet airplanes, the rocket airplanes, the rocket science, the intercontinental ballistic missiles, ah, we didn't have anything like the V-2, nothing, until much, much later. And heaven only knows, the V-3 probably could have hit New York from Germany, but...

Question: Were you patriotic before the war?

Answer: Yeah, I think I was. I think, like I was a boy scout and all that type of thing. I went to a religious college, ah, college, Willamette University was founded by the Methodist Church. Ah, I took part in some interesting things in college. For example I did a lot of singing then and I was in a singing group and I stood closer to Paul Robson than I am to you, as he sang that great ballad of Americans ah, and I had several of the little solo parts while he'd turned and looked at me you know. And later he was accused of being a what, a communist or whatever, I don't... I think we, that whole generation, our generation, the so called depression generation, in spite of everything that happened in the depression, as soon as the war started, my golly, I mean we were so involved, everybody, at every level of society, as we've said before. Ah, the involvement was unbelievable in our country. And sure, that involves, or revolves around not only love of country and all that but patriotism and love of the freedoms that we enjoy. Um, I remember when I was a kid, one of my projects won -- I don't remember if it was Memorial Day or Independence Day -- but I had to memorize and present the Gettysburg Address and ah. I still remember about four-fifths of it but ah, yeah I think I was as patriotic as the next guy. Ah, as I said I was the I-N-E officer for quite a bit of that time

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and getting into the types of things that we had to present in the I-N-E program, whether you could call it brainwashing or not, I don't know, I don't think it was, I think it was just an attempt to make sure that everybody knew what the score was, what, what this war was all about.

Question: Survival.

Answer: Ah, it was not only survival, personal survival but it was survival of our society and our concept of the way things should be.

Question: Let me ask you a real quick one 'cause I'm getting my beep, my tape's coming up to the end here. What was the toughest part for you?

Answer: In World War II?

Question: Yeah.

Answer: Course being away from my family, having a daughter I'd never seen, didn't see her until she was 18 months old, ah, seeing friends get blown away, knowing there but for the grace of God it would be I. I don't know other than that, sure the very act that this is a shooting war and the next bullet might have your name on it. But you don't, you didn't dwell on that type of thing, I didn't, I know a lot of people did, but I was lucky I was hopefully sane enough to not have to worry about that. Doing the job, getting the job done as quickly and as cheaply as possible. Ah those are the things we thought about.

Question: Hm. Do you face any dilemmas later, I mean looking back now? I know some people hang onto things.

Answer: H

Answer: I actually, when we went on our trip in '94 and visited the sites where we had been and where good friends were killed and things like that, that was pretty rough. But my wife tells me that, the roughest part for her was I would wake up or I'd be asleep and I'd wake her up by shouting firing commands, in the, telling the battery what to do, powder and tell her to wake up we got to get out of here, they're coming and stuff like that. Ah but no I personally had and have had no difficulty mentally or otherwise, dealing with what we went through. I think I'm old enough now I shouldn't have to worry about that.

Question: We did what we had to do.

Answer: Yeah, we did what we had to do, we did it the best way we knew how at the cheapest possible price, and human life and everything else, and ah, we succeeded. It was great. It was great to come home. It was great to leave it behind you. It was a when I was in Korea and in Vietnam, those situations...