

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

World War II Project

Personal Experience

O. H. 912

WILLIAM H. MUIR

Interviewed

by

David P. Powell

on

November 1, 1986

WILLIAM H. MUIR

Bill Muir is a very friendly outgoing person. As Bill had owned and worked in grocery stores most of his life I thought he would know about rationing and how it affected people during World War II. I didn't realize that he was not working in a grocery store when the war began.

As the interview went along Bill would sometimes talk about his experiences in Europe as a soldier. They were interesting and it was easy to get him back on the subject of the homefront during World War II.

Bill answered two questions that I was curious about; how did the people in a community feel about the many soldiers stationed in their town, and was it possible to get rationed goods if you didn't have the the required stamps?

Bill told about living with his wife in a small town in Texas when he was sent there by the Army for training. They were treated very well by the people--however, in New York when they stayed there the people were not as friendly toward soldiers.

The second question Bill answered while talking about his father who owned two markets in Warren. He told how it was common practice for a grocer to keep back cigarettes, sugar, or other hard to get supplies for "good"customers. He knew it was probably wrong, but he felt it was a common practice. It was necessary if you wanted to keep your customers.

After the war Bill started to run one of his father's stores. Later he bought out his father and ran Muir's Market on Warren's Southeast side until he retired.

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INTERVIEWEE: WILLIAM H. MUIR

INTERVIEWER: David P. Powell

SUBJECT: Copperweld Steel, Camp Beale, Camp Bowie,  
rationing, travel during WWII

DATE: November 1, 1986

P: This is an interview with Bill Muir for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Home Front during World War II, by David Powell, at 4044 Aleesa Drive SE, on November 1, 1986, at 3:42 in the afternoon.

We are going to be talking about the Second World War. Could you just kind of give us an introduction, how you found about the war, or what you felt about it when you first heard about it?

M: I remember Pearl Harbor vividly. My mother and I lived in an apartment on Main Street in Warren and I was working at Copperweld at the time. We were sitting around, it was a Sunday afternoon, playing cards with one of my friends and all of the sudden they came on the radio saying the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. That was a shock. I had previously signed up and had my draft card. Incidentally, I just saw my draft card the other day when I was going through some things. I knew that one of these days I was going to get called up, but I didn't get called up until the following November. Then I went into the service.

P: How old were you when Pearl Harbor happened?

M: Twenty-two. It was quite a day, we were really--oh, I don't know, a sickening feeling, just sick--not so concerned about when we were going to go or not. With my friend it was the same thing, he and I both felt the

same way. It was just a horrible, horrible thing. Then as the reports came through it was worse and worse because it was really a sneak attack. Maybe figured we might be in trouble with them but not that soon, not a sudden attack.

I worked at Copperweld Steel in the cost department for about almost a year. Copperweld was then at that time . . . Before I left they were making machine gun barrels. Everything was changed into war production in steel mills. I remember we had moved in, my mother and I had moved. I found an apartment on Market Street and we had three bedrooms. There was a fellow working at the Copperweld from the government, DPC; Defense Plants Corporation. They were auditing all the figures that were going through the department. I got to know him through the cost department. He came to live with us and he told us about different things that they were watching.

It was just then that the country started to mobilize, it wasn't completely mobilized then. I was quite interested in everything he had to say, just new accounting procedures and that stuff. When I went to the service I went . . . I remember much, I was always pretty much an academic and I played football and baseball when I was a kid, nothing great. I went down four days, and I was inducted, and they gave me a uniform that didn't fit, really I was. . . We went on to Camp Beale, California and became a member of 129th Armored Engineer Battalion and the 13th Armored Division. So, I was in the Army division, same division, same company, all the time I was in the war. We had our basic training, lots of fun. Always that thought behind, "Sometime they are going to call us. Are we going to come back?" That was always in the back of your head, I'm sure, at least it was in mine. It was pretty much . . . The training was tough. I got really, really tired. I remember the first furlough I was going to get, we had to walk a twenty-five mile march in eight hours. We were in pretty good shape, of the 150 of us that left, there were only sixteen of us that finished. I was one of the sixteen, and at least I got to go home with the first batch. That may be . . . I always felt pretty good about that because I was never the greatest athlete in the world.

Then I went to Camp Bowie from Camp Beale. That was in Texas, down in Brownwood, Texas. We trained there. I had never had an opportunity to drive a car when I was growing up, so in the Army they gave us a shot. I drove a truck for about fifty yards and never drove a jeep. We were out on maneuvers one day--this was in armor division then--and the captain's jeep driver was having a problem and he couldn't drive the next day.

The captain looked around and he said to me--that was before I was a Sergeant Private--"Muir, you are driving for me tomorrow." I had never driven a jeep before and I hurried up . . . The guy's name was Polowski, the driver, and I said, "Joe, how in the world am I going to drive this thing?" He said, "It's easy, just turn it on and drive it." So I got it started the next morning and I drove the captain. We started to get up into the lines and I got it shifted, I jerked it around a little bit because it was standard shift. Pretty soon we got into mud, I got stalled, I didn't know how to get into four wheel drive. He look at me and said, "Muir, did you ever drive before?" I said, "No, sir." He said, "Why didn't you say something?" I said, "Sir, you didn't ask me, you told me." He said, "Well, move over." So, I drove with the captain drove the jeep all the time, the whole day on maneuvers. I was a spectator, I thought that was pretty funny.

I remember coming home on furloughs, things kept getting more different every time I came home. My dad had a grocery store, my dad and mother were divorced, and my dad had a grocery store. I remember they had little packets of cigarettes underneath the counter. His good customers, maybe he had three or four packs and he would have maybe one or two packs for the ones that weren't so good. I remember they used to come in and get their cigarettes and he would have their names on them. He was taking care of his customers. Meat, you couldn't buy meat, you had to have stamps. He bought meat from a butcher who lived out in the country. He used to butcher so many steers and buy them, I guess it was black market. Dad would always buy a couple of them, maybe three or four I don't know. Then they didn't have stamps, so the people came in and they had to pay extra for the meat. You couldn't buy it at the regular price. When they had the extra meat, why, the people would come in, and in the growing business everybody that came in got cuts of meat. It was probably crooked. What the counter men in the meat department did was they would weigh the meat at the regular price, at the OPS price or OPA price. Then they would just write on the package, like it was just another package of meat and that would make \$1.80. Maybe that was what the extra money was for, they just put an extra \$1.80 on the package. So you get four packages being charged for five. They did that and I remember my dad had to go to the OPA office one time to pay them, but they didn't do anything to him. I remember it wasn't a very honest thing but they were all doing it, almost all the merchants were doing that except the chains.

P: So, if you had a little extra money you could get something?

M: Yes, you could get it and the people did it. I know, of course, when you got sugar in or anything like that it there would be a run on it. Everybody came in for whatever was short at the time. They had a run on that item. That is the way they operated then. Of course I don't know whether it was very patriotic or not but it was available. Just a lot of different people had their hands in it, that's all. A lot of people made some money and the others didn't.

P: I know that when I was little my mom used to save grease in a can, what was that for?

M: I think probably it was for ammunition. It seems to me that is what they saved it for. I don't know what . . . It seems to me that is what they did.

P: Because I know she used to take it to the store, that was the one thing I do remember. She would save cans of grease.

M: Yes, I don't know. I would think that would be the reason.

P: As I remember, they paid some money for it, of course I was little and didn't get the money. So, if you don't get the money you don't pay attention very well.

M: No, that's right. Like I say I was in the service and I don't remember most of the things. I do remember being home on a furlough, and I saw them doing that at the market. My dad was a pretty straight laced man. I never thought he would do something like that. Evidently that was the going way.

P: If you didn't look for your customers then they would go somewhere else?

M: Well, I think that is probably what started it, but after awhile he got new customers that weren't the old ones before anyway.

P: You said that you were working at Copperweld, how long did it take then to get ready for the war and things like that?

M: I think it didn't take very long, it didn't take very long. By the time I went into the service they were working on machine gun barrels then. So that was eight or ten months, almost a year from Pearl Harbor. It might have been sooner than that.

P: Did you have to work extra hours or anything?

M: It got hard to hire people and there were still a lot

of people around. It took a long time to muster all the people into the Army that weren't in. We had about twelve million people in uniform. So, it took awhile to get everything in. When I first went into the service, went into the Army, we didn't even have rifles issued to us. We got power rifles about three months after we were in.

P: What did you use for three months?

M: Well, we trained with some in field rifles. We got to shoot at the firing range, but it was only maybe three rifles to a squad, or something like that. They taught us all about them and you would get up and you would take your chance or take your turn at stripping the rifle. Then I remember they had an inspection, this was on a Saturday morning, we had a whole big bunch of boxes brought to the motor pool. They were in the back of a truck anyway, and several truckloads full. They had inspection that Saturday morning and almost, oh I would say, fifty percent of the company got gigged. It was gigged because they found out something wrong with their bed or something like that. What better we had to do was clean the cosmoline off of the rifles. We worked from 10:00 in the morning until about 9:00 at night, when it got dark, cleaning those darn things. Boy, that was a big job! We had M1 rifles, and we had our own rifles, they issued them on Monday. That was one of those things.

P: When you went to these camps then, with so many soldiers, and sailors suddenly being drafted were they really ready for that many people?

M: I don't know. I had a uniform, like I said they didn't have the guns, and Camp Beale was a new camp. We were the first one in the barracks. A whole division pulled in within three, or four, or five days, I think, from all over the country. I remember getting out of a truck when they first pulled us from the trains. We came by truck and we stopped and some sergeant there, we were all privates--just a bunch of draftees--and sergeant said, "How many of you guys went to college?" I stepped forward. "How many of you graduated from high school?" Some more guys stepped forward. He said, "Okay, you guys take these barrack bags and separate them, read them." All the barracks bags had names on them, and separate them into alphabetical order. "We asked for you because we knew you could read." So, we were the smart ones. After that I never volunteered for anything else.

Really, my uniform didn't fit me very well. I got that at Fort Hayes in Columbus. It fit me but not very well. As we finally settled down and I went into AA

Company in 129th armored engineers and then 3rd squad, 3rd platoon and they started to move around. We could exchange our clothes, interchange them. They asked me because of my background I guess, I don't know. So, I worked in the supply room for a few months to help get everything straightened out in the supply. Then I went on the line. I remember I became a specialist, but I didn't get rank. I ended up as a staff sergeant. We went to Camp Beale and I was quite good.

I remember I played ball for the division baseball team and we played a team in Yuba City. Maybe you have heard of Yuba City, California. We played ball there and I remember playing ball and reaching up and taking a peach off the tree and eating it. Also, there was an olive grove there. I remember the first, second day when we were in the field and I looked up and I saw olives, ripe olives. I thought, "Oh, I love ripe olives. I am going to have a feast." What happened was they weren't cured. Oh, they were bitter, nothing good about them at all, just so much different from the canned olives we have.

P: You mean you can't eat them off the tree?

M: No.

P: Oh, I didn't know that.

M: No, they have to be treated with vinegar and stuff.

P: You mean you don't just pick them and eat them.

M: No, no. That is what I thought, "Oh man, I am going to have a feast." Then we went to Camp Bowie in Texas. I was there for about a year, and we shipped overseas. I spent the rest of the time in France.

P: Getting back to the camp thing, what would be like a typical day in camp?

M: Well, they get you up maybe about 6:30 in the morning for reveille, and you would fall in. Now this is basic training, your training. You go have chow, after chow you. . . Your squads go to different training. Maybe you would be with the rifle, how to shoot the rifle, or gas mask training, or physical fitness. Each squad or each platoon would be out, you would have to go to a different thing. You are just training. An awful lot of marching, and some combat, and obstacle courses. The obstacle course was tough. A lot of the guys when I first went in were not physically fit. A lot of them were weeded out because they weren't able. . . Some of them were a little bit too old, in their thirties, and they just couldn't stand the gaff. Their bodies

couldn't. . . Some weren't physically able. One fellow had one muscle in the back of his leg cut off. He was still there, and he had a limp. He lasted about three weeks, till they finally got the papers on him and got him released. Because he just wasn't able. It was mostly learning how to do the different things. Like I said, they had classes on truck driving and jeep driving. I never got an opportunity to do any of those things. Evidently when that was going on I was in the supply room, but after I got out I caught up with all of them. It was hard. We were tired at night.

We would go up to the PX and get a few beers. There was a bunch of friends in our squad, and we would go up and buy a case of beer a couple nights a week. We would sit out in the olive orchard and drink beer, get a little crooked maybe, some of us. Then it would be tough the next day, but that was the way it was. There weren't many guys there who didn't drink. Most of the fellows drank. We went to town on a weekend pass or overnight pass sometimes, in Yuba City and Marysville. It kept you busy. You didn't get bored. You might have gotten tired of it, sick of it, but there was always something to do except after chow at night. If you didn't have guard duty then you were free maybe until 9:00 or something like that. Lights out at 9:00. Then they had a day room there, play ping pong. On pay day we gambled on the ping pong table. There was a lot of gambling going on. I never gambled, never had enough money to gamble. I wouldn't have done it anyway.

It was kind of a devil-may-care attitude that you tried to put on when you went to camp. Every unit had its own feeling. They thought they were pretty great, pretty tough. That was what they tried to instill into them. We would get into some fights in town. We got into one bad one one time. We were sitting in this bar, a bunch of us from the engineers, and bunch of fellows from the reconnaissance came in. We had a problem with them. We had one lieutenant, Dynamite Hogan, he was pretty good guy. He liked the enlisted men, he didn't care much for the officers. We got into a fight. He had just bought a broom, and he was swinging that broom in the fight. I remember all of us being taken to the stockade. We had been drinking and we were cold. They just put us on a table, a regular eating table, that's all. It was a Saturday night and they were filled up completely, so we had to sleep on that. No comfort or anything, cold. Woke up in the morning cold and miserable and hungover. We got back to the unit; restricted to camp, lost my stripes. It was bad. I was at Camp Beale before, then when we went back to Bowie I got my stripes back. Then I got sent to New York City to go to electrical

school. They needed electricians, so they picked out so many. Betty came there, we had been married in between one of my furloughs. Betty came there after I had a good three months in New York City. I didn't get to go to electrical school. They found out I had had line duty, so they put me in charge of a squad. All I did was take care of the squad. I didn't go to school, which was really kind of a gyp. It would have been nice.

Then when we were overseas, I was in three battles. I don't care too much to talk about those. You have seen those. I will say one thing though, they talk about inhumanity, well I have seen it on both sides. I remember when we were taking some prisoners back to our field headquarters, one of the fellows in the line was a young kid--couldn't have been more than sixteen or seventeen, and he was a little cocky--but he was marching in. He said something, spit or something like that on one of the fellows. The guy shot him, shot him in the back and killed him. No need for it whatsoever. It made me sick. Another time after the war was over, we had two SS soldiers who were picked up. They had an investigation, but they never found out. . . But somebody either in our outfit or in the recons took those two SS soldiers and shot them, and just dumped them in a grave in the graveyard that was dug. They didn't cover them or anything. Just shot them. Talk about, you know how the Germans treated us, regular Army was all right, but we weren't very nice either. No matter how angry you get, you don't do that.

I got a little bit scared a few times, lost a bunch of friends from our platoon in river crossings. We were combat engineers. We crossed the Aisne River and we lost some. We went over and they were all dug in on the other side. We were to ferry the infantry over. Boy, they let us get almost there and then they opened up on us. We had an awful time getting out of that. We spent about twelve hours underneath the bridge. Our jumpers were hurt pretty badly in that.

P: Now, my dad and Betty both said that mail went through really well during the war. If you were up on the front did you get mail?

M: Oh, yes. I got mail, sometimes late, but I got mail. In fact, we were at a little place where our general was shot. We were cleaning out the mines in a bridge, and our general came up. We were all doing it because we had snipers. . . We were all doing it slowly, trying to get this big shell diffused. The general said, "Come on, get up! You're too slow, get going!" He got shot right through the neck. Telling us to get up, we were thankful we weren't up. Anyway, after that we got

through that town, at the end of the town, and it was still a pretty hot town. They came up and I got some mail, I got a letter from Betty and it had some pictures or our baby, Bill, in it. I got to look at it. The hole was semi-dark, I couldn't hardly see it. But I got to see some of the pictures and I was all set. I put it in my musette bag and we moved our half tracks on up.

Couldn't see it that night about 10:00 at night, at about 3:00 in the morning they called us and we had to go up and release Tiger tanks, I don't know what it was. Anyway, we were to go up. Sherman tanks were battling some Tiger tanks right on the ridge. We got right on the ridge up there, the lieutenant carried us right into the middle of a battle. Tiger zeroed in on us, had one of those 98 mm's and just wiped out the half track that we were in. We were off on the side of the road. Wiped off the tank, the half track, that was the one that I had my musette bag in that, and the picture was gone. So I never really got to see that first picture of my son. That was a funny one. It wasn't funny at the time.

We got off to the side, and I jumped into a little slip trench. There was actually. . . The Germans alongside of their roads had dug little foxholes. We all got into some shelter because these tanks were having a battle. They were just shooting over our heads. I jumped into this foxhole, and somebody had been there before me and he had to go to the toilet. I was covered, I smelled. It was terrible. We worked our way back away from the road back into a stone quarry. There was a hole back in there, and everybody went into the hole. Because you couldn't get mortars or anything into the hole. They wouldn't let me in the hole. They wouldn't let me in at all. So I had to sit outside. That was just towards the end of the war. I remember that so plainly.

P: Tell us what the traveling was like in our country when you were traveling on to different bases.

M: It took three days to go from San Francisco to Cleveland, to get home. Three days. About two and a half of it was to Chicago. They didn't have air conditioning. It was the Old Challenger the train that we went on. They just let everybody on until . . . They didn't have seats. If you were lucky you got a seat, but we were sitting in the entry way and maybe five or six people. Dirty, it was so hot in there that you would open up the window and all the cinders would come in from the tracks and from the coal burners. It was really a mess coming back and forth on the Challenger. Dirty. You would try to wash up in their little wash

basin, but you couldn't. Just filthy. For three days we lived like that. It was pretty bad. Crowded, no matter where you went, you were crowded. It was really crowded because. . . Well, it was the only way they could get transport I guess. I never knew anybody that flew. They didn't have the airlines like they have them now anyway. It was quite hard.

I remember New York Central Station when Betty and I went back. I took a delay in route. We stopped in North Jackson for a few days, and then it went on down to Camp Cook. I remember I was broke. I had my ticket, but I had to get another ticket because we were taking a delay in route. So we took everything we had and it was \$1 short. I borrowed \$1 off a soldier, I don't know who he was. I told him what my problem was and he gave me \$1, and I bought my ticket. Betty had hers. We rode from New York to Salem. We had seats. We were fortunate. Most of the time, if you were lucky you had a seat, you sit on your duffel bag or something like that, barracks bag, or your suitcase or whatever. It was quite an experience. Everybody in the place would be a soldier, everybody in the car, just soldiers. Maybe there would be a few civilians, women, but that is about it. I remember we had about \$.40 or \$.50 and we were trying to buy something to eat with our \$.50. They wouldn't take pennies, the vendors wouldn't take pennies so we didn't get anything to eat on the way.

P: Why wouldn't they take pennies?

M: They would rather have the dollars. They just wouldn't take pennies. Some of the people were pretty good. I remember in New York. . . New York was a tough town on soldiers. I guess the soldiers raised as much heck as anybody. I remember one time we went into this restaurant, we had enough to buy a meal a piece, but this waiter wouldn't wait on us. I got a little mad and I went up to the bartender and tried to get him and ask him. He said, "Why should we wait on you guys? You never tip." We couldn't get anything to eat there. We had to go some place else to eat, they wouldn't feed us.

P: In New York City they weren't very friendly then?

M: No, they weren't in most of the restaurants. Although Betty lived in a little hotel off of. . . In Greenwich Village off Washington Square. My hotel was about five blocks away from there. I had to report in every night. Of course, sometimes I didn't report in, I stayed with her. Somebody covered my bunk. I stayed at the hotel. We ate across the street mostly at a little Italian restaurant there. There was this little

Italian lady, and she liked us. We ate there often. She would tell us what to buy, what the specials were, very nice. Betty was getting sick, she was pregnant with the baby and getting sick then.

No, they weren't friendly with the soldiers, nobody. They had too much of them. Like in Marysville when we had the fight, all there were were soldiers in there. Soldiers everywhere. You would go to town, the townspeople would stay inside. They didn't want to be bothered. Because there was usually a lot of drinking going on. Usually they hated the. . . People around the camps didn't care for the soldiers at all. I don't hardly blame them.

P: Soldiers are problems then?

M: Oh sure. Well, it's that supposedly devil-may-care attitude that you try to put on, that facade. They weren't very friendly. The bartenders were friendly until you got unruly. They would always pour you a drink. Once in awhile you would run into a nice family that might invite you to dinner or something like that. Most of the guys were looking for girls or something like that. After all, that is that age group. Most of the guys were single, I was single when I first went in. They were always looking for girls. The fathers were trying to keep their girls away from them.

P: Yes, I imagine so.

M: Yes.

P: Not only that, but the soldiers wouldn't be there very long probably.

M: Well, no. They might be there and they might not. The girls had their choice of the boys. Go to the USO. . . The USO was all right before. . . They sure watched the girls there too when they got out.

P: What all could you do at a USO?

M: You danced, at night if you went in, or you talked to one of the hostesses. Usually, depending on the person, you got hungry for female companionship. I don't mean for sex or anything like that, just to talk to somebody, a woman or a girl. They had sandwiches there, or they had music and you could dance with some of the girls. I didn't dance, it wouldn't do me any good. They really tried. There was some entertainment there a lot of the times. They really tried to make you welcome. Of course they didn't tolerate any drinking, any boozers or anything like that. I never went into too many of them. I went in the one in San Fran-

cisco and of course Marysville. I went to Brownwood too, but I was married then. I wasn't fooling around anyway then. They served their purpose. I never really spent a lot of time in them.

P: Did they show the guys movies and things like that on the base?

M: At the base, yes, you could see the movies. I saw Bob Hope one time on the stage, and they had movies there every night in the camp. Usually all the different ones. Have you ever seen "M\*A\*S\*H", it is the same type of thing. You would have movies every night, sometimes it would be the same for a few nights. Most of the time it was in the camp. You would be getting ready for tomorrow or cleaning up a little bit. Friday night you had to really scrub up the floor. We used to make our floor almost white. We would scrub it with that G.I. soap and make it almost white. When we went to Camp Bowie we lived in squad huts. There were about thirteen men to a squad, and you lived that way. The other way was the whole platoon on one floor. It was kind of. . . You did a lot of card playing and a lot of horsing around. Not much really constructive life. Kind of lonely in a way, but there was always some goofball or someone doing something that made you laugh.

P: What were the troop ships like when you were going over to Europe?

M: I had two of them on the way over. The Liberty ship, we were out about two days and something went wrong with the rudder or something, and they turned around and came back. We left the convoy, and that was kind of scary. We left the convoy and came back. Then we went over on another one, on a bigger ship. The whole division was on it. I think the whole division was on it. That was pretty tight. We played "Monopoly", some guys gambled all the way over. We played "Monopoly" almost all the way over. That was fun. I remember I was so sick of "Monopoly" and "Casino".

P: I remember playing "Casino" when I was a little kid.

M: That is what we played, "Monopoly" and "Casino" all the way over. On the way back, I was on a luxury liner. Oh, the food. . . In the first place we got sick. I got sick on the Liberty ship and I got sick on the next ship. I remember the mess hall was a set of high tables, not with chairs. We didn't sit down to eat. We just stood up and ate our meal. We would go right through the line and pick up our stuff, it was cafeteria style. Regular Army style, they just put it on your plate. You would take it over there, and the ship

was moving around, and you're moving with it. Pretty soon you would be sick. I remember the first couple of days, there were always three or four guys being sick right at the mess where you were eating your dinner. It made us sick, made me sick. I remember one time I got a--now this was after I settled down, my stomach was all right--I saw a piece of meat and I said, "Oh man, there is something good to eat. That looks really good." It was tongue, and I hate tongue. I don't like any of that type of thing. I remember how disappointed I was when I bit into that thing and had to chew it up.

We had to exercise everyday. We would go out on deck and exercise. You really lost your muscle tone in those places because you were so cramped. I think there were four bunks in a row, or up one on top of another. You had room enough to crawl in and sleep in a hammock like bunk. One after another, you could look down through it and see just bunks. That was all you would see, and then you would see people shooting craps on the floor. A lot of crap games going on. It was an experience. Of course, you're young, you can take all of that stuff. It doesn't bother you none. I couldn't stand it now, but nothing really bothered you when you were young and in good condition. That is one thing about it, everybody was in good shape. When I came back from the service after the war, I weighed 138 pounds. When I went into the service I weighed 160. I will tell you I was in shape. Tremendous. I could run for miles, and walk for miles, just had stamina that wouldn't end. One thing about it, we did a lot of walking, even though it wasn't. . . We used to get mad because we would go out to the rifle range or something like that and we used to have to walk or run. The infantry would be driving coming up, and they would bring men up in two and a half ton trucks. We used to get mad. We were the armored division, yet we had to walk. It really wasn't that way, but. . . Because we had our half tracks.

P: My brother told me in Pearl Harbor he was a sailor, but he did a lot of walking too.

M: Yes.

P: I guess it was about the same everywhere.

M: Yes.

P: Betty said you had gotten back about six months after the war was over then.

M: Yes.

P: How long did it take the country to get back to more

normal conditions?

M: Well, I don't know. It didn't take too long. They still had the OPA on after the war, but not for long. It took a long time to get a car though. I remember my dad had an old 1939 Ford, and they used it to go out in the country and get eggs and stuff in. So it wasn't the cleanest thing. But I couldn't buy a car. You couldn't buy any kind of a car. For about a year they were all tooled up for jeeps and all the rest. I drove that, so I didn't really have any trouble getting a car. There was plenty of food. . . Oh, there were shortages, but there was plenty of food. I am trying to think about the clothing. I don't remember about the clothing. Of course, I didn't wear my uniform after I came home. Everybody had enough of that darn thing. Evidently I got enough clothes to wear, because I didn't have any problems. But I don't think there was too much.

That was six months after the Germans surrendered. It was only about three months after Japan, or two months after. I don't remember exactly, but I remember when we were out at Camp Cook in California. We were in this little town in Germany, and they told me that I had to go home on an advanced cadre. We set up the entire supply in Camp Cook, California. We were to be in the assault troop, and we were going to assault Japan. So I got home a little earlier than the others, out of Europe, and stopped home for a little bit. About a week, or three days, or four, or five, I don't remember. Then we went to Camp Cook. We were in training for an assault crossing, supposedly. On the way out there, in Albuquerque, New Mexico they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. We knew then that that would be the end.

P: Of course, I suppose you didn't realize that is where they had built the bomb.

M: No, no. We were in Albuquerque when we got the news. We were on a troop train, a bunch of us were going out there.

P: Do you remember what they told you? Just a big bomb, or did they say an atomic bomb?

M: No, they didn't say atomic bomb. They said that they dropped a big bomb, and Japan was going to surrender. I am not sure whether now, to tell you the truth, whether they dropped the bomb. . . No, they dropped the bomb the day I left Warren to get on the bus to go to Cleveland to get on the train, they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. When we got to Albuquerque, they surrendered. That is how it was. That has been a long time.

I haven't even thought about that.

P: I know if you were in the war you had seen what bombs would do and stuff. Were you curious that one bomb would do that much?

M: Well, I don't know. I really didn't think too much of it. I know what they would do, because we had been under barrages before. I guess I just didn't even think at the time that they dropped an atomic. . . It must have been they dropped an atomic bomb because that is what they called it. Of course, we didn't know anything about atomic bombs then. Anyway, this was an attack on Japan and we were hoping that something would happen before we had to ship out again. Because we didn't really know at the time that we were going to be. . . We knew we were going to be trained in assault training, I knew that, but I didn't know we were going to do Japan until the company all arrived. They all arrived. They didn't make changes in any of the plans. I was there setting up for the battalion.

I knew the war was over, but still we were setting up things. . . We weren't getting the things we wanted because everybody cut down. I had an officer there who didn't really care. We couldn't get any information, so we just played everything by ear and tried to set up for the company, so we would have plates and stuff like that, and vehicles. It was quite a mess trying to get all that stuff together. Because most of our stuff was left in Europe from our regular company stuff. We had plenty of jeeps. And then a big exodus started, guys were, and the motor pool, the battalion supply. . . I was back when the battalion supply took over and I was back with the unit, with my company. They started to take chainsaws and everything, they were shipping all of those things back. Sheets, everything they could get a hold of, they were shipping, and boxing up, and sending them back. Nobody stopped them.

P: You mean they were just kind of borrowing it?

M: They were stealing it.

P: Yes.

M: Nobody stopped them. I couldn't believe it. I didn't do it, I didn't do anything. Betty said, "Boy, it would have been nice if you could have sent some sheets." I guess they were hard to buy, sheets and pillowcases. Betty said, "It would have been nice if you could have sent some of that." I could have, but I wouldn't have anyway.

P: I remember my brother said that he had a chance to

steal a rifle when they were shipping back. He said he was going to, but he started shooting it and it made so much noise he knew he would scare deer for miles around. No use stealing it. So he said they threw it in the water.

M: I had access to all that stuff. I just never thought that way, that's all. I won't say that I was sound and pure, I just didn't think that way. Maybe I was lazy, I don't know.

P: Did they have a system for who went home first?

M: Yes, points. I am trying to think. It seems to me we had five points for each battlestar, and five points for each year. I know I had thirty-five or forty points. I got out because, you also got a point if you had a baby, you got a point if you were married. I am not sure whether you just got one point if you were married, or a point for your baby and a point for being married. I can't remember. You got a point for any decorations you had. The only thing I had was a combat ribbon, never a great hero. I got out fairly early. About half of our unit, it was about the middle half, about halfway.

P: Were they mostly guys from around here?

M: No, our outfit was from everywhere. A lot from Michigan, a lot from Alabama. Now there were a lot from Ohio, but most of them went into the tanks. I went into the engineers. Some of us from Youngstown, a couple guys from Youngstown.

P: When you got home then, was it easy to get a job?

M: I had a job already. My dad decided that. . . I had a job with Copperweld when I went back, but my dad wanted me to come in. He had two stores, and I knew the grocery business. I worked at it as a kid. He wanted me to go to work for him. He offered me \$75 a week. Now that was big money to me because I wasn't making that much at Copperweld. I was only making about \$150 a month, and here he was offering me \$300. Of course, I may have made more than that at Copperweld if I went back. That is what I was making when I left Copperweld. So I took the \$75 a week and I worked for him. I didn't have any trouble. In fact, I worked for him for about a year or less. Betty and I opened up the store on Perkinswood. We still had a manager in there. Finally, he wanted to sell out and I bought his half of the store on Perkinswood out. I went up there and he sold the other two stores. I just stayed in the grocery business, better living than what I would have had. No, I would have made more money later on, but I

did all right. I was my own boss, which is a great thing. I never realized it. I had a lot of headaches, but at least I never had to take any orders like I had to take in the Army.

P: You don't tell the captain you think the order is dumb?

M: I did once. I did once and I got busted again. I got busted twice. They were having an inspection, and they were having a IG inventory. IG, inspector general. The supply sergeant was on furlough. And they asked me when he was on furlough, they just moved me into the supply room. I had the supply room and the captain came in to me and he said, "Muir, I want you to set it up so that the officers can take inventory of their men and equipment." I said, "Captain, you don't think your officers are capable of doing that, do you?" That wasn't a very nice thing to say, and I was dumb to say it, but I did. I just had so many problems with them. When you would get the new officers just from the OCS, they didn't know anything, a lot of them. You always had to try to cover for them anyway. I just got a little upset. Then they sent me to the electrical school. When I came back I got my stripes back.

P: Were there any of the guys that decided to stay in the Army and make a career of it, or were most of them just sick of it?

M: Most of our guys were sick and tired of it. Three years with the same bunch. I don't know of any of them, unless the officers. . . They go to the Reserves. I don't know whether they were forced to or not, that they could be in the Reserves and get a little extra pay. None of my friends did. They were all so glad to get out of it. Of course, gee whiz, when you have been gone, you get back, and you have got a chance to go home, especially if you have got a family. . . Most of the guys had girls. They didn't have wives, they had girls. Betty was with me when I was down in Camp Bowie, but she wasn't with me at Camp Cook at the end of the war. That is when you started to get edgy, when the war was over and you couldn't get out.

P: Yes, I bet. Like I said, that is about the only thing I really remember is when my brothers came home. I don't remember too awful much about the war, but I remember when they came home. I can remember when it was over too. Everybody celebrating.

M: Yes.

P: I really don't have a lot of memories of the war. I was too young I guess.

M: Well, I haven't thought about it. Most of it is just that you remember the humorous things. Some of the battles, I remember the battle where I got into the foxhole and covered with crap, but that was a bad time because we lost a lot of friends in that. I remember when General Logan got shot by the sniper. One of the guys there took his jacket off. He had a combat jacket with stars on it, one of the guys took his jacket off and put his jacket on, put it on himself. He said, "I will be a general for a minute." Killed him dead, just bang like that. I suppose we had about twenty-five percent casualties.

P: Yes, it would be pretty high.

M: Most of them were in the river crossings.

P: I know Betty was saying about the Navy was supposed to have clean living. I don't know if that is why my brothers joined the Navy or not, but they did. I don't know if somebody told them something or not.

M: Well, I think the Air Force too, especially if you weren't a flyer, had a pretty nice life. We sludged right through the mess.

P: Well, it's getting late so why don't we shut this off.

M: Yes, go ahead.

END OF INTERVIEW